Perspectives

ASSESSMENT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL AND TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL HEADMASTERS IN INDIA

Alireza Rezaei Abgoli

This paper aims to study transformational and or transactional leadership styles of secondary school headmasters in India. Headmasters refer to individuals who manage secondary schools. The study was carried out using Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Bass and Avolio (2000). Leadership scale scores were analyzed and formed part of the study. These MLQ scores were idealized influence (behaviour), idealized influence (attributed), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward, management-by-exception (active), management-by-exception (passive), and laissez-faire. In particular it was intended to find out if they have been following transformational and transactional leadership styles. It was found out that headmasters more adhered to more transformational leadership style with mean of 36.81 and standard deviation 12.74, vis-à-vis transactional leadership followed with the mean of 25.11 and standard deviation 6.55. It was also found that headmasters’ leadership style did not have a significant relationship with their demographic variables such as gender, age, educational qualification, subject and experience. The study was limited to secondary schools located Mysore city (Karnataka).

Key words: Leadership styles, transformational leadership, transactional leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Effective leaders of school staff whose work they supervise always repose enormous confidence in them and succeed in obtaining their full co-operation and support. Leader must know when and how to synchronize thinking of his staff. People tend to lack skills in problem-solving and divergent thinking, as well as the ability to create innovative solutions to complex problems. Research shows involving people in using their creativity is itself inspiring.
In organizations, leaders have main role in inspiring work teams with their vision, positive outlook and optimism. A leader by definition cannot be pessimist. Mahatma Gandhi while in his Sevagram Ashram at Wardha (Maharashtra) on February 2, 1946 observed: ‘only he can be a leader who never loses hope.’ A dynamic leader achieves competitive advantage for his organization by inspiring an empowering individuals to make best contribution and make them stay in the organization even if in terms of perks and emoluments it may not be best for them. It is generally a myth that money is the main motivation for job switch but quite often it is lack of work challenge and inspiring leadership, which is the main reason for an employee leaving one organization and joining another.

Empowered employees are more committed to their jobs as they do not work ‘under’ the management but ‘for and with’ the management. Empowerment also makes information flow upwards as in empowered state employees do not merely take up instruction but also put up their ideas and suggestions upwards. Empowerment replaces autocratic style with participative style. Flexibility is important both in army and corporate world for individual performance and empowerment. Flexibility leads to empowerment which a leader wants to have for higher performance standards. Flexibility provides freedom to act in accordance with one’s knowledge and experience.

A dynamic leader empowers everyone with the organization to achieve high performance standards by creating very dynamic flexible and growth oriented work culture and the process retains most of his employees in the organization. A true leader can widen an institution’s role in the world beyond its walls and improve internal dynamics of the institution, and harmony among its staff. This requires a fair mix of leader’s goal vision and ability to bring everyone along (Ekman, 2003).

Dean’s role may be multifaceted and may vary from institutions to institution but there is one issue, namely, ‘change’ which all institutions’ deans face uniformly. While undergoing change as in corporate world, institution’s staff needs to be duly empowered to adequately deal with the process of change. Leaders need to possess transformational qualities that facilitate staff to transform in order to face changing situations (Shamir, et al., 1993; & Yukl, 1999). Transformational leadership may motivate people to go beyond their own self-interest and make them pursue collective goals of the group. Effective leadership is central to change and in particular needs ability to facilitate ‘constructive or adaptive change’ as leaders often
‘risk disorder and instability as they seek out opportunities for change’. A leader needs to have a vision; ability to communicate; and ability to set purpose and direction for the goals and envisioned (Bedeian & Hunt, 2005).

The manner in which secondary school headmasters lead their schools and teachers through change and leadership style may determine success of their educational institutions. Leadership of secondary schools will be a determining factor of whether they will be able to successfully manage change in their institutions. Headmasters of secondary schools in Mysore are held completely responsible for managing change in their institutions.

Headmasters cannot solve problems alone. In today’s complex world problems for solution require necessary efforts by all concerned. For these reasons need for teamwork and strong institutional leadership is overriding. Following complex challenges faced by secondary schools these days, it is imperative for their headmasters to solve problems efficiently and make the most of their available resources. Headmasters need hardness creativity of school staff belonging to all disciplines. Suggestions and ideas from all quarters need be obtained; and implemented quickly and efficiently. Headmasters need to develop culture of collaboration and teamwork among staff. In order to facilitate change, headmasters also need to enjoy respect from their colleagues; and improve their problem solving capabilities for meeting diverse challenges which their institutions face.

Research findings support process-based approach to leadership. This approach shows that an individual is influenced by internal motivating factors. A process-based view of leadership basically involves ability to motivate individuals, recognizing that ability to influence others is essence of leadership (Yukl, 1999). An effective leader has capacity to have his vision accepted by his followers and make them work toward a common objective (Chemers, 2001). An effective leader inspires individuals to accept change by communicating a compelling vision of the future and motivating willingness to work in a new direction.

It is important to provide followers opportunities to participate by having chance to present their thoughts and opinions. These thoughts and opinions can then be considered and incorporated into management decisions. Followers are more willing to accept change when they are involved in the change process. According to House’s (1971) Path-goal Theory, a successful leader is someone who engages followers by making their personal aspirations converge with organizational goals. Leadership is not simply a
matter of leaders or leaders and followers, instead it views leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers within a social group (Haslam, 2001). Effective leadership is about evolving a vision, creating social power, and directing that power so that an individual can realize that vision.

Goal attainment is also an important issue in leadership research. Within a group, the leader influences its members in setting of direction or attainment of goals. Therefore, leadership involves directing a group toward some end point or accomplishing some task. This direction includes defining and articulating a direction according to external and environmental contingencies for the leader’s followers (Zaccaro & Banks, 2001). Transformational leadership theory includes the idea of inspirational motivation as one way of encouraging followers to envision attractive future states (Bass, 1998).

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The study primarily aimed to determine if headmasters in secondary schools in Mysore city in Karnataka as a case-in-point use transformational and/or transactional leadership styles in carrying out their duties.

Accordingly, the population for this study was secondary school headmasters and senior faculty in the Mysore city. Each participant was individually contacted who held title of secondary school’s headmaster/headmistress. The leadership style questionnaire for study purposes was distributed among 200 secondary school teachers with a view to analyze leadership styles of their headmasters’/headmistress in 30 secondary schools.

Leadership styles and leadership behaviours as reflected by the respondent were determined by scoring each participant’s response to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) that was handed over to them. The MLQ is based on ‘full range leadership model’ developed by Bass and Avolio (2000). The MLQ measures individual leadership styles as being transformational and transactional as well as scales of leadership. The survey is a short and comprehensive assessment with 45 items that measure a full range of leadership behaviours. The efficacy of MLQ has been repeatedly validated by leadership analysts. The MLQ is regarded as an effective predictor of a leader’s performance (Bass, 1997). The MLQ analyses leadership styles, and designates behaviours ranging from transactional leadership to transformational leadership, including laissez-faire leadership. The reliability of the MLQ as reported by Bass and Avolio for each leadership factor generally ranges between 0.74 to 0.91.
The MLQ was utilized to measure elements or scales of transformational and transactional leadership of the secondary school headmasters. The MLQ scale scores are measures of characteristics, or behaviours of leaders. These characteristics include idealized influence (attributed); and idealized Influence (behaviour), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration associated with transformational leadership; contingent reward, management by exception (active), management-by-exception (passive), and laissez-faire associated with transactional leadership.

Transformational leadership encourages followers to accomplish more than what is normally expected from them. They become motivated to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group or organization (Northouse 2001; & Bass & Avolio, 1990). In this study nine leadership scale scores measured through the MLQ that represented transformational and/or transactional leadership, namely, (i) idealized influence (behavior) associated with transformational leadership; (ii) idealized influence (attributed) associated with transformational leadership; (iii) inspirational motivation associated with transformational leadership; (iv) intellectual stimulation associated with transformational leadership; (v) individualized consideration associated with transformational leadership; (vi) contingent reward associated with transactional leadership; (vii) management-by-exception (active) associated with transactional leadership; (viii) management-by-exception (passive) associated with transactional leadership; and (ix) laissez-faire, an inactive form of leadership characterized by a reluctance to become actively involved and a view that the best leadership is to disassociate from the action.

The leader in which followers react to the leader and his/her behaviour is defined by the leader’s idealized influence score. Idealized influence leaders have high moral and ethical values and are able to provide their followers with a sense of vision and mission. Followers deeply respect an idealized influence leader (Northouse, 2001).

Inspirational motivation is perceived in leaders when they inspire and motivate followers to demonstrate commitment to the shared vision of the group or team. The inspirational motivational leader engages in clearly communicating high expectations to followers and enhances team spirit and enthusiasm (Northouse, 2001).

Intellectual stimulation is demonstrated by a transformational leader when he supports followers to be creative and innovative to try out new ideas and strategies.
approaches, and challenge their own long held beliefs and values. This type of leader promotes problem-solving capabilities to find creative solutions to task at hand (Northouse, 2001).

*Individualized consideration* is exhibited by the transformational leader by creating a supportive climate, listening to followers, and acting as a coach and mentor. The leader pays attention to individual differences and treats individual employees in a caring manner. Leaders also help individuals achieve goals and grow personally. This type of leader also practices delegation to get followers to grow by successfully facing personal challenges (Northouse, 2001).

*Contingent reward* is how the leader and followers exchange specific rewards for outcomes or results. Goals and objectives are agreed upon by both the leader and followers and the achievement is rewarded or punished. The MLQ measures a leader’s degree of possessing contingent reward leadership attributes which are demonstrated by leaders that engage in a constructive path to goal transaction and exchange rewards for performance. These leaders specify expectations, share promise objectives and resources, arrange mutually satisfactory agreements, negotiate for resources, exchange assistance for effort, and offers appreciation for successful follower performance.

*Management-by-exception* (active) is when a leader makes corrective criticisms or uses negative reinforcement. This leadership behaviour monitors followers closely that enables them to point out mistakes and errors. Leaders with management-by-exception with “active” behaviours have characteristics of monitoring followers’ performances and taking corrective action if deviations from the set standards occur. These leaders also enforce rules to avoid mistakes.

*Management-by-exception* (passive) is only intervening when goals have not been met or a problem arises. The *management-by-exception* leader with a “passive” behaviour would not intervene until problems become serious. The *management-by-exception* leader (passive) waits to take action until mistakes are brought to his or her attention (Northouse, 2001). *Laissez-faire* behaviours are ones that delay decisions and give up responsibility. Laissez-faire leaders offer no feedback or support to the follower. Laissez-faire leadership is a “hands-off” approach to leadership (Northouse, 2001). *Laissez-faire* leadership is also termed a non-leadership style. The laissez-faire leader avoids accepting responsibilities, is absent when needed, fails to follow up on requests for assistance, and resists expressing his or her views.
on important issues. The *laissez-faire* leader gives the majority of control in the decision-making process to the followers. *Laissez-faire* leadership assumes that followers are intrinsically motivated and should be left alone to accomplish tasks and goals. The laissez-faire leader does not provide direction or guidance either.

**RESULTS**

Each of the nine leadership scales measured by the MLQ as well as the transformational and/or transactional leadership style scores are presented in Table 1. Leadership scale scores have a range possibility of 0 to 4. A score of 0 meant the behaviour was not used at all while a 4 was a behavior or style used frequently, if not always. A score of 0-1 represents a behavior or style used minimally or never. A score of 1-2 indicates behaviours used once in a while to sometimes. A MLQ score between 2 and 3 signifies behaviours or traits used fairly often. Leadership behaviours or styles used frequently, if not always scored between 3 and 4. Of the nine scale scores, *idealized influence* (behaviour) received the highest mean score ($M = 7.58, SD = 2.79$), while *laissez-faire* scale scores received the lowest mean score ($M = 5.51, SD = 1.82$)

**ON HUMILITY**

We should not mistake humility for good manners. One might bow down before another having his heart full of hatred and contempt; this is not humility but hyporisy. One might repeat the name of God (Rama) or say rosaries the whole day long, but if he is selfish he is not truly humble. One can measure Truth and Love, but not Humility. Humility is limitless.

- Mahatma Gandhi

Be modest and humble; this is the secret that will take you over the sea of life. Tuka says, It is the burden men carry that makes them sink.

- Sant Tukaram

All of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another for ‘God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time.

- Koran
Leadership style scores also had a range of 0 to 4. The range of style scores for the respondents for transformational leadership was 7.28 to 7.58. Transactional leadership style scores ranged from 5.51 to 7.20. Transformational leadership scores reported by participants were highest of the leadership style scores (M = 36.81, SD = 12.74). Participants reported a score (M = 25.11, SD = 6.55) for transactional leadership style. Table 2 summarizes mean scores for the two leadership styles, namely, transformational and transactional leadership. Coded data were analyzed with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. ANOVA—one way and t-test were used to compare the headmasters’ leadership style vis-a-vis their demographic variables.

Table 1 Mean Scores of Leadership Sub-scales of Headmasters Belonging to Different Schools and Summary of ANOVA Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Sub-scales</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized behaviour (behaviour)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.58</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized influence (attributed)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational motivation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual consideration</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingent reward</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management-by-exception (active)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management-by-exception (passive)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-faire</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>1.82</td>
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Table 2 Mean Scores of Leadership Styles of Headmasters Belonging to Different Schools and Summary of ANOVA Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership style</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36.81</td>
<td>12.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional leadership style</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25.11</td>
<td>6.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEARNING AND SERVICE

True learning induces in the mind service of mankind.

- Adi Granth
Following comparison of mean scores of all scales, leadership styles of headmasters vis-à-vis their demographic variables some specific trends in leadership behaviour were found.

**Gender.** Males and females had very similar scores and no striking difference was noted.

**Age.** In total transformational leadership style and its sub-scales headmasters who are above 40 achieved slightly higher scores than those below 40. In evaluation of total transactional leadership style headmasters who achieved higher scores than those below 40 years although no perceptible difference was observed in its sub-scales.

**Educational qualification.** In analyzing the impact of educational qualification headmasters with bachelors degree scored more than those with masters degree in both transformational and transactional leadership styles and their sub-scales.

**Art vs. science subject.** As for the relative impact of particular subject stream, the mean of those with art subject were higher in total transformational leadership. The mean of all other sub-scales of both transformational and transactional leadership styles except management-by-exception active and laissez-faire headmasters with science subject had higher scores than those with art subject.

**Experience.** As for the relative impact of experience on leadership styles, no significant difference was discerned in headmasters’ leadership style in terms of their demographic variables.

The objective of this study was to determine if the leadership style of secondary school headmasters was transformational and/or transactional. Existing headmasters who were surveyed, appeared to follow more transformational leadership style as evidenced by a mean score in transformational leadership (M = 36.81), while exhibiting some characteristics of transactional leadership (M = 25.11). Such findings were seen as a positive sign for schools, colleges and universities. Available evidence in literature shows that most effective and successful leaders are generally transformational leaders followed by transactional leaders, and with some in small numbers adopting *laissez-faire* leadership behaviour (Tichny & Devanna, 1990).
Findings of this research shows that headmasters exhibit more transformational leadership style (mean = 36.81) than transactional style (mean = 25.11). It was found that secondary school headmasters, both male and female, adhered to transformational leadership styles more often than transactional leadership behaviours. This is a positive reflection of the existing secondary school headmasters leadership behaviour considering that as per available research transformational leadership behaviours are more conducive for attaining and achieving institutional goals (Tichny & Devanna, 1990).

When relationships between demographic variables and leadership style were examined, no significant relationships patterns could be found. This finding concurs with other studies examining demographic variables on similar populations (Wolverton, et al., 2001; Moore, 2003; and Stedman, 2004).

**DISCUSSION**

It was found that secondary headmasters in Mysore city tended to practice transformational leadership styles more often than transactional leadership styles, which is an important finding. Eagly, et al. (2003) reported that effective and successful leaders generally conform to transformational leadership behaviours more often than transactional leadership. Bass (1990) stated that transformational leadership is the prototype of leadership that people have in mind when they describe their ideal leader. Bass also stated transformational leaders are more effective and successful. This is good news for land-grant institutions. If school headmasters are following transformational leadership more often than transactional leadership, chances for success and continued viability for educational institutions is promising.

It was also found that academic programme leaders adhered to transformational leadership behaviours more often than transactional behaviours regardless of their demographic variables. Using principals of transformational leadership as the basis for this study, it is suggested that academic programme leaders (deans) should practice transactional as well as transformational leadership styles, as was found in this study. Secondary school headmasters are using both transactional and transformational leadership in the completion of their job, if results of this study are any indication. It is encouraging to find that secondary school headmasters are using transformational leadership.

As demographic variables did not significantly influence the leadership
style or behaviours of the school headmasters, it is suggested that educational institutions should continue with their policy to recruit leaders with diverse backgrounds. Further research needs to be carried out to determine if headmasters’ demographic factors contribute towards development of their leadership style.

REFERENCES


OFTEN PROBLEMS ARE ONE'S OWN CREATION

The problems we face today are human-created.

- Dalai Lama