

Lead Your Children and Raise Your Employees: The Connection Between Parenting and
Leadership in a Public Administration Setting

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to establish whether a relationship exists between parenting and leadership among public administration professionals. Although there has been considerable research in both fields as independent disciplines, there is minimal information on potential relationships between the two subjects. This is surprising because parents are the first leaders each of us are introduced to in childhood. Similar to leaders, parents must use their experiences as a guide for leading their children, inspire and lead by example, and set clear goals to maintain order within the household. These similarities caused me to ponder the value of parenting in leadership. However, the paucity of published research on this subject leads one to conclude that the role of parenting is historically undervalued as a leadership skill that could be used within the workplace. This study was designed to explore the gap between these two subjects by focusing on the following research question.

Does a relationship exist between parenting and leadership, especially in a public administration setting?

In order to answer this question, the study followed a qualitative research model where semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine public administration professionals who were parents.

These individuals were selected from the fields of criminal justice, education and social services. Such diverse agencies were chosen in order to include a broad a range of views and perspectives about leadership and parenting while eliminating possible biases which may have occurred if only agencies with similar missions (i.e., all law enforcement) had been selected. In addition, document analysis from questionnaires and other books and web sources were referenced in this research in order to broaden its scope.

Interestingly, the above approach resulted in some very intriguing findings. Female participants were more likely to see a relationship between leadership and parenting than their male counterparts. The culture of an organization weighed heavily in the participant's perspectives about parenting and leadership. Those from the Virginia Department of Education (a more female dominated organization) felt parenting did influence their leadership styles while the majority of subjects from the Bureau of Prisons (a more male dominated agency) did not see a relationship. Stage in life and experience were found to influence competence and clarity in leadership style as well as in recognizing relationships between parenting and leadership. Finally, several of the participants were found to have adopted a situational leadership approach in both their parenting and/or their leadership styles.

The above noted findings have provided some useful information that could be a first step in improving the fields of leadership and parenting by opening new possibilities for understanding the interconnectedness of work and family life. Currently, most

researchers study leadership as something that occurs at work and parenting as it takes place in the home. Integrating the two disciplines could be useful in the development of leadership and parenting training courses. It could also help experts in the field of leadership to understand the developmental aspects of how relationships between good leaders and followers grow. Having a leader that could motivate and empower others may create a more desirable workplace that emphasizes mutual trust and respect. In addition, the heightened sensitivity that attenuates in parents could evolve into a similar instinct in leaders. Just as parents give of themselves to create a child who is a responsible member of society, the leader could learn to give of himself or herself to develop the human capital that are his/her followers. This could create an employee who would mature into a valuable component of an organization. Gaining insight into public administrator's perceptions regarding possible connections between parenting and leadership may contribute to future research on this subject.

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Introduction

Although leadership has been examined in a variety of ways, there are almost as many definitions of the topic as there are studies that describe it. Much like the words peace, love and faith, many people understand the meaning behind them, but may interpret the words differently (Northouse, 2000). This same idea applies to the question of whether or not parenting influences leadership ability, or conversely, whether leadership influences parenting ability.

While the literature does not overtly connect the two subjects, there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to suggest that a relationship does exist (Brandt, 2004; Mackoff & Wenet, 2000; Popper & Mayseless, 2002; Crittenden, 2004).

This link is especially critical as so much of an individual's development is determined by the amount of security, leadership and guidance that a parent provides to help their children grow into self confident, autonomous, and productive members of society (Dinkmeyer, McKay & Dinkmeyer, 1989). For example, similar to leaders, parents must demonstrate authoritative characteristics to maintain order in their home. They emphasize logical consequences for breaking rules, and promote team building relationships built on trust and respect among siblings to achieve the goals of their household (Popper & Mayseless, 2002; Dinkmeyer et al., 1989). In contrast, relationships between leaders and followers can parallel those between parents and their children. For example, followers may come to depend on their leaders for guidance and support. According to Hogue (2002), during times of uncertainty ranging from national or political disasters to something as simple as organizational change, followers tend to

relate to their leaders through processes of transference and projection. As a consequence, followers are more likely to lose self-autonomy and tend to depend on their leaders to make themselves feel secure (Popper & Mayselless, 2002).

According to Popper and Mayselless (2002), leaders are similar to parents in that they are expected to fill a need for security with their followers. This need can be met as the trust relationship develops. Similar to the way a parent must put the needs of the child before self interests, leaders must remain mindful of the importance of their duty to meet their constituents' best interest while fulfilling the needs of the organization they serve (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Based on the literature, the dynamics of good parenting could help experts in the field of leadership identify the developmental aspects of how relationships between good leaders and followers grow. In addition, some of the teaching methods used to train good leaders could be adapted to assist the development of young parents.

Before an argument can be made to support the proposed link between parenting and leadership, it is necessary to investigate whether this relationship is present and if so, then what is the nature of it. Consequently, the purpose of this research is to explore public administrator's perceptions regarding possible relationships that may exist between parents and leaders. During the course of this study, many interesting findings were discovered. These will be addressed in detail in the results and discussion section of the article. However, the following is a summary of these findings:

- Cross cultural differences of leadership styles within organizations
- Gender differences in leadership and parenting styles

- Situational influences on decision making within leadership and parenting roles
- The importance of experience in leadership and parenting

Many examples of these topics are also identified in the literature and will be addressed in the following review.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: The first portion will consist of a literature review where several leadership theories ranging from a historical perspective to present will be introduced and discussed. This is necessary to gain a broader understanding of changes that have occurred in the field of leadership over the past 80 years and should serve to show gaps in the literature addressed by this study. The second section includes a discussion of methods of data collection and analysis and the limitations. The third portion of this project will address the findings and will then expand upon them in the discussion and implications section. The final segment will address the conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

In this section, I present a review of the literature which is divided into two main areas. First, it includes a summary of the history of the study of leadership. The second section explains relationships between parenting and leadership.

History of Leadership

Historically, leadership has been noticed during times of conflict when the actions of a single person have proven to be crucial to overcoming and controlling an unpleasant situation (Doyle & Smith, 2005). Leaders such as Napoleon or Julius Caesar had the foresight to determine what could and should be done in order to meet an objective. This

ability, combined with an extraordinary talent for communicating a vision that influenced people to follow them, caused scholars to seek the answer to the reasons these leaders differed from their followers (Doyle & Smith, 2005).

Over the last 80 years, numerous philosophies about leadership have been developed. Many of these theories could be described by using the following eight classifications (Doyle & Smith, 2005; Van Wagner, 2006): Great Man Theories, Trait Theories, Situational Theories, Contingency Theories, Behavioral Theories, Participative Theories, Management or Transactional Theories, and Transformational Theories. To assist in broadening the reader's general understanding of the development of leadership studies from a historical to present day context, more detail about each of these theories follows.

1) *Great Man Theories*- This philosophy is based on the premise that leaders are born and not made and it is assumed that successes are attributed to innate abilities. In this context, it is believed that during times of need, an individual rises to leadership in almost the same manner as a mythical hero. Moses would be an example of a person who fits into this mold. He rose from nowhere to lead the Hebrews from their oppression in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. The "Great Man" title emerged during an era when leadership was dominated primarily by affluent males who were in a position of power. Females and the underprivileged were not afforded the opportunity to pursue such positions (Van Wagner, 2006).

2) *Trait Theories*: This area of theory assumes that traits and inborn personality characteristics such as high energy, exceptional intelligence, extreme persistence, self confidence, and a yearning to influence others are what differentiate leaders from

followers. For many years, psychologists believed that these leadership traits were genetic and without them one could not become a leader (Avolio, 2000, p. 1). However, Stogdill (1948) determined that such a narrow view of leadership based on traits was not sufficient for distinguishing leaders from their followers, which led to the situational approach.

3) *Situational Theories*: Stogdill (1948) recognized that other characteristics, such as personality traits, were affected by the situation in which the leader was placed (Mendez-Morse, 1992; Hencley, 1973, p. 38). This particular view relies on the premise that the situation dictates which style of leadership is used. Accordingly, the ability of an individual leader to adapt to changing situations is paramount. This method became the dominant view toward leadership during the 1950s and 1960s (Doyle & Smith, 2005).

4) *Contingency Theories*: This approach stemmed from the situational philosophy. It is based on the assumption that certain environmental factors can influence which style of leadership best fits a situation (Van Wagner, 2006). Within this context, two styles of leadership might develop that help leaders to manage external factors that could influence the situation. The first refers to the task structure, which is related to task clarity, the means to task accomplishment, and task finalization. The second style is based on relationships that concentrate on the general environment of the group and the positive feelings (or lack thereof)--such as loyalty and confidence--that the group has for its leader (Fielder & Garcia, 1987). However, this model fails to identify which combination of personality traits, behaviors, and situational variables contribute to a leader's success (Mendez- Morse, 1992).

5) **Behavioral Theories:** This group of theories posits that leaders can be made through teaching and observation instead of being “born to lead” or having certain personality traits. Scholars recognized that leader behaviors often determined their success within a certain situation (Stogdill, 1948). From this perspective different patterns of behavior were grouped together, studied and subsequently labeled as different leadership styles (Doyle et al., 2001). The below noted styles were formulated from this concept:

- Concern for task: Leaders emphasize high levels of productivity and ways to organize followers and activities in order to meet those objectives.
- Concern for people: Leaders emphasize followers’ needs, interests, problems, and development.
- Directive leadership: Leaders expect subordinates to blindly follow instructions. The leader tends to be a micro manager.

Blake and Mouton’s (1960) Management Grid model was a method of showing whether leaders were more task or relationship oriented.

Concern for People	Country Club management		Team management
		Middle of the road management	
	Impoverished management		Authority-compliance
	Concern for Production (Task)		

Source: Management grid and subsequent description were retrieved

d from Changingminds.org.

Impoverished management-Based on the premise that managers put forth a minimal effort when accomplishing tasks.

Authority- Compliance- The manager shows little concern for people and concentrates on efficiently completing tasks.

Country Club Management-Encourages a participative environment with a low focus on tasks.

Middle of the Road Management-The leader focuses on people and tasks while not placing a lot of emphasis on either area.

Team Management-Leader is committed to people and tasks while followers are committed to accomplishing the task or mission.

The task and relationship views toward leadership became the dominant theories that determined an individual's style of leadership (Doyle & Smith, 2005). Although other theories emerged (see below), behaviors have continued to play an integral role in guiding research on the subject (Doyle & Smith, 2005).

6) Participative Theories: This philosophy is based on the belief that leaders should involve peers, subordinates, superiors and other stakeholders in decision-making processes while retaining the right to make the final determination. There are different types of participative decisions that include the leader selling an idea to the team and then making a final determination through collaboration; and management by objectives, where the leader describes “what” the objectives or goals are and then defers “how” they will be carried out to team members. Involving others in decision-making processes promotes individual worth and decreases competition while encouraging collaboration to achieve joint goals (Changing Minds.org, 2006). In addition, group input enhances creativity that may otherwise be absent if one individual were required to formulate ideas for achieving a certain goal by themselves (Changing Minds.org, 2006).

Although participative theories were seen as an evolutionary step forward in the study of leadership, during the 1980s a paradigm shift occurred concerning the qualities that determined a successful leader (Avolio, 2000). Bennis and Thomas (2002) and

Avolio (2000) suggest that leadership skills can be gained through life experiences. Since experiences were determined to be an important factor in this era, scholars integrated two new ideas into its study. Researchers explored the differences between leaders and managers and introduced the new characteristic of vision into the concept of leadership (Mendez-Morse, 1992). New styles of leadership emerged from this research, and the following transactional and transformational theories were created (Doyle & Smith, 2001).

7) ***Management or Transactional Theory***- Within this theoretical model, the leader is task oriented and achieves goals by using an authoritative approach such as micro-managing. The use of incentives and rewards such as monetary bonuses are also emphasized in order to accomplish the mission of the organization. Punishments such as withholding bonuses are also utilized as a consequence of failing to meet the set objectives of the organization. This philosophy does not concentrate on team building processes to accomplish tasks and focuses solely on individual behaviors (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Van Wagner, 2006). This type of leader does not typically promote creativity or trust in followers (Bennis & Thomas, 2002).

8) ***Transformational or Relationship Theories***- In this framework, transformational leaders articulate a vision and use lateral or nontraditional thinking by raising the followers' level of awareness about the significance or value of achieving goals (Carless, 1998). Transformational leaders are different from their transactional counterparts who use rewards to achieve a certain outcome. The transformational leader helps the follower transcend his/her self-interests by connecting outcomes to the team's progress instead of just the individual's (Doyle & Smith, 2001). In addition, transformational leadership

theory places great importance on development processes by empowering followers and helping them become autonomous individuals who require little to no monitoring (Popper & Maysless, 2002).

When reviewing the empathetic characteristics and team building traits associated with leadership, one cannot ignore the similarities between many of the leadership styles noted above and parenting. Good parents tend to place the needs of their family before self-interests, they use their experiences as a guide for leading their children, encourage individuality and trust, and inspire and lead by example (Dinkmeyer et al., 1989). Similar to good leaders, good parents develop with experience and require commitment to the goal of transforming children into moral and trustworthy adults (Popper & Maysless, 2002). The next section addresses parallels between these two subjects.

Parenting and Leadership

Only one article was found that addresses the parallels between parenting and leadership. Popper and Maysless' (2002) study compared attachments occurring between parents and their children to those of leaders and their followers in collectivist societies. Although the article found similarities between parenting and leadership, it does not address whether or not parenting influences one's leadership style. In addition, despite the obvious similarities between the two subjects there was no literature found that showed whether leadership may influence parenting.

As listed above, there are a variety of leadership styles that influence the dynamics of leadership. In this same regard, parenting has a similar system for identifying certain traits such as assertiveness, passiveness or negligence that impact the dynamics of parenting. Below is a listing of these styles.

Van Wagner, 2006). The use of incentives and rewards such as monetary bonuses are emphasized in order to accomplish the mission of the organization. Punishments such as withholding bonuses are also utilized as a consequence of failing to meet the set objectives of the organization (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Van Wagner, 2006). In contrast, the autocratic parenting style is based on the premise that parents use rewards and punishment to fulfill requests. Children are expected to blindly follow their parent's orders. Similar to transactional leadership, this type of parent leaves little room for creativity (Darling, 1999).

The situational leadership approach is similar to the democratic style of parenting. Both approaches require the leader/parent to weigh the maturity of the child/subordinate and then vary their approach or leadership styles based on their assessment (Mendez-Morse, 1992; Hencley, 1973; Darling, 1999). In the situational model, leaders consider the task at hand, and then delegate these tasks by identifying the correct skill level of their subordinates (Northouse, 2000). A supervisor would not send a rookie police officer with one month experience to respond to a hostage situation without a seasoned colleague to back them up. Likewise, parents who use a democratic style of leadership give choices based on a child's ability. A parent would not allow a teenager who just earned his temporary driving permit to drive without adult supervision on a busy interstate with four of his friends in the vehicle. In either situation, placing a child or an employee in a position that they were not trained for would set them up for failure.

Transformational leaders and parents who practiced active parenting seem to be the most similar of all the comparisons discussed thus far. Transformational leadership roles include guiding, directing and empowering followers by building self confidence

and establishing trusting relationships through team building processes (Popper & Maysless, 2002). Likewise, active parenting requires establishing goals for children by directing and empowering them to master new skills which promote secure attachments resulting in autonomy as they mature (Dinkmeyer et al., 1989).

Similar to the way a parent must put the needs of their child before self interests, effective leaders must remain mindful of the importance of their duty to serve their constituents' best interest while meeting the needs of the organization they serve (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). An example of this comparison is illustrated in an article written by John Brandt (2004). He described establishing boundaries as a way that parents allow their children to find their own way and preferences in accomplishing tasks. Mr. Brandt then associated this description to leadership in the work place by stating that "wise leaders do the same thing by establishing clear goals for individual, team and organizational success and unmistakable guidelines regarding what types of activities and behaviors are appropriate in reaching those goals. Employees respond to this with a level of comfort that drives performance and innovation and profits." (p.2).

Summary

As noted in the literature, it seems the one common denominator between parents and leaders is both roles require them to manage people. Although numerous factors as discussed above seem to contribute to the manner by which one is led, the literature does suggest a relationship exists between the two topics. This study has been designed to further explore these relationships in depth in order to ascertain whether there is a relationship between parenting and leadership. Although the results are based on the perceptions of the participants; their feedback could improve the fields of leadership and

parenting by opening new possibilities for understanding the interconnectedness of work and family life.

Methodology

This study followed a qualitative research design which used semi-structured interviews with public administrators as well as document analysis to answer the following research question:

- Is there a relationship between parenting and leadership specifically in a public administration setting?

Qualitative techniques were used to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's perceptions about the relationship between parenting and leadership. This method is appropriate since this study is seeking to explore an area for which minimal information is available.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The data in this study were gathered from a purposefully selected sample of nine public administrators chosen from the fields of education (Virginia Department of Education), criminal justice (Federal Bureau of Prisons), and health and human services (West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services). Ideally a sample size should be large enough that all the results gathered would be statistically significant. However, due to time constraints, nine participants were determined to be the largest practical sample size to allow timely completion of the project.

The primary reason the above noted organizations were selected was because they have different missions in representing the public interest. The Virginia Department of

Education's mission is to prepare students to take a meaningful and productive place in society by providing them with a quality education. The Federal Bureau of Prisons mission is to remove threats to the general population of the U.S. by effectively and safely incarcerating persons found guilty of federal crimes. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources mission is to ensure that essential social services are provided to at risk individuals in society. Sampling such a diverse group of organizations with different missions and ways of dealing with the public also raised the possibility that they may recruit and reward public administrators with very different leadership styles. In addition, such diversity may provide a broad range of views and perspectives that would have been excluded if only one type of organization had been examined in this study. The selection of these agencies was also influenced by the fact that this researcher was employed by several of them at one point in the past.

Experience was another characteristic that was considered when selecting participants for this research. It was necessary to select individuals who had a solid frame of reference in both the subjects of parenting and leadership to allow for a broad scope of information that would provide solid points of comparison. The importance of experience is supported in the literature, Bennis and Thomas (2002) argue that experience can lead to life lessons which improve leaders self confidence and can help prepare them to make wiser decisions. In order to allow time for proficiency and competence in the areas of parenting and leadership, public administrators with a minimum of five years of parenting and supervisory experience were interviewed for this study.

All of the interviews were conducted in person by the primary researcher and ranged from 35 minutes to 1 hour. Eight (participant numbers 1-8) of nine participants

were tape recorded using an audio recording device while participant number 9 was interviewed using manual notes. Participant number 9 exhibited signs of stress and anxiousness during the first five minutes of the interview. At this time he expressed concern about being recorded and requested that notes be manually written. I complied with the request in order to increase the participant's trust and to encourage openness during the interview process and to adhere to IRB guidelines regarding ethical treatment in studying human subjects. The following is a description of the public administrators who participated in the study and their approximate years of parenting and supervisory experience.

Virginia Department of Education:

- Participant #7- (Female) approximately 20 years of supervisory experience and 17 years of parenting experience.
- Participant #8- (Male) more than 30 years of supervisory and parenting experience.
- Participant #9- (Male) more than 10 years of supervisory and parenting experience.

Federal Bureau of Prisons, Federal Correctional Institution Beckley, West

Virginia:

- Participant #1- (Male) more than 10 years supervisory experience and 12 years of parenting experience.
- Participant #2- (Male) six years supervisory experience and 15 years parenting experience.

- Participant #3- (Female) approximately 10 years of supervisory experience and 6 years of parenting experience.

West Virginia Departments of Health and Human Resources:

- Participant #4- (Female) more than 10 years supervisory and 6 years parenting experience.
- Participant #5- (Female) more than 20 years supervisory and 24 years of parenting experience.
- Participant #6- (Male) more than 6 years supervisory and 9 years of parenting experience.

The following interview questions were used to encourage participants to share their ideas by drawing from personal experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

- What connections do you think exist, if any, between parenting and leadership?
 - Can you provide examples?
- What are the age(s) of your children?
- Are you the primary caregiver?
- What is your parenting style?
 - What are your thoughts on discipline?
 - How do you motivate your children?
- How long have you been a supervisor?
- How would you describe your leadership style?
 - What are your thoughts on discipline?
 - How do you motivate your employees

- Can you provide an example of when you applied skills you learned in parenting in the work place?
- Can you provide an example of when you applied skills you learned in parenting in the work place?
- Can you provide an example of how your leadership experiences have contributed to parenting?
- Are there specific skills you have learned in parenting that are useful in public service?
 - Please give me examples.
- Is there anything else you would like to add about your perceptions of connections between leadership and parenting?

Since this study is based on self reported information, there is some concern about biases that could emerge from the participant's self perceptions about their leadership and parenting styles. In an attempt to identify and compensate for possible biases, the subjects were requested to complete two separate questionnaires (See appendix). The first addressed whether an individual is more of a relationship oriented or task oriented leader. This questionnaire was obtained from a secondary source titled *Managing Human Behavior in Public & Nonprofit Organizations*, written by Denhardt, Denhardt and Aristigueta (2002). The primary source titled *Leadership Theory and Practice* by Northouse (2004, p.82) was reviewed and it was found to be consistent with the secondary source.

Both sources were checked to determine whether the questionnaire had been tested for validity and reliability and neither text addressed the issue. However, it seems

likely the authors of the two academic textbooks felt the questionnaire was reliable enough to include in their text. From this context, and for the purpose of this study, the instrument was suitable to sufficiently answer the questions of whether or not a person was a task or relationship oriented leader. In addition, neither of the above listed sources addressed a requirement for permission to use the questionnaire.

The second questionnaire was intended to identify parenting styles. Permission to use the instrument in this study was granted by Molly McBride with Active Parenting Publishers Research and Development Department. The questionnaire had not been tested for reliability and validity but it has been used extensively by her agency as a tool for parents to gain a general idea about their parenting style, specifically whether it was autocratic or permissive. The answers from the questionnaire were used as a reference tool to compare to the participant's perceptions of their parenting and leadership styles to what was reported during the interviews.

Data Analysis

Due to the small sample size in this study, qualitative data analysis software was not utilized to analyze the data. Rather, the following techniques as explained by Lofland and Lofland (1995) were utilized to analyze the information collected from each interview. The process included: listening to the entire interview, transcribing it, then re-reading those transcripts to ensure this researcher gained a broad understanding of the information. Each theme was then assigned a meaning, categorized and labeled using a tree format. As other relevant concepts and themes related to the research question emerged, they were added to the tree. Concepts and themes interpreted from the

interviews as well as relevant information relating to this study were also gathered from alternative sources such as journal articles, periodicals, books and websites.

All identifying information such as names, employers' names and addresses, dates (e.g., birthdates) telephone/fax numbers, e-mail addresses, and voiceprints retrieved from audio recordings were kept confidential and anonymous. This was accomplished by maintaining all identifying information in an area that was separate from the subject's responses. Each participant in the study was assigned a code number beginning with 001 and ending in 009, which was maintained in one log. This was used as a method of linking identifying information to the study responses. The document that linked the two topics was maintained and locked in a area only accessible to this researcher. All audio recordings and identifying documentation will be destroyed pending completion of this study.

Validity/Trustworthiness

Many of the findings from this study were attributed to subjective interpretation. In order to ensure face validity, the above noted interview questions were designed to accurately evaluate public administrators' perceptions regarding possible relationships that may exist between parents and leaders. Several research methods were used to ensure trustworthiness and validity in this investigation. Leadership and parenting questionnaires were completed by the participants and were then compared and contrasted to their interview answers to ensure triangulation of results. In order to provide a valid cross section in this study, member checks were conducted, information from interviews was gathered using a system of main questions and probing and follow up questions when clarification was necessary. A thick description of the data including

complexities, variability and commonalities is provided in the findings and discussion section. Transparency was ensured through the maintenance of a detailed record showing the coding categories used and sorting techniques. In order to enhance self reflection in this study, perceived biases and observations detected during the interview process were noted on to the reports as they were transcribed.

Prior to conducting the first interview, face validity was established by pre-testing the questions on a public administrator employed by the Beckley, West Virginia Department of Education. During the pre-test process, it was found that I failed to identify years of experience within the questions as briefly discussed in the literature review. Without knowing this information, it would be difficult to ascertain if the participant met the minimum experience requirement discussed above. Since the subject had already received and signed the informed consent document listing the research questions, the “years of experience” question was incorporated into the interviews. During each session, the subjects were informed that they were not required to answer the experience question since it had not been previously sent to them, but doing so would be very helpful for the study. All participants agreed and did not find that it was harmful in any way.

Limitations

This was an exploratory study conducted solely to determine public administrators’ perceptions regarding the relationships that may exist between parenting and leadership. Therefore, the results gained from this investigation should be used as a guide for future research into the two subjects. Due to the exploratory nature of this research there were several limitations that emerged:

- Due to the time limitations on this study and the small sample size, it is difficult to say conclusively that certain connections between leadership and parenting are certain. However, the information gathered may provide the basis for future studies that may incorporate a broader and greater number of participants.
- The sample in this study only consisted of leaders that were parents. Time constraints on the research did not allow for a control sample of non-parents to provide a point of reference.
- Due to the large number of variables that potentially influenced leadership and parenting, it was difficult to isolate which one had the most affect on the two subjects.
- The small numbers of organizations sampled in this research were not exhaustive,
Since organizational differences were found to be a factor that influenced leadership and parenting, these differences may be better quantified if more agencies were sampled.
- As hypothesized in the discussion section of this paper, it is possible that the degree of parental involvement may affect ones leadership style. Since there was not a scale in place to test this it is difficult to state with certainty whether such a linear connection exists.

Findings

The purpose of this research was to explore public administrators' perceptions regarding relationships that may exist between parenting and leadership. This section will present the following findings from interviews and other documentation:

- Perceived connections/relationships between parenting and leadership
- Relationships between parenting and leadership styles
- The effect of gender on leadership and parenting
- The effect that experience has on leadership and parenting
- Emphasis of situational leadership among the participants

In addition to these, related themes and concepts that emerged during the research process will also be discussed.

Perceived Connections/Relationships Between Parenting and Leadership

During the interview portion of the research, several intriguing findings were uncovered about the participant's perceptions of connections between leadership and parenting. For example, all nine of the participants valued relationships and believed that both the role of parent and leader required an individual to manage people. However, their explanations for why they felt this way varied. Two of the male participant's (#1 & 2) with the Bureau of Prisons were not able to articulate exactly which factor including experience from parenting, or maturity gained from growing older contributed to their leadership styles. Each gave equal value to these influences in their lives, but could not state with certainty whether one was more influential than the other. This is illustrated in the following statement:

I'm not sure if my leadership style is influenced by having children or not, but certainly the fact that I've had children along with growing older and what not, has had an impact. Particularly as a younger male, I was driven to go from point A to point B in my mind. That was my approach and addressing whatever needs to be addressed not paying attention to those relational factors, and I think as you grow and mature and certainly having children plays a part in that. You realize that we can still get the job done while maintaining the quality of a relationship with the people you work with (participant #1).

Participant number one did not rule out the possibility that parenting influenced his leadership style. This is important because it does show that a possible relationship exists between the two subjects. However, since the participant could not determine the extent that parenting or maturity from getting older influenced his leadership style, it is difficult to measure which experience was more significant. Interestingly, the subject did feel that he emphasized tasks in his role as a leader when he was younger, and as he grew older and became a parent he seemed to realize the importance of relationships. Since parenting is relationship intensive, it is possible that this particular experience formed and influenced the participant's leadership style more than growing older. This theory is also supported in the below noted statement by participant number 2:

I'm not sure if it is due to parenting or leadership, it's just hard for me to see parenting in the same light as I see work. You know, I may handle them in the same way. I don't know if it's a combination of working in the bureau, getting a family, or getting older, but I've noticed when I

became a supervisor, I am more assertive in what my ideas are to people other than my family. I always was that way with my family, this is my idea, this is what I think. So maybe doing that at home could have caused me to bring my ideas out more here. I don't know, I've noticed that happens, but I don't know if it is because I'm a parent or I'm getting older or what (participant #2).

The participant's assertion that maturity and/or experience gained from growing older could possibly influence leadership style is supported by the literature. According to Bennis and Thomas (2002), leaders have undergone at least one transformational experience which is referred to as a crucible (p. 30). As a consequence of such an experience the emerging leader's self confidence is increased. The above participants could not articulate which experience contributed most to their leadership style, but the fact they could not rule out parenting as a contributing factor could further establish a connection between the two subjects, or at least contribute to future research.

Although the participants were unsure of what factors contributed to their leadership styles, two of the female subjects, #3 from the Bureau of Prisons, and #4 from DHHR felt that becoming a leader influenced how they parented. This is illustrated in the following statements:

Being a supervisor has spilled into my parenting, because of this, I am not as lenient as some parents are because I feel that he is six [her son] and knows what the rules are. The same thing with staff, you knew you were supposed to do this, then how come it wasn't done? (participant #3).

I have learned patience from being a leader, and learned tolerance in the workplace which I have applied at home (participant #4).

Although this study is exploring possible connections between parenting and leadership, the above comments suggest that leadership affects parenting. This information is important because it still establishes a connection between the two subjects. However, the extent of this connection has not been determined and further research is needed in order to quantify and qualify this information.

Parenting and Leadership Styles

As previously mentioned, this study explored a topic for which minimal information was available i.e., whether a relationship exists between parenting and leadership. The paucity of research on possible links between these topics made it necessary to gather as much information as possible from numerous sources in order to provide a broad range of findings. The results from the parenting and leadership questionnaires discussed in the methodology section provided some interesting insights into the participant's self perceptions about their parenting and leadership styles. Before elaborating further on these findings, this section will explain the methods of design, analysis and subsequent results from each questionnaire. These results will be compared, contrasted and discussed in this section of the paper.

The questionnaire results are presented in the chart below. The following table lists the parenting survey scores of each participant in the study.

Table 1: Parenting Questionnaire Results

Participants	Permissive Combined score	Belief	Action	Autocratic Combined score	Belief	Action	Active Combined Score	Belief	Action
Participant #1	28	16	12	25	13	12	39	16	23
Participant #2	23	11	12	31	14	17	33	15	18
Participant #3	21	14	7	24	13	11	44	22	22
Participant #4	25	10	15	33	19	14	34	19	15
Participant #5	22	13	9	21	11	10	43	20	23
Participant #6	19	11	8	28	10	18	36	16	20
Participant #7	25	13	12	25	14	11	37	19	18
Participant #8	26	16	10	26	14	12	41	20	21
Participant #9	23	9	14	28	13	15	40	21	19

In the parenting survey, the highest combined score an individual can receive for each parenting style category is 50, and the closer the score is to this number the higher the tendency toward that type of parenting. Additionally, the parenting style with the highest combined score suggests that is the style currently being adopted. A difference of 15

points between the belief and action scores suggests the participant tends to believe one thing but does another. The following three parenting styles (as addressed in the literature review) were included in the questionnaire: Autocratic, (uses rewards and punishment to achieve goals) Permissive (two types: Democratic (parent more lenient) and nondirective (parent sets few demands for child), and Active parenting styles (set clear goals for child and are concerned with helping them to achieve those goals).

As shown above, all of the participants responses from the surveys reflected strong active parenting styles. Upon comparing the interview results to the surveys, only two participants viewed their parenting skills differently than the survey results. While Participant number 3 identified her parenting style score as authoritarian, she had the highest active parenting score (44) of all the subjects in this study. Participant number 6 described himself as an “overly permissive” parent, but the survey results showed that he ranked the lowest in this category.

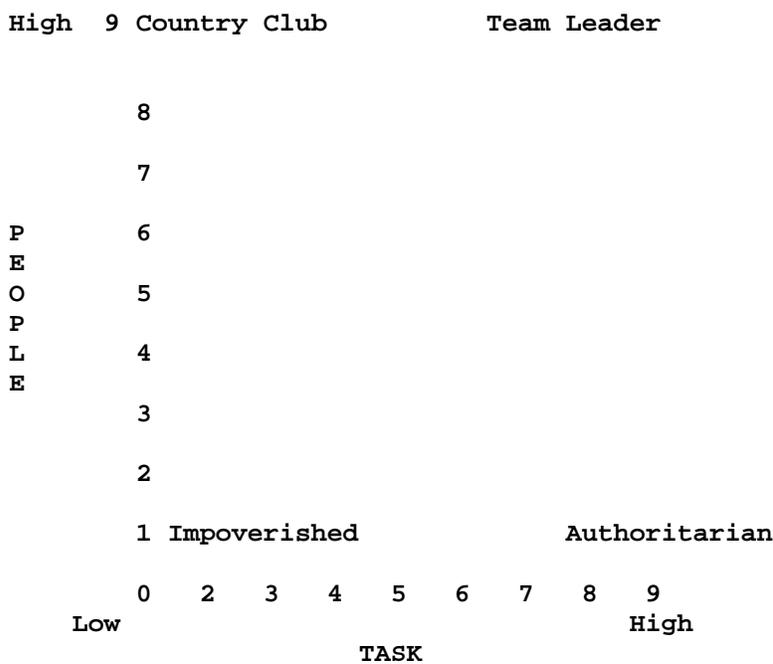
The table below provides the results of the leadership surveys administered to the participants of this study.

Table 2: Leadership Questionnaire Results

Participants	Authoritarian High task low relationship	Team leader High task high relationship	Country club leader Low task high relationship	Impoverished leader Low task low relationship
Participant #1			X	
Participant #2			X	
Participant #3		X		
Participant #4		X		
Participant # 5		X		

Participant #6		X		
Participant #7			X	
Participant #8			X	
Participant #9		X		

The above came from a leadership questionnaire based on Blake and Mouton's managerial grid model (1985) which used a method of illustrating whether leaders were more task or relationship oriented. It is plotted on two axes: Concern for people- on the vertical axis, and Concern for Task on the horizontal axis. Both axis have a range of 0 to 9 which can be drawn using the following grid:



Most people fall somewhere near the middle of the two axes (Clark , 2005). However, people who score on the far end of the scales tend to be those within the extremes such as impoverished leaders who put forth a minimal effort when

accomplishing tasks or authoritarian leaders who show little concern for people and concentrate on task completion.

The following chart is an informational summary of the participant’s answers to the parenting and leadership surveys. It also provides an overview of each subject’s leadership and parenting styles as well as whether or not they believe a relationship exists between parenting and leadership.

Table 3 Summary by Participant

Informational Summary by Participant					
	Gender	Organization	Parenting Style	Leadership Style	Perceived Relationship
Participant #1	Male	FBOP	Active	Country Club	Unsure
Participant #2	Male	FBOP	Active	Country Club	Unsure
Participant #3	Female	FBOP	Active	Team Leader	Leader-->Parent
Participant #4	Female	WV DHHR	Active	Team Leader	Leader-->Parent
Participant #5	Female	WV DHHR	Active	Team Leader	Parent-->Leader
Participant #6	Male	WV DHHR	Active	Team Leader	Unsure
Participant #7	Female	VA DOE	Active	Country Club	Parent-->Leader
Participant #8	Male	VA DOE	Active	Country Club	Parent-->Leader
Participant #9	Male	VA DOE	Active	Team Leader	Parent-->Leader

Notes: FBOP = Federal Bureau of Prisons, WV DHHR = West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources; VA DOE = Virginia Department of Education.

Perceived Relationship Key: Unsure - Participant could not identify relationship; Leader-->Parent - Participant felt their Leadership experiences affected their parenting skills; Parent-->Leader - Participant felt their parenting experiences influenced their leadership abilities.

Interestingly, all nine of the participants self perceptions about their leadership styles provided during the interviews matched the results from the survey. This suggests that the subjects had a high level of self awareness when it came to assessing their leadership styles, but were less aware in regard to their parenting styles. This lack of

objectivity regarding parenting style could be related to personal attachments that occur between parents and their children. Good parents care for their children from infancy; they provide love, comfort, and security, throughout their child's life (Bowlby, 1988). Such a personal relationship could color one's objectivity when assessing parenting style. Although the literature suggests that personal relationships develop between leaders and followers (Popper & Mayseless, 2003), the lack of lifelong attachments may make it easier for the participants to be objective when discussing their leadership styles. This disparity may reflect a gap that exists between parenting and leadership styles.

Although the above noted leadership survey did not measure for certain type of leadership styles such as trait or situational leaders, a common theme that emerged from this study was the majority of participants (7 of 9) referenced using the situational leadership style in parenting and/or leadership roles. The following statements by participants one and eight provide an example of this theme:

One of the things I've always advocated is being able to switch my parenting style depending on the situation. I'd like to believe that I'm able to do that. There are certain situations that demand I take an authoritarian position, I do not hesitate to do that (Participant #1).

The statement made by participant one is an example of the situational style used in parenting. The next statement made by participant eight reflects the use of this style in leadership:

My leadership style depends on the person or the subordinate, the level of maturity of the subordinate determines the type of leadership style I will assume. Similar to the situational leadership model, whether you're telling, selling or

encouraging, you must be effective in all of them and be able to change depending on the employee (participant #8).

While this study was unable to determine a causal connection between the situational leadership style and its use in parenting and leadership, the fact seven of nine participant's in this study who were both male and female and worked in a variety of public administration organizations were identified as situational leaders, may suggest that a possible connection exists between these fields. However, this cannot be determined until further research is conducted to ascertain which factors in parenting or leadership may or may not contribute to this phenomenon.

Gender Differences

There were significant differences in the interview responses of male and female participants in the study. For example, three of five male participants were found to be task oriented leaders. When answering the questions about parenting the same three males did not see a relationship between parenting and leadership. Conversely, all four female participant's felt that parenting influenced their leadership styles. Interestingly, all of the female participants adopted a relationship oriented style of leadership. This will be addressed further in the below noted findings. However, before proceeding to this section, it is helpful to note that there is much evidence in the literature to support gender differences in leadership styles. According to Carless (1998), social role theory proposes that individuals tend to conform to cultural expectations about their gender roles throughout the socialization process of their lives. The word gender defines an individual's social construction of reality by emphasizing the manner sex roles and behavior patterns of men and women are interpreted within one's culture (Duerst-Lahti &

Kelly, 2000). The pervasiveness of roles and attitudes associated with gender has affected the way organizations allocate responsibilities and make decisions regarding the career progress of employees, their salaries, and who is given power and authority (Northouse, 2000).

Despite significant evidence to suggest that women are as capable as men to lead in corporate America, the reality is, women are still denied leadership positions (Northouse, 2000). Duerst-Lahti and Kelly (2000) suggest that the disproportion of female leaders to males is attributed to organizational, interpersonal and personal barriers. In fact, a frequent theme that emerges among female leaders on their rise to the top of the corporate ladder is their need to find a balance between the conflicts of work and home life. Many women have found relief by hiring domestic services, having a spouse that is unemployed or who works fewer hours than their partner, or utilizing organizational supports such as flex time or parental leave (Catalyst, 1996; Gallagher, 1996; Kirchmeyer, 1998; Hochschild, 1997; Kelly & Dabul Marin, 1998; Morrison, as cited in Northouse, 2000).

Ann Crittenden, author of *Managing People Magazine* (2004), interviewed successful female professionals who were actively involved parents in order to learn about their experiences with balancing parenting and full time employment. Some of the comments from these professionals tended to support Northouse's (2000) argument that women experience difficulty balancing home life and work. For example, Madeleine Albright, a women who transitioned from full time mother to Secretary of State, felt that multi-tasking was a valuable life lesson. She argued "The person who can run a household and raise kids, while holding down a paying job at the same time is an expert

manager of life”(p. 2). Similarly, Shirley Kenney, President of the State University of New York at Stony Brook described her multi-tasking day as follows:

Drag out of bed, get kids up, make breakfast and school lunches, pick up baby sitter, drive car pool, put on lipstick at stoplight, hurry to campus for first class, teach, hold office hours, sit on committee du jour, hurry home, return babysitter to home base, locate Hamburger Helper, fix dinner, supervise homework and lesson practice, give orders for cleanup, write notes to teachers, kiss kids, send big ones to bed, tuck little ones in, kiss them again and again, drag out briefcase, grade papers or get back to research, stumble to bed in the wee hours, comfort little one when he wakes up, sleep a little. Start over (p.2).

Male CEO's do not struggle with the same family conflicts as their female counterparts primarily because the majority of them have spouses that do not work outside of the home (Northouse, 2000, p. 230). Male CEO's whose spouses were employed, tended to defer the household responsibilities onto their spouses leaving them as the primary caregivers of children from the marriage (Northouse, 2000). For example, a longitudinal study conducted by Dalton et al., (2006) examined children's perceptions of male professionals who felt their parenting roles were equally distributed within their household (Dalton et al., 2006). Despite these assertions, the majority of the children when interviewed as young adults, felt their mothers were the primary caregivers and rated them as having the most influence in their lives.

Interestingly, in this study when the female public administrators were asked whether they felt parenting was a shared role in their homes, they all believed it was.

However, after elaborating about parenting styles three of four of the female participants eluded to the fact that they were responsible for discipline and maintaining the household. One even recanted her original statement that the parenting duty was shared. This is illustrated in the remarks shown below:

I take that back, I was the primary caregiver, I did spend most of the time with my daughter. She had ADHD and my husband and her butted heads, so it was frustrating for him. He could not handle her (participant #005).

I'm more of the disciplinarian. When it comes to things like skating or running I do that. Unless I'm not home then my husband does it, but I mostly do it, my husband thinks that is more of a mommy thing (participant #3).

My parenting is different than my husbands. He is more of a friend/parent, and I am more of a parent/friend. I'm strict, actually, slightly OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). I do like consistency, that's part of my personality which is hard for children. When I come home I don't like stumbling over people's stuff. The kids know not to leave it out (Participant #4).

The above statements seem to support the literature regarding personal and interpersonal barriers that females are confronted with. The participants were not only responsible for overseeing their home-lives but were also responsible for ensuring their agencies were managed efficiently and effectively. Since the above female participants

were required to spend more time with their children, and since parenting is especially relationship intensive, it follows logically that this type of orientation would spill into the work place.

Gender role theory attributes specific leadership behaviors to females and males. For example, females encourage participative decision making, collaboration, and interpersonal relationships with subordinates. In contrast, men tend to adopt a macho, directive, and task oriented approach (Carless, 1998, Northouse, 2000). The gender differences in leadership styles discussed above is also supported by the findings in this study. As previously stated, of the four female participant's involved in this research, all of them felt that parenting did influence leadership and they emphasized relationships in their leadership styles. In contrast, three (Participant's #1, 2, 5) of the five males interviewed did not perceive a relationship between the two subjects and were task oriented.

The following quotes highlight the differences in leadership styles between females and males in this study and their opposing views when asked if they believed parenting influenced leadership. The subsequent quotes will reflect the female point of view and will then followed by their male counterparts points of view:

I think if you are in the role of leadership, it gives you more patience and forces you to deal with a variety of people and events at different stages in their lives. It's like being a parent, each of your children are different, they came into the world differently, they are not on the same level. Like at work, if I notice that workers progress was high and now it's low then I will ask if there is something I need to know, do you need time off? I'm

noticing things aren't where they need to be. You have to pay attention to signs. If your worker has excessive sick days then perhaps it is time to put them in for a vacation....I have to have a handle on things. I meet with my workers monthly and have a handle on what's going on. One of the first questions is, any gripes or complaints? The best thing you can do for people is let them get it off their chest. I'm very direct, but I love them and they're loyal and I'm loyal to them and have an appreciation for the work they do (Participant #4, female).

The next quote reflects the emphasis that the female participant placed on relationships as well as similarities between parenting and leadership.

I think both roles have to do with how you manage people. There really are a lot of similarities. I find myself carrying over behaviors from home into the work place. The strategies work in both places, I think your children and the people at work respond much better if everybody has a common goal. If you want certain results and everyone has a buy in and a say so, then people tend to be more receptive and things go a lot smoother (Participant #7, female).

The two female participants above did not seem to differentiate their roles as leaders from their roles as parents. As a matter of fact, they stated that their leadership and parenting styles were the same, at least in regard to the relational factors established in both roles. The results from the parenting and leadership questionnaires further supported their emphasis on relationships. The findings from the parenting survey

reflected that both of the above participants ranked highest under the Active Parenting category (participant #4 scored 34 out of a possible 50 and participant #7 scored 37 out of 50). Active parenting emphasizes relationships by stressing cooperation and communication between parents and their children. These characteristics resonated in both of the participant's responses as they encouraged a participative environment that allowed employees to have a "buy in" during decision making processes. The subjects leadership survey results also reflected high relationship orientations. Participant number 4 was categorized as a team leader which places an equal emphasis on tasks and relationships. Team leadership is similar to Active Parenting as it fosters team building through cooperation. The similarities between participant number four's parenting and leadership styles supported her assertion that her leadership was similar to her parenting style. In contrast, participant number 7 was classified as a Country Club leader which places more emphasis on relationships than tasks.

This leadership style is comparable to the permissive parenting style which is more lenient. However, participant number 7 was classified as an Active Parent. Although it is difficult to state which factors influenced these differences in parenting and leadership styles, the fact is, they both place a strong emphasis on relationships which supports their statements.

Three of the five male participants in this study emphasized task accomplishment over relationships in their leadership styles. This is illustrated in the next statement made by a male participant:

I don't know if there is really a big connection between leadership and parenting....In comparison, my employees you have interest as far as your

job goes or career goes, but it is not the same as having that personal interest with your children. You're more detached with your employees, if I see a problem in my area of course I'm going to let the people who work for me know what they need to do to fix it. And if they have problems I may give them direction or advice, but it kind of stops there. I don't really care if they take my advice at that point. As long as the job gets done that is what's important (Participant #2, male).

To further illustrate the task oriented tendency of the males in this study, two of the three (Participants #1 & 2) males who tested as Country Club style leaders (encouraged a participative environment with a low focus on tasks) in their survey results, actually provided answers in their interviews which indicated strong task orientations. Examples of these differences can be seen in the following interview responses:

On a daily basis, I rarely know and don't want to know what types of things they (subordinates) are needing to do to get the job done. I'm looking at the finished product (Participant #1, male).

I'm more of if you're doing your job, I don't care how you're doing your job. If the job gets done then you're not going to hear anything from me, but if you're not doing your job then you're going to hear from me (Participant #2, male).

The above statements provided by both male and female participants seem to support the literature about women's propensity toward relationships versus men's toward tasks. Since the sample size of 9 participant's is not enough to conclusively determine whether parenting is a contributor to gender differences in leadership styles,

the fact that all of the females in this study saw a connection between parenting and leadership provides evidence for future research in this area.

Organizational Culture

Studying the marked gender differences from the section above led to some interesting observations; notably, cross cultural differences of leadership styles within organizations. According to the literature, the way an employee functions within an organization can also be influenced by gender orientations of the agency (Duerst-Lahti & Kelly, 2000). On the surface this would not seem significant to this study; however, some of the participant's who worked in organizations such as the Virginia Department of Education that tended to be more female dominated, noticed a connection between leadership and parenting. Conversely, the one female participant (#3) who worked in a male dominated agency, The Federal Bureau of Prisons, tended to adopt a more masculine leadership style, but still noticed a connection between parenting and leadership. The other two participants with this agency (#1 & 2 as discussed under connection/relationships between parenting and leadership)not only displayed masculine leadership tendencies, but they could not definitively relate whether parenting influenced leadership or vice versa. In both cases, the gender of the participant did not seem to matter because the participant's seemed to adopt views and perceptions about leadership and parenting that were commensurate with the culture of their organizations.

Two male participants who were identified as relationship oriented leaders (according to social role theory this is a trait more associated with females) worked for the Virginia Department of Education (Participants #8 & 9). According to Northouse, (2000) primary and secondary school systems tend to be predominantly female. The

quotations below illustrate the relationship oriented leadership styles of the male public administrators who worked in education:

It is my job to aid an employee in their error, like you do with the old saying, “spare the rod you spoil the child”. There are times when a little reminder given with love is an effective way of doing things (participant #8).

In addition, another participant, who requested that no recording device be present, described himself as a participatory leader with a democratic style. He said he values employee’s feelings and compromises with them. He wants employees to have ownership in decision making process by soliciting their input and advice. The participant also considers himself a coordinator, gets input from faculty meetings and surveys especially when making major decisions that affect the school and their ability to teach (participant # 9).

As public administrators in the field of education, the participants discussed above have been strongly involved with children in the school systems as well as at home. This mirrors many of the experiences that women who work outside of the home undergo (as discussed above). These participants also emphasize relationships in their leadership styles, which as established above, is a trait associated more with females. Although it cannot be stated with certainty that there is a connection between parenting/dealing with children and leadership style, the above examples do suggest that a relationship exists.

Experience in Parenting and Leadership

Experience was another factor that weighed heavily in the participant’s answers. Of the nine subject’s interviewed, the two whose children were no longer living at home

and who were at retirement age (participant's #5 and 8), placed a high emphasis on finding a replacement to continue their vision. They also referenced strong connections between their experiences as parents and the way they interacted and led their subordinates. In this case, one of the participant's was a male and the other a female, yet both of their goals were similar. This is illustrated in the following:

My leadership style is not much different than my parenting style. I do try to ensure my staff have clear instruction, I try to encourage. I don't like to discipline in terms of writing up or suspension etc. I feel you can get more out of people if you're positive with them, if you give them feedback and encourage them.... I mentor my employees. I am trying to help them prepare for higher level jobs. In state government, we are at a point where all of us have grey hair and are ready to retire.... It is incumbent on us to mentor persons who can move into our positions (Participant #5 female).

Similar to his female counterpart noted above, the following male participant emphasizes relationships in leadership (a quality attributed more to females) and is also, able to identify a link between parenting and leadership.

The other thing you realize now my children are older than the people I employ. Now I think about some of the things my children did as twenty something's and I don't get too shook up about it when my employees do something odd. When your employees are the same ages as your children and you're mentoring them and talking with them in the same way as your kids, then become instead of a leader, you become a surrogate parent to your employees....I think at a certain point in any leader's life it becomes their responsibility to promote the success of

the organization after they are gone. If you think you can be in an organization and it can't run without you, is crazy. The old adage put your hand in a bucket of water and pulls it out. Watch how long the ripples in the water last, that's how replaceable you are (participant #8).

According to Bennis and Thomas (2002) experience is usually attributed to a serious life lesson that causes such qualities to emerge as: an adaptive capacity that allowed leaders to survive and learn from setbacks and difficulties, an ability to engage others through shared meaning or a common vision, a compelling voice that communicated one's moral conviction to do what was right, and a high sense of integrity (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Since the participants discussed above were certain that parenting had affected their leadership, perhaps the wisdom drawn from personal experiences and possibly, their stage in life gave them a perspective about relationships between parenting and leadership that others who lacked this experience could not identify.

Summary

There were several findings such as cross cultural differences of leadership styles within organizations; the influence of experience on leadership and parenting styles, gender differences between leadership and parenting styles as well within organizations; and an emphasis on the use of the situational leadership style. As previously stated, due to the small sample size in this study, it is difficult to determine whether the findings are significant; however, the information gathered from the interviews discussed above combined with the empirical support from the literature strongly suggests that parenting and leadership are linked.

Discussion and Implications

The goal of this project was to explore and identify possible connections that may exist between parenting and leadership, specifically in a public administration setting. To analyze these processes, the study drew on a powerful analogy between parent-child and leader-follower relationships that develop through interactions that build trust, motivation and self efficacy. This research expanded on these dynamics in order to highlight specific developmental processes that occur within relationships between both parenting and leadership.

The literature and the findings support that developmental processes between leaders and followers as discussed above seem to be influenced by gender differences (Duerst-Lahti & Kelly, 2000; Fink, 2003; McDonald, 2004; Northouse, 2000; Carless, 1998; Boy & Her, 2003; Groves, 2005; Moore, 2006; Hogue Ludwig & Yoder, 2002). In fact, some of the most interesting discoveries from the interviews broke down along gender lines. There were two interesting findings in relation to gender that I believe can be supported by one explanation. First, all of the female participant's in the study were more relationship oriented than their task oriented male counterparts. This finding by itself was not surprising and to an extent was anticipated to emerge during the research process. However, when weighing this finding against the fact that these females were parents and were primarily responsible for caring for their children, it raised the question of whether gender was the only factor influencing the female's leadership styles.

This led to the importance of the second finding: female participants in this study were much more likely to see a connection between parenting and leadership than males. One possible explanation for both the high relationship based leadership styles displayed by females in this study and their tendency to associate connections between parenting and leadership, may not necessarily be related to being female, but rather to the amount of time and effort that is invested in raising children. According to the literature, females bear a disproportionate amount of child-rearing duties (Northouse, 2000 p. 230). It seems highly likely the more one is involved as a parent, the stronger any potential link would be.

Experience and stage in life were found to weigh heavily in the developmental processes occurring between leadership and parenting as well. For example, participant's number 1 and 2 were ambivalent about which factors -- experience from leadership or parenting--had the most influence on their leadership styles. What was interesting about this particular finding was the two interviewees who indicated they were unsure about this were in middle management positions within their careers and had children at home that were in between childhood and adulthood (ranging from the ages of 9-16). Since experience is gained from the accumulation of knowledge derived from participation (Kouzes & Pozner, 2002), it is likely that the subjects' ambivalence was a product of their stage in life combined with a lack of experience in both parenting and leadership. Perhaps in this situation, clarity is gained from what is learned from each experience. Since it is unlikely that any of the participants in this study can see into the future, it is difficult to state with certainty which factors affect leadership and/or parenting style until they reach a point in time when they can look back and evaluate what they have learned.

In contrast to the above, participants number 5 and 8, who were ready for retirement and had raised their children, were definitive about connections between leadership and parenting. They were able to assimilate both experiences into one leadership style that emphasized relationships. These participants felt this style enhanced their leadership abilities. Although it is difficult to determine whether stage in life and life experience actually contributed to their leadership style, it is likely that the wisdom gained from this would increase competence and credibility in the areas of leadership, parenting and public administration. Kouzes and Posner (2002) argue that competence and credibility are the foundation of leadership. Both parents and leaders must be viewed as capable of carrying out their duties, otherwise, if children and followers doubt them then it is unlikely they will accept their positions. This finding could be important to public administration because a leader's past performance can speak to their knowledge of an organization and their ability to lead it (Kouzes & Posner, 2002 p. 29). If the above participant's perceptions were correct and experience from parenting and stage in life does enhance leadership style, then it is likely this knowledge could be used to train and educate individuals in the fields of public administration, leadership and parenting.

As addressed in the "perceived connections between leadership and parenting" section, an unexpected and interesting finding that emerged during the study was two of nine participants (#3 & #4) believed leadership contributed to their parenting styles. Despite the way the two topics are framed in the literature, the similarities do seem obvious. Currently, most researchers study leadership as something that occurs in the workplace and parenting as it takes place in the home. However, the findings in this

study suggest that a corollary link exists between the two subjects. Based on this researcher's experiences and professional interactions, this finding seems logical.

Both parents and leaders have to deal with time management issues, delegation, and are required to be effective communicators. For example, leaders must ensure deadlines are met in order to meet the goals and mission of the organization they are employed by. Likewise, parents must ensure their children make it to school, athletic practices, and other extracurricular activities on time. As children mature, parents may assign household chores to them which would contribute to the orderly running of their home. Similarly, leaders in the work place will assign tasks to subordinates to improve the efficiency of the office. In all of these cases, both parents and leaders must be able to clearly communicate their expectations in a respectful manner. Based on these similarities between leadership and parenting it does seem logical that a person who became a leader first would feel that experience influenced their parenting style. This view could open a new approach to leadership research by possibly integrating the two subjects instead of studying them separately.

As referenced in the findings section, seven of the nine participants in the study were identified as using situational leadership approaches. This was distributed across both genders and all organizations addressed in the study. Since this finding was not isolated to one particular group such as gender and occupation, the one remaining constant among this group was their status as parents. The lack of other obvious contributing factors leads to a conclusion that perhaps parenting experience predisposes an individual toward this leadership style. Logically, parents and leaders will be exposed to many different situations as their children age. The instant feedback which is

frequently provided by children helps to reinforce the use of different techniques in different circumstances allowing the parent/leader to learn which techniques are effective in various situations. The experience thus gained will enable the leader to make effective use of situational techniques in the work place.

Conclusions and Future Research

As stated previously, although there are similarities between parenting and leadership, it is difficult to state with certainty whether one influences the other. Since the results from this study show that relationships do seem to exist, the following suggestions for future research may be useful in bridging the gap between the two subjects. First, an area to further investigate would be to determine more specifically the affects leadership has on one's parenting skills. Conversely, a study might be conducted to understand how and why parenting influences leadership. Second, stage in life was found to possibly affect one's leadership style, further studies in this area could help to develop this connection which in turn, may provide insight for training parents and leaders. Third, one might develop a scale to rank parental involvement and to study leadership as a function of the degree of parental involvement. This could assist both parents and leaders in becoming more self aware and self actualized which could enhance abilities in both fields. Determining whether a certain type of leader is more influenced by parenting than another may narrow the scope of this research. Adding a control group of non-parents to this study could also provide a point of comparison to determine if non-parents tend to be more disposed toward a certain leadership style than their parental counterparts. Finally, examining gender differences between the way males and females lead and parent may

provide a broader understanding for the differences in leadership styles discussed in this study.

Although this study produced some interesting findings, further research will have to be conducted in order to discern whether or not parenting or leadership will improve either field. However, it does seem logical based on many of the results from this research as well as information gathered in the literature, that integrating the two disciplines could be useful in leadership and parenting development.

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Appendix

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Below are two questionnaires I would like you to complete prior to the interview. The first one is designed to assess whether your leadership style is relationship or task oriented. The second is intended to measure your parenting style. Each questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

What is your leadership style?

Please read each item in the below noted leadership style survey and think about how often you engage in the described behavior. Indicate your response to each item by circling one to the five numbers to the right of each item (1=never, 2=seldom, 3= occasionally, 4= often, 5= always).

1. Tells group members what they are supposed to do. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Acts friendly with members of the group. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Sets standards of performance for group members. 1 2 3 4 5
4. Helps others to feel comfortable in the group. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Makes suggestions about how to solve problems. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Responds favorably to suggestions made by others. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Makes his or her perspective clear to others. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Treats others fairly. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Develops a plan of action for the group. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Behaves in a predictable manner toward group members. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Defines role responsibilities for each group member. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Communicates actively with group members. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Clarifies his or her own role within the group. 1 2 3 4 5
14. Shows concern for the personal well-being of others. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Provides a plan for how the work is to be done. 1 2 3 4 5
16. Shows flexibility in making decisions. 1 2 3 4 5
17. Provides criteria for what is expected of the group. 1 2 3 4 5

18. Discloses thoughts and feelings to group members. 1 2 3 4 5
19. Encourages group members to do quality work. 1 2 3 4 5
20. Helps group members to get along. 1 2 3 4 5

What's Your Parenting Style?

The following questionnaire is divided into two parts with fifteen statements each. Part I is designed to help you identify your beliefs about being a parent. Part II focuses on your current home situation. As you read each statement, decide how much you agree with it. Then write the number from 1 to 5 that corresponds to your level of agreement: 1..strongly disagree; 2..disagree; 3..neutral; 4..agree; 5..strongly agree

Part I: Beliefs

1. It is better to give a little ground and protect the peace than to stand firm and provoke a fight.
2. Children need discipline that hurts a little so that they will remember the lesson later.
3. Children shouldn't always get their way, but usually we ought to learn to listen to what they have to say.
4. The parent-child relationship is like a war in which if the parent wins, both sides win; but if the parent loses, both sides lose.
5. If parents provide a good environment, children will pretty much raise themselves.
6. The parent's role is like that of a teacher who is preparing the child for a final exam called life.
7. Childhood is so short that parents should do everything to make it a happy time.
8. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" is still the best policy.
9. Children need to learn what they may or may not do, but we don't have to use punishment to teach.
10. Whether we like it or not, children have the last word about what they will or won't do.
11. If you let children have pretty free rein, they will eventually learn from the consequences of their behavior what is appropriate.
12. Children first have to learn that the parent is boss.
13. Too many children today talk back to their parents when they should just quietly obey them.
14. If we want children to respect us, we must first treat them with respect.
15. You can never do too much for your child if it comes from genuine love.

Part II: Actions

16. I often have to call my child more than once to get her or him out of bed in the morning.
17. I have to constantly stay on top of my child to get things done.
18. When my child misbehaves, he or she usually knows what the consequences will be.
19. I often get angry and yell at my child.
20. I often feel that my child is taking advantage of my good nature.
21. We have discussed chores at our home and everybody takes part.
22. My child gets a spanking at least once a month.
23. My child has no regular chores around the home, but will occasionally pitch in when asked.
24. I usually give my child clear instructions as to how I want something done.
25. My child is finicky eater, so I have to try various combinations to make sure he or she gets the proper nutrition.
26. I don't call my child names, and I don't expect to be called names by my child.
27. I usually give my child choices between two appropriate alternatives rather than telling my child what to do.
28. I have to threaten my child with punishment at least once a week.
29. I wish my child wouldn't interrupt my conversations so often.
30. My child usually gets up and ready without my help in the morning.

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants In Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Lead Your Children and Raise Your Employees: The Effects of Parenting on Transformational Leadership.

Investigator: Andrea Franco-Cook, graduate student at the Center For Public Administration and Policy.

I. Purpose of this Research/Project

The purpose of this research is to explore public administrators' perceptions regarding possible relationships that may exist between parenting and leadership. There is little to no information available on this subject and it is this researchers hope to gain a deeper understanding of the participants perspectives on the connection between the two subjects. This research will study nine leaders from criminal justice and social service related fields that have a minimum of five years management experience and have supervised at least five people .

II. Procedures

The information in this study will be collected from a purposefully selected sample of 9 public administrators in the fields of education, criminal justice and health and human services. In an effort to answer the primary research question *What are public administrators' perceptions regarding possible relationships that exist between parenting and leadership?* One method of data collection using semi-structured interviews will be employed. The following interview questions will be used to encourage the participants to share their ideas by drawing from their personal experiences as supervisors/leaders and parents:

Interview questions:

- What connections do you think exist if any between parenting and leadership
 - Can you provide examples?
- What are the age(s) of your children?
- Are you the primary caregiver?
- What is your parenting style?

- What are your thoughts on discipline?
- How do you motivate your children?
- How would you describe your leadership style?
 - What are your thoughts on discipline?
 - How do you motivate your employees?
- Can you provide an example of when you applied skills you learned in parenting in the workplace?
- Can you provide an example of how your leadership experiences have contributed to parenting?
- Are there specific skills you have learned in parenting that are useful in public service?
 - Please give me examples.
- Is there anything else you would like to add about your perceptions of connections between leadership and parenting?

Each interview will last approximately one hour and will be conducted at a site that is convenient for the participant. In the event of scheduling problems telephone discussions will be conducted instead of in-person meetings. However, the telephone method is the least desired mode of interviewing and will only be used in the event that all other options have been exhausted. A recording device will be utilized during the interviews and the information will be reviewed and noted after each meeting. A follow up meeting may be requested in the event that the researcher discovers inconsistencies or confusion over the answers that were provided during the interview.

III. Risks

There are no expected risks that involve physical danger or emotional distress in this study.

IV. Benefits

There will be no immediate personal benefits to the participants. However, integrating parenting and leadership could help experts in the field of leadership understand the developmental aspects of how relationships between leaders and followers grow. In addition, some of the teaching methods used to train good leaders could be adapted to assist in the development of young parents. Having a leader that could motivate and empower others may create a more desirable workplace that emphasizes mutual trust and respect. Followers would feel that they were part of a team and therefore, would be more efficient because of the trust that is placed in them to put forth their best effort.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

All identifying participant information such as names, employers' names or addresses, dates (e.g., birthdates) phone/fax numbers, e-mail addresses, and voiceprints retrieved from audio recordings will be kept confidential and anonymous. This will be accomplished by maintaining all identifying information in an area that is separate from

the subject's responses. To further ensure confidentiality and anonymity all identifying information will be assigned a code that is only known by the researcher and will be used as a method of linking identifying information to study responses. The document that

links the two topics will be maintained in a separate locked area that will only be accessible to the researcher.

It is possible that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research. In some situations, it may be necessary for an investigator to break confidentiality. If child abuse is known or strongly suspected, investigators are required to notify the appropriate authorities. If a subject is believed to be a threat to herself/himself or others, the investigator should notify the appropriate authorities.

The results of this study will be presented in an academic setting and the final thesis containing such results will be submitted for a final grade. In the event the findings of this research prove to be significant to the field of leadership and/or parenting then the thesis may be submitted for publication in academic journal.

VI. Compensation

There will *not* be any type of tangible or intangible compensation such as money or redeemable coupons or other currency offered to the participants of this study.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

Participants are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

VII. Subject's Permission

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

Subject signature

Date

Witness

Date

Should I have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject, I may contact:

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E-mail Letter of Contact

Dear Ms. Campbell:

Pursuant to our discussion this morning, I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in my study. As a graduate student at Virginia Tech majoring in Public Administration and Policy, I am conducting research on possible relationships that may exist between parenting and leadership. Specifically, my primary research question is: **What are public administrators' perceptions regarding possible relationships that exist between parenting and leadership?**

As a public administrator who I know also has children, I would greatly appreciate it if you could give me approximately one hour of your time to discuss your experiences as a leader and a parent. I am attaching an informed consent form that explains the study in more detail. In the event a hard-copy would be more convenient, I would be happy to send you one.

I will follow up with a telephone call within the next week to schedule an interview as well as answer any questions you may have regarding this study. Again, thank you in advance for your help. If you should have further questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at [MGcook3@ Suddenlink.net](mailto:MGcook3@Suddenlink.net) or 304-256-8699.

Sincerely,

Andrea Franco-Cook

Interview Protocol

Date:

Start Time of Interview:

Ending Time of Interview:

Organization Type:

Project Description (to be read or summarized at start of interview):

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study that addresses possible relationships that may exist between parenting and leadership.

This interview should take no more than one hour of your time. A report of my findings will be made available to participants and may be published more broadly.

With your permission, I would like to record this interview so that I can take more thorough notes following our session. The recording will be destroyed once the project is completed, and all of your responses will be kept anonymous.

Do I have your permission to record this interview session? Thank you. Your cooperation and candidness are greatly appreciated.

Interview questions:

- What connections do you think exist if any between parenting and leadership
 - Can you provide examples?
- What are the age(s) of your children?
- Are you the primary caregiver?
- What is your parenting style?
 - What are your thoughts on discipline?
 - How do you motivate your children?
- How would you describe your leadership style?
 - What are your thoughts on discipline?
 - How do you motivate your employees?
- Can you provide an example of when you applied skills you learned in parenting in the workplace?
- Can you provide an example of how your leadership experiences have contributed to parenting?

- Are there specific skills you have learned in parenting that are useful in public service?
 - Please give me examples.
- Is there anything else you would like to add about your perceptions of connections between leadership and parenting?

Closing:

Thank you for participating in this interview. All interview results will be kept anonymous. Is it okay for me to contact you again if I need to clarify any of your statements? () Yes. () No.
Would you like to have a chance to read over a transcript of the interview? () Yes () No.

Participants Signature