

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF
TRANSCENDENT LEADERS IN HEALTHCARE

by

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A doctoral project submitted to the faculty of the Medical University
of South Carolina in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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in the College of Health Professions

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Dedication

To my father and mother, Joseph and Julia Jordan.

Through their lives, I've come to understand the meaning of "other"-interest and the virtues of altruism, benevolence, and empathy. *Obrigado mom e dad. Meu amor eternal a você ambos para sua vida de dar selfless.*

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative inquiry has been to explore the reasonableness of proposing a new leadership construct, *transcending leadership*, by examining the lived experiences of notable healthcare leaders. Participants in this phenomenological study were nominated by state hospital association and medical society executives and included individuals from 12 geographically diverse states; representing a variety of healthcare delivery settings and socio-economic environments. The methodology involved *hearing the voice* of 14 extraordinary healthcare leaders, along with their respective nominating-corroborators, as a means of identifying key characteristics common among the study group. Twelve categories of data were analyzed and interpreted using content analysis. The findings indicate that the participating leaders shared three reoccurring characteristics: an “*other*”-*interest*, *determined resolve*, and the personal and social competencies broadly associated with *emotional intelligence* theory. When comparing the findings with extant transactional-transformational leadership theory, the characteristics of “*other*”-interest and aptitudes consistent with emotional intelligence theory appear discrepant, thereby affirming the reasonableness of a transcending construct and a plausible extension to the extant full range of leadership model. The study findings were further juxtaposed with four nascent propositions; each proffering a basis(es) for the legitimacy of a transcending leadership construct.

The findings of this study propound a triarchic leadership model where the transcending construct adds to the transactional-transformational paradigm an “*other*”-interest perspective manifest in leader altruism, benevolence/beneficence, and empathy.

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