

# EVALUATION OF THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL

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## ABSTRACT

The topic of leadership has become an issue that is quite important to be studied, researched and debated in the literature on management studies and organizational behavior during the last few decades to date. One of them is that transformational leadership has been empirically proven to have a positive effect on the relationship between leaders and subordinates. Bass developed a model of transformational leadership in more detail to describe the transformation process in organizations and distinguish between transformational, charismatic and transactional leadership models. Bass defines transformational leadership in the context of the leader's influence on subordinates, leaders transform subordinates to be more concerned about the values inherent in the work they do. As a result of this influence, subordinates will have a high level of trust and respect for a leader so that they are motivated to do something more than expected. A more detailed explanation is needed regarding the flow of the leadership process between a leader and subordinates. Transformational leadership models should still accommodate the leadership process at higher levels (groups and organizations).

**Keywords:** leadership; leader; subordinates; transformational model.

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## 1. Introduction

The definitions related to leadership have been carried out through various studies and researches, usually researchers define leadership from the perspective of an individual and various phenomena that surround it. The definition of leadership that appears as much as the number of researchers who try to define the concept of leadership. Leadership is defined in the context of individual characteristics (traits), leader behavior (behavior), interaction patterns, roles of relationships, perceptions of subordinates, the influence of leaders on subordinates, influence on job goals, and influence on organizational culture. Different perspectives on the studies conducted have led to many differences, controversies and debates on the meaning of leadership and various aspects related to the phenomenon of leadership in organizations (Yukl, 1989).

In the 1980s, researchers related to management topics had a high interest in the topic of charismatic and transformational leadership and their influence on organizational performance. This topic is very relevant to the condition of America at that time which was undergoing major changes to face competition from foreign companies.

Burns (1978) defines leadership as a process of development that is reciprocal between leaders and subordinates, leaders try to influence subordinates and so leaders are influenced by subordinates to jointly change behavior and adjust to one another. Burns contrasted transformational leadership with transactional leadership. Burns stated that transformational leaders seek to raise awareness of their followers by raising their ideals to be higher and relevant to values such as freedom, justice, equality, peace and humanity.

Bass developed a model of transformational leadership in more detail to describe the transformation process in organizations and distinguish between transformational, charismatic and transactional leadership models. Bass defines transformational leadership in the context of the leader's influence on subordinates, leaders transform subordinates to be more concerned about the values inherent in the work they do. As a result of this influence, subordinates will have a high level of trust and respect for a leader so that they are motivated to do something more than expected.

## **2. Literature Review**

The book *Transformational Leadership (Industrial, Military, and Educational Impact)* was published in 1998. At that time, leadership theory, research related to the topic of leadership and leadership education concentrated on the transactional leadership approach where leadership patterns were seen as an ongoing exchange between leaders and subordinates. Furthermore, a new approach emerged, namely the transformational leadership model which is considered more powerful for predicting effective leader behavior.

### *2.1 Transformational Leadership Components*

According to Avolio, Bass and Jung (1999), transformational leadership is initially shown through three behaviors, namely charismatic, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. In its development, the charismatic component is divided into two, namely charismatic or idealized influence and inspirational motivation. Based on studies that have been carried out, the components of charismatic and inspirational motivation cannot be distinguished empirically, but the conceptual differences between the two make these two factors can be observed as two different things. Furthermore, in subsequent developments, transformational leadership is described in four components, namely: charismatic or idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. This book provides an explanation for each of the components of transformational leadership as follows:

- Charismatic ( idealized influence), transformational leaders become role models for their subordinates for their behavior in the organization. Leaders are admired, valued, and trusted. Subordinates identify themselves with the leader and want to emulate him. Leaders are seen as having extraordinary abilities.
- Inspirational motivation, the behavior of transformational leaders motivates and inspires those around them by providing meaning and challenges to their subordinates regarding the work they do.
- Intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders provide a stimulus for followers to be creative and innovative by remapping problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. New ideas and creative ways of solving problems emerged from followers.

Followers become courageous in trying to come up with new approaches even though they are different from the leader.

- Individualized consideration, Transformational leaders pay special attention to the needs of each individual to grow and develop by acting as a mentor or coach.

## *2.2 Empirical Evidence*

Many studies conducted in various business and industrial sectors, government sectors, military institutions, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations show that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership. Each component was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The results of further studies indicate that building a transformational leadership model can be done through training related to the relevant aspects to build the components inherent in a transformational leadership model.

In various studies it has been shown that the components of transformational leadership are highly correlated with various independent criteria compared to transactional leadership. High scores for measuring the components of transformational leadership were obtained for innovative school heads, marine corps commanders, financially successful middle managers, junior naval officers and so on. The survey results using MLQ show that transformational leadership is positively correlated with several indicators of effective leadership such as: satisfaction from subordinates, increased motivation and performance of subordinates in the organization. The meta-analysis conducted by Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam (1996) on 39 studies using MLQ shows that the core components of transformational leadership are positively correlated with subordinate satisfaction and performance. The results of the meta-analysis also show that contingent rewarding (a component of transactional leadership) is also positively correlated with performance, although the results are weaker and tend to be inconsistent. Descriptive analysis using interview and observation methods also resulted in findings that transformational leadership is effective in a variety of different situations (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Tichy and Devanna, 1986).

## **3. Criticism of Transformational Leadership Models**

Transformational leadership theory provides an important understanding of effective leadership. In the 1970s the behavioral approach was more dominant in providing an understanding of effective leadership. Some of the theories include path-goal theory (House and Mitchell, 1974), Leader Member Exchange Theory (Graen and Cashman, 1975), and Normative Decision Theory (Vroom and Yetton, 1973). Since the late 1980s, transformational leadership theory has become the most influential or dominant theory in explaining the phenomenon of effective leadership. Several versions related to transformational leadership have been developed by several leading researchers, including: Bass (1985, 1996); Benis and Nanus (1985), Sashkin (1988) and Tichy and Devanna (1986, 1990).

Unlike other leadership theories which tend to be traditional (more emphasis on rational processes), transformational leadership emphasizes the emotional and values aspects. This theory helps us explain how a leader can influence his subordinates to make sacrifices, build commitment to difficult goals, and give performance more than expected. The following is a summary of the evaluations of several researchers regarding the transformational leadership model developed by Bass in 1985:

### *3.1 Ambiguity regarding a leader's processes influencing his subordinates*

The things that underlie the process of a leader when influencing his subordinates in the transformational and transactional leadership model are not explained in detail. The explanation regarding the process of influencing subordinates carried out by a leader is very useful for identifying the level of influence of a leader on the attitudes, behavior and motivation of subordinates. Another way to explain the leader's influence on his subordinates is to observe the short-term effect of a leader's behavior on variables that mediate it on performance such as; formation of motivation or emotions, increased self-efficacy (optimistic), belief in rewards, and increased commitment to work. Transformational leadership theory will be stronger if the process of impacting subordinates (carried out by the leader) is identified more clearly and is used to explain how each type of behavior affects each type of mediating variable and outcome.

### *3.2 Excessive emphasis related to the dyadic process between leaders and subordinates*

The concept of transformational leadership theory is developed in the context of the dyadic level (the relationship between two individual leaders and subordinates). Most of them explain it in the context of a leader's direct influence on subordinates, not the leader's influence on group or organizational performance. Examples of processes that occur at the group level are; (1) how well is a job managed to make use of existing resources ?; (2) how well are the activities between groups organized ?; (3) the number of members who agree on the stated goals and priorities; (4) level of trust among members of the organization; (5) to what extent do members identify with the organization ?; (6) members' confidence in the organization's ability to achieve its goals; (7) efficient use and procurement of resources; (8) external coordination with outsiders. Leadership is seen as a determinant of organizational effectiveness, but the causal relationship between leader behavior and processes within the organization is not explained.

### *3.3 Ambiguity regarding the components of transformational behavior*

Identification of the behavior of transformational leaders based on an inductive process using factor analysis. The explanation provided by the theory to show the differences between the components of behavior is unclear. The overlapping content and the correlation between the behavioral components give rise to a weak construct validity. For example, the individualized consideration components are measured using a supporting and developing scale, where the two scales have different concepts and have different effects on subordinates. Next, there is an overlap between the constructs of idealized influence and inspirational motivation.

### *3.4 Missing some important behaviors*

Some important behaviors in the transformational leadership model are omitted in the measurement model developed by Bass and Avolio. Many components of behavior were removed from measurement instruments at the dyadic level, group level and organization level. Since Bass prioritizes the development of transformational leadership theory at the dyadic level, transformational behavior at the dyadic level is more dominant than transformational behavior at the group level and organizational level. There are quite a lot of important behaviors that are not

represented by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), this has an effect on the level of validity of studies with the topic of leadership using MLQ.

### *3.5 Insufficient specifications regarding situational variables*

Transformational leadership theory assumes that the leadership process (the influence of the leader on subordinates) and its correlation with outcomes will be relatively the same in various situations. Bass (1998) states that transformational leadership is beneficial for subordinates and their organization regardless of the situation in the organization. In order to support the opinion that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and effectiveness within the organization, there have been many replications for leaders with different levels of authority, in different types of organizations, and leaders from different countries. Researchers claim that certain situations moderate the effects of stronger transformational leadership on subordinates. Situations that moderate the effects of transformational leadership include an unstable organizational environment, an organic organizational structure, and an environment in which there is an entrepreneurial culture. According to Bass, there are still too few studies that test propositions related to situational variables that can moderate the effects of transformational leadership. A more accurate measurement tool is needed to measure the effects of situational variables in moderating transformational leadership.

### *3.6 Lack of identification of opportunities for negative effects*

This theory does not explicitly identify situations where transformational leadership could be detrimental. The possibility that transformational leadership can have a negative impact on subordinates or the organization has been raised by some researchers. Stephens, D'Intino, and Victor (1995) argue that transformational leadership theory, like other theories that emphasize the role of leadership in increasing motivation and performance, tends to be biased towards certain stakeholders (top management, owners, customers) compared to employees (subordinates. ). Transformational leadership can have detrimental consequences for organizations. If organizational members are influenced by different leaders with competing visions, the impact on increasing role ambiguity and role conflict. The leader who develops a strong identification with the subunit and its goals can increase the motivation of the member, but excessive competition may arise between the different subunits. When cooperation between units is required to achieve organizational goals, the result can have an impact on decreasing organizational effectiveness. The possibility that transformational leadership has a negative impact needs to be identified using research methods specifically designed to detect these effects.

## **5. Discussion**

The attractiveness of the transformational leadership model lies in its emphasis on the emotional aspects and is associated with the achievement of certain values. This is quite different from the traditional approach which emphasizes the rationality of a leadership process. Another interesting thing is that discussions related to transformational leadership models are always linked, compared or contrasted with transactional leadership models. The transformational leadership model is supported by strong empirical evidence with its implementation of leadership processes in various

sectors of business, industry and institutions. Bass in the book *Transformational Leadership (Industrial, Military, and Educational Impact)* also emphasizes that transformational leadership models have a positive impact on organizations in dealing with crisis conditions and organizational members in dealing with stress.

Several evaluations related to transformational leadership have been described earlier. Emphasis on the emotional aspect causes the explanations and arguments used by transformational leadership theory to describe the process of leaders in influencing subordinates to be relatively weak. A clearer identification of the flow of the leadership process is needed. The theoretical emphasis on the dyadic level should be proportionately reduced. Identifying the flow of the leadership process will help explain how the leadership process affects the organization at all levels (individual, group and organization).

The charismatic component in the transformational leadership model developed by Bass causes the difference between transformational leadership and charismatic leaders to be very thin. Both of these models attribute the character of the leader who is considered extraordinary. Leaders who tend to be transformational are perceived as leaders who can provide inspiration to motivate, provide stimulus and are able to solve various problems in the organization. Bass should provide clear boundaries regarding attributions to transformational leadership that tend to be more rational, not only admiring individual characters who are innate and inherent in specific people. A one-way relationship also shows that the foundation of organizational success is borne by individuals, not collectively. Burns (1978) has developed a leadership model that is reciprocal between leaders and subordinates, this can be the basis for Bass to accommodate a leadership perspective that is collective (shared leadership).

Some behaviors that reflect empowering constructs (consulting, delegating, information sharing) are not represented in MLQ. This contradicts the opinion expressed by Bass in this book that transformational and transactional leadership can be directive or participative. Eliminating consulting, delegating, and information sharing behavior indirectly eliminates the participatory aspects of transformational leadership theory. It is a common understanding that no single theory related to leadership is expected to include all aspects of leadership behavior. Bass's use of the label "full range of leadership" to describe the leadership style used by leaders has drawn a lot of criticism regarding the completeness of the elements that make up the full range of leadership model. Bass should not only include the types of behavior that come from transformational and transactional leadership models, for example, behaviors relevant to the task-oriented dimension are also used. Bass should also pay attention to the interaction of a leader with superiors, peers, and outsiders where the information they have, cooperation and political support are very important for the organization.

Transformational leadership has been empirically proven to have a positive effect on the relationship between leaders and subordinates. It was identified that the one-way leadership process in addition to having a negative impact on overloading a leader can also have a negative impact on subordinates. The efforts of a leader who tends to be transformational to increase the concern of subordinates by involving them in managerial processes intensively have an impact on increasing stress experienced by subordinates. Harrison (1987) suggests that subordinates who have high emotional involvement in work can result in prolonged stress. Transformational leaders seem to exploit their subordinates to have high emotional involvement even though this is not necessary. Seltzer, Numerof, & Bass (1987) conducted a research survey to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and stress levels of subordinates. The results

showed that stress was reduced, but the likelihood of effects occurring in the long term could not be evaluated by the cross-sectional study design they used.

## 6. Conclusion

The transformational leadership model developed by Bass in 1985 has inspired many academics and practitioners to study leadership from a perspective that emphasizes aspects of emotions and values. Inspire subordinates to be more caring, creative, innovative and positively involved in achieving organizational goals. A more detailed explanation is needed regarding the flow of the leadership process between a leader and subordinates. Bass needs to emphasize whether the leadership process is reciprocal or one-way. Emphasis on the dyadic level causes the correlation between leadership and effectiveness at the group and organizational levels to be weak. Transformational leadership models should still accommodate the leadership process at higher levels (groups and organizations).

Bass also needs to explain the difference in attributions in charismatic leadership as opposed to attributions to transformational leadership. Subordinates are inspired rationally, not inspired by things that are mystical or irrational. The reciprocal aspect between leaders and subordinates needs to be developed to avoid “heroic leadership” bias. Organizational success does not rest on a single leader but is collective among all members of the organization. The main function of a leader is to help the organization adapt to the environment and obtain the resources needed to survive (Yukl, 1989).

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