Leadership Styles for Incident Command.

Executive Leadership

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Abstract

The behaviors of leaders within organizations have been found to account for some of the organization's overall performance. The fire service has required more leadership from its executive fire officers because of the need for a capable coordinated emergency response necessitated by manmade or natural disasters. The Saint Paul Fire and Safety Services (SPFSS) problem is the Command Officers have no set leadership style designated for the fire ground to increase the likelihood of a successful incident outcome. This applied research project investigated the leadership style used on the fire ground by the SPFSS Commander Officers and attempted to determine if that leadership style was appropriate for the fire ground. The evaluative research method was chosen for this applied research project.

The applied research project examined the following questions:

1. What are most common leadership styles in the Fire Service?
2. What is the most predominant fire ground leadership style used by the SPFSS Command Officers?
3. Is that leadership style the most appropriate leadership style for the SPFSS Commander Officers to use on the fire ground?

The questionnaire materials consisted of a fifteen item feedback survey. The questionnaire asked twelve SPFSS Command Officers to determine the type of leadership style they used on the fire ground. Participants reported using more transactional than transformational leadership style on the fire ground and disagreed with using laisse faire leadership style on the fire ground. The SPFSS Training Division should research, train, and implement an initial transactional leadership style for their Command Officers on the fire ground, followed by transformational leadership style if the incident progresses into a larger NIMS type event.

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Introduction

Since 911, the fire service has required more leadership from its executive fire officers (EFOs). Our country's susceptibility to manmade and natural disasters along with the public's feeling of vulnerability has created an increased demand for a ready emergency response. A capable response necessitates the need to coordinate all the United States fire departments including the Saint Paul Fire and Safety services (National Incident Management System, 2004). Due to the increased threat of terrorism on America, EFOs are now responsible for improving the fire service by implementing new strategies, new missions, and new goals (Berson & Avolio, 2004).

Research shows that leaders can affect the performance of an organization. EFOs are organizational leaders responsible for directing their followers towards achieving organizational purposes by articulating the organization's mission, vision, strategy, and goals (Berson, 2004). The fire service leader must influence their followers' behaviors individually and as a group toward the achievement of departmental objectives and goals (Knabe, 1999). Today, the EFO's leadership role has reached a new critical juncture, the EFO needs to manage the many diverse issues of American workers as well as provide strong leadership in the department and on the fire ground in order to achieve the organization's goals (Athanasaw, 2003).

Times have changed creating new challenges and through necessity so have leadership styles. During the last century, prominent leaders had to deal with their own threats to national security. Those leaders dealt with two world wars, led America through a depression, rebuilt communities, and started corporations (Athanasaw, 2003). After the Great Depression, American workers were grateful to have a job and followed their leaders in a mechanical way (Athanasaw, 2003). The World War II leadership style was more of a leader than a manager who could, through his own will, drive change into an organization (Athanasaw, 2003). The advent of 911 requires a similar strong leadership style in order

to make the necessary changes to meet the needs of the fire service. The EFO must chart a new course in their role as a leader. Today, fire department management needs to command and direct, but also identify needs, communicate, empower, inspire trust, and forge a common vision for a better future (Athanasaw, 2003).

Currently, the majority of the EFO's time is spent dealing with the diverse issues of American workers. Fire service employees are higher educated than that of the previous century (Athanasaw, 2003). The average fire department employee requires to be seen as a valued human being whose ideas are, at least, seriously considered (Athanasaw, 2003). Employees want to know why and of what value their work adds to the final outcome (Athanasaw, 2003). To meet organizational goals and maintain high employee morale, EFOs must address problems caused by increased diversity, high turnover rates, poor public image, lawsuits and grievances (Katz, 1996). The best way to accomplish this task is for the executive fire manager to select a leadership style specific to the situation (Paul & Ebadi, 1989)

A problem may exist if an executive officer is unfamiliar with the leadership style needed for a specific situation and fails to pick the appropriate leadership style to favorably resolve the conflict (Vera & Crossan, 2004). This may occur if the EFO is required to move between the roles of a leader and a manager when the officer takes on the duties of the fire ground Incident Commander (IC). The same problem could exist if the EFO is required to manage the diverse issues of today's American workers and fails to pick an appropriate leadership style specific to the situation. Selecting the wrong leadership style could cause the EFO to become an ineffective manager (Vera & Crossan, 2004).

The Saint Paul Fire and Safety Services (SPFSS) problem is that the Command Officers have no set leadership style designated for the fire ground to increase the likely hood of a successful incident outcome. This applied research project study is to discover which leadership style is being

used on the fire ground by the SPFSS Commander Officers and attempt to determine if that leadership style is appropriate for the fire ground.

In an attempt to correct the above problems, a fire ground leadership style questionnaire will be sent out to determine what is the most predominant leadership style used on the fire ground by the SPFSS Command Officers. The applied research project will examine the following questions:

1. What are most common leadership styles in the Fire Service?
2. What is the most predominant fire ground leadership style used by the SPFSS Command Officers?
3. Is that leadership style the most appropriate leadership style for the SPFSS Commander Officers to use on the fire ground?

This evaluative research project will include a literature of appropriate topics to explain past trends. The report will also include published studies from reference sources and input from SPFSS standard operating procedures and memoranda.

Background and Significance

Through out the history of organizational management, Fire Chiefs have not followed the norm as managers (Knabe, 1999). Like business managers, Fire Chiefs manage multiple roles within their departments using several leadership styles (FEMA, 2005, sm5-1). What makes Fire Chiefs unique is that they must also manage emergency incidents (Knabe, 1999). Unlike business managers Fire Chiefs make life and death decisions in their role as the IC (Knabe, 1999). The leadership style they choose for the fire ground can affect the incident outcome for all involved. To have a successful fire ground incident the IC must pick an appropriate leadership style specific to the situation (Vera & Crossan, 2004).

Matching the appropriate leadership style to the type of fire ground situation could result in increasing successful incident outcomes. Increasing successful outcomes could aid the SPFSS in meeting the United States Fire Administration (USFA) objectives aimed at reducing fire fighter fatalities by 25% within five years and by 50% within ten years (National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. [NFFF], 2004). The appropriate leadership could also help meet one or more of the following USFA operational objectives:

a. Reduce the loss of life from fire in age group 14years old and below.
b. Reduce the loss of life from fire in age group 65 years old and above.
c. Reduce the loss of life from fire fighters.

If a proper leadership style is utilized by the IC on the fire ground it could allow the SPFSS to meet the March 2004 USFA established 16 major life safety initiatives (NFFF, 2004), (see Appendix A). The following three of the 16 initiatives deal directly with fire ground management:

1. Define and advocate the need for a cultural change within the fire service relating to safety; incorporating leadership, management, supervision, accountability and personal responsibility.
2. Focus greater attention on the integration of risk management with incident management at all levels, including strategic, tactical, and planning responsibilities.
3. National standards for emergency responses policies and procedures should be developed and championed (USFA, 2004).

This research on matching the appropriate leadership style to the type of fire ground situation could result in reducing fire ground line of duty deaths (LODD) and satisfy the applied research project requirements for the 2006 Executive Leadership class. This research relates to Unit 5, Managing Multiple Roles (FEMA, 2005, sm5-1).

Due to the inherent danger of a fire ground for responding personnel, fire departments should ensure that their ICs are well trained. Designating an appropriate leadership style for the fire ground and providing the necessary training in leadership could improve an IC's decision making, and focus which could result in decreased property loss, decreased fire victim fatalities, and decreased LODDs. A designated leadership style for the fire ground should build trust in the leader, build self and collective efficacy, and allow the IC to make the right decision sometimes with very little information (Berson & Avolio, 2004).

Literature Review

The behaviors of leaders within organizations have been found to account for some of the organization's overall performance. Leadership style has been identified as an important area of interest. O'Regan and Ghobadian (2004) define performance measurements as consisting of quantitative indicators used by management to judge how well an organization is doing. Definitions of leadership depend on whether they emphasize leadership behaviors or the results of those behaviors (Jex, 2002). One definition of leadership states that leaders influence people to strive willingly and enthusiastically toward achieving the group's mission (O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004). Another view defines leadership as a series of functions that need to be carried out for a group to be effective (Jex, 2002). Interest in leadership has led to a distinction being made between leadership and management. A manager carries out administrative duties and exerts control over subordinates' behavior, while a leader carries out the required administrative functions along with inspiring and motivating members to strive for excellence, and when needed facilitating change in organizations (Jex, 2002). The difference between management and leadership consists of the following: managers obtain reluctant compliance from subordinates, while a leader obtains commitment from his or her subordinates (Jex, 2002).

Leadership is the process of influencing followers so they cooperate. Social identity theory explains how group membership influences behavior. A social identity analysis of leadership emphasizes that leaders are members of groups of people who influence the context of the organization they lead (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). Since individuals have a fundamental need to belong to social groups, their need promotes cooperation because they want to maintain their membership in the group (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2002). Cooperative leaders are associated with teams who cooperate more, share critical information, focus on gathering a team solution and accept criticism without retribution (Peterson, Smith, Martorana & Owens, 2003). When Individuals identify with the group, the group's successes or failures are experienced as personal successes or failures (Kark, Shamir, Chen, 2003). Group members who cooperate and identify with the group's goals are more likely to achieve group goals than groups who have uncooperative members.

Leaders can influence the organizational climate by showing support and offering rewards to members in return for their cooperation (Zohar & Luira, 2004). An effective method of influencing culture change is achieved through the use of human resources policies, management practices and reward systems that reflect, reinforce, and guide the organization's culture (Katz & Miller, 1996). Employee trust in leaders is influenced by the level of perceived fairness or justice reflected in the organizational practices of distributing rewards and benefits. According to Dirks and Ferrin (2002), procedural justice is an indicator of the leader's tendency to be fair when making decisions about rewards; distributive justices is the fairness of outcomes a follower receives as a result of those procedures; and interactional justice involves the degree of respect with which the leader treats the follower as they carry out organizational policies and procedures. Dirks and Ferrin (2002) found that trust in leadership is related to attitudinal, behavioral, and performance outcomes.

Trust is a key concept in many leadership theories, such as the leader-member exchange theory, and leader behavior (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Trust is important because leaders often have the power to impact followers' rewards and their ability to achieve goals. Followers will attempt to draw inferences about their leader's characteristics such as integrity, dependability, fairness, and ability because these inferences have consequences for work behavior and attitudes (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). If employees feel their leader cannot be trusted, the employees will spend energy on protecting themselves and this will detract from their performance (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Individuals who feel their leader will demonstrate care and consideration may go above and beyond their job role which will result in higher performance and possibly in extra-role behaviors (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Extra-role behaviors such as helping a co-worker who has been absent or being courteous are called organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and are not part of the employees' formal job description (Jex, 2002).

Building of the subordinates' trust in the manager's leadership starts with the manager's ability to lead and administer the department (Knabe, 1999). Mutual trust needs to be in place before a crisis. According to Bass (1985), one of the most important conditions that a manager must instill in his subordinates prior to problem solving is trust by his employees in his ability to lead. Trust can be instilled in employees when managers respect employees, display moral courage in times of crisis, value right and wrong, follow rules, and, request and use input from the employees for the betterment of the organization (Bass, 1985; Kelly, 2005; Knabe, 1999). The manager that promotes trust between himself and his subordinates will strengthen his ability to lead in times of crisis.

Effective Leadership

Effective leaders understand the characteristics of their organizational culture and develop strategies such as problem solving and communication styles to influence their followers performance so their followers will strive toward the achievement of departmental objectives and goals (Katz &

Miller, 1996; Knabe, 1999; O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004). In addition to leading their own organizations leaders may be required to work with other organizations. This is important today when federal, state, and private funding initiatives are mandating coalitions, collaborations, and other inter-organizational approaches to address important community, social and health issues (Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 2001). Mizrahi & Rosenthal (2001) found effective coalition leadership requires knowledge, skills and an equitable structure and process for decision making and allocating resources and benefits to members in order for the coalition to be successful. These same leadership skills required for leading coalitions are also used for leading groups.

An effective leader who has the appropriate leadership style for the situation and problem can increase their followers' performance. Effective leadership is demonstrated by influencing and guiding the activities of the team toward achieving its goals (Judge, Colbert & Ilies, 2004). According to Jex (2002), goals direct our attention, focus our efforts, and help maintain task persistence which helps individuals avoid getting sidetracked. By guiding the group, a leader enhances group processes and facilitates the development of collective efficacy which has an influence on group outcomes (Chen & Bliese, 2002; Foti & Miner, 2003; Paul & Ebadi, 1989). According to Chen and Bliese (2002), group members' work experience, role clarity, and work related stress affect their beliefs of self efficacy and performance outcomes. Effective leaders are clearly understood and can act quicker to achieve organizational goals (Judge, 2004).

Some variance in group performance can be explained by identifying the personality of the leader and the type and quality of the interaction of the management team (Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003). If a leader can bring his or her top management teams (TMT) and frontline workers in line with the organization's goals, the organization's outcomes may improve. This ability of leaders to shift group members' focus from self-interest to collective interest has been shown to account for

performance variances within firms. Leaders may need to possess the intelligence to make effective decisions, the dominance to convince others, the achievement and motivation to persist, and other traits if they are to emerge as leaders and be seen as effective (Judge, Colbert, & Illies, 2004). O'Regan and Ghobadian (2004) found that when a gap exists between an organization's actual strategy and intended strategy, the failure can be traced back to the organization's leadership.

Different leadership styles produce different outcomes and are suited for different times and situations**.** By the1940s, the three basic leadership styles used by managers of that time were autocratic, democratic, and laissez faire, (Vera & Crossan, 2004; Stowell, 2004). The autocratic style was a controlling type leadership style that expected managers to make all the decisions for the employees and was orientated toward how the work was done (Stowell, 2004). The democratic leadership style had a balanced concern for high quality of work for the company and the wellbeing of employee (Stowell, 2004). The democratic leadership style exerted minimal control over the employees and involved the employees in the decision making process (Stowell, 2004). The third leadership style was laissez faire. Managers who used laissez faire leadership style exercised little control of employees, made few decisions, and had a high concern for employee wellbeing (Stowell, 2004).

By the 1970's, more research had been completed to improve the leadership style used by management (Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003). The research focused on using the right leadership style for the right situation in order to achieve a positive organizational outcome and building trust in the managers in order to increase their ability to lead in times of crisis (Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003). The three leadership styles had been further defined as the transactional, transformational, and laissez faire (Vera & Crossan, 2004; Stowell, 2004).

Before the 1980s most leadership research focused on transactional leaders (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003). However, today transformational leadership is a prominent topic because of its relevance to organizations competing in a changing global economy (Lim & Ployhart, 2004; Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003). Three styles of leadership will be discussed in this paper: transactional, transformational, and laissez faire. Laissez faire leadership style is described by Bass (1985) as passive management in the absence of active management. The laissez faire leadership style abdicates or relinquishes the leadership role, avoids providing direction, shows a lack of caring for what the followers do, and pursues busy work (Bass, 1985, O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004). For this reason the laissez faire leadership style is deemed an inappropriate leadership style for today's public service manager (Bass, 1985, O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004). Bass (1985) operationalized transactional leadership as consisting of (1) providing contingent rewards (the leader selectively reinforces subordinates' behaviors with rewards), and (2) management by exception (correcting failures while they occur). Transformational leaders are held in high regard by their followers. A transformational leader will inspire, and provide individual consideration and intellectual stimulation to subordinates to challenge their creativity in pursuit of the organization's goals (Bono & Judge, 2004; Bossink, 2004). Transactional leaders give followers something they want in return for something the leader wants, while transformational leaders are able to influence followers so they identify with the needs of the leader (Judge, & Piccolo, 2004). Generally, when members identify with their leader they are more committed to the organization and will attempt to work harder. Therefore the proper use of leadership styles can produce positive organizational outcomes and assist managers in building trust between management and subordinates (Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003; O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004). The most effective leaders are able to choose the right leadership for the situation (Vera & Crossan, 2004; O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004).

Transformational Leader

The four components of the transformational leadership style are charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Berson & Avolio, 2004; Knabe, 1999; Walumbwa & Lawler, 3003; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). The charismatic leader creates an emotional connection between himself or herself and the subordinate which causes the employee to follow the leader (Bass, 1985; Kelly, 2005). While charismatic leadership motivates the individual, inspirational motivation inspires the entire organization and increase organizational effectiveness especially during times of need (Bass, 1985; Kelly, 2005). By articulating a vision to his followers, the transformational leader can use intellectual stimulation for long term problem solving by having have his subordinates supply input to promote new ideas (Bass, 1985; Kelly, 2005). The final component, individualized consideration gives personal attention to the subordinate and treats them differently according to their needs (Bass, 1985; Kelly, 2005). Since transformational leaders form relationships with their subordinates, they are better able to communicate the goals of the organization to the employee and influence the employee to help achieve those goals especially during times of crisis (Berson & Avolio, 2004; FEMA, 2005; Knabe, 1999).

The influence of transformational leaders is based on motivating followers to perform beyond usual expectations by transforming the followers' beliefs, attitudes and values into those of the organization (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). Transformational leaders have been found to be more aware of their environment, better able to assimilate emerging trends into their strategic vision and more able to create agreement over goals which may be why they are better at inspiring their followers (Berson & Avolio, 2004). Transformational leaders inspire followers by connecting the followers' self-concept to the mission statement of the organization (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003**;** Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003). Once the followers "buy in" to the mission, their tasks can become more significant and they

can develop an identity with their job which increases their willingness to contribute to group objectives (Whittington, Goodwin, & Murray, 2004). The followers' "buy in" is accomplished by inspiring them with a picture of an optimistic future that provides meaning and challenge for the followers (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003; Whittington, Goodwin, & Murray, 2004).

The follower's identification with the organization's/transformational leader's mission is important and plays a role in motivational and behavioral consequences because a motivated employee believes in his or her ability to cope and perform successfully (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). Followers of a transformational leader exhibit higher levels of commitment to the organization's mission, a willingness to work harder, greater levels of trust in their leader, and higher levels of group cohesiveness (Berson & Avolio, 2004). These followers go beyond their self-interest to realize the vision of the transformational leader, which may enhance cooperative behavior such as OCBs and group performance (De Creamer & van Knippenberg, 2002). Followers of transformational leaders also had more interest in seeking out work-related information to accomplish their goals than followers of non-transformational leaders (Berson & Avolio, 2004). Thus, transformational leadership style can result in an individual's growth, independence, and the empowerment (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003).

The core of transformational leadership is the ability of the leader to motivate followers to perform at a higher level than they were originally expected to perform (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). The higher level of performance results in a variety of positive individual and organizational outcomes. Some positive outcomes are organizational commitment, satisfaction with supervision, extra effort, lower turnover intention, organizational citizenship, and overall employee performance that is related to transformational leadership behaviors (TLB) (Bommer, Rubin, & Baldwin, 2004). Positive outcomes are achieved because transformational leaders instill trust, encourage new ideas, show

consideration and allow flexibility so their followers are better able to meet goals (O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004).

Social exchange is a key element in transformational leadership. Transformational leaders display more individual consideration by showing general support for their followers' efforts, and concern for their welfare (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004; Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003; Zohar, 2002). Individualized consideration is shown by leaders being available to followers, paying attention to the specific needs of followers (often by assigning tasks based on abilities), promoting learning by inspiring members, encouraging dialogue among members, providing mentoring and coaching along with timely feedback, which increases motivation (Vera & Crossan, 2004; Whittington, Goodwin, & Murray, 2004). Transformational leaders work with their followers to generate creative solutions to complex problems, while allowing them to handle more responsibility thereby enhancing their performance capacity (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003). In this way a manager can improve on individual subordinate's weaknesses and create a future manager succession program (FEMA, 2005). Through the use of TLB, leaders challenge and motivate their followers to achieve the organization's goals. The followers of the transformational leaders assume that their performance is consistent with the leader's vision and will be rewarded (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leaders place less emphasis on the relationship and more on the character- based issues of fairness and integrity (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). While transformational leaders establish a social exchange relationship with followers by building trust, transactional leaders establish an exchange relationship between the leader and employees based on the benefits of cooperation (Athanasaw, 2003; Kuo, 2004; O'Regan & Ghabadin, 2004). The exchange relationship between

leaders and followers in an organization can be the wages or prestige the follower receives for complying with the leader.

Transactional leaders seek to strengthen the organization's culture, strategy and structure by encouraging routine (Vera & Crossan, 2004). These leaders take advantage of the organization's current learning, culture, structure, strategy, procedures and systems by emphasizing existing values, routines and focusing on increasing efficiency in current practices (Vera & Crossan, 2004). This type of leader focuses on standardization, formalization, efficiency, and the mastery of current learning in order to get the job done. Transactional leaders pay attention to deviations, mistakes or irregularities and make corrections (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Transactional leadership is internally oriented with a strong emphasis on control (O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004).

Laissez Faire Leadership

The laissez faire leadership style is a passive approach to leadership. According to O'Regan and Ghobadian (2004) laissez faire has little to offer in today's dynamic business environment because of its lack of responsiveness. Laissez faire leadership is considered management by exception because leaders take the passive approach until a serious problem arises (Bono & Judge, 2004). This style of leadership is the avoidance of decision making until problems arise that impair the organization's performance (Bono & Judge, 2004; O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004). This style is reactive, only taking action when things go wrong and passive because an intervention takes place as a last resort (O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004).

Leadership Fit

Researchers have studied the effects of leadership, but are unclear why people choose one style over another. The theory of planned behavior has been used in organizations to help predict behavior. The theory of planned behavior states that intentions are related to an individual's attitude toward the

behavior, an individual's subjective norms -his or her perception of social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior, and the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (Ajzen, 2002). The more favorable the attitude and the subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control of an individual, the likelihood of an individual performing the behavior also increases. In other words, an individual's behavior depends on their attitude and the attitude of others. According to Bommer, Rubin, and Baldwin (2004), the theory of planned behavior is a basis for why leaders choose transformational leadership behaviors.

The use of transformational leadership style is dependent on the level of cynicism in the organization. Cynicism has been defined as an attitude of contempt, frustration, and distrust toward an object or multiple objects (Bommer, Rubin & Baldwin, 2004). Leaders are more likely to use the transformational style if there is less cynicism to change. Since transformational leadership style is usually found in organizations undergoing change, an individual's behavioral intention is affected by their cynicism regarding change (Bommer, Rubin & Baldwin, 2004; Workman, 2005). Therefore, individuals who are cynical about organizational change are less likely to engage in transformational leadership behaviors. People may resist change because they believe the change will have a negative impact, or out of fear of the unknown (Jex, 2000). Transformational leaders overcome fear by inspiring and exciting people to change. Bommer, Rubin, and Baldwin (2004) found that the level of transformational leadership behaviors exhibited by managers was positively related to the transformational leadership behaviors of their managerial peers. This means that when more managers exhibit transformational leadership behaviors in an organization, this exhibited behavior cancels out some of cynicism's negative effects on leader.

Transformational leadership style is suited for "selling" a strategic vision for change or changing the organization's institutionalized learning environment (Hutton, 2004; Vera & Crossan,

2004; O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004). Transformational leaders are more likely to reflect current and changing social values that emerge during periods of crisis and change because they can communicative new ideas and a vision for the future, sometimes creating new strategic directions (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Berson & Avolio, 2004). After a crisis, transformational leaders may need to acknowledge the pain and trauma followers feel before helping them collectively envision a better future (Bligh, Kohles, & Meindl, 2004). These leaders will express an optimistic vision of the future by using inspirational communication, such as positive and encouraging messages, to overcome resistance to change (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004).

Transformational leadership style is associated with organizational structures that are more adaptive, decentralized, utilizing teams and shared data-bases (Vera & Crossan, 2004). In general, adaptive organizations are considered risk oriented and focus on expanding new markets (Berson & Avolio, 2004). Transformational leaders are considered open and flexible because they create a culture that challenges institutionalized learning environments and motivates employees to try new ways of doing things (Vera & Crossan, 2004). They emphasize collective achievement and goals and believe diverse expertise and backgrounds are more valuable than homogenous groups (Lim & Ployhart, 2004; Vera & Crossan, 2004; Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003). The ability of transformational leaders to build trust helps foster the dissemination and acceptance of the organization's strategic goals (Berson & Avolio, 2004). According to Bass, Avolio, Jung, and Berson (2003), a strong relationship exists between transformational leadership and long-term performance because transformational leaders create an inspired and committed culture.

If transformational leadership provides the vision for an organization, then transactional leadership style provides the frame work for achieving the vision (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Organizations that use a commander or paramilitary type of centralized control to run the organization

typically use the transactional leadership style (Hutton, 2004; Jacobs, 1998; Knabe, 1999). The transactional leadership style provides a rigid structure that closely supervises employees. The increased supervision usually means better safety records, and enables the organization to carry out more complex operating procedures than other leadership styles (Hutton, 2004; Zohar & Luria, 2004; Bass, 2003). When a problem arises, the problem is passed up through the chain of command to the top of the organization for a solution; the solution is then pasted down the chain of command for implementation (Hutton, 2004). This is done for work related reasons to provide stability, efficiency, quality, and work reliability (Berson, 2004; Hutton, 2004). Internal communications for this type of organization are culturally strict. Communicating without regard to rank is considered a violation of the culture and is seen as inappropriate (Hutton, 2004). This type of stringent communication protocol may be detrimental to an organization in crisis.

Transactional leadership style is found more often in a well-order society. Transactional leadership style is best suited for times of stability when organizations need to refresh, reinforce, and refine current learning or increase efficiency (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Typically, transactional leaders are found in cultures that are considered more bureaucratic. These leaders are concerned with stability and tend to endorse more conservative goals (Berson & Avolio, 2004). Transactional leaders are by the book, the organization knows exactly where the transactional leader stands and in times of crisis this can be beneficial for the subordinates because the employee knows how the manager will approach the situation (Hutton, 2004, Curtis, 1996). Transactional leaders will follow standard operating procedure and stay on target which makes them a good fit for the public service organization (Curtis, 1996).

Transactional leadership behaviors become more important as organizations grow. New entrepreneurial companies need transactional leadership to codify current practices, put routines in place, and communicate organizational norms and values (Vera & Crossan, 2004). These leaders

control ambiguity by formalizing and standardizing teaching (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Transactional leaders of stable organizations are more reactive, they focus on what works and how to keep the system running (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Transactional leadership is correlated with short-term performance strategy, while laissez faire leadership style was not related to any strategy characteristics (O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004).

Although transformational and transactional leadership are very different styles, both leadership styles have their place in organizations. Transformational leadership behaviors emphasize follower empowerment and are consistent with the current trend for organizations to be less hierarchical, more flexible, more team oriented and participative (Kark, 2004). According to Bass, (1985) & Kelly, (2005) the most effective leadership style in a time of crisis is the transformational leader because they are quick to respond to change. Transformational leadership style is considered more proactive and effective than transactional, or laissez faire leadership in terms of motivating followers to achieve higher performance (Berson & Avolio, 2004). According to Bass, Avolio, Jung, and Berson (2003), transactional leaders establish clear standards and expectations of performance while transformational leaders energize groups to persist when conditions are unpredictable, difficult, and stressful. Transformational leaders are relations- oriented while transactional leaders are task-oriented (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Transformational leaders focus on managing and institutionalizing radical change whereas transactional leaders seek efficiency goals and incremental evolution of the status quo (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Transactional leaders are considered closed and rule bound because they see change as risky and work within the system to create an internal environment that is closed to change (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Transactional leaders are common in public service organization (Stowell, 2004).

According to Vera and Crossan (2004), a leader can be transactional, transformational, both or neither because transformational leadership builds on transactional leadership and on contingent reward behaviors. Strategic leaders use a combination of transactional and transformational leadership styles to manage their subordinates in varying degrees (Bass, 1985). By combining transactional and transformational leadership styles, the strategic leader can identify the leadership style appropriate for the circumstances in order to achieve the organization's goals (Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003). Strategic leaders see the benefit in supporting the efficiency of tradition to control the basic operation of the organization (Vera & Crossan, 2004). The strategic leader supports autonomy ensuring that local responsibility and increase accountability are maintained (Vera & Crossan, 2004). If the strategic leader determines the organization needs new organizational elements he will drive cultural, strategic, and structural change into the organization using transformational leadership style (Vera & Crossan, 2004; Hutton, 2004). But once the change is implemented he will switch to transactional leadership to provide the power to control the new norm (Vera & Crossan, 2004, Hutton, 2004).

The ideal strategic leaders are conscientiousness, emotionally stable, extraverted, open and agreeable (Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003). Because they can accept criticism openly without retribution, they make decisions by carefully considering alternatives (Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003). Their successful decision making is built on carefully surveying their alternatives, conducting an extensive dispassionate search for relevant information and they make contingency plans (Berson & Avolio, 2004; Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003). Because the strategic leader sees change as less risky, strategic leaders will preserve the local autonomy, while at the same time support greater risk taking, which helps bring about change in time of crisis (Berson, 2004; Vera & Crossan, 2004).

The ability to adapt leadership styles varies across individuals because people differ in values, orientations, and preferences as well as in their effectiveness in using different leadership styles (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Bono and Judge (2004) found little support linking personality to transformational and transactional leadership styles. Empirical evidence suggests that transformational and transactional leadership behaviors can be taught (Bono & Judge, 2004). Because leadership behaviors can be taught, an ideal leader would be able to identify and exercise the appropriate leadership behaviors for their organization's circumstances. Adaptive leaders would be able to preserve autonomy, support risk taking, and ensure responsibility and accountability (Vera & Crossan, 2004). The ability to adapt is important because in a stable environment, transformational leadership can be dysfunctional if followers do not perceive the need to change and reject the leader's vision (Vera & Crossan, 2004). According to Rooke and Torbert (2005), leaders who are willing to develop themselves and become more aware of their environment can become transformational leaders. The difference between leaders is how they interpret their surroundings and react when their power or safety is challenged (Rooke & Torbert, 2005). Because leaders are required to fill many roles and maintain relationships with many individuals on different levels, social perceptiveness and behavior flexibility are important factors in their success (Foti & Miner, 2003).

The strategic leader's ability to combine transactional and transformational leadership styles makes the strategic leader so rare that the current public service administrator of the organization may not be a strategic leader (Stowell, 2004). In this case, an organizational leader could find individual command staff members to balance transactional and transformational leadership styles in order to maintain organizational stability (Vera & Crossan, 2004; Hutton, 2004). The public service administer could then use a common vision and a core set of values to act as a glue and have the different leadership styles work together (Vera & Crossan, 2004; Hutton, 2004). No matter what leadership style

the public service administrator prefers to use, there is a need to educate the executive fire officer about leadership styles so they can use the appropriate styles to fit the situation, including the SPFSS fire ground.

Procedures

This evaluative research method was chosen for this applied research project. The research procedure for the paper began with a literature review at the Learning Resource Center (LRC) in the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) during May of 2006. The literature review included an internet search for leadership styles in journal articles, books, SPFD memoranda, NFA applied research papers and government reports.

The questionnaire materials consisted of a 15 item feedback survey with five questions on the following three leadership styles: transformational, laisse faire, and transactional (see Appendixes B and C). In May 2006, the surveys were sent by interoffice mail to 12 SPFSS Command Officers. The questionnaire asked the participant to determine what type of leadership style they used as a commander on a fire ground. A four-point Likert scale was used in order to eliminate a neutral response to the leadership questions. The responses were strongly disagree = 1, disagree =2, agree =3, and strongly agree = 4.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data (see Table 1 and Graph 1). The mean and the standard deviation were used to summarize the average response and the average measure of how much each of the scores in the sample differed from the sample means (Pelham, 1999). The hypothesis is that most Command Officers will use the transactional leadership style on the fire ground.

The City of Saint Paul has 12 SPFSS Command Officers to manage 55.4 square miles, with a population of 287,151 (SPFSS, 2004). The SPFSS operates 16 fire stations, 459 authorized personnel,

and a general fund operation budget of $39,833,158 (SPFSS, 2004). SPFSS has 40,003 fire EMS responses (SPFSS, 2004).

Ten participants responded to the SPFSS leadership questionnaire (see Appendixes B and C). Participants had over twenty years of firefighting experience, five years as a chief, and had taken an average of two classes at the National Fire Academy.

The scope of the SPFSS fire ground leadership questionnaire was limited to the 12 command officers. These officers act as the SPFSS ICs who respond to fire ground events and assume command of those incidents.

The survey had some limitations. The questionnaire did not ask when and why the command officer's leadership style would change on the fire ground. The questionnaire did not ask which leadership styles the command officers would use for managing their multiple roles with-in the SPFSS departments. Further research needs to be done to find if the leadership styles the command officers prefers to use in managing those roles may or may not be appropriate styles to fit those situations.

Results

Participants reported that they agree with using transactional leadership style on the fire ground an average 3.56 (SD=.5) and agree with using transformational leadership style an average of 3.18 (SD=.8) (see Table 1). This means all fire officers reported using transactional and transformational leadership on the fire ground. Fire officers reported using some transformational leadership characteristics, but not all.

Participants reported that they disagreed with using laisse faire leadership style on the fire ground an average of 1.72 (SD=.83) (see Table 1). This means the majority of fire officers disagreed or strongly disagreed with using the laisse faire leadership style on the fire ground.

The following applied research project questions can be answered using the information discovered in the literature review and results from the SPFSS fire ground leadership questionnaire. The applied research project will examine the following questions:

1. What are most common leadership styles in the Fire Service?

   The most common leadership styles in the Fire Service are transformational, transactional, and laisse faire leadership styles.

2. What is the most prevalent leadership style used by the SPFSS Command Officers for the fire ground?

   The most prevalent leadership style used by the SPFSS Command Officers for the fire ground is the transactional, followed by the transformational leadership style. The laisse faire leadership style was used the least.

3. Which leadership style would be the most appropriate for the SPFSS Commander Officers to use on the fire ground?

   The leadership style most appropriate for the SPFSS Commander Officers to use on the fire ground is the transactional leadership style.

Summary conclusions reached from the SPFSS fire ground leadership questionnaire is that initially a transactional leadership style should be used on the fire ground by the SPFSS Command Officers. As the incident progresses into a larger National Incident Management System (NIMS) event, the transactional leadership style should be followed by the transformational leadership style. The purpose of combining these leadership styles for one event is to build a sound incident command organizational structure using the transactional leadership style and then as the situation continues to develop, improve the operation using the more flexible transformational

leadership style. The laisse faire leadership style was deemed inappropriate for use on the fire ground.

Discussion

The SPFSS fire ground leadership questionnaire indicated that SPFSS incident commanders preferred the transactional leadership style on the fire ground (See Table 1**).** According to Knabe (1999) a leader should build a strong organizational foundation early in the incident which may improve the trust from his subordinates in his ability to lead. The transactional leadership style is best suited in situations where organizations should follow standard operational procedures. On the fire ground, the performance of standard operating procedures creates structures which allow the IC to take charge, give guidance and reassurance to the firefighters (Athanasaw, 2003). For example when an incident commander arrives on the scene, the transactional leadership style may be more appropriate for assigning jobs and companies on the fire ground. Research indicates that the transaction leadership style can be more efficient and effective in getting work done and having orders followed (Athanasaw, 2003). For this reason the transactional leadership style may be the initially preferred style in the beginning of an incident.

The SPFSS questionnaire supported past research indicating that the command officers routinely use transactional leadership on the fire ground and to a lesser degree the transformational leadership style (Curtis, 1996; Stowell, 2004). In the SPFSS fire ground leadership questionnaire, participants indicated that their use of the transactional style was only slightly more than the transformational style (See Table 1). Although most participants preferred the transactional leadership on the fire ground, they considered some characteristics of the transformation leadership style to be important on the fire ground. The reason for this maybe if the event evolves into a larger NIMS type incident, an IC can become a strategic leader and switch to the more flexible transformational

leadership style. The advantage of using the transformational leadership style for a larger event is that the IC may solicit and use input from the fire ground team members which develops better communication and mutual respect relationship between himself and the firefighters (Knabe, 1999). With the transformational leadership style, an IC assumes more of a leader role than a manager role.

While participants indicated that they used transactional leadership style only slightly more on average than the transformational style, the standard deviation was greater on the responses to the transformational leadership questions (See Table 1). The larger deviation in regards to the transformational leadership style questions indicates that the SPFSS Command Officers do not all agree when it is strategically appropriate to use the transformational leadership style while on the fire ground (See Table 1). The larger standard deviation on the transformational leadership style implies that more research needs to be done to determine when the use of transformational leadership style is more appropriate on the fire ground.

Combining leadership styles under the appropriate circumstances, the IC becomes a fire ground strategic leader (Vera & Crossan, 2004). The strategic IC would then be able to combine both transactional and transformational leadership styles to increase the likelihood of a successful incident outcome (Vera & Crossan, 2004). The literature review suggests that transformational leadership builds on the foundation set down by transactional leadership (Vera & Crossan, 2004). The need to develop a strong organizational foundation early in the incident may be why most ICs prefer the transactional leadership style. Also most fire ground incidents do not evolve to a NIMS type event which could be why the transactional leadership style is preferred. Building a sound incident command organizational structure is the goal of every IC (Stowell, 2004). Initially, the transactional leadership style may be better suited for saving the lives of the public and preventing the occurrence of a firefighter LODDs (Knabe, 1999, Curtis, 1996, Stowell, 2004).

Strategic leadership, the combining of leadership styles in the appropriate circumstances may also be used by the Fire Chief in the daily administration of the department (Vera & Crossan, 2004). It is important for Fire Chiefs to recognize the advantages of using multiple leadership styles in managing the multiple roles required by them in dispatching their daily duties (FEMA, 2005). The transformational leadership style seems more appropriate for the management of the day to day administration of the fire department (Stowell, 2004). But, in the fire service there is a greater need than in the business community, for Fire Chief's responding to an actual emergency to focus on transactional leadership style for fire ground incidents (Stowell, 2004).

Recommendations

Since the research is unclear why managers choose one leadership style over another, the SPFSS Training Division should research, train, and implement an initial transactional leadership style for their Command Officers on the fire ground, followed by transformational leadership style if the incident progresses into a larger NIMS type event. The fire ground leadership style should also indicate that the laisse faire leadership style is deemed inappropriate for use on the fire ground.

By designating the transactional leadership style for the fire ground and providing the necessary leadership training to our Command Officers it could increase the IC’s decision making focus and possibly result in decreased property loss, decreased fire victim fatalities, and decreased LODDs. Designating transactional leadership style for the fire ground should build trust in the leader, build self and collective efficacy, and allow the IC to make the right decision sometimes with very little information (Berson & Avolio, 2004; Paul & Ebadi, 1989).

Further study needs to be done to determine when and under what criteria the leadership style on the fire ground should shift from transactional to transformational. In addition, further study needs

to be done to discover which leadership styles are appropriate for each of the multiple roles the EFO is expected to fill in the daily administration of the department. An EFO must work with federal, state, and private funding initiatives to collaborate in addressing important community, social and health issues (Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 2001). Today's EFO must provide coalition leadership, knowledge, skills and a process for decision making and allocating resources and benefits to the members in order for the coalition to be successful. These same leadership styles required for leading coalitions are also used for leading the Saint Paul Fire and Safety Services.

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Appendix A

Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives

1. Define and advocate the need for a cultural change within the fire service relating to safety; incorporating leadership, management, supervision, accountability and personal responsibility.

2. Enhance the personal and organizational accountability for health and safety throughout the fire service.

3. Focus greater attention on the integration of risk management with incident management at all levels, including strategic, tactical, and planning responsibilities.

4. All firefighters must be empowered to stop unsafe practices.

5. Develop and implement national standards for training, qualifications, and certification (including regular recertification) that are equally applicable to all firefighters based on the duties they are expected to perform.

6. Develop and implement national medical and physical fitness standards that are equally applicable to all firefighters, based on the duties they are expected to perform.

7. Create a national research agenda and data collection system that relates to the initiatives.

8. Utilize available technology wherever it can produce higher levels of health and safety.

9. Thoroughly investigate all firefighter fatalities, injuries, and near misses.

10. Grant programs should support the implementation of safe practices and/or mandate safe practices as an eligibility requirement.

11. National standards for emergency response policies and procedures should be developed and championed.

12. National protocols for response to violent incidents should be developed and championed.

13. Firefighters and their families must have access to counseling and psychological support.

14. Public education must receive more resources and be championed as a critical fire and life safety program.

15. Advocacy must be strengthened for the enforcement of codes and the installation of home fire sprinklers.

16. Safety must be a primary consideration in the design of apparatus and equipment.

Appendix B

Questionnaire Cover Letter

June 6th, 2006

United States Fire Administration

National Fire Academy
Executive Fire Officer Program
Applied Research Project

Fire ground Leadership Style Questionnaire

From:
St. Paul Fire Captain Stanley Jadwinski
Station 17, A shift.
Work 651-776-1683, Work: stanley.jadwinski@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Home Address: 11860 Mentzer Trail, Lindstrom, MN. 55045
Home 651-257-4137
E-mail addresses:
Home: vickyj@citlink.net

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am currently enrolled in the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program. I am completing my final class, Executive Leadership. The purpose of this applied research project is to discover which leadership style is being used on the fire ground by the Saint Paul Fire Department Command Officers.
If you would please fill out the fire ground Leadership Style Questionnaire it will help me gather the needed information to write an accurate Applied Research Project.

This information is important for the Executive Fire Officer Program and the City of Saint Paul. Please complete the questionnaire and reply by hard copy with in one week. The questionnaire may be returned by department mail or mailed to my home address listed above. Include any extra materials you may think would be helpful. Your answers will be kept anonymous. Feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely
Fire Captain Stanley Jadwinski

Appendix C

Fire ground Leadership Style Questionnaire.

Each of the following statements describes a certain leadership behavior, characteristic, or effect that a fire ground commander may have on an incident or an organization. Read each statement carefully and decide to what extent it is an accurate description of you while in command of a fire incident. It is important that you answer all the questions, even though it maybe difficult at times.

To answer a question, please circle the most correct number:

1. I expect firefighters on the fire ground to comply with my orders without hesitation.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

2. I acknowledge fire ground accomplishments and reward firefighters appropriately.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

3. I believe the tried and tested method of fire ground management is the best way to consistently produce positive incident outcomes.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

4. I create fire ground objectives that are clear and concise.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

5. I give firefighters the authority they need to complete their fire ground duties.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

6. If I can, I avoid intervening in problems between firefighters on the fire ground .

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

7. I will let company officers run the incident and only intervene as a last resort.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

8. Usually the fire fighters know what to do so I only take action if things go wrong.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

9. I like to observe the situation and wait to take action until management is needed.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

10. I give firefighters complete and total flexibility in completing their fire ground duties.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

11. I on the fire ground the firefighters trust me to make the right decision.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

12. On the fire ground I’m willing to try new and creative alternatives over preserving the status quo.

Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

1……..….2……..…3…….4

13. I allow innovative fire fighting techniques to be put to the test on the fire ground.

    Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

    1……..….2……..…3…….4

14. While on the fire ground I am concerned about the firefighter's feelings as well as their ideas.

    Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

    1……..….2……..…3…….4

15. Conveying my fire ground fire fighting strategies to firefighters increases their effort.

    Strongly Disagree…Moderately Disagree.…Moderately Agree.…Strongly Agree

    1……..….2……..…3…….4

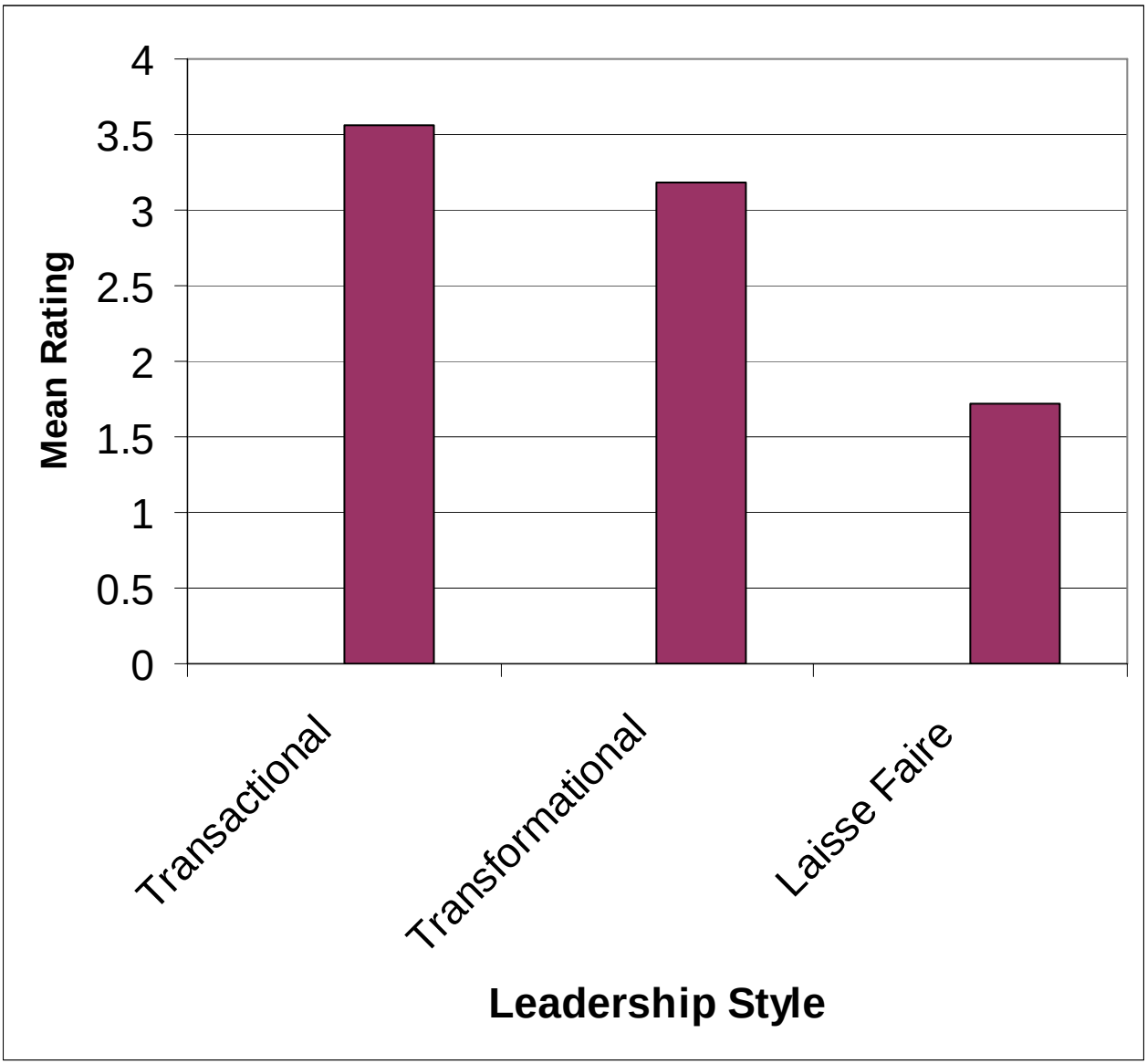
Table 1

The mean rating of leadership styles as a function of fire ground command.

Leadership style	Mean	Standard deviation
Transactional	3.56	.50
Transformational	3.18	.80
Laisse faire	1.72	.83

Figure Caption

Figure 1. The mean rating of leadership styles as a function of fire ground command.


Mean Rating
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
Transactional
Transformational
Laisse Faire
Leadership Style