

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

K-12 FLORIDA CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN CRISIS:
A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DURING THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Cesar O. Irizarry

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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ABSTRACT

K-12 Florida Christian schools were disrupted due to the advent of a global crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Flexibility was needed by educational leadership during this time of crisis. For that reason, this study will aim to understand the leadership principles necessary to provide leaders with the flexibility to adapt to extreme circumstances. The literature addresses the leader's importance of being flexible during a crisis (Ruffner & Huizing, 2016). However, the literature continues to examine the effects of the pandemic on education but has not identified those contingencies that are necessary for leaders in the Christian educational system to face a crisis. Transformational leadership is a powerful way to influence the process utilized by leaders as it "persuades followers to adopt certain behaviors in order to bring about what the leader considers as beneficial change" (Bush, 2018, p. 883). The design that was utilized for this study was a quantitative correlational approach, which was used to measure the degree of relationship between two or more variables (Creswell, 2019). The research and data analyzed aimed at finding if there was a correlation between leadership principles and the contingencies necessary to ensure flexibility when dealing with a crisis for both the research literature and practical applications to educational leadership.

Keywords: COVID-19, Leadership Flexibility, Crisis Management, Emotional Intelligence, Educational Leadership, Transformational Leadership

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the love of my life, my wife, Gloria. Without her constant support, love, and inspiration it would not have been possible to work on this research study and complete the dissertation. To God be all the glory. Without the Lord this work would have never been realized. His church and His kingdom are the sole reason for this research study, it has been conducted to help future generations of leaders become agents of transformation who will continue the work of the kingdom, for the glory of God and His church.

Acknowledgments

I want to also thank my esteemed Professors Dr. Robert Van Engen, Dr. Stephenie Guess, Dr. Joseph Butler, and Dr. Gary Bredfeldt for their guidance and mentorship throughout this process, your inspiration and commitment to students like me has been invaluable in reaching this phase of the program.

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List of Abbreviations

Leadership (L)

Liberty University (LU)

New International Version (NIV)

New American Standard Version (NASV)

Organizational behavior (OB)

Transformational leadership (TL)

Emotional intelligence (EI)

Crisis Management (CM)

Servant Leadership (SL)

Educational Leadership (EL)

Leadership Style Survey (LSS)

Personal Adaptation Profile (PAP)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

K-12 Florida Christian schools were disrupted due to the advent of a global crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Flexibility was needed by educational leadership during this crisis. For that reason, this study aimed to understand the leadership principles necessary to provide leaders with the flexibility to adapt to extreme circumstances. The advent of a global health crisis that brought life to a pause made face-to-face education limited if not impossible to reduce disease transmission risk. Christian educational institutions are no exception to a crisis which tested the resolve of academic leadership as it navigated through the stringent changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The research conducted sought to fill the gap between traditional educational leadership and the development of needed contingencies based on flexibility to deal with a global crisis or disaster. This study explored those leaders who can become agents of transformation regardless of the circumstances faced if given flexibility to act. To gain understanding into how transformational leadership can be successfully applied to the virtual work environment, there needs to be a discussion on how flexibility can help a leader overcome a crisis.

This chapter presents the background to the problem which was the disruption in K-12 Florida Christian schools caused by the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago. A theological and theoretical framework addressed leadership flexibility in the context of a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. The thematic framework addressed leadership flexibility in the context of a crisis to evaluate how K-12 Christian educational leaders react in an extreme context like the current pandemic. This section also states the problem to be studied as well as the purpose for the research study. The research questions guided this study to determine if any correlation between

a lack of leadership flexibility and the COVID-19 pandemic was justified as well as a null hypothesis to assess the effectiveness of the research. The study also lists the delimitations and research assumptions as well as provides a definition of the terminology encountered through the research. Finally, this chapter states the significance of this study for Christian educational leaders who may be facing the challenges of leading a team through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background to the Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic caused disruption in K-12 Florida Christian schools. Leadership teams had to scramble to adapt all aspects of education to the online environment as the state began stay at home orders to prevent the spread of the virus. Schools had to contend with a lack of resources like computers as well as with the prospect of not having enough personnel to assume teaching duties online. As educational leaders faced this crisis, flexibility in leading was needed, but that flexibility was available. This study aimed to understand the leadership principles necessary to provide leaders with the needed flexibility to adapt to extreme circumstances. As the world experienced a global pandemic, virtual work became a reality in all aspects of daily life including education. K-12 Christian schools needed to make changes quickly to adapt to the stringent contingencies. Leadership flexibility was needed to direct those changes. Leadership flexibility strategies can be utilized to manage a team in today's crisis environment. K-12 Christian learning institutions in Florida were not allowed the needed flexibility to work as usual (Florida Department of Education, 2020). Many K-12 Christian schools were unprepared for the sudden lockdowns and remote working conditions. The purpose of the literature review was to examine if leadership flexibility was available in K-12 Christian educational institutions to address the disruption. It is possible to become a flexible leader during a crisis. It seems that even though there are physical barriers being created by the different measures in place to

mitigate the spread of disease, the virtual environment can help bridge the gap between a team and its leader. A leader can work and overcome those barriers and use flexibility even in the virtual environment to reach the individuals working in a team.

Theological

In order to create leadership flexibility, an understanding of transformational leadership principles as found in the doctrine of the incarnation provides evidence of true flexible leadership for humankind. God became human to be present with His creation. By assuming the human nature, God was able to establish a program that would have Jesus as the mentor to the disciples in the art of being a leader. The Bible presents and documents the revealed God as a model of transformational leadership in Jesus. Ruffner and Huizing (2016) have stated that, “Leadership, from a biblical perspective makes us realize that the very essence of God’s being creates the rationale for all human behavior and enterprise” (p. 39). As God revealed Himself through Jesus, He was able to show humankind His essence and character. Any individual who aspires to become a leader must understand and acquire the leadership traits of Jesus to become a flexible transformational leader.

God’s purpose has always been since before the creation to bring humankind into a relationship with Him. Through the transformational leadership model of Jesus, God has revealed His purpose for humankind as leaders in His kingdom. The divine plan has always been to prepare humankind to be leaders. Patterson (2016) argues that all believers have been called to lead others to Christ (p. 81). Patterson further expresses the inclusion of the leadership dimension in the creation narrative found in Genesis 1 (p. 82). Hence, since the beginning God has demonstrated His leadership as creator of the universe.

The New Testament is key to showing the leadership of Jesus through the lives of His disciples. The relationship between Jesus and the disciples is one of servant-master. Those who

are to become leaders need to assume the role of servants to accomplish the task assigned to them. In other words, be servants to all. The principles that guide a transformational leader are found in the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Gorringer, 2011). The words found in John 13 and Mark 8 present a revealed God whose purpose for humankind is to become leaders who help transform the lives of those who need to be led to the Father. The leader emulates the life of Jesus Christ in service to God and others.

Theoretical

Transformational leadership is one of the most effective and flexible styles of leadership in today's educational setting. For Bush (2018), transformational leadership is a powerful way to influence the process utilized by "leaders who persuade followers to adopt certain behaviors in order to bring about what the leader considers as beneficial change" (p. 883). In other words, it provides flexibility. Bush argues that one of the main aspects for a leader is "the vision" that followers need to be part of, for them to do what is best for the organization and commit themselves to work to achieve that 'vision' (p. 883). Transformational leadership requires team members to acknowledge and pursue the leader's influential guidance to help achieve the organization's goals. Leadership needs to be developed to achieve goals in all aspects of education and business. Momeny and Gourgues (2019) argue that transformational leadership is meaningful leadership.

Flexible transformational leadership is needed now more than ever. For many scholars, the challenges that a global crisis brings to Christianity and Christian educational institutions are evident. The lack of face-to-face interaction is a major challenge that Christian leaders face. Lowe's (2018) remarks regarding humankind as part of a system of ecological interconnections to God, provides an understanding to the role of the virtual transformational leader. There are no time or space boundaries that can constrain the work of the Holy Spirit in us (p. 35). The

objective is clear, to inspire and guide others in the transformation of their mind through overcoming the challenges that the virtual work environment presents.

Thematic

Tosas (2016) makes an interesting argument in favor of educational leadership as an autonomous discipline whose goals and strategies should not mirror those of typical business and political leadership. Tosas engages three different points of view to support the argument for educational leadership as an autonomous discipline beginning with Arendt. Tosas points out that Arendt argued that education should not be reduced to just being an instrument at the service of the reinforcement of a given social and economic system. Using Agamben's ontology of impotentiality, Tosas argues that education becomes an instrument which desubjectifies the learner by making him/her develop their potential instead of dwelling in impotentiality. This idea goes against what education stands for.

Tosas (2016) argued that Bauman on the other hand is a staunch proponent of reaching the potential that everyone has instead of suspending it. For Tosas, this "is the *raison d'être* of educational leadership." This means that a leader should reach his or her potential by embracing a transformational style of leading unique to the perspective of education. Leaders are agents of change. They can shape the events that surround the transformation of individuals (Koppula, 2018). Mencil et al. (2016) provide valuable insight into the thought that "human and managerial skills have long been recognized as important attributes of leaders at every level of an organization" (p. 635). The literature regarding transformational leadership sees this style of leadership as a predictor of a series of outcomes like employee attitude and performance that guide the process of transformation in team members and affords the necessary flexibility to overcome any crisis or challenge.

According to the literature, the challenges faced by leadership teams are causing a revolution in education (Hulme et al., 2016; Tosas, 2016). The 21st century has brought with it a new pandemic of epic proportions. All work has shifted to the online environment to reduce risk and comply with government issued guidance regarding the mitigation of the effects of this new global health threat. These are uncertain times that require flexibility to adapt to the extreme circumstances brought about by the pandemic. Today, leaders need to remain optimistic and engage their teams to work efficiently for the benefit of humankind. As the United States education system faced these challenges, leaders needed to transform the mindset of teams tasked with the adaptation of face-to-face interactions as they shift to the virtual environment (Hulme et al., 2016).

Flexible transformational leaders are not afraid to ask tough questions that pose a challenge to the established way of thinking. As a leader Jesus asked these kinds of questions, one such event occurs on a Sabbath as Jesus confronts the religious elite for their strict ideas. Jesus states “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore, the Son of man is also Lord of the sabbath” (NKJV, 1996, Mark 2:27-28). Questions like this need to be asked, and leaders must never be afraid of asking such questions. Transformational leaders can transcend physical barriers and crisis. Transformational leaders can overcome any of the challenges brought about by a crisis. Through the understanding of a theological, theoretical, and thematic framework, the problem of working remotely seems to be the new normal. The conditions that the COVID-19 pandemic unleashed on a global scale may seem insurmountable for leaders. However, leaders who follow the transformational style modeled by Jesus Christ can be the individuals needed to overcome the current challenges. These challenges are causing a

revolution in education and provide leadership with the opportunity to become more flexible to overcome a crisis.

Statement of the Problem

K-12 Christian schools in the Southeastern State of Florida have undergone changes due to the current global health crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic challenged the way traditional leaders collaborate with a team through the virtual environment. The literature reviewed has proven insufficient to address the needed flexibility that the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic experienced within many organizations. Although some current research (Lowe & Lowe, 2018) encourages the formation of online communities, the pandemic has challenged educational institutions and forced many to close and/or limit in-person interactions leaving leaders with little to no flexibility to collaborate with their teams. Christian educational institutions need transformational leaders who can have flexibility to lead their teams to adapt to the virtual work environment and successfully accomplish the organization's goals. The unexpected way in which many institutions were suddenly thrown into virtual work mode challenged leadership at all levels.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to understand the relationship between the advent of a global crisis and the educational leadership adaptations based on flexibility necessary for virtual work in K-12 Christian educational institutions of the Southeastern State of Florida. For this research, the virtual workplace was defined as not located in any one physical space, but several locations interconnected through technology without regards to geographic boundaries. This research suggested that transformational leadership theory provides leaders with the necessary flexibility to lead a team to overcome a crisis. This

theory was developed by Burns (1978), and it is defined as, “leaders and followers raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (p. 20). This theory was utilized to examine the possible relationship between the advent of a crisis and the use of transformational behavior principles to develop the necessary adaptations/flexibility to effectively lead in the virtual work environment.

Research Questions

The following Research Questions guide this study:

RQ1. What type of resources were available to leaders of K-12 Florida Christian learning institutions to become more flexible during a crisis?

RQ2. What type of knowledge (training) did leaders of K-12 Christian learning institutions have to make them more flexible during a crisis?

RQ3. What Christian principles played a role in the development of a strategy that increased flexibility by leaders in K-12 Christian learning institutions during the COVID-19 crisis?

RQ4. What, if any, are the measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic?

Assumptions and Delimitations

It is important to note that this correlational study was limited to K-12 Christian educational institutions in the State of Florida with an enrollment of three hundred or more students. While a classification system exists to delineate the differences of schools with greater or smaller number than three hundred, the three hundred threshold represents the minimum number of criteria necessary to identify a school as being large enough for the proposed study.

Research Assumptions

There were physical barriers being created by the different measures in place to mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus. However, the virtual environment is bringing down the physical barriers between a team and its leader.

Delimitations of the Research Design

This research was delimited to a population of senior educational leaders within K-12 Christian educational institutions in the State of Florida that have an enrollment of more than three hundred students. It did not include educational leaders of institutions with less than three hundred students. This research was also delimited to include school administrators who have been at academic institutions for over one year or more. The study was further delimited to include administrative managers. The study did not include school leaders who were at the helm of K-12 non-Christian educational institutions.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to provide a better understanding of leadership concepts.

1. *Leadership*: the process of moving people in a planned direction by motivating them to act through non compulsive means (Jubran, 2015).
2. *Transformational leadership*: process that induces a sense of belonging to a collective and makes followers collective identity more salient (Kim & Vandenberghe, 2018).
3. *Florida Association of Christian Schools*: organization that encompasses Christian educational institutions in the State of Florida.

Significance of the Study

This research study sought to add to the body of knowledge by providing guidance and understanding to the importance of leadership flexibility during a time of crisis. The study sought to improve working conditions for leadership teams during challenging times. As mentioned earlier in the background section, Bush (2018) argues that transformational leadership is a powerful way to influence the process utilized by “leaders persuade followers to adopt certain behaviors in order to bring about what the leader considers as beneficial change” (p. 883). In other words, transformational leaders have the flexibility to adapt to any circumstance.

Transformational leaders play a positive role in their organizations as agents of change. Educational ministry leadership requires a transformational approach to be an effective way to guide individuals to become Christ like. One of the most important aspects of transformational leadership is the perception that the leader is an agent of change or causal agent.

Summary of the Design

The sample of this current research was taken from the full population of educational leaders from K-12 Florida Christian schools with an average enrollment of three hundred or more students. To qualify, educational institutions needed to currently employ a headmaster or principal at the time the research is conducted. This research used two instruments. The first instrument was a leadership style inventory survey. This instrument was used to determine the most common leadership style by headmasters or principals. The second instrument was a personal adaptation profile survey. This instrument was used to determine the most common adaptations to develop flexibility by these educational leaders in the context of a crisis.

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to understand the relationship between the advent of a crisis and the educational leadership strategies necessary to become more flexible considering the state of crisis in Florida K-12 Christian educational institutions at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was designed to provide basic research information on educational leadership, leadership flexibility, and the adaptations of leaders in times of crisis. This current research sought to bring clarity on best practices in educational leadership during a crisis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The research conducted sought to fill the gap between traditional educational leadership and transformational leadership development in times of crisis. This researcher followed and explored the thought that leaders could become agents of transformation regardless of the circumstances faced to gain understanding into how transformational leadership can be successfully applied to the virtual work environment during a crisis. This research was guided by transformational leadership theory, developed by Burns (1978), and defined as, “leaders and followers raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (p. 20).

This correlational study of educational leadership during a crisis sought to understand leadership flexibility strategies that may be developed as a response to a crisis. In today’s world, technology is at the forefront of education. Many institutions of learning turned to online or virtual academic coursework to comply with 21st century educational challenges under the conditions brought about by the pandemic. The advent of a global health crisis that brought life to a pause as we know it, has made face-to-face education limited if not impossible, to reduce disease transmission risk. K-12 Christian educational institutions were no exception to this new normal which tested the resolve of academic leadership as it navigates through the rough waters of a global health crisis. This research literature review sought to fill the gap in the literature between traditional educational leadership methodologies and the development of a transformational leadership model that can be utilized in times of a global crisis or disaster. This chapter provides an ample though not exhaustive review of the existing literature to frame the study in the theological, theoretical, and practical aspects of crisis leadership and management.

Theological Framework for the Study

A theological framework provides an understanding of transformational leadership principles as found in the doctrine of the incarnation and can provide the evidence of true flexible leadership for humankind. The study of God is known as theology (Elwell, 2001). To understand God, one must first look at the Holy Scriptures to seek His revelation. To properly form a theological framework of leadership this researcher has sought to understand God's teachings regarding biblical leadership as the right model to apply to K-12 Christian educational leadership. This theological section of the literature review has four subsections. The first subsection describes a Theology of Christian Educational Leadership. The second subsection describes a Theology of Biblical Leadership. The third subsection describes a Theology of Servant Leadership. The fourth subsection describes a Theology of Educational Leadership in Times of Crisis. Each of these subsections were instrumental in the development of a proper theological model that forms and informs the topic of this quantitative study: namely, the relationship between K-12 Christian educational leadership and the development of transformational leadership behavior and adaptations during a global crisis.

Christian Educational Leadership

Anthony (2001) argues that the relationship between traditional educational leadership and the use of transformational behavior in servant leadership is presented within the pages of the Bible. There were no verses, chapter, or book of the Bible that dealt with a leader's management style. However, the wisdom found in the pages of the Bible provided an indirect indication of God's views on leadership and the transformational behaviors that apply to educational leadership.

Anthony further argues that Christian education is the attempt to understand the divinely ordained process by which individuals grow in Christlikeness and be able to work with that process (p. 35). The previous statement allows the reader to know and understand that God has provided humankind with a set of instructions regarding all aspects of life. The revelation of God's plan is written and uniquely inspired. In his letter to Timothy, Paul reminds us that God's Word is authoritative and inerrant (p. 35). The teachings of Jesus were authoritative and encouraged people to think. He lived what He taught to others and loved those He taught (p. 114). Paul's leadership style is patterned after the leadership of Jesus Christ. Jesus used a methodology of teaching and mentoring that is closely followed by Paul with his disciple Timothy and other church leaders. The teaching and learning process in K-12 Christian educational institutions should follow the biblical model of Jesus's teaching and leadership style. K-12 Christian education can be enhanced using leadership characteristics found within the pages of the Scriptures.

Edie (2012) argues that Christian educational leadership requires the vision of *pastoral* imagination (p. 12). This type of imaginative sense requires interpretive and reflective work to empower those individuals under the leadership of the administrator (p. 12). Christian educators are claimed, called, and sent by the triune God for love of God and neighbor. The Christian educational leader is gifted with the abilities to influence others in a positive manner. These gifts are to be offered back to the body of Christ including Christian educational institutions where educational leaders become servants (p. 13).

Biblical Leadership

Cooper (2005) states that biblical leadership can be thought of in terms of a "transactional-transformational paradigm" (p. 49). As mentioned in the introduction to the

theological framework, theology is the study of God, and in terms of this literature review it resulted in the researcher looking to understand a theology that examined and applied principles of leadership to K-12 Christian schools. To that end, several authors were reviewed to develop this theological model of transformational leadership during a global crisis.

Servant leaders are transformational and provide people with the uplifting motivation to overcome self-interest (p. 50). The apostle Paul emulated the life of Christ by being a servant leader. He exemplified the Christian life as he continuously strived to follow Jesus Christ's model of servant leadership and becoming a visionary in the process (p. 52). Paul's leadership style consisted of empowering those individuals under his influence (p. 53).

Christian leadership assumes a relational process in pursuit of a common purpose (Patterson, 2017). It is a process which, while expecting obedience to Jesus' commands, is devoid of coercive structures that require accomplishment (p. 82). Patterson (2017) believes that when one is obedient in the absence of coercion it presupposes that there is an intrinsic motivation – love. In today's organizational context the power of the relational process is absent. It is worth noting that Christian leaders begin by loving those whom they lead. While this may be a bit strange by social standards, it is nonetheless the most consistent leadership behavior model to be proposed (p. 82).

Thomas (2018) states that, biblical leadership is taking the initiative to influence people to grow in holiness and to passionately promote the extension of God's kingdom in the world (p. 108). The indispensable mark of Christian leadership is the combined effort of action and agenda with the purpose to intentionally influence others (p. 108). Jesus initiates this model of Christian leadership, through a process of transforming the individual to transform the world by being a mentor to a disciple (NKJV, 1996, Mark 3:13-19). The biblical pattern of leadership utilized by

Jesus consisted of appointing an individual by using an “*inverted pattern of leadership*” where He would select people who had character flaws and no trajectory or experience (p. 111).

This section explored the theological qualifications of a leader in terms of K-12 Christian educational leadership. The literature suggested that a strong knowledge of theology is fundamental for leading a group during a crisis. This section of the review led to the next section, which developed a theological model for servant leadership. It is conceptually appropriate to examine biblical leadership to build a theology of educational leadership as a solid foundation for the literature review. Several authors were reviewed for their views of servant leadership, one that stood out from the rest is Coulter. This author dealt with servant leadership in a way that was particularly relevant to this study.

Jesus is the embodiment of servant leadership as He stated that “I came to serve and not be served” (NKJV, 1996, Matthew 20:28). For Coulter (2003), this style of leadership involved laying aside anything that would be associated with prestige or the worldly idea of success and control. He contends that “in order to lead we must walk in submission” (p. 26). Jesus demonstrated submission to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane prior to his arrest, trial, and crucifixion as He confessed “not my will, but yours be done” (NKJV, 1996, Luke 22:42).

One of the most important aspects of transformational leadership is found in the doctrine of the incarnation. This is the theological model to be utilized to build a proper model of true leadership for humankind. God became human to be present with His creation. By assuming the human nature, God was able to establish a program that would have Jesus as a mentor to the disciples in the art of being a leader. The Bible presents and documents the revealed God as a model of transformational leadership in Jesus. Ruffner and Huizing (2016) stated that “Leadership, from a biblical perspective makes us realize that the very essence of God’s being

creates the rationale for all human behavior and enterprise” (p. 39). As God revealed Himself through Jesus, He was able to show humankind His essence and character. Any individual who aspires to become a leader must understand and acquire the leadership traits of Jesus to become a transformational leader.

God’s purpose has always been since before the creation to bring humankind into a relationship with Him. Through the transformational leadership model of Jesus, God has revealed His purpose for humankind as leaders in His kingdom. The divine plan has always been to prepare humankind to be leaders. Patterson (2016) argues that all believers have been called to lead others to Christ (p. 81). Patterson states that, God expresses the inclusion of the leadership dimension in the creation narrative found in Genesis (p. 82). Hence, since the beginning God has demonstrated His leadership as creator of the universe.

The New Testament is key to showing the leadership of Jesus through the lives of His disciples. The relationship between Jesus and the disciples is one of servant-master. Those who are to become leaders need to assume the role of servants to accomplish the task assigned to them. In other words, be servants to all. The principles that guide a transformational leader are found in the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Gorringe, 2011). The words found in John 13 and Mark 8 present a revealed God whose purpose for humankind is to become leaders who help transform the lives of those who need to be led to the Father. The leader emulates the life of Jesus Christ in service to God and others.

K-12 Christian educational organizations across the United States and much of the world experienced strong challenges and aggressive competition during the pandemic. The challenge of globalization and technological advancements are present now more than ever for Christian educational leadership, in particular servant leaders. Aboramadan (2020) states that, “servant

leadership is a value driven leadership style that was populated by Greenleaf as a lifelong journey and a managerial instrument through which leaders express their will to serve” (p. 618). Servant leadership could explain the variance in outcome variables when compared to transformational, authentic, and ethical leadership styles (p. 618).

Servant leadership focuses more on the aspirational and motivational aspects that recognize a follower’s need for psychological support and belonging to help mitigate the challenges in the modern workplace (p. 618). This theological construct provided this researcher with a way to properly ask questions with the survey instruments used for the study to probe the relationship between leadership behavior and the advent of a crisis among these K-12 Christian educational institutions.

Educational Leadership in Times of Crisis

Constructing a theology of educational leadership during times of crisis required an examination of the questions asked by this researcher and the answers provided by the literature. This was an essential part of the process to pursue a proper theology of leadership as part of the investigation to examine transformational leadership as a relevant style of management in K-12 Christian educational institutions. Urick et al. (2021) argue that the current generation of school leaders has endured countless crisis ranging from school shootings, hurricanes, social unrest, and a pandemic (p. 1). With a global health crisis in their hands many school administrators scrambled to transition from face-to-face education to virtual learning platforms. The shift from the traditional model of education to the “new normal” took everyone by surprise. K-12 Christian educational institutions have also had to contend with this public health crisis and use crisis management strategies to become resilient and adapt to the new normal of learning and work.

The main challenge of effective leadership during a crisis is preparing and training leaders for unknown and harmful circumstances (p. 3). One of the questions that has been asked by Christian educational leaders facing this crisis is related to the theological aspects of the current pandemic. Why did God allowed a virus to take over the world and disrupt life as we knew it? Where is God? Such questions require an in depth thought about the promises of God for His creation.

Christ promised to be with us always, especially during times of crisis. During turbulent times, leadership must rise above the crisis to guide others through the rough patches ahead. Knowing the special revelation of God's Word allows us to understand His plans for humankind. The current health crisis could be seen as an opportunity for people to reconnect to God, reconnect to one another, and care for one another in a manner not seen by the world in recent times. Henderson (2021) believes that Christian educational leaders must also understand that God is implicated in human history (p. 6). The divine metanarrative affirms to Christian educational leaders that "God exists and is personal-relational," and that "He is intentional and provides us with a basis for meaning and understanding" (p. 8).

During the pandemic of COVID-19 no lives remained untouched. Song (2020) asks a particularly important question that deserves attention and poses a further challenge for leaders. Is it possible for leaders to serve-first while battling for the survival of their organizations or themselves during this pandemic? (p. 81). Christian educational institutions had been in turmoil as they had been thrown into the virtual learning environment without much preparation. Servant leaders must encourage everyone in their organizations to practice empathy and patience (p. 87). "Ninety percent of servant leadership is about the personal growth and development of people

who choose to serve first, and then lead” (p. 88). The effective leader will seek new opportunities to guide and influence people based on the intentionality of God towards humankind.

Summary of Theological Framework

The literature addresses a theological basis for transformational leadership with flexibility but does not address how Christian leaders can utilize this information during a global pandemic. Christian educational leaders must use a theological framework of leadership for their daily interactions with others as servant leaders in the image of Christ. To be competent, leaders must display the wisdom and the glory of God to the world. Christians have been endowed with the image of God and as such their character flows out of biblical convictions and beliefs. As such, leaders must also be aware that God is implicated in human history and will always be there for humankind. Leaders must also become servant leaders. The example provided by Jesus Christ who came to serve humankind is fundamental to become a transformational leader. The next section provides a review of the theories that are to be applied in times of crisis to form a proper leadership framework.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

According to the literature a theoretical framework provides an understanding of the different theories of leadership to apply these theories to educational leadership during times of crisis. Dorfman et al. (2012) effectively argue that leadership matters greatly. Leadership also matters when managing a team, organization, or country (Antonakis & House, 2014). Actions from leaders, good or bad, have the potential of impacting our daily lives (Eberly et al., 2013). Leadership impacts not only the individual follower but also teams/groups, departments, and whole organizations (Hiller et al., 2011). Litz and Scott (2017) believe that effective leaders

influence shared beliefs and values to create a complete and comprehensive level of change (p. 569).

This theoretical section of the literature review had three subsections. The first subsection described Crisis Leadership Theory. The second subsection described Transformational Leadership Theory. The third subsection described Transformational Leadership in Extreme Contexts. Each of these subsections were instrumental in the development of a proper theoretical model that formed and informed the topic of this study, the relationship between K-12 Christian educational leadership and the development of transformational leadership behavior and adaptations during a global crisis.

Crisis Leadership

The coronavirus crisis experienced since March of 2020 was unprecedented. While there have been plagues and other diseases throughout human history, none has been more virulent or impacted the world on so many levels ranging from the economy to society (Tourish, 2020, p. 262). The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many facets of people's lives and has necessitated profound changes in the way work is done (Caringal-Go et al., 2021, p. 1). The scale of this crisis means that political leaders, healthcare leaders, and Christian educational leaders are being tested and must adapt to the new normal. This means that the coronavirus crisis is also a crisis of leadership (Tourish, p. 262). Tourish suggests that this is also a crisis of leadership practice. The questions that Tourish posed in his article pertained to the performance of decision makers, the leadership systems in place, and if the relationships and dynamics used are producing results. Another question that this study seeks to answer can be related to the leadership theories employed to understand what is happening. To what extent can one point to the approaches that leaders should adopt to get positive outcomes? (Tourish, p. 262).

During times of crisis, the role of a leader and the impact of his or her decisions and actions tends to be magnified. Wooten and James (2020) assert that, “leaders have a critical responsibility of finding resolutions to a crisis while also considering the financial stability and image of the organization, as well as the morale and welfare of their employees” (p. 355). Leadership is an integral element of effective crisis management (Bhaduri, 2019). One can argue that the practice of leadership goes beyond the activities that must be accomplished during a time of crisis. Wooten and James (2020) have linked crisis management to leadership by identifying competencies for leaders at different stages of crisis situations.

According to the study realized by these scholars, key competencies during a containment and damage control phase include decision-making under pressure, effective communication, and risk taking. Another aspect of leadership practice, emotional intelligence, appears as essential for crisis leaders (Lockwood, 2005). The integration of this trait and the ensuing behavior it contains can be understood as leadership. It is also important to recognize and understand the context in which a crisis happens. One must also remember that there is a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between subordinates and superiors that involves leader behaviors and the resulting outcomes (Lord et al., 1999). Studies have shown that transformational leadership styles are perceived as more effective by followers and may have more positive effects on their affect and performance (Bligh et al., 2004; Sommer et al., 2016). However, according to Owen (2020), leaders have the potential to digress to counterproductive capacity during times of crisis and high stress (p. 505).

Owen (2020) further argues that overcoming obstacles takes mental discipline and resilience; a leader should ask for input from the people they lead so they understand the risks and appropriate decisions can then be made. Effective leadership shapes the initial crisis reaction

to maximize their teams' potential to have a productive outcome long after a crisis ends, while being able to maintain a state of readiness for the next one (p. 505).

During the COVID pandemic leaders needed to define their current situation and reality, both within their organization and externally (Keen et al., 2020, p. 503). There are several key components that must be enacted to succeed as a leader during a crisis. A compact list of these components can definitely help the organizational leader engage the best practices necessary to achieve his or her objectives during a crisis. By achieving situational awareness leaders can make informed decisions and communicate effectively. During a crisis, even those organizations with highly effective teams know that their normal processes and practice of conducting business cannot meet the demands of the current situation and new reality. To succeed they must adapt before quickly making critical decisions (p. 504).

Transformational Leadership

The relationship between the advent of a global crisis or disaster and leadership adaptations like transformational leadership style was paramount to this research study. The literature reviewed provided an understanding of transformational leadership as one of the most effective and popular styles of leadership in today's business and educational setting in times of crisis. Transformational leadership theory is one of the newer leadership paradigms. Founded by Burns (1978), it is defined as "leaders and followers raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (p. 20). It is perceived as a process in which leaders transform an organization. Transformational leadership is part of the essential process of transformation and change involving the individuals and organizations through long term goals. Burns believed that real leadership achieved the goals and transformed people for the better all at the same time.

Chow (2017) agrees with Burns in that this is a way to increase the achievement and motivation of their followers (p. 150).

Bush (2018) states that transformational leadership is a powerful way to influence the process utilized by “leaders to persuade followers to adopt certain behaviors in order to bring about what the leader considers as beneficial change” (p. 883). One of the main aspects for a leader is “the vision” that followers need to be part of for them to do what is best for the organization and commit themselves to work to achieve that ‘vision’ (p.883). Transformational leadership requires team members to acknowledge and pursue the leader’s influential guidance to help achieve the organization’s goals. Leadership needs to be developed to achieve goals in all aspects of education and business. Momeny and Gourgues (2019) believe that transformational leadership is meaningful leadership.

Virtual transformational leadership was needed now more than ever. For many scholars, the challenges that the global COVID-19 crisis brought to Christian leaders and Christian educational institutions were evident. Among the challenges found the lack of face-to-face interaction stood out. However, Stephen Lowe argues that humankind is part of a system of ecological interconnections to God, which provides an understanding to the role of the virtual transformational leader. There are no time or space boundaries that can constrain the work of the Holy Spirit in us (Lowe & Lowe, 2018). The objective is clear, to inspire and guide others in the transformation of their mind to overcome the challenges of the virtual work environment during a crisis.

Management and human skills like emotional control and emotional sensitivity contribute to transformational leadership in those individuals who assume upper-level management positions. Mencl et al. (2016), argue that interpersonal skills are applicable to all levels of

management and benefit the firms that employ them (p. 636). Emotional intelligence and effective leadership begin with self-control of all emotions involved in high level decision making. An individual's emotions may influence their actions as they guide a team of individuals to achieve an organization's goals. Today emotional intelligence applications can be found in all fields of study, and there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and credibility. Credibility is an essential attribute of transformational leadership. Williams's model (2018) demonstrates that transformational leadership results in more commitment and effort, and the unification of the team around the organization's mission (p. 513).

One of the vital adaptations that transformational leaders can utilize during a time of crisis is Emotional Intelligence (EI). The significance of emotional intelligence skills is well established (Lam & O'Higgins, 2012; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005). Gorgens-Ekermans and Roux (2021) have proposed that leadership is an emotional process. Researchers have explored the relationship between a leader's emotional intelligence and effective leadership. Leaders who are more emotionally intelligent are more committed and more successful in the workplace. Any leader who understands and is capable of effectively managing his or her own emotions, and who exhibits self-control, is more than likely to be perceived as a role model by his or her followers, developing their trust and respect for their leader (Barling et al., 2000). Leaders who can effectively manage their emotions are more than likely to manage their relationships with subordinates well through the effective communication of values and standards, creating a shared sense of purpose (Gorgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021). Positive outcomes from followers provide an indication of effective transformational leadership.

Chen and Guo (2020) believe that the capacity to manage the emotional side of leadership undoubtedly becomes a challenge during times of rapid change. The world has

experienced such rapid change with the COVID-19 pandemic. Instructional leaders have not been exempted from the changes that have occurred during these challenging times. Emotional Intelligence (EI) considers a person's ability to perceive, understand, reason with, and manage emotions. Mansel (2017) argues that self-awareness is at the heart of EI and enables a person to discern, describe and understand their feelings, creating a guide for their behavior. Social awareness and relationship management provide a solid foundation on which to develop leadership skills.

The literature is consistent with its assessment of the concept of emotional competence and its impact on the quality of leaders. Wang (2016) shows that research demonstrates that emotional awareness is an essential component to transformational change and leadership effectiveness. The author states that, "Emotional competence involves the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (p. 468). Wang believes that emotional competence is the basis for transformational leadership and plays a significant role in human performance. Leaders can influence the process by mobilizing followers towards reform by appealing to values and emotions that transcend the basic needs of the individual (p. 469).

Another aspect of emotional competence related to transformational leadership is mindfulness. Carleton et al. (2018) believe that social learning theories have allowed researchers to hypothesize that a leader's mindfulness trait is related to transformational leadership in an indirect way, having a positive effect in the relationship between mindfulness and transformational thought. Carleton et al. further suggest that "as mindfulness reflects an open, receptive, and nonjudgmental attention and awareness of one's current experience and reality, it likely enables leaders to enact transformational leadership behaviors" (p. 186). The research

suggests that mindfulness is a beneficial trait of those individuals who are moving their followers in a positive direction within an organization. Transformational leaders are influential motivators who provide a positive environment to team members even in a virtual environment.

Transformational Leadership in Extreme Contexts

Leaders need to adapt to different situations by utilizing an array of skills available to them. Those leaders who are using a transformational style may improve their results with emotional intelligence adapted to extreme contexts. Context includes organizational characteristics, work functions, and external environmental factors like environmental risk (Antonakis et al., 2003). Buchanan and Hällgren (2019) argue that an extreme context is one where the actors perceive an existential threat. This can also be classified as a crisis. Their definition implies a crisis-as-processes perspective (p. 153). An extreme context is one in which individuals may face uncertainty, time pressure and crises and where decisions of leaders and/or organizational members have the potential for catastrophic consequences for individuals, groups, and nations (Hewitt & Luce, 2006; Hunt et al., 1999). Society expects the organizational setting to become extreme without warning as is the case with the current geopolitical, religious, ideological, or public health related emergencies like the coronavirus pandemic (Buchanan & Hällgren, p. 153).

Arnold et al. (2016) believe that transformational leadership is necessary in an extreme crisis context. Hannah (2010), observes that, “leadership in dangerous contexts is where effective leadership is indeed needed most” (p. 181). The situation being experienced worldwide due to the COVID-19 health crisis is one of those extreme contexts. Scholars argue that leadership is a collective effort (Buchanan et al., 2007; Denis et al., 2012; Gronn, 2011). In extreme contexts, Fraher (2011) believes that a high performing team allows the most qualified individual to

emerge and lead as required by operational scenarios (p. 179-180). Leadership effectiveness is enhanced by shared mental models, leader creativity, emotional management, and a cohesive team environment with a successful performance (Campbell et al., 2010). Bass (2003) and Hannah (2009) argue that adaptive leaders lead more effectively in a rapidly changing environment due to their ability to select an appropriate response to a challenge (p. 235). Thus, leadership is not static, there is no specific leadership style that suits all situations or contexts. In other words, adaptive leaders are effective leaders in any situation (p. 235).

There are four components that contribute to being seen as a transformational leader. First, idealized influence refers to a leader who does the right thing and is a role model for followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Second, an individual who is inspirationally motivating can communicate the vision of the organization to others. Third, leaders who utilize an intellectual stimulation component encourage followers to think “outside the box” to find solutions to a problem. Lastly, a leader spends time coaching and developing followers (Avolio, 1999). Research confirms that people tend to go beyond for transformational leaders more than any other type of leadership style (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Summary of Theoretical Framework

The literature addresses a theoretical basis for transformational leadership with flexibility but does not address how Christian leaders can utilize this information during a global pandemic. The empirical studies included in this portion of the literature review provided evidence to ascertain that transformational leadership is an important characteristic of effective leaders. Due to the recent changes in the educational landscape of the United States and much of the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic, transformational leadership skills were essential to the operation of many institutions including Christian churches and schools. Face-to-face

interactions were no longer possible at that moment and for the near future. Educational institutions, public or private, secular, or Christian are now challenged to migrate to the virtual environment for instructional activities.

Thematically Related Literature

According to the literature a thematic framework provides an understanding and a critical review of the various subtopics that are related and relevant to the subject matter of this research, the relationship between K-12 Christian educational leadership and the development of transformational leadership behavior and adaptations (flexibility) during a global crisis. The organization of this part includes an in-depth review of the researcher's survey of relevant aspects of the study that framed and informed the research. This part of the literature review was divided into four sections as follows: 1) Educational Leadership Literature, 2) K-12 Christian School Leadership Literature, 3) K-12 Christian School Leadership Style Literature, and 4) Educational Leadership During a Crisis Literature.

Educational Leadership Literature

In this section the researcher reviewed literature from scholars in the field that contributed to the current and contemporary of the field of Christian educational leadership. This section was subdivided in two subsections: 1) Foundations of K-12 Christian School Leadership, 2) The Principal's Role in K-12 Christian School Leadership.

Foundations of K-12 Christian School Leadership. In this subsection the researcher examined prior research about how leadership style is foundational for a Christian school's success. One of the representative selections reviewed was written by Pennings, Seel, Neven Van Pelt, Sikkink, and Wiens (2011). It addressed the qualities of instructional leadership among principals in successful Christian Schools. According to the authors, "Without attention paid to the academic

program ... a Christian school is nothing more than a tuition-based youth group” (p. 157). Martin (2018) believes that the 21st century has brought greater accountability for increasing student and teacher performance in public education. Christian private schools are not exempt from the fact that as part of the educational system they need to adhere to the same performance standards that are part of the public educational system. However, as Martin points out, “private schools are not required to adopt national or state standards for hiring and developing principals” (p. 158). Harrison and Allen (2015) established the need to study instructional leadership in private Christian schools. They reported that although principals were responsible for instructional decisions, they did not consider themselves *instructional leaders*.

Tosas (2016) makes an interesting argument in favor of educational leadership as an autonomous discipline whose goals and strategies should not mirror those of typical business and political leadership. Tosas engages three different points of view to support the argument for educational leadership as an autonomous discipline beginning with Arendt. Tosas points out that Arendt argued that education should not be reduced to just being an instrument at the service of the reinforcement of a given social and economic system. Using Agamben’s ontology of impotentiality, Tosas argues that education becomes an instrument which desubjectifies the learner by making him/her develop their potential instead of dwelling in impotentiality. In this researcher’s humble opinion this idea goes against what education stands for.

The current challenges faced by leadership teams are causing a revolution in education. The 21st century has brought with it a new pandemic of epic proportions. All work shifted to the virtual environment to reduce transmission risk and comply with government issued guidance to mitigate the effects of this new global health threat. These were uncertain times that required adaptation and an innovative approach to leading. Today, leaders need to remain optimistic and

engage their teams to work efficiently for the benefit of humankind. As the United States education system faced these challenges, leaders needed to transform the mindset of teams tasked with the adaptation of traditional face-to-face interactions shifting to the virtual environment (Hulme et al., 2016).

A transformational leader is not afraid to ask the tough questions that pose a challenge to the established way of thinking. As a transformational leader Jesus asked these types of questions. Matthew recounts one such event as Christ was on the cross. The Lord asked the Father, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (NKJV, 1996, Matthew 27:46). Questions like this need to be asked, leaders must never be afraid of asking the tough questions for which there may not be an immediate answer. Transformational leaders can transcend the barriers brought about by any crisis. They can overcome the challenges brought about by a crisis by creating a positive work environment and motivating their followers. Working remotely was the new normal for 2020, the conditions that the COVID-19 pandemic unleashed on a global scale may have seemed insurmountable. However, leaders who followed the transformational style modeled by Jesus Christ were those individuals needed to overcome the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, for the glory of God.

The Principal’s Role in K-12 Christian School Leadership. The early 1980’s saw scholars like Hallinger (2003) question a principal’s ability to impact instruction due to the multifaceted nature of the principal’s role. Principals who focused on instructional leadership would be responsible for defining and carrying out the school’s mission and managing the curriculum while creating a positive learning environment become more than building managers (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). The foundational premise of the *instructional leadership* framework focuses on the principal’s role of “supporting teachers in professional development, providing curriculum

direction, keeping teachers on mission, and at times even modeling instruction” (Martin, 2015, p. 159).

One of the aspects found through the review of the literature was that a school principal may not exhibit any one type of leadership style. For Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), leaders transform followers through the increased awareness of the importance of their work. One key difference noted from their argument is that instructional leaders focus on school goals whereas purely administrative leaders focus on the handling of the day-to-day operations of the school. Transformational leaders on the other hand will focus on the restructuring of the school by improving its conditions and casting a vision for the future (Martin, 2015). It was found that both instructional and transformational leadership affect student achievement and faculty staff performance (Robinson et al., 2008).

The principal of the K-12 Christian School should then become a servant leader to those within the school community. Greenleaf (1977) explained that a servant leader is motivated to serve others. In Christian teaching, the greatest example of a servant leader is Jesus Christ who taught His disciples that He did not come to be served, but to serve (NKJV, 1996, Matthew 20:28). Servant leaders are often self-denying, allowing others to be seen as prominent before themselves, and provide resources and support without an expectation of acknowledgement (Black, 2010). Martin (2015) agrees that instructional leaders who exhibit a transformational leadership approach encompass the qualities that lead to student and staff success (p. 163). Leaders empower others and foster a collaborative community effort (Marks & Printy, 2003). As school leaders, the principals’ role as a servant leader is foundational for the success of the school community as an agent of change through transformation.

K-12 Christian School Leadership Literature

This section reviewed literature from scholars in the field that have contributed to the field of K-12 Christian educational leadership's decision process required to successfully lead a school community through any situation, particularly during a crisis. K-12 Christian educational institutions are now experiencing a leadership crisis due to the advent of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

School Leadership Decision

At no time in the history of education in North America and the world has there been more pressure to improve the learning conditions and achievement of students (Polka et al., 2017). Even though the public health emergency caused by the novel coronavirus was not in sight, the authors of the study provided insight on the decision-making process required to contend with emerging situations. Tarter and Hoy (1998) and Polka (2017), argue that problem solving, and decision-making approaches are most often used when dealing with extreme circumstances. These approaches provide a better understanding of the situation at hand and the workable solutions to problems like the current pandemic crisis. Begley (2006) argues that authentic leaders are those that demonstrate knowledge of the issues at stake, an ability for moral reasoning, and sensitivity to the needs of others.

For Davis et al. (2005), school leaders' decision-making process is centered on supporting students and staff achievement and transformation. This process involves developing a shared vision, assisting in the formation of teams, reaching a consensus regarding the goals that need to be achieved as well as the high standards for the work of the team (Leithwood, 2005). Successful school leaders demonstrate a sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of the students

and teachers. Decision-making school leaders will lead student achievement, staff/teacher development, and better school organizational processes (Polka et al., 2017, p. 224).

K-12 Christian School Leadership Style Literature

This section of the literature review examined the different styles of leadership encountered by researchers in the K-12 Christian school setting. The current literature on school leadership led this researcher to probe and inquire about the most common type of leadership style utilized by Christian administrators of learning institutions. While a multitude of leadership styles exist, two styles have certainly gained prominence in educational leadership research: instructional leadership and transformational leadership. This section further examined the literature regarding both leadership styles and their impact on school performance. This section was subdivided into two subsections: 1) Instructional Leadership, 2) Transformational Leadership.

Empirical studies by Robinson et al. (2008) suggest that school leadership is an important factor for creating and sustaining “*functional*” schools. Schools under the direction of competent educational leaders will affect all aspects of a school’s life, from student learning to staff development and work performance. Robinson et al. (2008) and Day (2016), argue that a “layered” approach to leadership is one of the most prevalent leadership styles in schools with a high level of student performance. According to studies reviewed for this research, successful principals used a “layered leadership” style that combines both instructional and transformational strategies and actions (p. 245). Other studies revealed an opposite position to the argument that the use of both styles (instructional and transformational) was not as effective when combined. Shatzer, Cardarella, Haram, and Brown (2014), found that instructional leadership has a slight advantage over transformational leadership.

Instructional Leadership

This type of leadership style focuses on the quality of teaching in classrooms. It “typically assumes that the critical focus for attention by leaders is the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students” (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 8). From an instructional leadership perspective, this means that the principal is responsible for the quality of the teaching and the staff. The principal is influential in all aspects of the school. Some of the common areas of instructional leadership are defining the schools’ mission, managing curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting an effective instructional climate (Krug, 1992). Thus, instructional leadership is an expectation of the principalship (Hallinger & Wang, 2015).

Instructional leadership has deep roots in American education. It has been a part of the education system since the 1960’s and a highly researched subject. When schools improved, the principal was seen as the instrumental factor for such achievements. Evidence also suggests that schools improving under challenging circumstances more than likely have a principal as the leader. The next section will provide the reader with an overview of transformational leadership in the context of educational leadership style literature.

Transformational Leadership

This type of leadership style is distinct from transactional leadership and is often complementary to instructional leadership. Transformational leadership can trace its beginnings to Burns (1978) who explained that transforming leadership “occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). Bass (2006) explained that transformational leadership “occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness

and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group” (p. 21). Both authors provide a concise and accurate overview of transformational leadership which this researcher found to be a foundation for Christian educational leadership.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) proposed that transformational leadership is composed of the following dimensions: building school vision and goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, symbolizing professional practices and values, demonstrating high performance expectations, developing structures to foster participation in school decisions, staffing, instructional support, monitoring school activities, and community focus.

Transformational leadership builds up the capacity of those leaders who motivate and influence those individuals they work with to achieve change. This is an ideal and effective style of leadership for school principals considering how to improve their schools. Change management is a strength of transformational leaders.

While some researchers have found that instructional leadership is highly effective, others have embraced a transformational approach to leadership as the most important agent of change within an organization. School leaders who utilize a transformational approach have demonstrated its effectiveness in student achievement and staff performance. It is important to note that there is still ample debate regarding the most appropriate style of leadership to use for school improvement and student success. This researcher deemed transformational leadership to be an appropriate leadership style to overcome the challenges of a crisis. The next section provided a review of the current educational leadership literature during times of crisis.

Educational Leadership during a Crisis Literature

This section examined the current literature in the field of crisis management as applied to educational leadership. Leadership is not exempt from functioning during a crisis. In educational leadership research much has been written about the subject of management under crisis situations. Instructional leadership, which can benefit from transformational leadership strategies, needs to be researched thoroughly to assess any potential gaps in the literature. This section further examined the literature regarding crisis management and transformational leaderships' impact on educational teams. This section was subdivided into three sections: 1) Transformational Leadership, 2) Inclusive Leadership, and 3) Crisis Management.

Transformational Leadership

Scheuerlein et al. (2018) agree that an acute crisis supports the emergency use of transformational leadership. One of the reasons for the use of transformational leadership during a crisis is the strong stress perceived by subordinates that leads to frustration and anxiety. It is during these times that individuals look for the guidance of a strong leader. Followers will seek and accept, even need the influence of a highly confident leader who will provide solutions to the current situation (Pillai, 1996; Shamir & Howell, 1999). These types of leaders will arise as the situation becomes chronic. During 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has challenged this type of leadership. As the pandemic became the new normal, educational institutions attempted to understand and navigate through the challenges created by this public health emergency.

Conveying a positive, collective vision of the situation and outcomes is the hallmark of transformational leaders in times of crisis. Hoffman (2011) and Lombardo (1998), believed in the possibility of transforming an otherwise stressful situation into a positive challenge that can be overcome with affirmative, emotional communication to motivate followers to accomplish a goal. The benefits of leadership are most often assumed during a time of crisis. With those

assumptions comes the burden of providing ethical leadership under stressful circumstances (Keselman & Saxe-Braithwaite, 2021).

Inclusive Leadership

With the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts had to shift from trait-based leadership strategies to contingency-based leadership strategies (Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2021). Classical definitions of crisis have been upended as the current threat forces organizations to adapt to a new environment caused by the pandemic. The prevailing threat brought about by the novel coronavirus can be overcome with effective leader behavior (p. 96). Organizational improvement (OI) can be achieved with an effective leader who utilizes inclusive behavior strategies with followers (p. 96). Servant leadership and transformational leadership are the two most prominent types of inclusive leader behavior that can be used to overcome a crisis. The next subsection explored crisis management and its relevancy for educational leadership.

Crisis Management

Crisis management can be defined as a set of factors designed to combat crises and to lessen the actual damage inflicted by a crisis (Coombs, 2018, p. 199). One of the pressing issues when faced with a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic is that this is no “*run of the mill*” crisis. This current crisis has presented challenge after challenge for leaders on a worldwide scale. Maak (2021) argues that the pandemic has revealed *fault lines of leadership* that could cause a failure in many organizations’ practices of leadership. One of these fault lines as discussed by Padilla (2007) is “toxic leadership,” which has become apparent throughout the pandemic on a global scale. Responsible leadership can be an effective countermeasure to toxic leadership and its noxious effects on the organizational level.

Crisis management requires quick adaptations to the situation faced to overcome challenges and obstacles that may arise to hinder the organization’s performance. Crisis

managers are to restore normality by organizing, directing, and implementing actions that minimize the impact of a threat (Boin & t'Hart, 2003; Boin *et al.*, 2013). Crisis management is an ongoing process to prevent or reduce negative consequences through activities before, during, and after a crisis (Fors Brandebo, 2020, p. 569). Leaders must have clear and concrete ideas about how to overcome a crisis through common goals (La República, 2021).

Leadership Behavior and Virtual Work Teams

Virtual work teams were now required to face the uncertainty of a future without human physical interaction and social distancing measures. Creative and innovative management methods were now required to lead work teams. Emotional competence is one of the skills required for effective leadership as one can be aware of his or her own emotions and how these affect the team. Transformational leaders who integrate emotional competence as one of their essential tools can become more effective in today's virtual educational environment. The utilization of resources and skills like cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence, and transformational strategies are necessary to overcome the perception that leading through cyberspace is not effective. The digital age can certainly benefit from leaders who are capable of crossing over the barriers created by digital platforms.

Transformational leaders can transcend physical barriers. They can overcome the challenges brought about by a crisis. Working remotely became the new normal for 2020, it still is for 2021, and will be for years to come. The conditions that the COVID-19 pandemic unleashed on a global scale seemed insurmountable, however, committed leaders who used a transformational approach adapted to crisis situations could overcome any challenge. Bass and Riggio (2006) argue that transformational leaders are those who achieve superior results with their followers compared to other leadership styles.

Summary of Thematically Related Literature

The literature addresses a thematic basis for transformational leadership with flexibility but does not address how Christian educational leaders can utilize this information during a global pandemic and crisis management. Educational leaders in K-12 Christian schools utilize instructional and transformational leadership styles to achieve goals and improve the performance of students and staff. The principal's role in the decision-making process is foundational for the wellbeing of the school community. Those school leaders that use a transformational leadership style must become servant leaders who enhance the lives and performance of those individuals around them. During a crisis, the correct use of leadership style and strategies will ensure the continuity of service to both students and employees. Lastly, inclusive leaders protect the integrity of the leadership process by using contingency based strategies. The next section of the literature review proposed the rationale for this research project by looking for gaps in the current literature to contribute to the field of educational leadership.

Rationale for Study and Gap in the Literature

The preceding paragraphs in this literature review and their purpose was to provide the reader with this researchers' insights into the current field of traditional educational leadership and the development of a transformational leadership model in times of a crisis. This researcher's rationale for the study and the gap in the literature were further developed in the two subsections below.

Rationale for the Study

Martin (2015) makes a point to state that few studies exist referencing instructional leadership in private school settings; until now, the literature has been void of any instructional leadership studies of principals in evangelical Christian schools. More research is needed

regarding the impact of transformational leadership when facing a crisis. One can ask about the best type of educational leadership to apply in a crisis; however, the debate continues and needs further research (Pietsch & Tulowitzki, 2017, p. 633). Extreme context leadership research has focused on leadership capabilities and styles, yet our understanding of crisis and extreme context leadership is weak (Buchanan & Hällgren, 2019, p. 153). The contingencies from impacting leadership in extreme contexts are not well understood (Hannah & Parry, 2014).

Transformational leadership based on biblical principles is a necessary agent of change during the advent of any crisis. Qualitative research has a well-deserved place, but this researcher was more interested in using a quantitative approach to examine and understand the relationship between the advent of a global health crisis or disaster and the leadership adaptations (flexibility) necessary for new virtual styles of work in K-12 Christian educational institutions. After exploring this phenomenon during the pandemic, this researcher expected to be able to contribute that which is systematic and socially constructive to the larger field of K-12 Christian school leadership.

Maynard (2018) states that, “Across a variety of disciplines, research has demonstrated the value of teams to addressing complex and challenging problems” (p. 695). However, the authors do not mention educational leadership as one of the disciplines that may encounter those complex and challenging problems. The COVID-19 pandemic presented a novel, complex, and challenging problem. “Researchers have used the term extreme to describe intense, risky, and often dangerous environments that place unique demands on the teams operating within them” (p. 695).

Maynard (2009) proposed that extreme environments are characterized by extreme events that are “a discrete episode or occurrence that may result in an extensive and intolerable

magnitude of physical, psychological, or material consequences to—or in close physical or psycho-social proximity to—organization members” (p. 898). In turn, environments are extreme “where one or more extreme events are occurring or are likely to occur that may exceed the organization's capacity to prevent and result in an extensive and intolerable magnitude of physical, psychological, or material consequences to—or in close physical or psycho-social proximity to—organization members” (p. 898). Relatedly, Bell (in press) defined extreme teams as “teams (a) that complete their tasks in performance environments with one or more contextual features that are atypical in level (e.g., extreme time pressure) or kind (e.g., confinement, danger) and (b) for which ineffective performance has serious consequences (e.g., compromised health or well-being of the team or the team's clients)” (p. 2).

Researchers have also taken a more granular evaluation of these situations to identify the specific factors that contribute to the level of environmental extremity. In one of the most comprehensive models, Hannah (2009) proposed that five factors contribute to the level of extremity of a situation, including the (a) temporal order of extreme events and their aftermath, (b) magnitude of consequences in terms of the scope and scale of damage, (c) probability of those consequences occurring, (d) physical or psycho-social proximity, and (e) physical, psychological, or material form of the threat. Maynard (2018) further notes that time and complexity can intensify the effects of these factors.

For example, some extreme events such as an emergency response event will signal the need for specific, immediate actions. Adding to these factors, Driskell, Salas, and Driskell (2015) argued that stress resulting from high threat levels and the intensity of the task and performance demands is the defining feature of extreme environments. In turn, stress increases cognitive load, negative emotions, anxiety, social impairment, and distraction while also decreasing attentional

focus. These factors bring attention to the varied ways that extreme environments amplify or alter the drivers of effective teamwork.

Burke, Shuffler, and Wiese (2018) emphasize the important role of team leadership in extreme contexts. Teams in extreme contexts leverage a mixture of formal and informal leadership (Maynard et al., 2018). Effective team leadership may be a critical lynchpin in helping teams face the challenges of extreme contexts, by performing necessary functions that can aid in reducing stressors specific to the task at hand as well as supporting a positive social climate that encourages effective teamwork under difficult circumstances (Zaccaro, Heinen, & Shuffler, 2009). However, to date, there has been little investigation regarding how team leaders can aid in facilitating effective team processes and performance within extreme contexts (Burke et al., 2018).

Although the team leadership literature offers evidence for what types of functions may be most critical for leading teams in traditional organizational settings, it is unclear if these functions are similar or different in leading for extreme contexts (Burke et al., 2018). Most recognize leadership as a process of social influence where the role of team leadership is “to do or get done, whatever is not being adequately handled for group needs” (McGrath, 1962, p. 5).

Leaders influence the development of team cognition through processes such as sense making, sense giving, identifying problem needs, planning, and developing and motivating team members (Zaccaro et al., 2001). Hannah (2009) defines extreme environments as an “environment where one or more extreme events are occurring or are likely to occur that may exceed the organization's capacity to prevent and result in an extensive and intolerable magnitude of physical, psychological, or material consequences to—or in close physical or psycho-social proximity to—organization members” (p. 898). However, there is little research

aimed at understanding the degree of effectiveness of transformational leadership practices under different contextual conditions (Rowold, 2011). Such research is essential to be able to offer precise guidance to leaders who are operating in safety-critical contexts.

Gap in the Literature

Through an expansive search of the literature, it was possible to identify a gap in the research regarding leadership during a global crisis. Consistent with the findings of this literature there were few articles related to educational leadership crisis management that have been examined. For example, “the works of Hoy and Hoy (2013), Leithwood (2004), and Mulford (2008) reflect the way that effective leadership is necessary to achieve positive change through creating a shared vision, improving effectiveness, creating higher standards, and building instructional capacity” (Litz & Scott, 2017, p. 568). However, these studies do not reflect the contingencies (flexibility) that could be needed to face a crisis in the educational system. Other scholars like Buchanan (2007) explored the current trends in leadership in extreme contexts but not in a specific way to reflect the impact of a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic on educational leadership. This gap is more fully defined and described in the two sections below: 1) Missing Research from K-12 Transformational Educational Leadership Research, 2) Missing Research from K-12 Educational Leadership During Crisis Research.

Missing Research from K-12 Transformational Educational Leadership Research

In this subsection the research reviewed so far for this study demonstrates the need for additional information regarding the role of flexible transformational leadership in K-12 Christian schools. This researcher examined research on current trends of K-12 Christian schools and identified what was missing from the field of transformational leadership in times of crisis. For example, the current pandemic has stalled educational leadership due to the ensuing public

health emergency it has caused, forcing school administrators to utilize remote work during much of 2020 and 2021.

Missing Research from K-12 Educational Leadership during a Crisis Research

In this subsection this researcher explored prior research in school administration with an emphasis on crisis management and the use of transformational leadership style. The current literature did not provide enough current information regarding the use of crisis management strategies in the educational setting by administrators. The theoretical framework for leadership is utilized to create the proper context in which to evaluate transformational leadership as applied to a crisis. For example, Kouzes and Posner's (2017) dimensions of leadership include modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart (p. 570). However, articles like the previous one still lack the context of an extreme situation or crisis. This was yet another indication of the gap in the research.

Conclusion

Chapters One and Two outlined the researcher's research concern and provided a literature review of relevant sources in the field. Chapter Three examined the research methodology utilized by this researcher. Chapter Four presented an analysis of this researcher's findings. Finally, Chapter Five presented the researcher's conclusions. In summary, this study examined the theological and theoretical phenomena found in the use transformational leadership style during a crisis in K-12 Christian educational institutions.

Through the process of the literature review this researcher examined the current available writings of different scholars in search of a gap that supports the need for this study. The literature review conducted helped this researcher find a gap in the existing literature and allowed for the contribution to the field of educational leadership using a transformational

leadership approach based on the biblical model of transformational leadership utilized by Christ.

Leaders who follow the transformational style modeled by Jesus Christ are the individuals needed to overcome the challenges brought about by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

All for the glory of Christ.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research study was designed with quantitative methodology. This was a correlational study of educational leadership style and transformational behavior development during a crisis. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship, if any, between educational leadership style and adaptations to a virtual style of working and leading a team as a result of a global crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was designed to provide research information on educational leadership, leadership style, and the adaptations necessary to lead during a time of crisis. This current research sought to bring clarity on best practices in virtual educational leadership during a crisis.

The chapter begins by providing the reader with a research design synopsis to examine the problem and purpose of the research study. The research questions and hypotheses provided a glimpse of the direction of the study. The research methodology provided a rationale for the selection of the correlational study design to explore the possibility that a relationship exists between the development of transformational leadership practice and a crisis. The entirety of the sampling procedures and data collection methods is explained as well to ensure that proper results are quantified and analyzed.

Research Design Synopsis

The Problem

Transformational leadership is undergoing a change due to the current global health crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic challenged the way traditional leaders collaborate with a team through a virtual environment. The literature reviewed for this research study has proven insufficient to address the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and experienced

by many Christian educational organizations. Kouzes and Posner's (2017) dimensions of leadership include modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart (p. 570). However, articles like the previous one still lack the context of an extreme situation or crisis. Additional articles related to educational leadership crisis management have been examined. Hoy and Hoy (2013), Leithwood (2004), and Mulford (2008) reflect the way that effective leadership is necessary to achieve positive change through creating a shared vision, improving effectiveness, creating higher standards, and building instructional capacity (Litz & Scott, 2017, p. 568).

Ruffner and Huizing (2016) state that, "Leadership, from a biblical perspective makes us realize that the very essence of God's being creates the rationale for all human behavior and enterprise" (p. 39). Although some recent research appears to favor the establishment of online communities, the pandemic has driven educational institutions to close and limit in-person connections, causing many to struggle. The unanticipated way in which many institutions were thrust into virtual work mode has put leadership at all levels to the test. Bush (2018) argues that transformational leadership is a powerful way to influence the process utilized by "leaders persuade followers to adopt certain behaviors in order to bring about what the leader considers as beneficial change" (p. 883). Christian institutions both ecclesiastical and educational must turn to transformational leaders who can guide their teams to adapt to the virtual work environment and successfully accomplish the organization's goals.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to understand the relationship between the advent of a global crisis and the educational leadership adaptations necessary for virtual work in K-12 Christian educational institutions of the Southeastern State of Florida. For

this research study a virtual workplace was defined as not located in any one physical space but rather several locations interconnected through technology without regards to geographic boundaries. This research study was guided by transformational leadership theory as applied to a crisis situation. This theory was developed by Burns (1978), and it is defined as, “leaders and followers raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (p. 20). This theory was utilized to examine the possible relationship between the advent of a crisis and the use of transformational leadership principles to develop the necessary adaptations (flexibility) to effectively lead in the virtual work environment.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Research Questions

The following Research Questions guide this study:

RQ1. What type of resources were available to leaders of K-12 Florida Christian learning institutions to become more flexible during a crisis?

RQ2. What type of knowledge (training) did leaders of K-12 Christian learning institutions have to make them more flexible during a crisis?

RQ3. What Christian principles played a role in the development of a strategy by leaders in K-12 Christian learning institutions during the COVID-19 crisis?

RQ4. What, if any, are the measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were based on the following criteria: (a) the hypothesis states that there are no relationship/differences between leadership behavior and the advent of a crisis, (b) the hypothesis is testable by means of a survey and questionnaire.

H₀1: There is no statistical correlation found for the availability of resources to an educational leader in order to become more flexible during a crisis.

H₀2: There is no statistical correlation found for the knowledge (training) that leaders of

Christian learning institutions had to make them more flexible during a crisis.

H₀₃: There is no statistical correlation found between the Christian principles utilized and the role they played in the development of a strategy to become more flexible during a crisis.

H₀₄: There is no statistical correlation found between measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Design and Methodology

Quantitative research deals with numbers. It is basically “the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining phenomena” (Bredfeldt, 2017). Correlational field studies are also called survey or non-experimental designs. The term ‘correlational field study’ is preferred to ‘survey,’ as the latter is commonly associated with a questionnaire (Tharenou et al., 2007). Tharenou further stated that, “correlational field studies typically involve the administration of mail (postal) questionnaires to gather data to evaluate a research question(s) and/or specific hypotheses. However, correlational field studies can be used with any data collection technique, including interviews (face-to-face and telephone) and observation. They are a type of research design, rather than a specific technique of data collection” (p. 46).

The author states that “correlational field studies or surveys usually require the measurement of several independent variables and one or more dependent variables, as well as control and other variables (e.g., mediators, moderators). Unlike an experimental design, a correlational field study (survey) is less able to make strong causal inferences. The interpretation is usually correlational in nature. In other words, the aim of a correlational field study (survey) is to assess the extent of the relationships (correlations) between the independent variables and dependent variable(s)” (p. 46).

In general, “correlational field studies (surveys) are most suitable for use under a combination of certain circumstances. For example, they are used to: test a theory that includes not just the independent variables (influences) and dependent variables (outcomes), but also perhaps mediator variables (transmitters) or moderator variables (conditions under which the relationship exists); that is, differential predictions and alternative explanations are tested, not just the direct relationship between the independent and dependent variable; test the hypotheses/research questions on a large sample of people; examine real-life settings and use people (e.g., employees) facing those situations every day; examine the extent to which the dependent variable and each independent variable are related; generalize the findings – therefore, a large sample is chosen to be representative of a particular and predefined population; test questions when there is a solid literature base (i.e., theory, empirical studies) from which to choose the variables to measure in the survey; and assess the effects of several variables (e.g., independent variables) while taking into account other variables (e.g., controls such as individuals’ demographics, or organizational characteristics)” (p. 47).

Thus, quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2019, p. 4). A quantitative study is an experimental type of research, it may utilize surveys to collect numbers. This type of research is unbiased, it allows the data to speak for itself (Bredfeldt, 2017). Quantitative research is associated with a traditional worldview, it is the scientific method or science.

Data serves as an instrument with which the researcher can support or refute a hypothesis to evaluate a theory. Worldviews according to Creswell are a “general philosophical orientation

about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study” (p. 5). This worldview is known as positivist, modernistic or naturalistic. It stands to understand what is out there in the world through the careful observation and measurement of the objective reality that exists in the world (Creswell & Creswell, p. 6). This research study sought to bring a transformational worldview into the forefront of educational leadership to understand the relationship between leadership behavior and the adaptations needed to lead during a time of crisis.

The sample of this current research was taken from the population of educational leaders from accredited K-12 Christian schools in the State of Florida. These institutions needed to be members of the Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools and led by a team of one or more administrators. To qualify, these educational institutions needed to currently employ a headmaster or principal at the time the research was conducted. This research used two instruments. The first instrument utilized for this research study was a leadership style inventory survey. This instrument was used to determine the leadership style utilized by headmasters or principals. The second instrument was a personal adaptation profile survey. This instrument was used to determine the adaptation style utilized by these educational leaders.

The purpose of this study was to examine if there was a relationship between leadership adaptations to the emerging virtual workplace and the style of leadership utilized by Christian educational leaders as a result of a global crisis. This correlational research study was designed to provide basic research information on educational leadership, transformational leadership, and the adaptations necessary to lead during a time of crisis. This correlational research study sought to bring clarity on the best practices for educational leadership flexibility during the advent of a crisis. Correlational research was well suited for this investigation as it quantified

transformational leadership principles utilized by leaders and their relationship with adaptations to become more flexible leaders during a crisis.

Population(s)

The population for this study were those senior educational leaders of K-12 Christian schools in the State of Florida that are accredited members of the Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (FACCS). The population included principals and or headmasters who are in leadership positions over teams of administrative staff and faculty and who worked virtually due to gathering restrictions in place to mitigate community transmission risks. The population also included school administrative managers. At present there were 105 accredited member schools that were identified as possible candidates to take part in the study.

Sampling Procedures

The sample of this current research was obtained through a systematic sampling of the population of educational leaders from K-12 Christian schools in Florida which were accredited members of the FACCS and had an average enrollment of three hundred or more students (Creswell, p. 150). This study involved stratification of the population (Creswell, p. 150). To qualify, educational institutions needed to have an enrollment of three hundred or more students and employ a headmaster or principal at the time this research study was conducted. Given the population size to be sampled (105 schools in the State of Florida), and to reach a 95 % level of confidence with a 5 % margin of error, 99 responses were necessary. The sample size was determined by using *Sample Size Calculator* from Calculator.net (<https://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator.html>). Assuming a response rate of 80 %, 80 surveys were required to analyze the trend in the use of adaptations in the advent of a crisis and the type of leadership style used during such time. This current research used two instruments

developed specifically for this study. The first instrument was a leadership style inventory survey. This instrument was used to determine the most common leadership style utilized by headmasters or principals. The second instrument was a personal adaptation profile survey. This instrument was used to determine the most common adaptation style utilized by these educational leaders in the context of a crisis.

Limitations of Generalization

This research was delimited to a population of senior educational leaders within K-12 Christian educational institutions in the State of Florida that had an enrollment of more than three hundred students. It did not include educational leaders of smaller institutions or public schools. This research was further delimited to include school administrators who had been at academic institutions for one year or more. The study also included administrative managers. The rationale for including a minimum tenure time was that educational leaders needed to have some leadership experience that may have prepared them for work through demanding situations. The study did not include school leaders who were at the helm of non-Christian educational institutions.

The research also sought to avoid generalizations with non-Christian organizations. The rationale for excluding these organizations was due in part to the way secularized institutions manage their work teams. Transformational leadership based on biblical principles is a necessary agent of change during the advent of a crisis. The study was therefore not directly applicable to educational leaders who served other educational institutions like public schools, non-Christian educational institutions, or were new to school administration.

Ethical Considerations

Conducting ethical research is vital to provide solutions to a practical problem. This is one of the most important aspects to take into consideration when conducting research. Failure to apply ethical principles and standards will result in non-valid research that may do more harm than good. Zero harm must be the main objective of any individual conducting research. It does not matter if the research involves animals or human subjects, ethical principles and standards need to prevail. One of the reasons why some individuals fail to conduct ethical research is because they cannot distinguish what may be right from wrong (www.niehs.nih.gov/research). Another reason for failing to conduct ethical research is that some researchers may apply ethical principles considering their own life experiences. What may be acceptable behavior to them is not acceptable by the ethical principles and standards of the academic or scientific community.

The Institutional Review Board or IRB has developed a series of steps for those individuals conducting research. To conduct ethical research, one must avoid asking questions regarding the confidentiality of the participants as this may violate confidentiality agreements and standards of practice. A researcher must also develop trust with the participants, promote the integrity of research, and guard against misconduct or impropriety. As a researcher, one asks about the finality of the project, in other words, what will be accomplished in the field of leadership when facing a crisis like a global pandemic by this research study? Is there any possibility of harm to the participants? There was no harm to any of the participants as the responses to the survey questions were anonymous and confidential. This information was safeguarded by using encryption when the surveys were answered on the website created to implement the survey questions.

One of the greatest challenges facing Christian and public educational institutions in the United States is the shifting ethnic diversity and racial demographics of the population. The proliferation of digital technologies and the shift from traditional learning platforms to an online environment have created instability within the educational system's ability to safeguard personal information. Christian educational leadership needs to adapt to these challenges to thrive as a viable alternative to the US public education system. Another challenge encountered by educational leaders today is that "the proliferation of information technology tools in higher education has resulted in an explosion of data about students and their context" (Brown & Klein, 2020, p. 1149).

The techniques for data mining have increased over time and have made possible the "harvesting of vast amounts of personal data to be analyzed, stored, and repurposed by social actors" (Brown & Klein, 2020, p. 1149). According to Brown and Klein, the expansive accumulation of data plays into the hands of civil society's constant struggle between the rights of the individual and the needs of social institutions. The need for better controls regarding the collection and use of personal information by third parties is now more important than ever. Brown and Klein (2020) further point to the understanding of confidentiality agreements and the possibility of the misuse of personal information. The confidentiality between leadership and those individuals who are part of an educational organization must follow all regulations to protect sensitive information shared between the parties involved.

Any information or data collected from respondents must be managed and handled carefully to safeguard confidentiality during and after completion of the research. Therefore, data must be stored in such a way that research participants' names are not available to others, unless they are staff who are responsible to the researcher. One method for preserving the

confidentiality of research participants is to utilize unique identification numbers or codes (Tharenou et al., 2007, p. 318).

The following ethical guidelines were devised for this study:

1. Researcher provided participants with a consent form (Appendix C).
2. Researcher adhered to IRB guidelines and communicated participants of said guidelines.
3. Researcher protected the confidentiality of participants.
4. Researcher ensured that no harm was done to any of the participants in the study.

Data Collection Methods

Proposed Instrumentation

Two electronic survey instruments were proposed for this study. They were created to contain between 20-30 questions each to assess both the leadership style used by administrative leaders and the adaptations that these leaders utilize when facing a challenge like the COVID-19 pandemic. Creswell (2019) believes that survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (p. 9). Creswell (2019) states that “survey designs help researchers answer three types of questions: (a) descriptive questions; (b) questions about the relationships between variables; or in cases where a survey design is repeated over time in a longitudinal study; (c) questions about predictive relationships between variables over time (p. 147).

The surveys created for this study were used to identify the purpose of this research study: to understand the relationship between the advent of a global crisis or disaster and the educational leadership adaptations (flexibility) necessary for virtual work in K-12 Christian educational institutions of the Southeastern State of Florida. Choosing a survey design for this study allowed the researcher to produce and distribute the survey questionnaires in an

economical manner. This design also allowed for a rapid turnaround in the collection of data (Creswell, p. 149). The survey questionnaires devised for this study were made available through the internet utilizing Qualtrics. This method of data collection allowed for confidentiality and helped the researcher to avoid a lengthy process for the participants.

Leadership Style. One of the instruments devised for this research study was the leadership style inventory survey. This survey consisted of 31 questions provided to headmasters or principals and/or administrative managers (Appendix D).

Personal Adaptation Profile. The second instrument that was devised for the study was the personal adaptation profile survey. This survey consisted of 17 questions plus four demographic questions provided to headmasters or principals and/or administrative managers (Appendix E).

Both surveys were combined into a single instrument and made available to qualifying individuals through a website using Qualtrics that allowed participants to easily answer the questions in 30 minutes or less and for a rapid turnaround in the data collection process.

For research **RQ1**. What type of resources were available to leaders of K-12 Florida Christian learning institutions to become more flexible during a crisis? The survey utilized a Likert Scale, yes/no selection questions, and open-ended questions that stated the leadership style that most closely resembled the style of the respondent.

For research **RQ2**. What type of knowledge (training) did leaders of K-12 Florida Christian learning institutions have to make them more flexible during a crisis? The survey utilized a Likert Scale, yes/no selection questions, and open-ended questions that stated the leadership behavior that most closely resembled that of the respondent.

For research **RQ3**. What Christian principles played a role in the development of a strategy by leaders in K-12 Christian learning institutions during the COVID-19 crisis? The survey utilized a Likert Scale, yes/no selection questions, and open-ended questions that stated the behavior of the leader during the advent of a crisis or extreme circumstance that most closely resembled that of the respondent.

For research **RQ4**. What, if any, are the measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic? The survey utilized yes/no selection questions and open-ended questions that stated the possible adaptations or innovations developed by academic leaders in the virtual work environment that resulted because of pandemic era restrictions.

The following examples provide a glimpse of the type of questions that were asked to respondents. The survey questionnaires consisted of several questions that had a Likert Scale while some of the questions required a yes or no type of answer to simplify responses, as well as open-ended questions that ensured a rapid data collection turnaround.

1. Are you familiar with transformational leadership?
2. Are you familiar with organizational behavior?
3. Do you utilize any of the following leadership principles in your daily practice of leadership activities?
4. What leadership style most closely resembles your leadership style?
5. What leadership behavior most closely resembles your behavior as a leader?
6. What type of behavior do you utilize when confronted with a crisis or unexpected circumstance?

6. What type of innovations/adaptations have you developed to become more flexible as a leader during a crisis?
7. Did you lead a work team virtually during the beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Validity

Creswell (2019) states that, “to establish validity in quantitative research—whether you can draw meaningful and useful inferences from scores on the instruments. The three traditional forms of validity to look for are (a) content validity (Do the items measure the content they were intended to measure?), (b) predictive or concurrent validity (Do scores predict a criterion measure? Do results correlate with other results?), and (c) construct validity (Do items measure hypothetical constructs or concepts?)” (p. 153). The research study proposed survey instruments had to meet these conditions to establish the validity of the scores gathered to find the correlation among the variables of the study: transformational leadership style and behavioral adaptations that may result during a crisis.

Reliability

This study was also required to “demonstrate acceptable reliability” (Creswell, p. 153). Reliability in this context refers to the consistency or repeatability of an instrument. This is achieved by the internal consistency “quantified by a Cronbach’s alpha (α) value that ranges between 0 and 1, with optimal values ranging between .7 and .9 (p. 153). Validation of data will establish credibility. Creswell argues that one way to establish credibility requires to add a reflective question to the survey instrument that summarizes the accuracy of the questionnaire (p. 153). Clarifying one’s research biases of the present study helped establish dependability.

Detailed information of the process of data collection and analysis ensured proper research design and implementation.

Split Half Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Split half reliability occurs when you take all items in a measurement scale and divide them into two parts and then compare the answers on one half to the other half. If the measurement scale is reliable, then all items in the scale which are to measure the same construct will be correlated with other items in the scale, and therefore if you compare the answers from each individual on one half to the other half of their response to the scale, it should be highly correlated as the same person is answering items about the same construct. The items could be split in many different ways: first half to second half, every other item and so on. The measurement of a single construct is the key to split half reliability. If all items are measuring the same construct, then all items should be highly correlated and no matter how you split the items they will be highly correlated.

Cronbach's alpha makes use of the multiple ways to split the scale by obtaining the average of all possible split half-reliability correlation coefficients. This is an extraordinarily strong method to determine reliability and the most used today in determining the reliability of a scale. Lawson (2019) states that, "This method looks at the internal consistency of all items in the scale, no matter how we split and arrange the items in all potential pairings there is high internal consistency (a high correlation coefficient averaged across all of the possible splits)" (p. 126).

Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability is used for multi-item measures. If a multi-item measure has little random measurement error, the researcher would expect the items to be consistent with

each other. Tharenou et al. (2007) argues that internal consistency reliability is typically measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (p. 152). An alpha coefficient measures how correlated each item is with each other item in the scale. It is a measure of consistency because if the items in the scale are related to each other, it is an internally consistent measure (p. 153). Alpha coefficients are calculated using the average correlation among the items. So at least two items are required to calculate an alpha coefficient. The alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. It is not possible to obtain a negative alpha coefficient, unless the researcher has made a computational error (e.g., failed to reverse score negatively worded items), or the scale is extremely unreliable. In general, measures that are highly dependable have alpha coefficients of .90 or greater, while scales that have alphas below .70 can be said to have less than fair reliability (p. 153).

Pilot Study

The two instruments that were utilized in the study had no prior documented validity and reliability measures. For this reason, this researcher determined that a pilot study was appropriate in this case. The pilot study consisted of selecting five Christian school leaders to determine the combined survey instruments' validity and reliability. Only one leader reviewed the survey but did not offer any input. The pilot study did not provide any information in order to help refine the questions to determine if the instruments developed created confusion or frustration due to the type of questions and length of time needed to complete the survey.

Research Procedures

The sampling of K-12 Christian school leaders utilized a multistage or clustering approach to identify academic leaders through the FACS website (Creswell, p. 150). This procedure allowed the identification of those individuals required for the study within the

organization selected to draw the sample population (p. 150). These leaders were contacted via an email letter to request their participation in the study. If the school requires IRB approval prior to granting their permission, Liberty University can provide *conditional* approval once all requested revisions are received (Liberty University, 2022).

The research study was submitted to Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Florida Association of Christian Schools (FACS) for approval. After receiving confirmation that the study has been approved by both entities, the FACS sent an email invitation (Appendix A) to the qualifying schools with an introductory letter from this researcher and IRB approval letter. To safeguard the participant's identity, the survey instruments did not require the disclosure of any identifying personal information. The research material was received through a secure email account created for the study with log in credentials only accessible by this researcher. Consent forms (Appendix C) to participate in the study accompanied the initial communication sent to the potential participants. The Consent Form (Appendix C) can be electronically signed by using the form provided via DocuSign. This is a website that confidentially allows participants to sign the consent form which will be safeguarded by encryption technology and available to both the researcher and the participant.

The participants were required to establish a pseudonym to identify their institutions while safeguarding demographic data. The responses were collected and analyzed according to descriptive statistical methods utilized in quantitative research. The survey questionnaires utilized involve questions to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the advent of a global crisis or disaster and the educational leadership adaptations necessary for virtual leadership in K-12 Christian educational institutions in Florida. The participants were Christian school administrators who were currently in leadership positions at FACS schools. The study

also included school administrative managers. Initial contact was made via email to introduce the study. A follow up email requested the participation of these leaders in the study to collect pertinent data. The collection and analysis of the data provided corroborating evidence and validity to the findings.

Data Analysis and Statistical Procedures

This researcher created the survey instruments. A survey link was created using Qualtrics. The responses were collected from the Qualtrics website and carefully studied to gather the information necessary to find out if there was a relationship between the variables in order to validate the findings. Creswell (2019) has suggested utilizing data analysis spiral activities as an analysis technique. This study applied a series of strategic steps as suggested by Creswell. The first step was to read and reread the results to search for patterns that could have illustrated a relationship between the variables. The second step was to utilize lean coding to describe, classify, and interpret the data by forming codes or categories of information as suggested by Creswell. The codes were then assembled into categories of emerging relationships between the variables. The last step to be undertaken in the process was the visualization of the data to establish or deny the possible relationship between the variables being studied. The data was then analyzed using quantitative research software.

Data analysis was conducted using the statistical analysis computer program SPSS Statistics 29 for Windows (www.spss.com). The SPSS software is available in a graduate package for students. A descriptive analysis of data for all independent and dependent variables in the study was conducted (p. 157). Creswell (2019) states that, “the analysis should indicate the means, standard deviations, and range of scores for these variables (p. 157).

The interpretation of the results allowed this researcher to draw conclusions from the results of the research questions, hypothesis, and the larger meaning of the results (p. 158). Leedy and Ormrod (2018) state that, “interpreting the results of a quantitative analysis relates the findings to the overall research problem or question, as well as to specific sub problems and hypotheses” (p. 337). It also aids in “determining whether the findings have practical significance as well as statistical significance” (p. 337). This research study’s finality was to develop a practical understanding of the relationship between the advent of a global crisis or disaster and the educational leadership adaptations necessary for virtual work in Christian educational institutions during such times.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Three described the quantitative correlational research methods that were utilized in this transcendental study to understand the relationship between the advent of a global crisis or disaster and the educational leadership adaptations necessary for virtual work in K-12 Christian educational institutions. The four research questions sought to understand how leadership style and behavior may impact the development of adaptations necessary to deal with a crisis like a global pandemic that changed work habits from a physical setting to a virtual one. The research took place with schools accredited and affiliated to FACS. The participants were selected through a systematic sampling of the population of the FACS.

With IRB approval, data was collected. All data was analyzed using Creswell’s (2019) data analysis spiral activities. Credibility and reliability were established through reflective questions on the accuracy of the questionnaires. Ethical considerations included the application of IRB policies and procedures, participant anonymity through the use of pseudonyms, informed consent, and the safeguarding of all research materials.

This research study sought to fill a gap in Christian leadership practices for the virtual workplace during a crisis. The findings of this study provided organizations like FACS, which support Christian educators and schools, with valuable information on Christian educational leadership practices during times of crisis. The development of a proper leadership pattern is grounded on five essential elements. The most important of which are character and competency. Sánchez (2020) presents the notion that “those who lead in the church must be people of godly character” (p. 67). Christian leaders must exercise self-control to be of sober mind (NKJV, 1996, 1 Tim. 3:2). Leadership according to Sánchez is an issue of character and competency. To be competent requires that leaders display the wisdom and the glory of God to the world. Christian educators and leaders have been endowed with the image of God and as such their character flows out of biblical convictions and beliefs.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to understand the relationship between the advent of a global crisis and the educational leadership adaptations necessary for virtual work in K-12 Christian educational institutions of the Southeastern State of Florida. This chapter provides the data, analysis, and results of this research study.

Research Questions

RQ1. What type of resources were available to leaders of K-12 Florida Christian learning institutions to become more flexible during a crisis?

RQ2. What type of knowledge (training) did leaders of K-12 Christian learning institutions have to make them more flexible during a crisis?

RQ3. What Christian principles played a role in the development of a strategy that increased flexibility by leaders in K-12 Christian learning institutions during the COVID-19 crisis?

RQ4. What, if any, are the measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic?

Research Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no statistical correlation found for the availability of resources to an educational leader in order to become more flexible during a crisis.

H₀2: There is no statistical correlation found for the knowledge (training) that leaders of Christian learning institutions had to make them more flexible during a crisis.

H₀3: There is no statistical correlation found between the Christian principles utilized and the role they played in the development of a strategy to become more flexible during a crisis.

H₀4: There is no statistical correlation found between measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

Two electronic survey instruments were created for this study and compiled into a single assessment for simplicity. They were created to contain between 20-30 questions each to assess both the leadership style used by administrative leaders and the adaptations based on flexibility that these leaders utilized when facing a challenge like the COVID-19 pandemic. The two single survey instruments were merged into one to simplify the answering of questions and data analysis. Creswell (2019) believes that survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (p. 9). Creswell states that “survey designs help researchers answer three types of questions: (a) descriptive questions; (b) questions about the relationships between variables; or in cases where a survey design is repeated over time in a longitudinal study; (c) questions about predictive relationships between variables over time (p. 147). The surveys that were created for this study were used to identify the purpose of this research study: to understand the relationship between the advent of a global crisis or disaster and the educational leadership adaptations necessary for virtual work in K-12 Christian educational institutions of the Southeastern State of Florida.

The data collection phase of this research study began on August 30th of 2022 and ended on October 31, 2022. A single tool comprised of two questionnaires that were condensed into one was utilized for this study. The first step in the research process was to compile a list of K-12 Christian educational institutions from the Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (FACCS). This was accomplished by using the directory of accredited institutions from FACCS website. Because this study was to be conducted electronically online and distributed through email, only those institutions which had contact emails were selected as potential candidates for

participation. This initial step found 105 K-12 Christian educational institutions that were still in existence and to whom the information about this research was sent. After sending 105 emails there were ten undeliverable emails. There may have been several reasons for this. For example, some of the email addresses may have changed, and the database was not informed and/or updated to reflect these changes. It may also have been that the school was no longer in existence.

Beyond the ten returned undeliverable emails there were also a significant number of leaders from various K-12 Christian educational institutions who replied stating that they did not want to participate in the research study. These leaders gave no reason for their refusal to participate in the study. Out of the 95 possible candidates, around 45 indicated that they were willing to participate in the research study. After sending out the initial contact and recruitment emails, starting the week of August 30, 2022, the survey was closed on October 31, 2022, after getting only thirteen responses with four fully answered. The data collected from the single survey was collected in Qualtrics and then exported into IBM's SPSS software for all comparative analysis. SPSS was selected because it was the best software to compile comparative data across the survey instrument utilized for the study. All survey data was collected confidentially.

Demographic and Sample Data

The population for this study was composed of educational leaders of K-12 Christian schools in the State of Florida that were accredited members of the Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools. The population included principals and or headmasters who were in leadership positions over teams of administrative staff and faculty and who had to work virtually due to gathering restrictions in place during the public health emergency in order to

mitigate community transmission risks. The population also included school administrative managers. At the time of the study there were over 100 accredited member schools that were considered to take part in the study. The sample size was determined by using *Sample Size Calculator* from Calculator.net (<https://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator.html>). Assuming a response rate of 80%, 80 surveys were required to analyze the trend in the use of adaptations in the advent of a crisis and the type of leadership style used during such time.

Data Analysis and Findings

Survey information includes the number of survey requests sent (N – 105), the number of leaders who participated (N – 13), and the number of fully completed surveys (N – 4). This researcher was not pleased with the response rate of K-12 educational leaders to whom the participation email request had been sent on two separate occasions. According to Fincham (2008), a 60 % participation rate should be the goal for any quantitative study. The percentage of K-12 Christian educational leaders who participated and fully completed the survey was four out of thirteen or, 30.77 %, which was well below the requirements desired for this study.

Table 1

The Research Study Overview

Total Number Survey Requests Sent to FACCS Member Schools	Percentage of K-12 Christian Educational Leaders Who Fully Completed the Survey
105	4 out of 13 = 30.77 %
<i>Note:</i> According to Fincham (2008), a 60 % participation rate should be the goal for any quantitative study.	

The participants in the study were administrators with different titles, educational levels, and years of experience. Three of the four participants were in senior leadership positions such as superintendent, principal, or headmaster with a range of experience from 21 years to 37 years of

experience. One of the participants was an assistant administrator with 15 years of experience. The participants have been associated with their institutions ranging from 15 years to 42 years.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Data

Current Title	Educational Level	Years as Education Administrator	Years with the Organization
Superintendent	PhD	25	42
Principal	EdD	37	37
Assistant Administrator	BA	15	25
Headmaster	EdS	21	15

Correlational Analysis

For this research study, Pearson's r was chosen to determine if any relationship existed between the advent of a global crisis or disaster and the educational leadership adaptations (flexibility) necessary for virtual work in K-12 Christian educational institutions of the Southeastern State of Florida. The reason for selecting to use Pearson's r was that this method is the most widely utilized correlational method (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). Pearson's r looks for linear relationships between two variables to determine if a relationship exists. The correlation coefficient is between -1, a strong negative correlation, and +1, a strong positive correlation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).

Research Question One

RQ1. What type of resources were available to leaders of K-12 Florida Christian learning institutions to become more flexible during a crisis?

The problem this researcher chose to investigate is to understand the relationship between traditional educational leadership and the development of needed contingencies based on

flexibility to deal with a global crisis or disaster. Pearson's r value was calculated at 0.213 (Table 5), this indicated no statistically significant relationship between the resources available and becoming more flexible during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

A four-point Likert Scale was used to collect the data because it provided a more comprehensive data evaluation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to the statistical analysis done by correlating the resources available to leaders at K-12 Christian learning institutions and flexibility during a crisis, this researcher found that all of the respondents (4) received communication devices like laptop computers and virtual meeting software access in order to communicate more effectively during such a time (Table 3). They also were able to access educational resources regarding change and the importance of adapting to an emerging situation. Technology resources consisted of Zoom videoconference which was available to leaders during the early stages of the pandemic.

Table 3

Resources Available to Leaders

Resources	Use of Resources – Leadership
Laptop Computer	100 %
Communication Software (Zoom)	100 %
Educational Resources (training videos, handouts, courses)	100 %

Research Question Two

RQ2. What type of knowledge (training) did leaders of K-12 Christian learning institutions have to make them more flexible during a crisis? Pearson's r value for this data set was calculated at 0.213 (Table 5), this indicated no statistically significant relationship between the knowledge available to leaders to make them more flexible during a crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Nine questions that required a yes or no answer were included in the survey. The respondents answered questions regarding knowledge that could help improve leadership flexibility. The responses centered around communication skills learned prior to the pandemic. Leaders were consistent in their views regarding decision-making and reported using communication training to enhance the overall guidance provided to the team members during the early stages of the pandemic (Table 4).

Table 4

Communication Training

Training	Use of Resources – Early Pandemic
Self-directed courses – Communication skills	100 %
Leadership skills training	100 %

Research Question Three

RQ3. What Christian principles played a role in the development of a strategy that increased flexibility by leaders in K-12 Christian learning institutions during the COVID-19 crisis? A four-point Likert Scale was used to collect the data because it provided a more comprehensive data evaluation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Pearson's r value for this data set was calculated at 0.213 (Table 5).

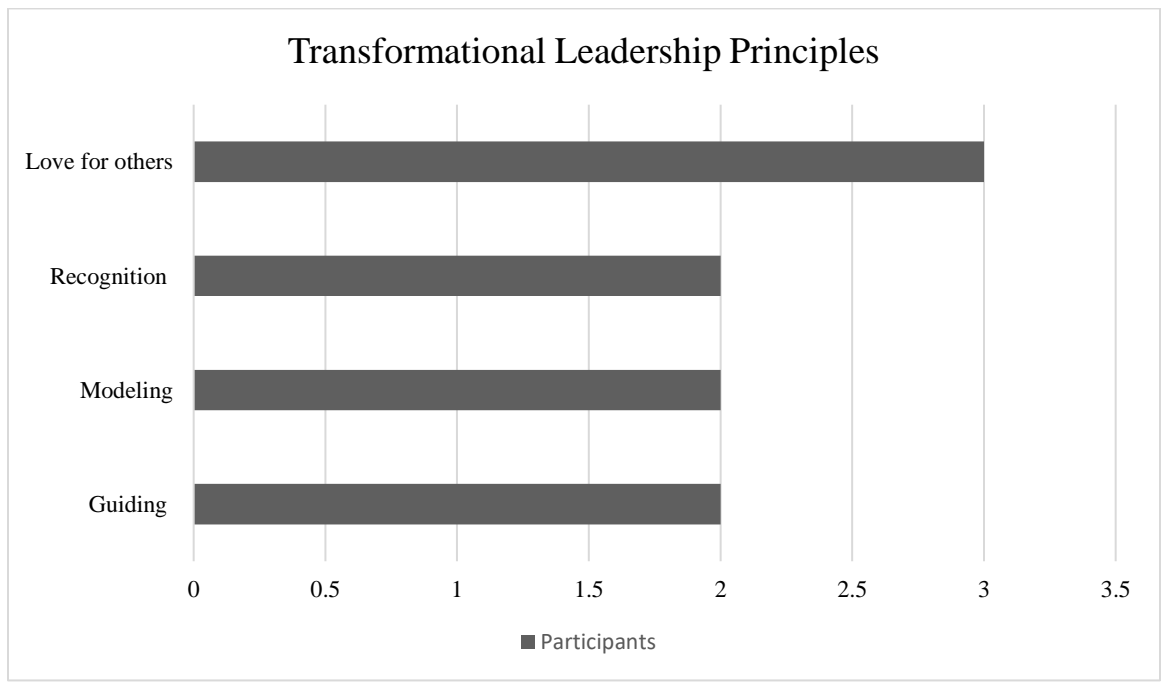
Table 5

Pearson's R

P-Value	0.213
Effect Size (Cramér's V)	1
Sample Size	4

Two out of the four respondents indicated that transformational leadership principles like modeling and guiding others were utilized most of the time (Figure 1). Leaders also recognized personnel when achieving complex tasks (Figure 1). The research data also demonstrated that three out of four leaders surveyed stated that love for others played a significant role in increasing their willingness to adapt to changes or extreme circumstances. (Figure 1). However, no statistically relevant correlation could be made regarding Christian principles and increased flexibility when facing a crisis.

Figure 1 Transformational Leadership Principles



Research Question Four

RQ4. What, if any, are the measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic?

The results of Pearson's r correlation, 0.213 (Table 5), suggests that there is no statistically significant relationship or measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis. The respondents answered a series of questions that inquired about their adaptations to become more flexible during a crisis. According to the data, one out of four of the leaders surveyed placed their entire trust in God to help them adapt to an emerging situation. The four leaders who responded to the survey also emphasized their love and service to others as the one part of their role that can help them adapt to any circumstance. All the leaders surveyed affirmed their willingness to adapt to different work environments.

Null Hypotheses Analysis

H₀1: There is no statistical correlation found for the availability of resources to an educational leader in order to become more flexible during a crisis. The results of Pearson's r correlation suggested that there was no statistically significant relationship between the type of resources available to K-12 educational leaders and the flexibility needed to face a crisis. The null hypothesis that there was no correlation between resources available and flexibility during a crisis was accepted.

H₀2: There is no statistical correlation found for the knowledge (training) that leaders of Christian learning institutions had to make them more flexible during a crisis. The results of Pearson's r correlation suggest that there was no statistically significant relationship between the knowledge acquired by training to improve flexibility during a crisis. The null hypothesis that there was no relationship between knowledge (training) and flexibility during a crisis was

accepted.

H₀₃: There is no statistical correlation found between the Christian principles utilized and the role they played in the development of a strategy to become more flexible during a crisis. The results of Pearson's r correlation suggest that there was no statistically significant relationship between Christian principles and the development of strategies to improve flexibility during a crisis. The null hypothesis that there was no relationship between Christian principles and strategic development of flexibility during a crisis was accepted.

H₀₄: There is no statistical correlation found between measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of Pearson's r correlation suggest that there was no statistically significant relationship between any measurable effects of leadership flexibility in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. The null hypothesis that there was no relationship between the measurable effects of leadership flexibility in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic was accepted.

Finally, in the analysis conducted, there was no statistically significant correlation between traditional educational leadership and the development of needed contingencies based on flexibility to deal with a global crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evaluation of the Research Design

This study used a quantitative correlational analysis design, which seeks to determine if a linear relationship exists between two or more variables (Cohen et al., 2003, p. 191). The quantitative data collected for this study was concerning K-12 Christian educational institution leaders and the flexibility needed to handle a crisis situation like the COVID-19 pandemic. The independent variable for this study being transformational leadership adaptations (flexibility) and

the dependent variable being the educational crisis faced by K-12 Christian educational institutions during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Qualtrics was used to store the survey and collect the responses with email being the method of distribution to prospective educational leaders. The Leadership Style Survey Questionnaire and the Personal Adaptation Profile were consolidated into one survey instrument that used a 4-point Likert Scale, yes/no questions, and open-ended questions. The population from this study were K-12 Christian educational institution leaders from the State of Florida. The method of statistical analysis selected for this research study was Pearson's r because this method is the most widely utilized correlational method (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). Pearson's r looks for linear relationships between two variables to determine if a relationship exists. The correlation coefficient is between -1, a strong negative correlation, and +1, a strong positive correlation where 0 is no linear correlation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). Pearson's r value for this research study was calculated at 0.213 (Table 5), this indicated no statistically significant relationship between the resources available to educational leaders and developing flexibility during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter Summary

Chapter four presents the data, analysis, and results of this correlational research. Although this researcher assumed that there would be a positive correlation between the independent and dependent variables, no such correlation was discovered. However, the research study design demonstrated the need for further research to determine if a positive correlation exists between leadership flexibility and crisis response. While this research method was able to shed light on how transformational leadership principles can help leaders adapt to a situation, it may not have been the most appropriate method to use in order to discover a correlation between

the necessary adaptations (flexibility) to face a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. Perhaps, a qualitative research study could have been more significant in shedding light into leadership flexibility during a time of crisis.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Chapter four discussed the data, analysis, and results of this correlational study and the possible relationship between the advent of a global crisis and the educational leadership flexibility needed to work through a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. In this chapter, the researcher provides a summary of the research purpose, state and discuss the research questions and the study's findings concerning these research questions, the conclusions, implications, and applications of the research study, discuss the research limitations, and finally offer some suggestions for further research regarding the advent of a crisis and the flexibility needed by leadership to adapt to a crisis.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to understand the relationship between the advent of a global crisis and the educational leadership adaptations based on flexibility necessary for virtual work in K-12 Christian educational institutions of the Southeastern State of Florida. There was a gap in the current literature in this regard.

This research study was guided by transformational leadership theory as applied to a crisis situation. This theory was developed by Burns (1978), and it is defined as, "leaders and followers raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (p. 20). This theory was utilized to examine the possible relationship between the advent of a crisis and the use of transformational leadership principles to develop the necessary adaptations (flexibility) to effectively lead in the virtual work environment.

Several key definitions guided this study. First, leadership was defined as the process of moving people in a planned direction by motivating them to act through non compulsive means

(Jubran, 2015). Second, transformational leadership was defined as the process that induces a sense of belonging to a collective and makes followers collective identity more salient (Kim & Vandenberghe, 2018). This researcher attempted to fill the gap found in the literature regarding the possible adaptations and flexibility needed to lead effectively during the advent of a crisis.

The Literature Review demonstrated that the topics regarding leadership adaptations during a crisis had been widely explored independently in the literature, but flexibility to ensure continuity of leadership during such circumstances had not been critically examined. K-12 Christian educational organizations across the State of Florida, the United States and much of the world experienced strong challenges during the early stages of the pandemic. The challenges presented by globalization and technology were more evident than ever during the early pandemic for K-12 Christian educational leadership, in particular those who considered themselves servant leaders. The Literature Review conducted in Chapter Two found that as Aboramadan (2020) stated, “servant leadership is a value driven leadership style that was populated by Greenleaf as a lifelong journey and a managerial instrument through which leaders express their will to serve” (p. 618). The study found that servant leadership could explain the variance in the outcome of the variables when compared to a transformational leadership style (p. 618).

During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the skills of leaders were put to the test. Behavioral shifts were needed in order to develop the necessary adaptations to handle the difficulties experienced by work teams in the educational setting. The Literature Review provided ample evidence of the many skills necessary to work through a crisis. Management literature had provided ample resources for those in leadership positions so that they could enhance their skills in order to face any circumstance. Unfortunately, as the COVID-19

pandemic took hold of the world, many K-12 Christian educational leaders felt unprepared to handle this crisis. Many individuals are not fond of changes, but these are part of daily life (Pallapa, p. 155). This research study's review of the current literature found that better skills and adaptations are necessary for the leader in order to handle a crisis and succeed.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study.

RQ1. What type of resources were available to leaders of K-12 Florida Christian learning institutions to become more flexible during a crisis?

RQ2. What type of knowledge (training) did leaders of K-12 Christian learning institutions have to make them more flexible during a crisis?

RQ3. What Christian principles played a role in the development of a strategy that increased flexibility by leaders in K-12 Christian learning institutions during the COVID-19 crisis?

RQ4. What, if any, are the measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic?

Research Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no statistical correlation found for the availability of resources to an educational leader in order to become more flexible during a crisis.

H₀2: There is no statistical correlation found for the knowledge (training) that leaders of Christian learning institutions had to make them more flexible during a crisis.

H₀3: There is no statistical correlation found between the Christian principles utilized and the role they played in the development of a strategy to become more flexible during a crisis.

H₀4: There is no statistical correlation found between measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

Studies have been conducted regarding leadership during crisis situations. In general, these studies have addressed a variety of topics regarding transformational leadership and its applications to different situations. However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a new normal that had not been foreseen by any leader, the introduction of lockdowns caused entire organizations to shift from face-to-face interactions to remote work. Many leaders had not prepared for such a situation, and many struggled to adapt to this situation during the early stages of the pandemic. As far as this researcher knows, there had not been any significant studies that reflect the contingencies (flexibility) that could be needed to face an emergent crisis in the K-12 Christian educational system as the one caused by COVID-19 pandemic. The use of crisis management strategies to provide flexibility within the educational setting by administrators was the subject of this research study.

Conclusions

The research conducted suggests that there was no significant correlation between the advent of a global crisis or disaster like the COVID-19 pandemic and the educational leadership adaptations (flexibility) to guide a virtual work team. The study did not find any statistically significant relationship between the knowledge available to leaders to make them more flexible during a crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, this research study found no statistically relevant correlation could be made regarding Christian principles and increased flexibility when facing a crisis. Lastly, the study conducted suggested that there was no statistically significant relationship or measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis.

Pearson's r value was calculated at 0.213 (Table 5) and indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between the any resources available to a leader and becoming

more flexible during a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the Null Hypotheses produced an acceptance of all four hypotheses. These results highly suggested that there was no relationship between leadership flexibility and the advent of a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Question One (RQ1) investigated what type of resources were available to leaders of K-12 Florida Christian learning institutions to become more flexible during a crisis? According to the statistical analysis done by correlating the resources available to leaders at K-12 Christian learning institutions and flexibility during a crisis, the research study found that 100% of the respondents received communication devices like laptop computers in order to communicate more effectively during the early pandemic. The research also found that educational leaders were able to access educational resources regarding change and the importance in adapting to an emerging situation like a crisis.

Research Question Two (RQ2) investigated what type of knowledge (training) did leaders of K-12 Christian learning institutions have to make them more flexible during a crisis? The research results indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between the knowledge available to leaders to make them more flexible during a crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Questions that required a yes or no answer attempted to answer this question. The respondents answered questions regarding knowledge that could help improve leadership flexibility. The responses centered around communication skills learned prior to the pandemic. Leaders were consistent regarding decision-making and communication training to enhance the overall guidance provided to the team members during the early pandemic.

Christian educational leaders need a Biblically based practical step-by-step model to assist them in dealing with an emerging crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, in

the literature, this type of model does not exist. Existing research at the time of the Literature Review did not reflect the contingencies (flexibility) that could be needed to face a crisis affecting the educational system. Scholars have wrestled with the issue but not in a specific way to reflect the impact of a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic on educational leadership. Transformational leadership based on biblical principles is a necessary agent of change during the advent of any crisis.

Urick et al. (2021) argue that the current generation of school leaders has endured countless crisis ranging from school shootings, hurricanes, social unrest, and a pandemic (p. 1). With a global health crisis in their hands many school administrators scrambled to transition from face-to-face education to virtual learning platforms. The shift from the traditional model of education to the “new normal” took everyone by surprise. K-12 Christian educational institutions have also had to contend with this public health crisis and use crisis management strategies to become resilient and adapt to the new normal of learning and work. Again, the main challenge of effective leadership during a crisis is preparing and training leaders for unknown and harmful circumstances (p. 3).

One of the reasons for the use of transformational leadership during a crisis is the strong stress perceived by subordinates that may lead to frustration and anxiety. It is during a crisis that individuals look for the guidance of a strong leader. Followers will seek and accept, even need the influence of a highly confident leader who will provide solutions to the current situation (Pillai, 1996; Shamir & Howell, 1999). These types of leaders will arise as the situation becomes critical. During 2020-2021, the coronavirus pandemic challenged this type of leadership. Scholars like Coombs (2018) believe that crisis management is designed to combat this type of emerging situations and actually lessens the damage inflicted by them.

Research Question Three (RQ3) investigated what Christian principles played a role in the development of a strategy that increased flexibility by leaders in K-12 Christian learning institutions during the COVID-19 crisis? Using a four-point Likert Scale resulted in two out of the four respondents indicating that transformational leadership principles like modeling and guiding others were utilized by leaders. Leaders also recognized personnel when achieving complex tasks. Research data also demonstrated that love for others played a significant role in increasing a leader's flexibility. However, there was no statistically relevant correlation regarding Christian principles and increased flexibility when facing a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Literature Review proved that Biblical leadership meant taking the initiative to influence people to grow in holiness and to passionately promote the extension of God's kingdom in the world. The indispensable mark of Christian leadership is the combined effort of action and agenda with the purpose to intentionally influence others (Thomas, 2018, p. 108). Jesus initiated this model of Christian leadership, through a process of transforming the individual to transform the world by being a mentor to a disciple (NKJV, 1996, Mark 3:13-19). The Literature review also found Christian principles of leadership based on Jesus as the embodiment of servant leadership. He stated that "I came to serve and not be served" (NKJV, 1996, Matthew 20:28). For scholars like Coulter (2003), this style of leadership involved laying aside anything that would be associated with prestige or the worldly idea of success and control. The Literature Review additionally revealed that, "servant leadership is a value driven leadership style that was populated by Greenleaf as a lifelong journey and a managerial instrument through which leaders express their will to serve" (Aboramadan, 2020, p. 618).

Research Question Four (RQ4) investigated what, if any, are the measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic?

The results of the statistical analysis suggested that there was no significant relationship or measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis. According to the data, one out of four of the leaders surveyed placed their entire trust in God to help them adapt to an emerging situation. The four leaders who responded to the survey also emphasized their love and service to others as the one part of their role that can help them adapt to any circumstance. All the leaders surveyed affirmed their willingness to adapt to different work environments.

The Literature Review found that the scale of the COVID-19 crisis meant that political leaders, healthcare leaders, and Christian educational leaders were being put to the test and needed to adapt to a new normal, the COVID-19 pandemic. Scholars like Tourish (2020) understood that the coronavirus crisis was also a crisis of leadership practice (p. 262). This research study corroborated what was found in the literature, that during a time of crisis, the role of a leader and the impact of his or her decisions and actions tends to be magnified. Key competencies during a containment and damage control phase of a crisis include decision-making under pressure, effective communication, and risk taking. These were contingencies that the participants in this research study were willing to utilize as they trusted God for their implementation.

Implications

The implications of this research study are significant for K-12 Christian educational leadership. The study demonstrated that even though educational leaders were in a position to navigate through changes, they were not necessarily prepared to deal with an emergent crisis.

The reasons for the lack of flexibility when facing a crisis can be various. Among these, this researcher found that Christian educational leaders did not have the proper training or tools required to plan for contingencies when dealing with extreme circumstances that require flexibility in order to help their work teams to adapt to a challenging situation. According to Pallapa (2022), “leadership has been one of the most frequently tested skills during the COVID-19 pandemic” (p. 190). Leading requires skill. It becomes necessary for leaders to understand the organization and team dynamics in order to have a better idea of potential challenges or impediments like the pandemic to become more flexible (p. 190).

The research conducted to understand the relationship between resources available to educational leaders during the early stages of the pandemic showed that a great majority of the leaders had technological resources available to them, but there was no guidance regarding an emergency situation like a pandemic. The respondents also had access to educational resources, but these did not provide answers regarding leadership adaptation or flexibility during a crisis. The management of such situations was reviewed in Chapter Two. Urick et al. (2021) stated that, “the main challenge of effective leadership during a crisis is preparing and training leaders for the unknown and harmful circumstances.” During the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work became more acceptable (Pallapa, p. 298). The results of the study confirmed that remote work indeed became acceptable to K-12 Christian educational leadership, but these same educational leaders did not necessarily use the available training or their knowledge to become more flexible in order to face the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

The research study results helped this researcher conclude that transformational leadership principles like modeling and guiding others were important for K-12 Christian educational leaders most of the time. Educational leaders must also recognize that personnel

needed to be celebrated when achieving complex tasks. This researcher concluded from the data that love for others does play a role in increasing a leader's flexibility. However, no statistically relevant correlation could be made regarding Christian principles and increased flexibility when facing a crisis. The implications for leadership that can be drawn from these results point to the relevancy of transformational leadership in the ability and willingness of a leader to develop contingencies to become more flexible when leading through a crisis.

According to Burns (1978) transforming leadership "occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 20). The literature review conducted for this research study provided the necessary background to correlate the knowledge required to be more flexible during a crisis. The K-12 Christian educational leaders who responded to this researcher's questions proved that in approximately 50% of cases, transformational leadership principles were vital in developing the necessary adaptations (flexibility) to face a crisis. The last research study question asked of the respondents about their adaptations to become more flexible during a crisis. According to the data, one out of four of the leaders surveyed placed their entire trust in God to help them adapt to an emerging situation. The four leaders who responded to the survey also emphasized their love and service to others as the one part of their role that can help them adapt to any circumstance. All the leaders surveyed affirmed their willingness to adapt to different work environments. However, this did not answer the research question in a practical manner as the measurable effects of leadership adaptations (flexibility) in response to a crisis were not apparent. None of the respondents answered the questions by relating their practices in day-to-day operations. Thus, measuring the effects of any adaptations (flexibility) that could be employed during a crisis remain unanswered.

Applications

This current study showed no statistically significant relationship between the advent of a global crisis or disaster like the COVID-19 pandemic and the educational leadership adaptations (flexibility) to guide a virtual work team. Constructing a proper theology of educational leadership during times of crisis required an examination of the questions asked by this researcher and the answers provided by the literature review. This was an essential part of the process to pursue a theology of leadership as part of the investigation to examine transformational leadership as a relevant style of management in K-12 Christian educational institutions.

With a global health crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic in their hands, many school administrators scrambled to transition from face-to-face education to virtual work and learning platforms. The shift from the traditional model of leading to the “new normal” of remote work took everyone by surprise. K-12 Christian educational institutions also had to contend with the emergent public health crisis and use crisis management strategies to become resilient and adapt to the new normal of learning and work. However, this study suggested that even though leaders needed to develop flexibility to contend with a challenge, many leaders’ adaptations to the crisis were not apparent.

This study also revealed that the main challenge of effective leadership during a crisis was preparing and training leaders for the unknown and any harmful circumstances encountered (Urick et al., 2021, p. 3). One of the possible applications and contributions of this research study to K-12 Christian educational leaders is use of self-assessment tools to discover the potential for the development of flexibility when facing a crisis or other extreme circumstance. Leadership can transcend any barriers encountered in remote work environments like the lack of face-to-face

interaction by developing adaptations (flexibility) to working virtually. Stephen Lowe (2018) argued that humankind is part of a system of ecological interconnections to God, which provides an understanding to the role of the virtual transformational leader. According to this application principle, there are no time or space boundaries that can constrain the work of the Holy Spirit, something that is applicable to K-12 Christian educational leaders within the context of the Christian educational institution. Transformational leaders can transcend any physical barrier. They can indeed overcome the challenges brought about by any crisis. Working remotely has now become acceptable as Pallapa suggests. It became the new normal in 2020-2021, and it still was for many individuals in 2022. As of the date of this research study all educational institutions public or private (Christian) have returned to on campus work and learning.

Leadership is a process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it (Yukl & Gardner, 2013). During times of crisis, the role of a leader and the impact of his or her decisions and actions tends to be magnified. During a crisis, even those organizations with highly effective teams know that their normal processes and practices of conducting business cannot meet the demands of the current situation and new reality. To succeed they must adapt before quickly making critical decisions (Keen et al., 2020, p. 504). Crisis leadership requires quick adaptations to the situation faced in order to overcome challenges and obstacles that may arise to hinder the organization's performance. Implementing courses in transformational leadership applied to crisis management is a way to enhance the skills of K-12 Christian educational leaders who may lack the flexibility to adapt to emergent situations. Thus, strengthening weak areas of transformational behavior.

Research Limitations

This research study and its findings were limited to a population of senior educational leaders within K-12 Christian educational institutions in the State of Florida that had an enrollment of more than three hundred students. It did not include educational leaders of smaller institutions or public schools. The research was further delimited to include school administrators who have been at academic institutions for one year or more. The study also included administrative managers who are employed by the educational institutions with the previous criteria.

Furthermore, this study was limited in that it only examined flexibility of leadership during a crisis based on transformational principles and practices. Additionally, the only instrument utilized for this research study was the Leadership Style and Personal Adaptation Profile Survey. This instrument was a self-assessment instrument where participants were asked their perception regarding the contingencies necessary to adapt (flexibility) to an emerging crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in limited validity. It should also be noted that this study was limited with regards to the sampling procedure as it was designed with a specific population in view.

The final limitation to be mentioned for this study has to do with the methodology selected and utilized, a quantitative correlational study. The reality is that attempting to prove a relationship between two variables utilizing a quantitative methodology is difficult to accomplish (Creswell, 2014). In the end, this research study was not designed to prove a cause-and-effect relationship but rather to determine if any significant relationship existed between the variables studied. Finding a correlation, even if present, does not prove cause-and-effect. For this reason, a study such as the one conducted by this researcher has limited applicability because other

variables may be involved when looking at leadership adaptations (flexibility) when facing a crisis.

Further Research

This research study has demonstrated the need for further research to validate, invalidate, or in any additional way contribute to the current literature and field of practice. For that reason, several recommendations for further research will be presented in this section. In the future, this researcher plans to rework the study to adapt to the needs of the educational leadership community by conducting a qualitative study to look for more detailed answers regarding the flexibility contingencies needed to lead through a crisis situation. The research study conducted did not provide a statistically significant correlation between the advent of a crisis and the adaptations (flexibility) necessary to work through it. Sample size needs to be increased as well as instruments that can be easily utilized. This researcher plans to utilize validated and reliably proven instruments to engage a viable population to conduct a future study.

One of the reasons why the results were not representative of the population targeted for the study is that the State of Florida, the United States, and much of the world have now transitioned from the pandemic. One cannot underestimate the impact of environmental conditions present when conducting a research study. As mentioned previously, self-assessment surveys do not always provide measurable results to find a correlation between variables.

Finally, population limitations may need to be reassessed in order to obtain different results. Further research may result in the discovery of a positive relationship between a crisis and the adaptations (flexibility) necessary to overcome its impact of K-12 Christian educational leadership. The likelihood of another crisis, be it a pandemic or other type of disaster will require leaders that are willing to obtain the resources needed to develop flexibility to meet those

challenges and fulfill their God-given duty to lead. This study has reflected that transformational leadership theory is not necessary when facing a crisis situation like the COVID-19 pandemic. The data has confirmed that even if leaders do not utilize transformational leadership principles, they can still do their work in an effective manner. In other words, leadership style does not play a role in the leader's adaptations to become more flexible during a crisis.

Chapter Summary

This research study examined the relationship between the advent of a global crisis and the educational leadership adaptations based on flexibility necessary for virtual work in K-12 Christian educational institutions of the Southeastern State of Florida. Educational leadership needs to become more flexible to face the challenges brought about by an emergent crisis situation. Transformational leaders need to have the necessary skillset to guide a work team through any circumstance, be it an extreme circumstance or a global health crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The results of this research study have not shown that there is a significant correlation between the advent of a global crisis or disaster like the COVID-19 pandemic and the educational leadership adaptations (flexibility) to guide a work team, the study has set a solid foundation for further research and has contributed to the literature and overall knowledge on this subject. Not every study yields the desired results. This is the reason research is so important. Leaders need to understand the organization and team dynamics that play a role in the response to potential challenges that may arise as a result of a crisis (Pallapa, p. 190). Further research might result in the discovery of a positive relationship between leadership practices that

are better suited to create the necessary contingencies based on flexibility to lead effectively during a crisis.

To God be the glory through all research done to benefit humanity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Recruitment Email

July 23, 2022

Dear Florida Association of Christian Schools:

As a graduate student in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctorate in philosophy (PhD). The title of my research project is K-12 Florida Christian Schools in Crisis: A Correlational Study of Educational Leadership During the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the purpose of my research is to determine if a relationship exists between the advent of a global crisis and the educational leadership adaptations based on flexibility necessary for virtual work. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older. Participants need to be in a position of leadership (principal/headmaster or school administrative manager) at K-12 Christian schools who have been in their assignment for one year or more. Participants, if willing will be asked to complete a survey by going to a secure webpage. The survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected. To participate please go to the following https://liberty.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bshKTeBUyma54Vw. A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Because participation is anonymous, you do not need to sign and return the consent document. After you have read the consent form, please click the button to proceed to the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time before submitting the survey.

Sincerely,

Cesar O. Irizarry
Doctor of Philosophy Candidate

Appendix B
Permission Letter

July 23, 2022

Florida Associations of Christian Schools

Dear Cesar O. Irizarry:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled K-12 Florida Christian Schools in Crisis: A Correlational Study of Educational Leadership During the COVID-19 Pandemic, I/We have decided to grant you permission to access our membership list/contact our principal/administrators and invite them to participate in your study.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

- I/We will provide our membership list to Cesar O. Irizarry, and Cesar O. Irizarry may use the list to contact our members to invite them to participate in his research study.
- I/We grant permission for Cesar O. Irizarry to contact principals/administrators to invite them to participate in his research study.
- [[I/We] will not provide potential participant information to Cesar O. Irizarry, but we agree to send/provide his study information to principals/administrators on his behalf.
- I/We are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

Official's Name

Official's Title

Official's Company/Organization

Appendix C

Consent Form

Title of the Project: K-12 Florida Christian Schools in Crisis: A Correlational Study of Educational Leadership During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Principal Investigator: Cesar O. Irizarry, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University, John W. Rawlings School of Divinity.

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate you must be at least 18 years of age or older, in a position of leadership in a K-12 Christian educational institution (principal/headmaster or school administrative manager) for over one year or more of their assignment. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is relationship between the advent of a global crisis and the educational leadership adaptations based on the flexibility that is necessary for virtual work in K-12 Christian educational institutions in the State of Florida.

What will happen if you agree to be in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following: Complete an anonymous online survey that will take approximately 20 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society include adding to the body of knowledge by providing guidance and understanding to the importance of leadership flexibility during a time of crisis.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in daily life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used for future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free

to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Cesar O. Irizarry. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Robert Van Engen, at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You can print a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

Appendix D

Leadership Style Survey

Likert Scale: 1 = rarely 2 = sometimes 3 = often 4 = almost always

1. I go out of the way to make others feel good to be around me. 1 2 3 4
2. I help others with their self-development. 1 2 3 4
3. I help others to understand my visions through the use of tools, such as images, stories, and models. 1 2 3 4
4. I ensure others get recognition and/or rewards when they achieve difficult or complex goals. 1 2 3 4
5. I let others work in the manner that they want. 1 2 3 4
6. I get things done. 1 2 3 4
7. I have an ever-expanding network of people who trust and rely upon me. 1 2 3 4
8. I provide challenges for my team members to help them grow. 1 2 3 4
9. I use simple words, images, and symbols to convey to others what we should or could be doing. 1 2 3 4
10. I manage others by setting standards that we all agree with. 1 2 3 4
11. I rarely give direction or guidance to others if I sense they can achieve their goal. 1 2 3 4
12. I consistently provide coaching and feedback so that my team members know how they are doing. 1 2 3 4
13. People listen to my ideas and concerns not out of fear, but because of my skills, knowledge, and personality. 1 2 3 4
14. I help others with new ways of looking at new and complex ideas or concepts. 1 2 3 4
15. I ensure poor performance is corrected. 1 2 3 4
16. As long as things are going smoothly, I am satisfied. 1 2 3 4

17. I monitor all projects that I am in charge of to ensure the team meets its goal. 1 2 3 4
18. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate yourself as a leader?
19. Do you like setting up goals and targets? (Yes/No)
20. What is your response to someone who questions your decision-making abilities?
21. In your opinion do you respond fairly to the issues in the team? (Yes/No)
22. Are you open to suggestions from employees and co-workers? (Yes/No)
23. Are you willing to take responsibility when a team member fails to deliver against expectations? (Yes/No)
24. Do you feel employees should only take orders without asking any questions? (Yes/No)
25. Do you personally think that a leader should be reasonable? (Yes/No)
26. A leader must not hold any grudges or biases against anyone in the team. Do you agree with the statement? (Yes/No)
27. Do you feel being correct is more important than being right? (Yes/No)
28. Do you feel providing guidance without any pressure is a trait of a good leader? (Yes/No)
29. Where do you see yourself in the next five years?
30. Is there anything that you would like to add?
31. How much influence or power does the pastor have if your school is associated with a church?

Appendix E

Personal Adaptation Profile Survey

1. What challenges are you facing? What wins, — big or small, did you have last week?
2. What do you think could help improve daily communications?
3. How do you adjust to changes that you have no control over?
4. What part of your role is the most energizing?
5. What part of your role is the most draining?
6. What part of your role is the most purposeful?
7. What are the greatest challenges you face when starting a new job?
8. How do you approach a new and unfamiliar task?
9. Are you someone who can adapt to different work environments?
10. A project's direction changes suddenly. What do you do?
11. How do you prepare for impending changes?
12. How do you adjust your work style when working in a team?
13. Tell me about a significant change in your life. What did you do to adapt to handle it?
14. What is your experience with technology? What initiatives have you taken to educate yourself on new technology?
15. How would you suggest and implement a change in the company?
16. Have you ever been frustrated by change? (Yes/No)
17. What has communication been like with team leaders, managers, and directors?

Demographic Questions

1. What is your current designation/title?
2. What is your educational level?

3. How long have you been in an educational administration position?
4. How long have you been associated with the organization?

Appendix F

Institutional Review Board Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 24, 2022

Cesar Irizarry
Robert Van Engen

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-82 K-12 FLORIDA CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN CRISIS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dear Cesar Irizarry, Robert Van Engen,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2. (i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office