

Free essay on transformational leadership

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The distinction in nature between transformational and pseudo-transformational leaders is able to reach the core of transformational leadership where leadership that actively abuses its level of power through the maximization of self-interest, in spite of the interests of the followers, happens to be antithetical to actual transformational leadership.

The concept of transformational leadership was first introduced in the year 1978 by James MacGregor Burns but Downtown coined the term in 1973.

Transformational leadership encompasses values, emotions, ethics as well as long term targets. Transformational leadership primarily deals with leaders who possess charisma and dominant traits along with the ability to influence various people. He/ she must always take into account the needs of the followers first. In case of transformational leadership, the leaders must motivate the followers to alter their pre-existing expectations and perceptions in order to achieve a common goal for the sake of a greater moral value .

Morality plays a large role in transformational leadership. It has the power to change not only a single person but the entire world. Morality makes the public aware of morally correct issues that might not necessarily be accepted by society. Martin Luther King Jr., for instance, increased the level of morality when he tackled the issue of integration of races. He helped to reveal that inside groups did not tolerate external groups and vice versa. The level of hostility and inequality claimed several lives but Martin Luther King Jr. fought in a peaceful manner for the rights of the black people.

Pseudo-transformational leadership, established by Bass in 1998, presents a direct contrast to the concept of transformational leadership. Bass came to

understand that transformational leadership might be taken in a negative or positive manner. The term “pseudo-transformational leadership” can be used to describe leaders like Kim Jong and Adolf Hitler who had a significant impact on their followers but in a negative approach. Such leaders happen to be self-oriented and hold the belief that their morals are right. Pseudo-transformational leaders normally possess a deceptive nature and cannot tolerate their views being questioned by the followers. The main target of these leaders is to acquire absolute power .

Pseudo-transformational leadership deals primarily with manipulation. The followers may consider the leaders to be the transformational type but in reality this is the effect of the manipulation of the leaders. The transformational leadership approach takes the requirements of every follower into consideration; on the other hand, pseudo-transformational leadership considers the needs of the person only when they can be used as an instrument to further their ambitions. These leaders possess high levels of charisma, similar to transformational leaders.

This concept can best be explained through the example of Adolf Hitler. He manipulated the public to discriminate and ignore the Jewish race. He killed thousands of people for the sole purpose of ruling over a particular race. He made effective use of his charismatic skills to convince the German public that they were Aryans, leading to the rise of segregationist tendencies among the people; this kind of action is referred to as idealized influence .

Other pseudo-transformational leaders such as Fidel Castro, Joseph Stalin, Saddam Hussein, and Kim Jong resorted to the transformational leadership model created by Posner and Kouzes. This late model suggests that pseudo-

transformational leaders are clear about their philosophies and values along with expressing them to other people. They were successful in forming a vision that served as a guide for the behaviour of their followers. They posed a challenge to the status quo and system and their idea of a better tomorrow was realized due to their innovative leadership. They could work with people successfully and were able to build trust, promote teamwork and even cooperate and collaborate. Some treated their subordinates rather respectfully. They offered encouragement to their followers through recognition and rewarding them for their accomplishments. These pseudo-transformational leaders lent support to in-group followers. Their manipulative minds made good use of power to facilitate war, murder, terrorism and poverty .

Leaders in recent times tend to make use of their leadership abilities to control and gain power to further their own goals, irrespective of the well being of the public. Governments of several nations use charismatic individuals in positions of power to encourage and deceive the entire country and enable them to take actions that do not take into account the best interests of the country.

Transformational leadership presents an expanding area of interest for study. But most of the literature on the topic has ignored the organizational context in which this type of leadership remains embedded. The extant literature offers the distinct impression that transformational leadership can be applied equally to various situations in an organization. The effectiveness and development of transformational leadership has close ties with contextual variables including the structure of the organization. But, if the

concept of transformational leadership is not connected to leadership based on values, it is likely to lose its effectiveness. A great deal of emphasis must be placed on the significance of the type of leadership based on values.

In the present day economic scenario, leadership is achieving greater dimensions and no longer remains confined to the leaders. Digital organization enables everyone to become a leader tasked with the formation of an environment for the sake of collective success and gain. A true leader must create followers within the framework of the organization who are influenced to act. This also happens to be the crux of transformational leadership. These changes have resulted in an increase in the importance of transformational leadership. Organizations need to be realizing that transformational leadership remains effective as long as it is value-based .

Transformational leadership has been branded as unethical by numerous critics. They argue that its rhetoric appeals more to the emotions instead of reason and that it lacks the balance of power distribution and democratic discourse; they believe it manipulates followers into ignoring their own best interests. They are unable to view the positive side of transformational leadership. The shortcomings of democratic processes are ignored by them completely. A distinction cannot be made by them between pseudo-transformational and transformational leadership.

It is unfair to term transformational leadership as being immoral since it has become almost a necessity in the current post-industrial field of work. Cascio in 1995 pointed out that the conventional job of service or manufacturing, a certain group of tasks carried out by a single worker, has been substituted by a service or manufacturing process, accompanied by a flexible team

possessing variable interests, attitudes and skills. As a result, the independent, networked and culturally diverse organizations of today need to implement transformational leadership among the followers to stimulate their imagination, creativity and efforts .

Pseudo-transformational leaders, on the other hand, who live in a world of fantasy and self-aggrandizement, can be termed as immoral. But actual leaders who serve as agents of morality help increase the scope of effective freedom, the limits of conscience along with the possibility of altruistic intention. The actions of these leaders aim for noble ends via fair consequences and legitimate means. They remain engaged in the task of uplifting their followers in terms of morality, sharing mutually rewarding views of success and empowering their followers to transform their visions into reality. Thus, the efforts of transformational leaders should receive applause instead of chastisement.

Several studies have contributed significantly to the literature of transformational theory . The most important contribution happens to be the development of true transformational leadership as the perfect form of leadership followed by the development of both leader and follower implicit leadership theories along with their relationship to authentic transformational leadership which is associated with the effectiveness of the leader . The literature helps examine the role of the implicit leadership theory of a follower and its subsequent impact on a leader .

It is necessary to examine the relationship that exists between ethics and values and transformational leadership. Organizational leaders must consider them to be serious topics since they clarify the ethical

responsibilities and moral obligations of the leaders who execute business decisions. The term “ethics” can mean more than compliance with regulations and laws like those applicable to safety regulations and occupational health. Criteria dependent mainly on legality can be considered insufficient to inform managers in an effective manner regarding to best way to deal with complex crisis that have considerable ethical impact in the long run. Complex problems dealing with morality need a concern and understanding for ethical values, justice, fairness and due process to communities, individuals and groups. But, in terms of transformational leadership, the values of the leaders are far more significant in shaping the ethical behaviour among leaders in comparison to the operationalization of the practices of management suggested by the theory of transformational leadership .

The connection between transformational leadership and personality is evident from the opinions of the leaders and subordinates. Personality shapes the concept of transformational leadership from the perspectives of leaders and subordinates. In case of transformational leadership, subordinates who are extraverted tend to develop a more positive image of their leaders in contrast to their introverted counterparts. Intuitive, perceiving and extraverted individuals consider themselves to be more transformational than people with a sensing, introverted and judging nature. The subordinates consider sensing leaders to be more transformational than leaders who are intuitive by nature. The tendencies indicate that difference exist owing to personality on an individual level .

Debates have been conducted actively over the ethics of charismatic and

transformational leadership, mainly because of the influential appeal of such leaders which yields chances for opportunistic behaviour. Differences are present between the conduct of pseudo-transformational leaders and actual transformational leaders. Even though influencing and inspiring others is not inherently unethical or ethical, true transformational leaders inspire and make good use of their influence to empower their followers. In sharp contrast is the behaviour of pseudo-transformational leaders who inspire and use their influence to gain for themselves.

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