



The Leadership style that transcend National and Cultural Boundaries: The Transformational Leadership

Abayomi Oluwatosin Alase

School of Education, College of Professional Studies, Northeastern University

Abstract

The need and importance of leadership in society exceed and transcend national and cultural boundaries as we know it today. The “art of leadership” is to lead and exhume the innermost humanity of the citizens for the betterment of the society, because without the presence of good leadership, chaos and tyranny will dominate and rule over every corner of our world. Hence, the reason for the conceptualization of leadership theories that transcend and cut through national and cultural nuances and boundaries is very essential. To help examine this leadership phenomenon, this paper has selected Bass (1997) “Does the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries?” as the primary seminal article to audit. In addition, ten leadership articles will be utilized as secondary articles for the purpose of auditing this seminal article.

Keywords: Authentic; Charismatic; Innovation; Transactional; Transformational Leadership

1. Introduction

This seminal audit paper will investigate the practical difference between the transactional and transformational leadership concepts vis-à-vis their ability, effectiveness, and functionality to cut through organizational, national, and cultural boundaries. To help with the examination and auditing of the conceptualization and theories of transactional and transformational leadership styles, the author has elected to use one of the works of Bass as the main paper for this seminal audit. Bass was a distinguished professor emeritus at the Binghamton University, New York. He was born on June 11, 1925, in Bronx, New York, and died in October 2007 in Binghamton, New York. Bass was well-known for his work on transformational leadership theory and concepts. The article selected as the main seminal paper is Bass (1997) “Does the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries?”

This audit paper will be organized by referencing ten peer-reviewed articles that have utilized and/or cited the main featured seminal article in their studies. These ten peer-reviewed articles ranged from leadership phenomenon in the nursing field to the leadership dynamics in the educational profession. This paper tied all these articles together to show how applicability Transformational leadership style is compare to other contemporary leadership styles; but more importantly, how it transcends national origins and cultural boundaries when it comes to its applicability and effectiveness.

Even though theorists and authors have found it hard to come up with a concise definition of what a leader is other than the generic definition, Bass and Riggio (2006) defined Transformational leadership as leaders who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity. Transformational leaders help followers to grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers’ needs by empowering them and

by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization (p. 3).

2. The Seminal Audit Research Table

Table 1 summarizes the contents of the supporting ten peer-reviewed articles that referenced Bass (1997) “Does the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries?” Article in their research studies. Table 1 is organized in a chronological order starting with the title of the article, the journal and year it was published, the author’s name, and the synopsis of the article (the research studies).

3. Seminal Review

As stated in the opening introduction, this seminal audit paper is based on Bass 1997 article titled “does the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries?”. In his initial statement, Bass (1997) stated that “evidence supporting the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm has been gathered from all continents except Antarctica” (p. 130). He also stated that “the transactional-transformational paradigm views leadership as either a matter of contingent reinforcement of followers by a transactional leader or the moving of followers beyond their self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or society by a Transformational leader” (p. 130). Bass (1997, p. 130) went on to note that “numerous investigations (field studies, case histories, management games, interviews, and laboratory studies) point to the robustness of the effects of transformational and charismatic leadership.” According to Hendel et al. (2005) study, they alluded to the emergence of a particular leadership style that could help the head nurses of five general hospitals in Israel manage conflict issues in their respective hospitals; they noted that “researchers have found transformational leaders to be more effective and satisfying than transactional leaders” (p. 140). In addition, many other articles and studies have also shown that women are more transformational in their leadership style than their male counterparts (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Eagly et al., 2003; Klenke, 1993; Mandell and Pherwani, 2003; Powell and Graves, 2003). As such, in their conclusion, Hendel et al. (2005) predicted that the “head nurses who perceived themselves as transformational leaders would choose collaborating as their preferred strategy in conflict management” (p. 143-144).

However, before diving too deep into the essence of this paper, perhaps a discussion on the dimensions of transactional-transformational leadership should be presented. These two leadership phenomena come with many dimensions. These dimensions are the functional ‘arms or branches’ of the leadership styles. Bass (1997) attributed four dimensions to the Transformational leadership theory (namely, idealized influence, also known as charisma; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individualized consideration) and listed three dimensions for the transactional leadership (contingent reward; management by exception-active; and management by exception-passive). Bass (1997) also added *laissez-faire* as a leadership style (theory) (however, this theory is basically an ineffective non-leadership style). In Gardner and Stough (2002, p. 74) article titled “examining the relationship between leadership and emotional intelligence in senior level managers,” they noted that their research “supported a strong relationship between transformational leader and emotional intelligence.” They believed that it was perhaps due to the diverse functions of the dimensions that facilitated the relationship. However, they stated that “a negative relationship was found between *Laissez-faire* leadership and emotional intelligence” (p. 75). As for management by exception (passive leadership), they argued that “these leaders fail to intervene in problems until they become serious and generally not taking any action until mistakes are brought to their attention.”

4. The Conceptualization of the Theories

In his analysis of the functions of the leadership concepts, Bass (1997) stated that transactional leadership “depends on the leader’s power to reinforce subordinates for their successful completion of

Table 1: Seminal audit research

Title of article	Peer-reviewed journal and date of article published	Author (s) of article	Article (research study) synopsis
Ethical preferences of transformational leaders: An empirical investigation	Leadership and organization development journal-2000	Banerji and Krishnan discipline: Organizational behavior	Study: On the ethical behavior of Transformational leadership Methods: Data collected from four multinational companies in India Finds: The study did not support the idea that Transformational leadership is ethical Contribution: This article provides a greater understanding of the ethical behavior of transformational leaders
Examining the relationship between leadership and emotional intelligence in senior level managers	Leadership and organization development journal-2002	Gardner and Stough discipline: Organizational psychology	Study: The study was on emotional intelligence and leadership Methods: 110 responses to the survey Finds: Study "supported a strong relationship between transformational leader and emotional intelligence" (Gardner and Stough, 2002. p. 74) Contribution: The study provided a "preliminary evidence for the efficacy of the workplace Swinburne University Emotional Intelligence Test (SUEIT) as a tool for the selection of future leaders, with the SUEIT assessing five competencies of emotional intelligence that appear integral to effective" (Gardner and Stough, 2002. p. 77)
The effects of Transformational leadership on teachers' commitment to change in Hong Kong	Journal of educational administration - 2002	Yu et al. Discipline: Leadership development	Study: "The effects of principals' transformational leadership on teachers commitment in Hong Kong primary schools" (Yu et al., 2002. p. 368) Methods: Two-part 113 item survey; administered randomly (Yu et al. 2002. p. 374) Finds: "The results suggest strong significant effects of transformational leadership on mediating variables and weak but significant effects on teacher commitment to change" (Yu et al. 2002. p. 368) Contribution: The authors suggested that "national culture might best be viewed as a distal, indirect, influence on leadership through its manifestation in organizational influences" (Yu et al. 2002. p. 384)
Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership	Cambridge journal of education-2003	Hallinger discipline: Education	Article/Contribution: The article discussed the change in the school principalship position from its instructional leadership posture to Transformational leadership in the 1990s and now back to instructional leadership

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Table 1: (Continued)

Title of article	Peer-reviewed journal and date of article published	Author (s) of article	Article (research study) synopsis
Transformational and Transactional Leadership: A meta-analytic test of their relative validity	Journal of applied psychology-2004	Judge and Piccolo discipline: Management	Study: "The study provides comprehensive examination on transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership" (Judge and Piccolo, 2004. p. 755) Methods: Researched Psyc INFO from 1887 to 2003 on transformational and transactional leadership Finds: Based on 87 sources and 626 correlations, transformational leadership and contingent reward had 0.44 and 0.39 validity, respectively Contribution: The authors stated that "the results provide important support for the validity of transformational as well as contingent reward and, to some extent, laissez-faire leadership" (Judge and Piccolo, 2004. p. 765)
Leadership style and choice of strategy in conflict management among Israeli nurse managers in general hospitals	Journal of nursing management-2005	Hendel et al., discipline: Nursing	Study: The study was to "identify conflict mode choices of head nurses in general hospitals" (Hendel et al., 2005. p. 137) Methods: "Five head general hospital nurses were surveyed utilizing 3-part questionnaire" (Hendel et al., 2005. p. 137) Finds: The study predicted that the "head nurses who perceived themselves as transformational leaders would choose collaborating as their preferred strategy in conflict management" (Hendel et al., 2005, p. 143-144) Contribution: The authors felt that "further research on individual's and environmental characteristics could contribute significantly to how conflict management strategies are determined" (Hendel et al., 2005. p. 145)
The role of leadership theory in raising the profile of women in management	Equal opportunities international-2006	Jogulu and Wood discipline: Business management	Study: The study examined "how leadership theories have helped or hindered raising the profile of women in management and leadership roles" (Jogulu and Wood, 2006. p. 236) Methods: Tracing leadership theories from earlier to contemporary researches on transactional and transformational leadership styles Finds: The study found that, in the 1990s, researches started documenting gender differences in leadership style with women been portrayed in a positive lights Contribution: The authors felt that the "contemporary theories, therefore, have made it possible to recognize the contribution that women can and do bring to a leadership role" (Jogulu and Wood, 2006. p. 246)

(contd...)

Table 1: (Continued)

Title of article	Peer-reviewed journal and date of article published	Author (s) of article	Article (research study) synopsis
Charismatic and transformational leadership - A review and an agenda for future research	Zeitschrift für Arbeits-u. Organisationspsychologie-2006	Judge et al. Discipline: Management	Article/Contribution: "This article reviews what has been learned about the antecedents of charismatic and transformational leadership, their effects on individual and collective outcomes across cultures, and moderations of those effects" (Judge et al. 2006. p. 203)
Promoting more integrative strategies for leadership theory building	American psychologist-2007	Avolio discipline: Management/ Leadership	Article/Contribution: This article reviewed in the integration of all the elements that constitute leadership; it believes that, with integrative leadership theory, leadership research can be positioned to better address the "age-old" question whether leaders are born or made
Comparing transformational leadership in successful and unsuccessful companies	African journal of business management-2009	Jandaghi et al. discipline: Management	Study: The study compared the transformational leadership in successful and unsuccessful companies Methods: The sample population of 80 people was utilized Finds: The study "shows that Transformational leadership is significantly higher in successful companies than unsuccessful ones" (Jandaghi et al., 2009. p. 272) Contribution: The authors felt that the transformational leaders provide leadership qualities that improve organizational performance. As well as provide grounds for organizational change that facilitate higher optimistic

the bargain. Reinforcement can be materialistic or symbolic, immediate or delayed, partial or whole, implicit or explicit, and in terms rewards or resources” (p. 133). On the same wavelength, Banerji and Krishnan (2000), in their empirical study, wanted to know whether transformational leadership is an ethical leadership style or not; they also wanted to know whether their subordinates’ satisfactions depend on the transformational leaders’ ethical behaviors and preferences. They stated that “at outset, it is necessary to differentiate between transformational and transactional leadership. Transactional leadership satisfies the immediate and separate purpose of both leaders and followers, whereas transformational leadership goes much beyond that” (p. 406). Conceptually, transformational leaders are people who energized and inspired workers (or people in general) beyond expectation. Bass (1997) stated that “authentic transformational leaders motivate followers to work for transformational goals that go beyond immediate self-interests. What is right and good to do becomes important. Transformational leaders move followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or country” (p. 133).

It is, perhaps, the untold myths about leadership theory that leadership concepts are only synonymous with commercial enterprises and organizational entities alone; however, having the ability to lead, motivate, inspire, and manage people goes beyond commercial activities, it also has a major impact and presence in the educational field as well. Selection and promotion of principals in the United States school systems change in the 1990s when leadership styles changed from instructional leadership to transformational leadership style. According to Hallinger (2003), a university professor and a former principal stated that, for over 25 years, selecting and promoting principals in the United States school systems have largely and primarily been based on finding instructional leaders; someone who can lead by showing that he/she has the capacity to supervise, control, coordinate, and develop curriculums for schools. However, the leadership preference shifted to transformational leadership in the 1990s when school principalship positions were reversed from top-down position to bottom-up leadership style. Therefore, as a transformational leader, principals are expected to exemplify a bottom-up leadership style and approach and have the ability to display “people-oriented” (transformational) leadership skills toward the students and the teaching staff.

Hallinger (2003) also argued that the utilization of transformational leadership in the educational profession started in the 1990s. He noted that “it found a receptive audience in the educational community during the 1990s as part of a general reaction against the top-down policy-down changes that predominated in the 1980s” (p. 335). In a parallel debate, Yu et al. (2002) article titled “the effects of transformational leadership on teachers’ commitment to change in Hong Kong” reported that their study shows the need for transformational leadership in the Hong Kong school systems. However, they were concerned whether the transformational leadership style approach that was commonly utilized in the North American educational systems would be able to meet the challenges they had in Hong Kong primary school systems. Nevertheless, their research study indicated that enough studies have been conducted by others to prove that transformational leadership was the most effective leadership style that could transcend national cultures and nuances. Therefore, in their conclusion, Yu et al. (2002) suggested that “while leadership itself may be less important to Hong Kong than North America teachers, transformational form of leadership may be equally suitable for schools in both contexts” (p. 384).

5. The Universality of Transformational Leadership Applicability

The universality of the leadership theory is what Bass called the three corollary paradigms. The first corollary, according to Bass (1997) is that there is a hierarchy of correlations among the various leadership styles and outcomes in effectiveness, effort, and satisfaction. Transformational leaders are more effective than those leaders practicing contingent reward; contingent reward is somewhat more effective than active management by exception, which, in turn, is more effective than passive management by exception. Laissez-faire leadership is least effective (p. 134).

As for the second corollary paradigm, Bass (1997) argued that “there is a one-way augmentation effect. When stepwise regression is used, measures of transformational leadership add to measures of transactional leadership in predicting outcomes, but not vice versa” (p. 135). In essence, what that

mean is that Transformational leadership style is a style that when utilized in conjunction with any other leadership style, it can add value and substance to the disposition of the person discharging the leadership style. Finally, the third corollary alluded to the “crossover and flexibility” effects of the transformational leadership style; Bass (1997) asserted that “whatever the country, when people think about leadership, their prototype and ideals are transformational” (p. 135). According to Judge and Piccolo (2004) research study on meta-analytic test on transformational and transactional leadership to understand the relative validity of the leadership styles, they noted that “most research on transformational leadership support has been conducted in the U.S., although increasing support has been accumulating from international studies as well” (p. 756). Moreover, based on their findings, they argued that their research results provided sufficient “support for the validity of transformational [leadership] as well as contingent reward and, to some extent, laissez-faire leadership. The validity of transformational leadership, in particular, seems to generalize across many situations, including when it is studied in rigorous settings” (p. 765).

With regard to paradigm that will work with leadership theoretical concept, Omar and Davidson (2001) argued that leadership paradigm needed to change and be more of what they called “feminization of management;” women have had it very hard to break through the invisible glass ceiling of leadership positions. In Jogulu and Wood’s (2006) article “the role of leadership theory in raising the profile of women in management,” they used the PsycINFO database to trace “leadership theories from earlier to contemporary researches on transactional and transformational leadership styles” (p. 236). Their research discovered that transactional leadership “depends strongly on the leader’s power to reinforce subordinates for their successful completion of tasks. Reinforcement can be materialistic or symbolic, immediate or delayed, partial or whole, and in terms of resources or rewards” (p. 243).

6. The Cultural and Organizational Contingencies

Culturally, it is very important that Westerners, especially Americans, understand that Western-developed and conceptualized leadership styles may not work as envisioned in a totally different culture and country. Dorfman (1994) cautioned about applying U.S.-developed leadership models to other cultures and agreed with Adler (1984) that the devil of the concepts and its application is in the details (cited in Bass). The cultural phenomenon as it relates to leadership effectiveness and relationship with followers (workers) in a non-Westernized country may be very low in comparison to North American or European workers. Bass (1997) cited the study conducted by Dorfman and Howell (1988) which stated that “thus, the impact of charismatic leadership on employee satisfaction was greater on the American employees for whom correlations of 0.50 and 0.70 were found, as compared with correlations of 0.29 and 0.57 for Mexican employees” (Bass, 1997, p. 136). Bass (1997) went on to note that “U.S employees generated higher correlations between contingent reward and the measures of satisfaction with work and with supervision (0.48 and 0.73, respectively) in contrast to the Mexican employees (0.19 and 0.58, respectively)” (p. 136).

In his attempt to promote more integrative strategies for leadership theories, Avolio (2007) noted that culture does play a very strong contextual part in the way leadership application which is universally viewed by others. In his article “promoting more integrative strategies for leadership theory-building,” Avolio (2007) stated that “cross-cultural researchers have begun to examine whether the qualities of desired and effective leadership are contingent or universal” (p. 27). In addition, he argued that “yet, even though the construct of integrity may be seen as desirable and universal across cultures, other scholars have acknowledge that it could be observed in a variety of forms and still be referred to as high-integrity leadership” (p. 27). Finally, he concluded by saying that “in line with Gardner’s (1990) arguments, the main thrust of this article has been to promote a more integrative examination of leadership theory-building and research so as to lay the groundwork for a more full understanding of what constitutes the best and the worst forms of leadership and how those forms develop” (p. 31).

As for transformational leadership style, it seems that the leadership style is more acceptable in a collectivistic society and culture than in an individualistic society like the U.S., because as Bass (1997) put it “in the individualistic societies of North America (U.S. and Canada), more participative

leadership would be expected of its transformational leaders. In the collectivistic societies of Asia, more directiveness would be expected of its transformational leaders” (p. 136). However, the extent to which the transformational leader is involved would depend on the authority that the transformational leader has to lead and motivate. The good thing is that, in many societies, transformational leadership style is seen and considered to be an effective and compassionate leadership style. Jandaghi et al. (2009) also amplified similar sentiment; they stated that “studies have consistently supported the positive effect of transformational leadership on several organizational and individual outcomes, including organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction” (p. 276).

In their quest to distinguish between charismatic and transformational leadership styles, Judge et al. (2006) agreed that there is a cross-cultural universality in the applicability of the charismatic-transformational leadership style in different societies. However, while some researchers concurred that transformational leadership theory does have universality applicability, others are very skeptical about the charismatic leadership theory claiming the same universality status. More importantly, Judge et al. (2006) also expressed similar concerns about the uproar that was brewing around the transformational leadership concept as well. They put forth a very important and thought-provoking scenario about transformational leadership style; they stated that “Research on transformational leadership has overwhelmingly been based on the assumption that transformational leadership is universally positive. There is no reason to believe that all change is good nor is there any reason to believe that persuasive leadership is always directed toward positive ends” (p. 211). Though, Transformational leaders are known to be articulate and charismatic in the way they interact with their peers and subordinates. However, the fact is that not every transformational leader is a good leader; actually some can be called certified psychopath. Two very good examples come to mind, Adolf Hitler and Osama Bin Laden; these men were considered charismatic and transformational leaders by people who believed and followed their crazy ideologies. Therefore, as objective and reasonable human beings, we need to be very careful about how we “glorify and glamorize” these leadership styles and the people who hold these leadership positions.

7. Conclusion

After reading and analyzing both the main seminal article and the secondary articles, I do believe that the construct of the transformational leadership conceptual perspective was a very well-reasoned theory that took a generally non-idealistic leadership concept and turned it into a well developed and well-analyzed conceptualized theoretical perspective that is now a world-renowned leadership style. As a leadership style, one can assume from all the articles cited in this audit paper that the transformational leadership is seen as having the ability and capacity to transcend and cut through any cultural and/or national nuances that many other leadership perspectives cannot do. Moreover, as a leadership style, Transformational leadership is a prototype and an ideal leadership style that truly transcend national and cultural nuances (Bass, 1997). Transformational leadership is a type of leadership style that is truly universal; Transformational leaders are all around us in every society and country. They are around us at our workplaces, our churches, our civic organizations, and our everyday life activities.

With everything said and done, no concept or perspective can be without a need for improvement or refinement. As a leadership style, transformational leadership is known as a leadership style that naturally attracts people of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. However, there is a concern that some have voiced. According to Judge et al. (2006), they noted that “research on transformational leadership has overwhelmingly been based on the assumption that Transformational leadership is universally positive. There is no reason to believe that all change is good nor is there any reason to believe that persuasive leadership is always directed toward positive ends” (p. 211). Perhaps, this word of wisdom is something we, as a society and people, need to be aware of and be a little vigilant about.

As the author who researched the effectiveness of the transformational leadership concept for this audit paper, I must say that I have enjoyed researching and writing this paper. As Bass (1997), a genius in the field of leadership concepts and theories, articulated in several of his books and articles, he truly

believed that transformational leadership style was a universal leadership style that has the ability to cut-across cultural/national boundaries. In addition, he argued that, as a leadership style, people of diverse backgrounds are encouraged to conceptualize transformational leadership as a universal prototype of what a good leadership style should be.

Finally, the hope is that this paper is able to differentiate between the transformational leadership style and the other leadership styles; however, more importantly, the hope is that this paper is able to explain the effectiveness of the transformational leadership style as it relates to how the leadership style treats its subordinates. For anyone who wants to be a leader, especially a transformational leader, it is important that he/she understand and cognizant of the benefits (and drawbacks) that comes with the responsibility of being a leader (especially, a transformational leader). As such, as a Transformational leader, it is important that the leader is mindful of his/her influence on others, because at the end of the day, that is what the leader will be known and judged for; so be careful and prudent in the disposition of your influence.

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