

Transformational Leadership

Overview:

- Popular and current approach to leadership developed in 1980.
- The Transformational Leadership concept began from a written work by political sociologist James MacGregor Burns entitled Leadership (1978).
- Burns examined the role of both leaders and followers and how they intertwine.
- Transformational leadership aims to transform a team of people into a viable unit.
- Transformation Leadership primarily focuses on strong morals and values of the leader.
- Transformational leaders set out to assist followers to live up to their full potential thus improving their overall performance.
- Additionally, to assess followers motives, attempts to satisfy their needs and most importantly they are treated like human beings.
- Further research by Bass (1998) analyzed how leaders with transformational qualities can use their position to further only their personal gain; pseudotransformational leadership
- Transformational leadership can be assessed through use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

Model of Transformational Leadership

- Factor 1: Idealized Influence/Charisma
- Factor 2: Inspirational motivation
- Factor 3: Intellectual stimulation
- Factor 4: Individualized consideration

Strengths:

- Popular model that has received a lot of attention by researchers.
- Emphasizes the importance of followers and their growth in the leadership process.
- Allows for a collaborative environment providing room for creative and innovative ideas.
- Prioritizes strong morals and values.

Weaknesses:

- It is based on the MLQ, which has been challenged by some research;
- The approach does not provide clarity for ease of replication.
- The framework implies leaders must possess charisma and persuasive trait-like quality
- Emphasizes “heroic leadership” bias; allowing the potential to be used in negative ways by leaders.
- Research indicates this approach is not effective on the millennial workforce.

Practical uses:

In an organization a transformational leader seeks to improve the performance of the organization while fulfilling individual followers to their top potential. The leader, a charismatic individual with a good moral compass, values, and set ideals would share their vision for the organization. This vision would be linked to the goals of the organization, but also take into consideration the input and needs of the followers because the leader would have built a good rapport with the followers. Therefore, followers would look at the leader as a source of inspiration and a role model. Transformational leaders provide constant motivation and nurture the sense of collaboration in the workplace so followers feel safe sharing their creative innovations. Since the transformational leader fosters this environment, followers tend to realize their full potential, leading to increased performance of the teams. In hand, this leads to exceeding performance of the organization, and most of the time creates growth for the leader as well.

Northouse, P. G. (2019). Leadership: Theory and practice (8th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.