

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ORGANISATIONS

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DOI: 10.19062/2247-3173.2022.23.19

***Abstract:** Transformational leadership is an area of leadership that is frequently discussed nowadays because of its positive effects on organizations. This leadership style is preferred by leaders who believe that innovation and creativity are the best tools to streamline the organization and make it evolve. By personal example, transformational leaders manage to induce change in their subordinates and make them not afraid of change. They inspire and motivate their subordinates, giving them confidence in their own strengths and encouraging them to make decisions within the organization.*

***Keywords:** change, leader, organisations, charisma, motivation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In general, the difference between a successful organization and a failed one is the result of the leadership process. In this context, it is certain that the leader is the main actor who stages one approach or another, in order to achieve the desired results. The secret is to find the right approach that will lead to organizational success.

Transformational leadership is that type of leadership that combines several useful aspects in this process, such as innovation, open-mindedness, participation, desire for change, elements through which leaders manage to obtain maximum efficiency from their subordinates.

Transformational leadership is a leadership model used in various fields such as technology, economics, entertainment, education, politics or the military.

“When you look at people that are good examples of transformational leaders, you think of the people that have had an impact, whether that’s on an organization or on the country. These are the people that can rise to any challenge and bring everybody together collectively to make a difference.”[1]

In order to give a definition of transformational leadership, we can say that it is based on the involvement and motivation of subordinates in building a bright future for the organization. Of course, this flourishing future cannot be built with great ease. First of all, the leader establishes and transmits the common goal of the group, an aspect that is based on the vision of the organization. The organization's vision contains the organizational mission and objectives, both in the short term and in the medium and long term. Without a clear and concise vision and mission of the organization, leadership cannot be achieved with maximum efficiency.

„Les Stein, PhD, assistant teaching professor in Northeastern’s Master of Science in Leadership program, believes a truly transformational leader can enter a struggling or stagnant organization, analyze the circumstances, and articulate needed improvements almost immediately. He or she should then be able to guide the organization in defining or redefining its core values in a way that unites the group in a common effort.”[1]

Secondly speaking, transformational leadership is centered on team unity, the common goal that all team members adhere to and that everyone has, as their primary goal, as an intrinsic engine for engaging every component of the organization.

2. SOME RELEVANT FEATURES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS

The transformational leader is the leader who determines a change and outlines a new vision that will be inoculated to the subordinates through the idealized influence.

According to Warren Bennis, *"the ability to lead is the ability to turn vision into reality"*[2]. As such, the transformational leader is the one who anticipates, with the help of a new vision, the future of the organization he leads. It causes change, imprints a new vision, sees beyond the horizon. However, is this new vision really needed?

Thus, *"a strong vision can facilitate the interest and ability of followers to set goals and believe that these goals can be achieved, to generate an optimistic assessment of the future, to build confidence in the ability to perform tasks successfully, and to discourage defeatist manifestations, because a favorable future is very near and it suits everyone."*[3]

Transformational leaders are those who have the ability to instill in their subordinates the idea that common organizational purpose, motivation, and organizational culture are the keys to success. Everything must be done together.

A transformational leader is: visionary, team-centered, inspirational, cooperative, with emotional intelligence, ethical values and outstanding communication skills.

3. APPLYING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION

The concept of leadership is one that defines military activity, being the main factor that indicates the performance and success of military structures and implicitly of military leaders. The latter are the ones who play a very important role in promoting the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the leadership process. Leaders are also the ones who build confidence, inspire, build teams and maintain team morale.

Moreover, the leader is the one who motivates his subordinates and gives them the necessary moral support to carry out all activities. Given these elements, transformational leadership is best.

However, using such a leadership style in a conservative, rigid, bureaucratic organization such as the military organization is a major challenge for all those involved in the leadership process. Therefore, transformational leadership in the military environment is an important topic, around which parts of military doctrine have been redefined.

„Research in the military environment confirms the positive impact of transformational leadership style on subordinates in several respects. For example, when subordinates perceive leadership to be more transformational, this results in stronger identification and internalization with respect to leaders. Research has also shown that transformational leadership increases subordinate’s military hardiness and individual creativity.

Transformational leadership style can foster interpersonal and organizational relationships, and it creates a friendly atmosphere that increases satisfaction, motivation, and defense commitment. ” [4]

If we turn our attention to the transformational leader in the military organization, he is the one who deeply perceives the importance of the military organization in society and at the same time develops that overall vision of the organization, being a supporter of change. At the same time, the transformational leader makes dynamic decisions and identifies opportunities, successfully using all aspects that favor change.

Certainly, there are many elements in the military organization that oppose change or act against change. Resistance to change is quite common in the context of military leadership. This can be manifested at the level of any echelon of the army, related to a multitude of aspects of the way the military organization works.

The change brings disorders at the individual level, disorders triggered by the existence of internal misunderstandings, states of anxiety that are based on the fear of accepting these changes. The new directions and values imposed by the leader can generate various emotions within the teams.

The transformational leader is the one who has to manage and solve a multitude of difficult situations, when he wants to implement changes in the structure he leads. He uses his empathy, but also his intelligence and persuasion, in order to identify the most appropriate means by which to influence his subordinates to give up the values of the past. Certainly, detachment from those values is not a simple act, but it requires a lot of effort from all those involved in the leadership process. It is foreseeable that at the beginning of the implementation of the change, there may be a slight disorganization, which may give rise to negative emotions among subordinates. However, for the leader to implement a successful strategy that will positively change the organization, this strategy must be simple to perceive, logical, persuasive, with a concrete plan of implementation, with correctly established tasks and responsibilities. The real motivation of subordinates in the direction of change is vital in its implementation. The process of applying change is a broad one, and the leaders who achieve it must have certain mental qualities, such as: cognitive, emotional and social intelligence, enthusiasm, loyalty, trust, developed communication skills.

Bernard Bass is the one who built the four very important dimensions of transformational leadership, namely: unrealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. These four dimensions, which practically define transformational leadership, highlight certain traits, attitudes and behaviors that transformational leaders have and that help them decisively in the leadership process. In fact, transformational leaders do not intend to persuade teams to conform, but rather encourage their subordinates to evolve while giving them the opportunity to be creative.

„Bass identified four leadership factors or behaviors that characterize transformational leadership. The first is “idealized influence” or charisma. This factor defines behaviors through which the leader cultivates admiration, respect, and trust in himself among followers. Examples of “idealized influence” include doing what is right rather than what is most convenient and making decisions more transparent by explaining the rationale behind the decisions. Leaders with “idealized influence” are able to obtain extra effort from followers to achieve optimal levels of performance.”[5]

Idealized influence is very important because it focuses on the charisma that transformational leaders have and with the help of which they manage to influence their subordinates, in order to achieve change. Moreover, with the help of charisma, leaders inspire confidence, are transparent, are not perceived as individuals who hide something,

are ethical and have moral values. They are also persuasive individuals who succeed in convincing their teams of the need for change.

„Bass’ second transformational leadership behavior is“ inspirational motivation, ”which refers to the actions the leader takes to present a vision, set high standards, and convince individuals that they can achieve beyond expectations. Transformational leaders assess the organizational environment both internally and externally to develop a mental picture of what the ideal end-state of the organization ought to be, given the expected future environment. Then, based on “knowledge and values” gained from experience, the leader develops a unique vision for the organization. This vision is more than a goal, unit objective, or commander’s intent for a particular operation. It is a value or collection of values that members of the unit believe in and are willing to rally around. The vision is developed as a collaborative effort between the leader and subordinates, with the leader performing the critical role of integrating and guiding the process. The leader through speeches, policies, behaviors, or symbols communicates the vision, provides a sense of direction, purpose, motivation, and identity for members of the organization. When members “buy in” to the vision, they perceive it as worth the effort, creating energy, commitment, and a greater sense of belonging among members. When shared throughout the organization, the vision can move members to significant achievements.”[5]

Closely related to inspirational motivation is the attitude of the leader who encourages his subordinates to achieve more than they think they can achieve. Around the transformational leader, the subordinates feel capable, strong and feel that they have a point of support in any situation.

The third important dimension of transformational leadership is directly related to how the leader perceives the needs of subordinates. Individualized consideration involves reporting leaders to subordinates as distinct, important individuals, with leaders concerned with their ongoing training and professional development. Closely related to this dimension, we identify the mentor and counselor components that any transformational leader has. Meeting individual needs, in the context of general goals that need to be met, is a challenge for leaders. This challenge is being successfully met by transformational leaders.

In the military field, individualized consideration is applied by transformational leaders in the context of a fairly rigorous organizational culture that promotes equidistance and an equal and impersonal regime.

The key to this dimension of transformational leadership is deep knowledge of subordinates. Once this condition is met, a close bond can be created between leaders and subordinates, and from here to motivating subordinates to perform is only one step.

The fourth transformational leadership dimension is intellectual stimulation or creativity. *„Transformational leadership values creativity and autonomy among the leader’s followers. The leader supports his followers by involving them in the decision-making process and stimulating their efforts to be as creative and innovative as possible to identify solutions.*

To this end, the transformational leader challenges assumptions and solicits ideas from followers without criticizing. She helps change the way followers think about and frame problems and obstacles. The vision the leader conveys helps followers see the big picture and succeed in their efforts.”[6]

The transformational leader encourages and mentally stimulates subordinates, causing them to analyze situations and identify possible solutions to problems that arise. In fact, it is about applying the democratic, participatory leadership style, with the help of which the leader asks for ideas and solutions from his subordinates. In the decision-making process, the leader listens to his subordinates, gives them confidence, uses their thinking

and decision-making skills. In this way, the leader manages to get more benefits for the organization. The most important of these is the development of new leaders.

Certainly, the intellectual stimulation of subordinates, doubled by confidence, encourages and supports them in their subsequent development. In this way, leaders raise other leaders.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Transformational leaders are the people who energize the activity, being full of energy and dynamism. It is clear that these traits can make the difference between an efficient and an inefficient organization. Transformational leadership is used in various organizations such as the military, hospitals, schools, multinational companies. If we look around us, all organizations are changing, which is really necessary.

This type of leadership stimulates, under all circumstances, the use of employees' skills, encourages people cognitively, as well as emotionally. These elements can be achieved by influencing their ideas, by identifying new ways in which issues can be addressed, with an emphasis on solving problems through diplomatic means. Team members are treated as individuals, as important people, and they are encouraged to use their creativity in a variety of situations. Moreover, in the elaboration of the vision, the transformational leader exerts influence on the individuals according to the missions they receive, highlighting the respect and responsibility towards themselves and towards the other members of the organization.

If we refer to the military organization, the ultimate challenge of the leaders of such organizations is the way to implement the change, in the conditions of a rigid institutional system, strongly legislated. However, transformational leaders manage to implement change, to bring elements of novelty, to be the main actors on the stage of organizational resizing. Using their own charisma, charm and emotional intelligence, they manage to bring a new breath to the organization and be the vectors of effective transformation.

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