Transformational Leadership in Open Distance Learning: A Key to Success

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ABSTRACT

The thrust for developing online education is because of the need to provide education for all, to enrich people's lives, to spread higher education and make and guide the future leaders to drive economic growth in terms of economy of scale. Among all styles, Transformational leadership leads to positive changes in those who follow. Transformational leaders prove themselves energetic, enthusiastic and passionate. Not only are these leaders concerned and involved in the process; they are also focused on helping every member of the group succeed as well. To fulfill the need of ODL transformational leadership is best suitable. This study investigated (1) how do leaders creates and sustain change in ODL. (2) Identifies qualities that best meet organizational and individual staff needs. Study was delimited to the students of course code of 4783 of PhD level 2011, faculty of Education of AIOU and trainers and heads of educational department at District Mandi Bahauddin. Data was collected from 100 respondents through questionnaire. The major findings for the paper are that characteristics, requirements and actions of ODL leaders are the still have not been sufficiently defined by the current research. Transformational leadership has been found to enlighten of organizational performance predicted higher levels of product innovation in R & D team, created safer work environments, training has been shown to improve leadership and associated performance.

Keywords: Leadership, ODL, Transformational, Change.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of transformational leadership was initially introduced by leadership expert and presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns. According to Burns, transformational leadership can be seen when "leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of moral and motivation." Through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions and motivations to work towards common goals.

Later, researcher Bernard M. Bass expanded upon Burns original ideas to develop what is today referred to as Bass' Transformational Leadership Theory. According to Bass, transformational leadership can be defined based on the impact that it has on followers. Transformational leaders, Bass suggested, garner trust, respect and admiration from their followers.

THE COMPONENTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Bass also suggested that there were four different components of transformational leadership.

1- Intellectual Stimulation – Transformational leaders not only challenge the status quo; they also encourage <u>creativity</u> among followers. The leader encourages followers to explore new ways of doing things and new opportunities to learn.
2- 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.
3- 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 fulfill these goals.
4- Idealized Influence – The transformational leader serves as a role model for followers. Because followers trust and respect the leader, they emulate this individual and internalize his or her ideals.

(Burns, J.M. (1978) http://blogs.psychologytoday.com/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/200903/are-you-transformational-leader)

First, significant global economic changes from the early 1970s – which followed on from about 25 years of post-World War 2 stability – meant that many large western companies such as General Motors and AT&T had to consider radical changes in their ways of doing business. Factors such as rapid technological change, heightened levels of competition, a rising flow of products from newly industrialized countries, volatility in OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) pricing strategies, and changing demographic structures created a turbulent, unstable and competitive environment in which significant organizational change was imperative. Changes often included downsizing and the adoption of new forms of organizational arrangement. These amendments took their toll on worker satisfaction and empowerment and broke "the old social contract of long-term employment in return for employee loyalty" (Griffin, 2003, p. 1).

Transformational leadership is that which:

… Facilitates a redefinition of a people's mission and vision, a renewal of their commitment and the restructuring of their systems for goal accomplishment. It is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents. Hence, transformational leadership must be grounded in moral foundations.

(Leithwood, as cited in Cashin et al., 2000, p.1)

Transformational leaders elevate people from low levels of need, focused on survival (following Maslow's hierarchy), to higher levels (Kelly, 2003). They may also motivate followers to transcend their own interests for some other collective purpose (Feinberg, Ostroff & Burke, 2005, p. 471) but typically help followers satisfy as many of their individual human needs as possible, appealing notably to higher order needs (e.g. to love, to learn, and to leave a legacy). Transformational leaders are said to engender trust, admiration, loyalty and respect amongst their followers (Barbuto, 2005, p. 28). Transformational leadership is also based on self-reflective

changing of values and beliefs by the leader and their followers. From this emerges a key characteristic of transformational leadership. It is said to involve leaders and followers raising one another's achievements, morality and motivations to levels that might otherwise have been impossible (Barnett, 2003; Chekwa, 2001; Crawford, Gould & Scott, 2003;).

Idealized influence (attributes and behaviours) + Individualized consideration + Inspirational motivation + Intellectual stimulation = Performance Beyond Expectations

Source: Hall, Johnson, Wysocki and Kepner (2002, p. 2).

Idealized influence is about building confidence and trust and providing a role model that followers seek to emulate (Bono & Judge, 2004, p. 901; Simic, 1998, p. 52; Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2003, p. 3). Leaders are "admired, respected, and trusted" (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003, p. 208). Confidence in the leader provides a foundation for accepting (radical) organizational change. That is, followers who are sure of the virtues of their leader will be less likely to resist proposals for change from her/him. Clearly, idealized influence is linked to charisma (Gellis, 2001, p. 18). Charismatic leadership is a characteristic of transformational leadership and depends on leaders as well as followers for its expression (Kelly, 2003). The link between charismatic and transformational leadership is clearest during times of crisis within an organization such as when Lee Iacocca took over and resurrected the ailing Chrysler Corporation in the 1970s and 1980s (Kelly, 2003).

Together, the four main dimensions of transformational leadership are interdependent; they must co-exist; and they are held to have an additive effect that yields performance beyond expectations (Gellis, 2001; Hall, Johnson, Wysocki & Kepner, 2002; Kelly, 2003).

Table 1. **Characteristics of Transformational Leaders.**

· Clear sense of purpose, expressed simply (e.g. metaphors, anecdotes) · Value driven (e.g. have core values and congruent behavior) · strong role model	· Emotionally mature · courageous
	· Risk-taking · risk-sharing
· High expectations · Persistent · self-knowing · Perpetual desire for learning · Love work · life-long learners	· visionary
	· Unwilling to believe in failure · Sense of public need. · Considerate of the personal needs of employees · listens to all viewpoints to develop spirit of cooperation
· identify themselves as change agents	
· enthusiastic	· mentoring
· able to attract and inspire others	· able to deal with complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity
· strategic	
· effective communicator	

Sources: Bass (1990a); Cox (2001); Epitropaki (undated); Hall, Johnson, Wysocki & Kepner (2002); Lussier & Achua (2004); Stone, Russell & Patterson (2003); Tichy & Devanna (1986); and University of Regina (undated).

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics that, according to the extant literature, accompany the four foundational attributes of a transformational leader. Collectively, they do suggest a human being of remarkable capabilities! Nevertheless, on foundations provided by the four dimensions of transformational leadership (Table 1 and Figure 1) and the various associated characteristics (Table 2), transformational leaders are people who can create significant change in both followers and the organization with which they are associated (Griffin, 2003). They lead changes in mission, strategy, structure and culture, in part through a focus on intangible qualities like vision, shared values and ideas, and relationship building. They are able to give significance to diverse activities, illustrating, for example, the ways in which different people and groups might be working towards larger organizational objectives. Transformational leaders also find common ground that allows them to enlist followers in processes of change. Following Lussier and Achua (2004), and Yukl (1989) there are four stages of organizational change under transformational leadership. First, it is necessary to make a compelling case for change. The transformational leader helps to bring about change by making a convincing case for it. This characteristically involves heightening followers' sensitivity to environmental changes and challenges and questioning the status quo. For instance, the case for change within a school or some other educational environment might be made by inviting government department spokespeople to the school to present an overview of policy and related contexts or by highlighting levels of performance relative to other, similar organizations.

Second, it is important to inspire a shared vision, seeking broad input, and encouraging everyone to think of a new and better future. This needs to be cast in ideological rather than just economic terms. This might be achieved by involving all staff in the shaping and reshaping of the school/department's strategic plan on a regular basis. Staff might be surveyed to establish their wants and needs. For example, in an educational context, a school principal or department head could also visit classrooms regularly (and encourage others to do the same) to better gauge collective requirements (ERIC, 1992). Inspiring a shared vision will also be achieved through coaching and conscious role modeling strategies. Third, change needs to be led. A sense of urgency must be instilled. Collaboration has to be encouraged and the self-confidence of followers' must be increased. In effect, it is vital to create an environment conducive to the creation and sharing of knowledge (Bryant, 2003, p. 37). Public recognition of achievements and successful (shared) initiatives might help serve these ends. Private notes of congratulation to successful followers can also help foster self-confidence (ERIC, 1992). It is also necessary at this stage, to deal with the emotional resistance that typically accompanies change and this may be achieved through careful recognition of the individual's needs of staff or followers. Finally, change needs to be embedded. This is achieved by, for example, monitoring progress, changing appraisal and reward systems, and hiring staff with a commitment to collaboration. Together these should also empower followers to help achieve the organization's objectives. What leaders pay attention to, what they measure and how they measure it, and what they control (Carlson & Perrewe, 1995) are critical factors in transforming an organization's culture and embedding new ways of thinking and acting.

There seems to be an emerging orthodoxy in the literature favoring a blend of transactional and transformational leadership (Bryant, 2003). However, Sanders, Hopkins and

Geroy (2003) propose an extension to both through what they call 'transcendental leadership'. Their model suggests three structural levels of leadership accomplishment, these being transactional, transformational, and transcendental, and they suggest that a leader's development along three dimensions of spirituality – consciousness (mind), moral character (heart) and faith (soul) – is associated with these levels of leadership accomplishment. They argue for the need to society and organizations to recognize the need for and embrace spirituality. Traditional leadership theories are said to concentrate on external manifestations of leadership but the model proposed by Sanders, Hopkins and Geroy (2003) indicates that leadership is best understood by adding consideration of the leader's internal components. While their very new theory is yet to be tested empirically, their intent is to help bring spirituality out of the 'closet' (p. 29) and to weave it coherently into new understandings of leadership.

Distance, online education, and management of higher education – an overview

Technological development has created new possibilities for distance education. Information and communication technology (ICT) can make it possible to connect people to each other and create interplay between people regardless of time, place, regions, and countries (e.g., Guri-Rosenblit, 2009; Miller & King, 2003). For example, Garrison (2009) notes that the development of technology changed how teaching was carried out from the independence in the early self-instructional correspondence packages to two-way communication. This change in educational conditions, given the technological advancements, has become a significant phenomenon facing the way universities deliver content (i.e., teach) and the way students receive content (i.e., learn). (Hillman & Corkery, 2010). There are multiple motives for universities to engage in e-Learning. MacKeogh and Seamus (2009) suggest that engaging in e-Learning may be, in part, due to a desire to seem up-to-date (i.e., reputation), to develop Information skills/literacies, to widen access, to support disabled student, to improve quality of teaching and learning, to increase flexibility, and to improve cost-effectiveness. Nevertheless, the cost aspect, or return of investment (ROI), has above all been a major force underlying the decision to develop online education. Rennie, Jóhannesdóttir, and Kristinsdottir (2011) conclude that increasing the number of students involved in distance education and extending the range of courses is economically prudent. The ROI argument rests on a belief, on the part of senior managers, that online education offers a way of reducing cost, but as Inglis (2008) argues, this relationship between cost and quality is complex, so more needs to be understood about the efficacy of online education before its true economic benefits can be determined.

Roberts (2008) notes that adopting educational technology involves more than merely installing a product. Previous research describing experiences of implementing online education for a university or an institution showed that the process is filled with complexities and there are multiple factors involved when establishing successful online education. Drawing on experiences from the transition from distance to totally online education, Hillman and Corkery (2010) highlight that full-scale solutions enc.ompassing whole educational programs involve more than teaching and learning issues.

In many ways, one might think the transition would be easy since we were not novices to the distance education field. However, the infrastructure requirements to move in this direction webbed out to encompass the entire university to an extent not anticipated (Hillman and Corkery, 2010, p. 468).

Similarly, Rovai and Downey (2010) note that the development of distance and online education is a long process with many barriers to overcome to attract and retain students. One major factor identified in research as necessary for developing stable and sustainable online education is related to management. Hillman and Corkery (2010) suggest that educational management plays an important role for the development from distance to totally online programs and online education cannot be viewed as a simple adjustment or a 'tag on'. That is, online programs require a solid institutional infrastructure to support the programs along with a willingness to collaborate and communicate among departments on campus. By necessity, an openness to question the 'status quo' is essential (Hillman and Corkery, 2010, p. 473).

Previous research has shown that drivers for the development of distance education many times are a consequence of a grass roots movement occurring at the department level (Hillman & Corkery, 2010). Other research also acknowledges the view that successful implementation of e-Learning requires an enthusiastic grass roots movement driven by innovators. To establish long-term stability, however, requires academic staff acceptance and engagement in combination with institutional structures in place to support the sustainability and mainstreaming of e-Learning initiatives (MacKeog & Seamus, 2009; Roberts, 2008). Clearly, there are real obstacles encountered when implementing change such as distance learning when funding is tight and competing priorities are present.

It also has to be acknowledged that while the support of senior management for change is essential, purely top down implementation strategies will not work in the traditional academic environment. The concerns and needs of academics and other stakeholders must also be addressed (MacKeog & Seamus, 2009, p. 152).

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of study is to investigate
1- How do leaders creates and sustains change in ODL.
2- Identifies qualities that best meet organizational and individual staff needs

METHODOLOGY

It was a descriptive type of research so questionnaire was formulated to collect the data.

POPULATION

1- The students of course code of 4783 of PhD level.
2- Faculty of Education of AIOU
3- Trainers and heads of educational department at District Mandi Bahauddin.

SAMPLE

1- Total population of the students of course code of 4783 of PhD level i.e 27
2- Total Population of Faculty of Education of AIOU i.e 23
3- 10 Trainers and 40 heads of educational department at District Mandi Bahauddin i.e 50

DATA COLLECTION

A questionnaire comprising 30 statements was formulated to collect the data on five likert scale.

SA   Strongly agreed
S   Agreed
N   Neutral
DADisagreed
SDA   Strongly disagreed

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Collected data was analysed by using percentage after giving scores.

Table of data collection

Sr.No	Statements	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
A transformational leader in ODL is who						
1	Achieves buy-in to his/ her vision	33%	29%	11%	17%	10%
2	Demonstrates high personal standards	37%	29%	13%	22%	13%
3	Inspires confidence in the value of his / her arguments	27%	30%	17%	12%	14%
4	Creates a clear vision of the future	34%	31%	10%	14%	11%
5	Inspires people to follow the vision	38%	34%	08%	11%	09%
6	Sets an enviable example for others to follow	35%	37%	13%	08%	07%
7	Motivates the team	39%	42%	04%	07%	08%
8	Listens to others	32%	38%	02%	11%	17%
9	Treats people as unique individuals	41%	40%	06%	08%	05%
10	Changes his/ her style and approach according to who he/ she are dealing with	39%	37%	04%	13%	07%
11	Tries to understand the other person's viewpoint	38%	32%	05%	10%	15%
12	Builds co-operative relationships with immediate colleagues	42%	39%	06%	06%	07%
13	Recognizes the different capabilities of individuals	42%	39%	06%	06%	07%
14	Tunes in to unspoken thoughts and feelings	32%	30%	11%	17%	10%
15	Sets clear objectives	37%	28%	10%	12%	13%
16	Achieves goals through realistic planning	49%	40%	02%	06%	03%
17	Perseveres towards goals despite problems	44%	41%	06%	08%	05%
18	Considers sufficient options before taking a decision	36%	40%	08%	07%	09%
19	Is able to think beyond the immediate	35%	37%	11%	10%	07%
20	Defines strategies for the team	40%	42%	04%	06%	08%
21	Organize resources to achieve goals	42%	36%	07%	11%	14%
22	Reviews individual performance	39%	38%	02%	11%	10%
23	Identifies problems in his/ her early stages	39%	40%	06%	07%	08%
24	Checks to ensure plans are on course	43%	32%	04%	10%	11%
25	Uses other people's time effectively	39%	31%	08%	10%	12%
26	Answers questions specifically and to the point	37%	28%	10%	12%	13%

27	Provides performance feedback that people can understand	49%	38%	04%	06%	03%
28	Provides timely performance feedback	47%	41%	02%	08%	02%
29	Provides performance feedback that people can accept	42%	37%	04%	10%	07%
30	Keeps people up-to-date on the progress of work and assignments	38%	36%	05%	10%	09%

FINDINGS

1. 62% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL achieves buy-in to his/her vision.
2. 66% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL demonstrates high personal standards.
3. 57% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL inspires confidence in the value of his / her argument.
4. 65% respondents are agreed a transformational leader in ODL creates a clear vision of the future.
5. 72% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL inspires people to follow the vision.
6. 72% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL sets an enviable example for others to follow.
7. 81% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL motivates the team.
8. 70% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL listens to others
9. 81% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL treats people as unique individuals.
10. 76% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL changes their style and approach according to who they are dealing with.
11. 70% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL tries to understand the other person's viewpoint.
12. 81% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL builds co-operative relationships with immediate colleagues.
13. 62% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL recognizes the different capabilities of individuals.
14. 65% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL tunes in to unspoken thoughts and feelings.
15. 89% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL sets clear objectives.
16. 85% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL achieves goals through realistic planning.
17. 76% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL perseveres towards goals despite problems.
18. 72% respondents are agreed that transformational leader in ODL considers sufficient options before taking a decision.
19. 82% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL is able to think beyond the immediate.
20. 78% respondents are agreed that transformational leader in ODL defines strategies for the team.

21. 77% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL organizes resources to achieve goals.
22. 76% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL reviews individual performance.
23. 79% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL identifies problems in his/ her early stages.
24. 75% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL checks to ensure plans are on course.
25. 70% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL uses other people's time effectively.
26. 65% respondents are agreed that transformational leader in ODL answers questions specifically and to the point.
27. 87% respondents are agreed that transformational leader in ODL provides performance feedback that people can understand.
28. 88% respondents are agreed that a transformational leader in ODL provides timely performance feedback.
29. 79% respondents are agreed that transformational leader in ODL provides performance feedback that people can accept.
30. 74% respondents are agreed that transformational leader in ODL keeps people up-to-date on the progress of work and assignments.

CONCLUSION

1- Transformational leader in ODL achieves buy-in to his/ her vision, demonstrates high personal standards, and inspires confidence in the value of his / her argument and created greater placement around strategic visions and missions. Scores on transformational leadership predict individual and group performance.
2- Transformational leadership creates a clear vision of the future, inspires people to follow the vision, sets an enviable example for others to follow and has been found to explain between 45% and 60% of organizational performance.
3- Transformational leaders motivates their team, Listens to others, treats people as unique individuals and created greater unit cohesion, commitment, and lower turnover.
4- Transformational leadership changes the style and approach according to who he or she is dealing with, tries to understand the other person's viewpoint, and builds co-operative relationships with immediate colleagues and predicted higher levels of product innovation in R & D teams. Transformational leaders created safer work environments.
5- Transformational leadership recognizes the different capabilities of individuals, tunes in to unspoken thoughts and feelings, sets clear objectives and training has been shown to improve leadership an associated performance over time.
6- Transformational leadership achieves goals through realistic planning, perseveres towards goals despite problems, and considers sufficient options before taking a decision. Through charisma, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation, transformational leaders have great potential to promote performance beyond expectations and to effect enormous changes within individuals and organizations.
7- Transformational leader is able to think beyond the immediate, defines strategies for the team, and organize resources to achieve goals. It appears to be a form of leadership well-suited to these current times characterized by uncertainty, global turbulence and organizational instability.

8- There are some risks associated with this form of leadership, particularly with respect to idealized influence. Reviews individual performance, identifies problems in their early stages, checks to ensure plans are on course.

9- Uses other people's time effectively, answers questions specifically and to the point, provides performance feedback that people can understand.

10- Provides timely performance feedback, provides performance feedback that people can accept, and keeps people up-to-date on the progress of work and assignments. The capacity for individual and organizational transformation must be accompanied by moral responsibility, for transformational leaders shape powerful social and institutional cultures which may either be liberating or oppressive.

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