Working in a stressful and chaotic environment can be difficult for building principals, particularly for those individuals in urban school districts (Stokley, 2002; Thompson, 2004; DeNisco, 2013). Presumably, the job is only expected to get more arduous with the increasing demands to improve student achievement (Kimball & Sirotnik, 2000; Queen & Schumacher, 2006; Allison, 2012). What is quite apparent today is that the role and responsibilities of the principal have changed dramatically over the past twenty years (Hill-Yevertont, 2003; Carlson, 2012) shifting from a factory model of management of learning to one in which teachers and principals have to create more student-centered and project-based learning opportunities (Ertmer, & Simons, 2006; Denning, 2011; Savery, 2015). There is ample research to suggest that those building administrators, who demonstrated
leadership skills that were based upon a strong sense of spirituality, were more likely to lead by example (Bolman & Deal, 2001), make working conditions and school improvement energizing and exciting (Fullan, 2005), and display level-headedness and calmness (Solomon & Hunter, 2002).

This study attempts to determine whether building principals that had a relatively “mid- to high-level” of spirituality, as measured by the Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments (ASPIRES) survey instrument, as compared to those administrators indicating a “little to no-level” of spirituality, would exhibit statistically significant differences in their leadership practices as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) instrument. To determine whether statistically significant differences existed between the two populations, and whether principals who had a high level of spirituality were more inclined to utilize the leadership practices of a transformational leader, a survey was completed by 114 of 347 building principals (or 32.9 % of the population of principals) in 30 Middle Cities Education Association (MCEA) school districts in the State of Michigan.

Survey responses were disaggregated by gender, ethnic background, and years of experience, to determine their influence on principals' leadership practices when controlling for their level of spirituality. An independent T-Test was used to test three research questions designed to measure levels of spirituality between administrators displaying transformational behaviors. A One Way ANOVA was used to test one research question designed to measure levels of spirituality between administrators displaying transactional or passive avoidant behaviors. A linear regression analysis was also conducted indicating gender and race as predictors of spirituality. In all, the 0.05 level of confidence was used for determining statistical significance.

This study's results reveal that leaders indicating a “mid- to high-level” of spirituality demonstrated the following qualities: holding spiritual values important, utilizing meditation and prayer, keeping spirituality as a central part of their lives while employing practices such as values, beliefs, a strong sense of purpose, and a collective sense of mission. There was a statistically significant difference between principals who held a “mid- to high-level” of spirituality when considering gender, race/ethnicity, and the utilization of transformational and transactional practices. Furthermore, this study concludes with three recommendations to improve the professional development and support of individuals that wish to pursue careers in this demanding profession.