

Leadership conclusion flashcard



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

For every theory there is a counter argument. What are the criticisms and arguments against Transformational Leadership? Identify the sources and clearly articulate the reasoning behind the criticisms. Adopt a position for or against Transformational Leadership and defend your position with argument

Introduction This essay is based on the Transformational leadership theory and will be referred to as TL throughout this essay. This essay will look into criticisms and arguments against the theory and analyse the reasoning of these criticisms and arguments.

Effective leaders are well aware that in best practice it is never viable to implement one style of leadership and flexibility is vital for a smooth operation. This essay will therefore stand for Transformational Leadership where it is applicable and against it where it is not. It will then articulate on the reasons behind this thinking. **Main Body** The original theory of TL was developed by James Burns in 1978 but it can be said that Bernard Bass is the main theorist behind the continuous development of TL.

From 1985 onwards Bernard Bass was accredited with more of a structured and better development on the theory of TL. Transformational leadership is very much dependant on human nature and how best to harness this to gain better performance. This naturally meant that just as with human nature there were many complex flaws with TL and the academics and critics were ever ready to emphasise this. TL was also criticised for not being able to stand alone as a single theory as the understanding of other theories was essential in order for its concepts to be grasped by the potential leader.

Babou (2008) “ Understanding the difference between transactional and transformational leadership is vital in getting the whole concept of transformational leadership theory” (pg1). Due to different viewpoints and counter arguments against TL, Bass and Avolio developed The Full Range Leadership Model (FRL), which integrated 9 factors from transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Kirkbride (2006) “ The FRL model makes the point that what is required is a change in the balance of leadership behaviours, away from the more transactional and more towards the transformational” (pg8). Kirkbride (2006) This was an important development as TL was compared with Transactional leadership by the critics and seemed to fall short or still to prove its better qualities. Mullin ((2007) “ Transactional leadership is based on legitimate authority within the bureaucratic structure of the organisation” (Pg381). Another criticism of TL was that it was dependant on further theories, and had strong similarities to participative leadership theory.

ChangingMinds. org (2011) “ A Participative Leader, rather than taking autocratic decisions, seeks to involve other people in the process, possibly including subordinates, peers, superiors and other stakeholders”(pg23). The relationship to other theories is true and was the basis of how FRL was developed, but this integration did however still make TL its own entity and help to stabilize its theoretical background. In 1998 Bass and Avolio developed the 4 components of TL in order to characterize the leader that implements TL.

These 4 components are known as the 4Is of Transformational leadership. Cherry, K (2012) The Components of Transformational Leadership Bass also <https://assignbuster.com/leadershipconclusion-flashcard/>

suggested that there were four different components of transformational leadership. Intellectual Stimulation – Transformational leaders not only challenge the status quo; they also encourage creativity among followers. The leader encourages followers to explore new ways of doing things and new opportunities to learn. Individualized Consideration – Transformational leadership also involves offering support and encouragement to individual followers.

In order to foster supportive relationships, transformational leaders keep lines of communication open so that followers feel free to share ideas and so that leaders can offer direct recognition of each follower's unique contributions. Inspirational Motivation – Transformational leaders have a clear vision that they are able to articulate to followers. These leaders are also able to help followers experience the same passion and motivation to fulfil these goals. Idealized Influence – The transformational leaders serves as a role model for followers.

Because followers trust and respect the leader, they emulate the leader and internalize his or her ideals. The four components deal with a close relationship between leaders and follower. The criticisms of the 4 components were that they were personalised, and demanded the capabilities of experienced senior managers. TL seemed to be out of reach for new or inexperienced leaders and thus was criticised as an elitist theory, relevant only to the selected few that may possibly be able to implement its strategy.

Bass and Riggio (2006) “ Critics perceive transformational leadership as elitist and anti democratic” (Pg11). This also brings into question on the limits of the application of TL as these so called elite will not be in the majority. The biggest criticisms of all regarding TL comes from the “ dark side” or the pseudotransformational aspect that is concerned with this theory. Bass and Riggio (2006) “ pseudotransformational leaders believe in distorted utilitarian and warped moral principles” (pg14). TL does not discriminate and is applicable by both authentic and inauthentic leaders.

This means an authentic leader such as Steve Jobs of Apple can create belief within a company in a way that can set it apart from its competitors with a strong loyalty and belief in the leader’s vision. An inauthentic leader such as Adolf Hitler can create the same belief and faith to take a whole nation down a path of destruction. Bass and Riggio (2006) “ Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot, Josef Stalin, Osama Bin Laden. These leaders are those who can be called Pseudotransformational” (pg5). There is no way TL can brush this off as it is part and parcel of any leadership theory that involves charismatic traits.

Bass and Riggio (2006) “ this notion of morally good and evil leaders has also been a dilemma for charismatic leadership theories”(pg13). Then the flaw of expected altruism within TL is raised by critics. Even though the theory highlights its pseudotransformational elements it does not give the follower enough information on how to recognise whether their leader is authentic or inauthentic. In a situation where the followers may lack education and live in impoverished conditions, an inauthentic leader will be able to manipulate these followers for an exploitative agenda. In this scenario, even with the frameworks such as FRL nd MLQ (discussed later), the comprehension of

these frameworks by followers will be fragmented. Gill, R (2009) “ Studies have also mostly focused on the leader in relation to a group of followers, involving averaging their assessments of the leader, thus failing to account for differences that reflect different behaviours by leaders towards different individuals” (pg45). The theory concentrates a lot more of how it should be applied rather than how the application should be correctly analysed and assessed by the followers. Studies into TL have also found that women are better TL leaders due to physiological factors.

Riggio (2010) “ research shows that women, as a group, have more transformational qualities than men. (pg1). This combined with factors such as charisma questions whether the qualities required for TL can be gained academically or with experience or are they something that a person has to be born with. The debate regarding this will go well into the future but the fact is it is more than likely both. This then once again questions the just how limited the theory can be as it is obvious it applies to specific individuals. These traits and qualities expected from TL are not qualities that are possessed by all individuals.

The multi factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) was developed by Bass and Avolio in 1997 in order to further establish the TL theory and counter balance the arguments against the theory. Broadbent G (2011) “ The MLQ is the foremost leadership assessment and development tool in existence. The 360° approach assures a clear picture of leadership behaviours across statistically verified competency dimensions. (pg1). The MLQ itself then came under heavy criticisms just as the theory itself for it was accused of an

approach where the questionnaire was geared towards content validity of the theory itself and the approach in itself was limited.

This criticism led to the creation of the TLQ by Alimo and Alban Metcalfe in 2001, this was considered a more valid tool for analysis. Gill, R (2009) “ MLQ tends to describe distant leaders, and they do so in the terms of charisma, vision and transformation, while perceptions of close leaders might be different” (pg55). Regardless of all these criticisms TL is a valid theory and leaders such as Steve Jobs have proven that a company can become a lifestyle and even a movement with the correct transformational leader in place and when all the elements of TL working in harmony with each other.

This is the essence of TL and recognising the difference and the benefits of TL establishes it to be great applicable theory it is. Burns J (1978) “ the transformational leadership style can alter and strengthen perceptions, values and aspirations of employees” (pg1). This in turn can revitalize both a struggling company and help a successful company gain the competitive advantage. When TL is looked upon from all angles it is clear that it is not possible to take a firm stance for or against TL. There is no one best way of leading and it is not best practice to try to stick to one leadership style.

As the demands of the company, industry and personnel change, a leader must be able to effectively apply the best style of leadership at the given situation. In some circumstances you can stand by transformational leadership firmly such as in a company like Apple. TL will however be challenged in a low skilled labour environment third world manufacturing plants where employees work for minimum wage in an environment where

jobs may be hard to find. In this scenario employees will just want to work and get paid.

Goleman (2000) “ New research suggests that the most effective executives use a collection of distinct leadership styles –each in the right measure, at just the right time (Pg3). Conclusion There is no best or perfect style of leadership. All leadership deals with human characteristics and interactions which naturally make them complex. With every new generation leadership styles and theories must also evolve in order to harness the changes in a beneficial way as human trends, expectations and attitudes change.

Transformational leadership has many critics but each and every single theory also has its critics.

The exceptional leader will be able to grasp the knowledge and be able to switch between styles in order for them to be the best they can. They will also be able to have a trust and understanding of their followers needs and have ethics that is not exploitative of their followers. Due to this there cannot be a firm stance for TL or any leadership theory as there can be no standalone victor. The best of leaders will already be well aware of this fact.

Reference list Kirkbride, P (2006) Developing transformational leaders: the full range leadership model in action.

Available at: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/search.htm?st1=FRL&ct=all&ec=1&bf=1&sr1=FRL%20Model> [Accessed 2nd December 2011]

Mullins, L (2007) Management and organisational behaviour. Harlow.

Prentice Hall Babou, R (2008) Transactional Leadership Vs. Transformational Leadership. Available at: <http://leadershipchamps.wordpress.com>.

<https://assignbuster.com/leadershipconclusion-flashcard/>

com/2008/08/04/transactional-leadership-vs-transformational-leadership/
[Accessed 12th December 2011] ChangingMinds. org (2011) Participative
Leadership. Available at: [http://changingminds.
org/disciplines/leadership/styles/participative_leadership. tm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/styles/participative_leadership. tm) [Accessed 12th
December 2011] Cherry, k (2012)Transformational Leadership. Available at:
<http://psychology. about. com/od/leadership/a/transformational. htm>
[Accessed 12th December 2011] Bass, B and Riggo, R (2006)
Transformational leadership. 2nd edition. USA. Lawrence Erlbaum. Riggio,
R(2010)Do men and women lead differently/ who's better?. Available at:
[http://www. psychologytoday. com/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201003/do-
men-and-women-lead-differently-whos-better](http://www. psychologytoday. com/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201003/do-men-and-women-lead-differently-whos-better) [Accessed 12th December
2011] Gill, R (2006) Theory and practice of leadership.
London. Sage Publications Broadbent, G(2011)Multifactor leadership
questionnaire Available at: [http://www. transformationalsafety. com/index.
php? option= com_content&view= article&id= 97&Itemid= 65](http://www. transformationalsafety. com/index. php? option= com_content&view= article&id= 97&Itemid= 65) [Accessed
22nd December 2011] Business mate. org(2010)James Macgregor Burns.
Available at: <http://www. businessmate. org/Article. php? ArtikelId= 23>
[Accessed 22nd December 2011] Leadership Advantage .
com(2007)Leadership Style. Available at: [http://www. leadershipadvantage.
com/leadershipstyle. html](http://www. leadershipadvantage. com/leadershipstyle. html) [Accessed 22nd December 2011]