

***Transformational Leadership in Changing Education Systems: Evolving Management Roles and Responsibilities in Educational Institutions***

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**Abstract**

This paper examines the effectiveness of transformational leadership in changing education systems and the rapidly evolving and expanding roles of educational leaders. Innovation, rather than the mere improvement of existing processes and structures, is one of the most important elements of an organization that a leader can help to promote. Whether it is a factory that produces tangible products or a learning organization involved in training individuals in a wide range of disciplines, leadership and management approaches that enhance innovation are of vital importance. Effective and enlightened leaders help organizations to improve and to evolve in innovative new ways (Mufeed, 2018). The traditional concept of leadership provides a rigid framework that may no longer be effective in an increasingly complex and interconnected international society. Effective educational leadership requires shared responsibility, advanced critical thinking skills, flexibility in decision-making processes, open channels of communication throughout an organization, and close collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016). Transformational leadership, which was first developed in the private sector, is now being employed successfully in the management and rapid transformation of educational institutions.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Education Systems, Innovation, Management

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## Introduction

Transformational leadership, which first evolved in private companies, is now being used effectively by some educational leaders to improve and transform educational institutions and education systems to meet the complex, changing needs of students. In the current period of rapid social, economic, and technological change, organizations and education systems require flexible, innovative leadership that is capable of transforming current organizational cultures, structures, and practices (Mufeed, 2018). The roles and responsibilities of educational leaders are expanding and changing as a result of multiple, complex, and evolving factors in global society, the economy, technology, the environment, and other key areas. Economic and political pressures are forcing some schools to operate in a manner similar to private companies to reduce costs and to produce more measurable results (Onorato, 2013). School management practices are being influenced by the private sector. Many school leaders increasingly need more financial knowledge, business skills, and negotiating skills as a result of funding cuts (Miller, Lu, & Gearhart, 2020). Transformational school leaders may need to carefully evaluate and adopt some of the best practices of private companies to reduce costs.

Resilient organizations and educational institutions are capable of responding quickly and effectively to new needs and challenges in a complex, interconnected, and changing international environment. Transformational leaders need to foster and promote diversity and cross-cultural communication in increasingly multicultural and international organizations and educational institutions (Bonsu & Twum-Danso, 2018). Increased diversity can improve the resiliency of an organization by providing a greater range of opinions and experiences that can be applied to decision-making processes. The concept of continual innovation and the processes that support innovation need to be fostered and developed at all levels of a truly resilient organization (Horibe, 2003). Leaders need to be willing to change and be able to lead and inspire other stakeholders to accept a culture of change and to make substantial contributions to necessary changes in existing policies, structures, and practices.

In the traditional view of transactional leadership, the leader may often play a dominant central role in an organization and may even dictate instructions or commands in a seemingly logical and rational manner. The term leadership may create the image of a lone figure at the top of a rigid, inflexible hierarchy or out in front of a group of obedient subordinates and making many of the most important decisions for other stakeholders in an organization. In a transactional style of leadership concentrated at the top of a hierarchical organizational structure, there may be virtually no role for interactive debates or individual decisions or initiatives within an organization (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016). The higher one's official ranking in an organization, the more influence one may have. The traditional concept of leadership centered around one main leader or a relatively small group of key, senior decision-makers at the top of a rigid hierarchical structure provides a framework for management that may no longer be effective in an increasingly complex global society.

In sharp contrast to traditional leaders, skillful transformational leaders do not isolate themselves or rely mainly on advice from a small number of senior members of an organization. Transformational leaders are capable of being good followers when necessary and communicate frequently with all members of an organization and with stakeholders in the surrounding community (Katz & Hamam, 2018). Effective transformational leadership requires shared responsibility throughout an organization. A good leader must recognize the need for critical thinking and for completely open, ongoing dialogue on all issues in the

workplace. In addition, competent transformational leaders are sufficiently aware of the role of emotions in thinking and in decision-making processes. Effective leaders are sincere, respect other members, and are committed to the success of an organization (Bennett, 2019). Transformational leadership practices can help educational institutions and education systems employ necessary reforms and changes to adapt to a rapidly changing global society and economy. Organizations, companies, and educational institutions that are too hierarchical, too rigid, and too slow to change risk becoming irrelevant in the current era of unprecedented, accelerating change in technology, in society, and in the evolving, interconnected global economy.

### **Transformational Leadership Roles and Shared Responsibilities**

Effective and enlightened leaders help organizations to continually improve and to evolve in a variety of innovative new ways (Mufeed, 2018). In the past, some leaders of schools and companies may have chosen the direction of an organization with little or no substantial input from subordinates. Without giving it careful consideration or applying truly critical thinking to the concept of leadership, some teachers in various educational settings may still believe that leadership implies supreme authority and a superior position with unequal subordinates who are not fully qualified to lead an organization in any substantial way. However, one should not underestimate the importance of delegating authority and of promoting shared leadership throughout an organization or educational institution. In the case of educational institutions, community leaders may also be able to make valuable contributions to new projects, goals and objectives (Katz & Hamam, 2018). Effective educational leadership requires a high level of shared responsibility, advanced critical thinking skills, flexibility in decision-making processes, open channels of communication throughout an organization, and close collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016). The ideal role of a skilled leader is to create the conditions in an organization that allow all its members and stakeholders to fully use their creative energies, to actively participate in changes, and to eagerly take a stake in management decisions and in the future success of an organization or school.

Resilient and successful organizations are capable of creating work environments which encourage the development of intrinsic motivation and self-motivation among the members and stakeholders. Effective transformational leaders give working teams or groups enough autonomy and freedom to make some mistakes within a reasonable limit. Leaders can promote strategic, mutually beneficial partnerships with a wide range of external stakeholders in the community (Kladifko, 2013). Learning teams can quickly and effectively manage and share resources, experience, and knowledge. Large contemporary organizations are far too complex for one single leader to do all the thinking and decision-making alone, and good leaders recognize the limitations of their own personal knowledge, experience, connections, and influence.

In companies and organizations today, innovation rather than the mere improvement of existing processes and structures is one of the most important things that a leader in an organization can help to promote. Whether it is a factory that produces various goods or a learning organization engaged in training individuals in many different disciplines, innovation and change are of vital importance to the success of an organization. The ability to transform an organization, helping it to grow and evolve quickly in completely new directions, should be a high priority for enlightened leaders and skillful, competent managers (Horibe, 2003). Effective transformational leaders encourage innovation and help to guide

necessary changes.

The members of an organization should be given opportunities to experiment with new ideas in order to encourage team leaders and other members to take some risks (Kozlov, 1989). The existing status quo and strict hierarchy in some large organizational cultures may discourage clear communication, trust, and openness between groups even within the same sections or departments. The rewards for taking a risk that proves successful may be extremely small in organizations with traditional management, while the potential punishments and negative consequences for any type of failure may be quite severe. Organizations should avoid having one single leader or manager judge a new idea and should encourage detailed feedback and participation in decision-making by all members (Vu, 2004). An organizational culture and decision-making processes benefit from diversity, multiple viewpoints and perspectives.

### **The Importance of Critical Thinking in Transformational Leadership**

Learning can be an interactive process between teachers and learners. Teachers and students can help each other to evaluate new ideas and concepts and to relate them to personal experience in order to construct new meanings. Teachers can use the classroom environment not only to transmit knowledge but also to reflect deeply on and to modify assumptions and beliefs (Stengel, 2001). A company or learning organization is also a place for leaders to experiment and to test new ideas and assumptions with the active cooperation of other members of an organization. An effective leader knows how to motivate people for a common purpose and for the benefit of all stakeholders. Good leaders are self-reflective and clearly understand the roles of cognitive processes and logic in their own thinking and daily decision-making processes.

Leaders should be sophisticated enough to avoid making faulty generalizations (Schwarze & Lape, 2001). Transformational leadership creates the conditions which allow members of an organization to make valuable contributions and to perform and to learn to the best of their abilities. Ongoing training in critical thinking skills is advisable for all members of an organization. The use of open-ended problems in group discussions can be an important part of ongoing employee training (McGraw, 2004). Members of an organization need support and encouragement from managers and leaders in order to continue to grow professionally.

### **The Role of Emotions and Intuition in Transformational Leadership**

Emotions may sometimes appear to be the opposite of reason and logic, but knowledgeable leaders need a deep understanding of the role that emotions and intuition can play in complex decision-making processes. Effective leaders must be willing to calmly and frequently question existing assumptions and practices, be open to new ideas, and be capable of reimagining and redesigning organizations (Ruggiero, 2004). Leadership requires a certain degree of emotional self-monitoring and self-control. A skillful leader is capable of understanding the emotional needs of other members of an organization, and knows that good listening skills are an essential part of successful interpersonal communication (Kirby & Goodpaster, 2002). Transformational leaders need to be able to listen carefully and frequently to members at all levels of an organization. Genuine sincerity is also vital when trying to persuade others to fundamentally change a point of view (Ruggiero, 2004). However, leaders and managers need to be cautious when transferring management and leadership techniques between different cultures. A gradual process of trial and error may be necessary when first attempting to transform the entrenched culture, management structures, and practices of a

large organization.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, in a transactional view of leadership, leaders may be privileged individuals at the top of a rigid hierarchy who make most of the key decisions for an organization by themselves or with a relatively small group of senior members of an organization. In contrast, effective transformational leadership is a highly interactive, dynamic, evolving process with shared responsibilities throughout an organization. In order to manage members effectively and to motivate them, a leader must be sincere and listen carefully, calmly and frequently to others (Bennett, 2019). Good leaders recognize that open, ongoing, constructive dialogue is extremely useful and that emotions and intuition may sometimes have an important role to play in the leadership and decision-making process. Transformational leadership in an educational institution is a continual, ongoing process which requires effective communication skills, a willingness to change, the delegation of responsibilities, and the active participation of all members of an organization and of multiple external stakeholders in the community (Eliophotou-Menon & Ioannou, 2016). Using transformational leadership, resilient organizations and educational institutions can foster a flexible and dynamic organizational culture which embraces and effectively manages continual organizational improvements and change in an increasingly complex global society.

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