



# The Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Performance Improvement among Teachers: A Case Study

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Received 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013, revised 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013, accepted 6<sup>th</sup> August 2013

## Abstract

*This study aimed to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher's performance improvement in Ahwaz education of regain one boy high schools. This research is descriptive-correlation. The statistical population of research consisted of 148 boy high schools employees, that 108 out of them were selected in stage cluster random sampling method and in basis of Krejcie and Morgan table. In order to collect data, we use Karry Barent transformational questionnaire for leadership and schools yearly performance table for Performance improvement evaluate. For analyzing data, the Smirnov and Kolmogrov test and Pearson correlation test are used. The finding result showed that there was a positive relationship between transformational leadership and teacher's performance improvement. The results shows that in order to improve teacher's performance by transformational leadership approach, managers should be as role model for teachers, set clear vision for them, help them for questioning the existent situation and consider them individually.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, transformational leadership, performance improvement.

## Introduction

Recently, surrounding environment of organization has become more active. Success requires organizations move toward transformation. Transformation is to abandon and leave a thing accepted by reason. According to authors, transformation is generally realized with new innovative methods, adjustment to environmental changes and making change in proper time span. Successful establishment of transformation requires support from the highest organizational levels, i.e. higher leadership of the organization<sup>1</sup>. In these days human resource is one the most valuable organization asset providing competitive advantages for organizational development<sup>2</sup>. Leadership is defined as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common aim"<sup>3</sup>. Leadership has been interested by authors to maintain and develop organizational culture. Leadership operating in both group and individual levels obviously influences on culture through language, structure, values and behavior<sup>4</sup>. The leadership fundamental function is to produce change and set direction to cope with change which is not similar to planning or long-term planning, but perplexity between both often takes place among people<sup>5</sup>. Leaders have to achieve organizational objectives by their human capitals. For many years, managers learn that their ability to achieve objectives is directly related to their ability to motivate workers. This has recently become more important; since, human problems, communication and relations between managers and workers have been transformed. Particularly, personal works is decreasing, significance of group and team works is increasing, and thus it becomes difficult to achieve high performance levels. These form a new increasingly important managerial approach. Significance of leadership for strategic success of organizations

and elimination of performance challenges encountered by workers made management scientists discover properties and characteristics of successful leaders in organizations. The efforts were followed by various schools and theories on leadership during recent decades. The newest of them can be transformational leadership which has been recently interested by theorists, scientists and practitioners of management. Various centers and groups have been formed to explain and determine different components of the theory. Managers attempt to use extensively the concepts in organizations.

Transformational leadership as a leadership paradigm to promote organizational performance by ability to motivate workers and develop organizational culture in which ethical procedures are considered as a behavioral norm put efforts to predict environmental changes<sup>6</sup>. By developing new ideas and visions, transformational leadership introduce a new path of growth and development and promise performance improvement of organizations. Most organizations recently require fast changes to maintain their competitive advantage. Fast changes require organizations have adjustable, effectively working leaders and workers who constantly improve systems and processes.

In an educational system, a principal as a coordinator of educational and training activities provides opportunities for performance improvement of teachers followed by increased learning among students in an active environment by help of teachers to realize optimally objectives of the school. Objectives and activities of an educational system are totally based on change influencing on learning process of learners<sup>7</sup>. This

requires the highest organizational levels know and practice changes. By adopting a transformational approach and identifying change and transformation, awareness of its advantages and disadvantages as well as starting transformation, higher management of the organization provides opportunity to change and transform educators, learners followed by whole society. In an educational system, transformational leadership style can change, modify and advance workers and subsystems. Some studies can explain considerable effects of this new leadership style.

Ulrich states that human resource practices are supposed to have impact on firm performance. Many survey results have proven the relationship between them<sup>8</sup>. According to Bass transformational leadership causes a performance beyond expectations in organizational settings. Experiments also supported a positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance. Studies also indicated a positive relationship between transformational leadership and commitment, low levels of job stress, job satisfaction and satisfaction with leader, innovation, emotional intelligence and organizational-citizen behavior<sup>9</sup>. Transformational leaders totally transform organization by their actions. Followers feel trust and loyalty to them<sup>10</sup>. Leaders help the employees to understand why and how certain activities and goals need to be accomplished. Leadership constitutes a process of facilitating individual, group, and organizational efforts to learn, and accomplish shared goals in organizations<sup>11</sup>.

Studying the effect of principal's transformational leadership style on adaptation of school learning environment and teacher's outcomes in secondary schools of New South Wales, Barnett used multilevel modelling analysis to discover the relationship between leadership, behaviors, factors of school learning environment and results of teacher's outcomes. Results from effect of leadership factors on school learning environment showed that transformational leadership style maximally influences on efforts to modify school learning environment<sup>12</sup>.

Daren studied the relationship between transformational leadership style and performance of workers. He believed that transformational leadership style was relatively superior on other leadership styles in predicting performance among workers. Daren studied senior managers of 100 top Canadian public firms. Results indicated a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and performance improvement of workers<sup>13</sup>.

Riaz, studying the role of transformational and transactional leadership on job satisfaction and job achievement, found that effective leadership always played an important role in growth and performance improvement of the organization. To determine this, he selected 240 workers as samples from different Pakistani private organizations by a simple random technique. He concluded that transactional leadership was considerably related to job achievement and transformational

leadership was strongly related to job achievement and job satisfaction<sup>14</sup>.

Geijssel studied effects of transformational leadership on commitment and efforts of teachers. He found that components of transformational leadership influenced on commitment and efforts of teachers. He also cleared that creating a future vision and mental stimulation of followers considerably influenced on them<sup>15</sup>.

Pillai studied the relationship between transformational leadership, self-sufficiency, team integration, commitment and performance of workers and concluded that transformational leadership process both influenced on self-efficiency and team integration and increased commitment and improved performance of followers in work groups<sup>16</sup>.

Yu examined the effects of transformational leadership on commitment to changes among Hong Kong teachers and found a significantly positive relationship between transformational leadership style and commitment of teachers. He also found that vision was most correlated to commitment among components of transformational leadership<sup>17</sup>.

Findings of Politis showed that some factors of transformational leadership provided opportunity for performance improvement<sup>18</sup>.

According to Bass<sup>9</sup>, transformational leadership formed from four elements: i. Idealized Influence, ii. Inspirational Motivation, iii. Intellectual Stimulation, iv. Individualized Consideration.

The core of idealized influence is to create values which inspire people and make sense for them. Other term used to describe this type of leadership is charisma. Charismatic leaders induct their self-confidence to others. Trust means self-belief<sup>19</sup>. A transformational principal motivate respect, admiration and loyalty among teachers emphasizing on strong commitment to meet missions of the school.

Through inspirational motivation, transformational leaders act to inspire people and motivate them. A transformational principal develops high-level standards for educators, clearly explain ideas and visions and motivate teachers to do tasks beyond norms. Inspirational motivation describes leaders who increase commitment and motivate educators by their participation in developing visions.

Transformational leaders stimulate efforts of followers to be innovative and creative by doubting assumptions, reforming problems and shifting from old situations to new methods<sup>20</sup>. Transformational components of intellectual stimulation of educators can create an environment in which educators can doubt assumptions and invent new methods replacing old processes.

Through individualized consideration, the leader requires followers to grow and provides a coaching style to meet requirements and prepare followers for higher levels<sup>21</sup>. Through individualized consideration, principals provide new learning opportunities along with a supportive climate for teachers. Bass claims that transformational leaders show individualized consideration by considering particular needs of workers. According to Soumia et al<sup>22</sup>, individualized consideration involves coaching, advising and attending others.

Thus, the present study examines the relationship between components of transformational leadership and performance improvement of educators considering the importance of performance improvement of teachers by leadership role. In educational organizations which are considered as total model of inputs and organizations within societies, the more significant fact is organizational improvement and as a result transformation. During recent years, some studies have been conducted on transformational leadership style; however, its application in educational systems needs deeper studies due to high difficulty and social sensitivity of the problem. Hence, adjustment of organization with environmental conditions is considered as the most sensitive tasks of leaders. Thus, leaders should have professional skills to develop and perform changing plans. While, Iranian educational managers are clearly weak in this regard and need to promote their skills<sup>7</sup>.

Improvement approaches can be classified in different forms. For example, scientists focused on reengineering processes during a certain period. They followed total quality management in another period. Knowledge management is recently put forward for competitive advantage. Through another approach, improvement plans can be divided in terms of hardware and software views. According to Davenport and Prusak, most scientists took initial technological steps. Thus, investment does not involve value-added equal to related investments. According to them, current focus has shifted from soft view, i.e. culture and leadership area. A new leadership style is transformational leadership which provide opportunities to promote performance of the workers and organizations in many ways. Thus, current study examines the relationship between transformational leadership of principals and performance improvement of educators. Therefore, assumptions are developed and tested according to the relationship between components of transformational leadership and performance improvement of educators.

### Methodology

Selecting the appropriate research approach requires considering a number of contextual factors and then reflecting them against the backdrop of the research question<sup>22</sup>. A descriptive survey was used to study the problem which was functional-research in terms of application and sectional-research in terms of time. Data was also quantitative. Participants (148) included workers of male secondary schools, Ahvaz. Sample size (108) was

determined by Morgan scale. According to the fact that participants are divided in schools, a multistage cluster sampling method was used.

A questionnaire was used to collect data. To examine transformational leadership style among principals, Barnett's work transformational leadership was used. To evaluate performance improvement among teachers, annual performance chart of schools was used. In 24-item transformational leadership inventory in the form of Likert's 5-point scale, 9 items measured individualized consideration, 6 items measured intellectual stimulation, 3 items measured idealized influence and finally 6 items measured inspirational motivation.

To determine validity of transformational leadership inventory, despite the fact that the inventory is a standard frequently used inventory, experts, professors and elites were asked to provide their views. Thus, the inventory is content valid. To determine reliability, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was used; eventually, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was obtained in 87%.

The present study used kolmogorove-smirnov test to measure normality of data distribution and Pearson correlation to measure the relationship between components of transformational leadership among principals and performance improvement among teachers.

### Results and Discussion

**Data Normality Test:** It is noteworthy that kolmogorove-smirnov test was used prior to assumption test to determine methodology and data distribution. Table 1 shows its results.

**Table-1**  
**Results from kolmogorove-smirnov test**

| Components | Individualized consideration | Intellectual stimulation | Idealized influence | Inspirational motivation |
|------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| SIG        | 0.188                        | 0.177                    | 0.169               | 0.347                    |
| $\alpha$   | 0.05                         | 0.05                     | 0.05                | 0.05                     |
| Result     | Normal                       | Normal                   | Normal              | normal                   |

Results from data analysis showed that data was normally distributed; thus, parametric statistical techniques, i.e. Pearson correlation, were used.

**Assumption Test:** To test assumptions, a Pearson correlation test was used to measure correlation of variables using the software SPSS 16. Then, assumptions were tested by regression analysis. Table 2 shows correlation coefficient and its test for two major variables and Table 3 shows values and tests for elements.

**Table-2**  
**Correlation between transformational leadership style among principals of male secondary schools and performance improvement of educators**

| Dependent variable<br>Independent variable | Performance of educator |       |             | Result                   |
|--|-------------------------|-------|-------------|--------------------------|
|  | r                       | P.V   | Error level |                          |
| Transformational leadership style          | 0.479                   | 0.001 | 0.05        | Null assumption rejected |

According to table 2, value of Pearson correlation test ( $r = 0.479$ ) is significant (0.05) between transformational leadership style of principals and performance improvement of educators in male secondary schools. The strong direct relationship is supported by positive correlation coefficient.

**Table-3**  
**Correlation between components of transformational leadership of principals and performance improvement of educators**

| Dependent variable<br>Independent variable | Performance of educator |       |             | Result                   |
|--|-------------------------|-------|-------------|--------------------------|
|  | r                       | P.V   | Error level |                          |
| Transformational leadership style          | 0.479                   | 0.001 | 0.05        | Null assumption rejected |
| Individualized consideration               | 0.381                   | 0.001 | 0.05        | Null assumption rejected |
| Intellectual stimulation                   | 0.279                   | 0.01  | 0.05        | Null assumption rejected |
| Idealized influence                        | 0.289                   | 0.01  | 0.05        | Null assumption rejected |
| Inspirational motivation                   | 0.249                   | 0.02  | 0.05        | Null assumption rejected |

As table 3 shows, correlation coefficient is 0.479 between transformational leadership style and performance improvement. This value is reasonable in 0.05 error level. The table also shows correlation coefficients of different components indicating a significantly, positive and direct relationship.

**Discussion:** The first assumption examined the relationship between idealized influence and performance improvement of educator. Results from data analysis showed a significantly positive relationship between these two variable. This was supported by Daren<sup>13</sup>, Riaz<sup>14</sup>, Geijsel<sup>15</sup>, Whittington. Thus, principals are expected to promote their influence on teachers and provide a role model of themselves. To develop idealized influence, principals can consider followings: ignoring personal interests in favor of team interest; showing power and self-confidence, communicating with teachers by talking about their beliefs and essential values; facilitating more coordination and participation of teachers by creating a common vision and explaining the importance of strong commitment to objectives; creating a healthy competitive environment to develop potential

capabilities of workers by providing rewards for teachers and top groups; promoting collectivism rather than individualism by establishing work teams and providing rewards based on participation and coordination of members.

The second assumption supported a significantly positive relationship between inspirational motivation and performance improvement of educator. This was observed in Bass<sup>9</sup>, Daren<sup>13</sup>, Pillai<sup>16</sup>, Barnett<sup>12</sup> and Yu<sup>17</sup>. Thus, principals are expected to develop a promising future for inspirational motivation of teachers. Promising future is a mechanism emphasized by new theories of leadership. Therefore, principals have to both emphasize on foresight and motivate enthusiasm of teachers and create an optimistic view to the future by developing high-level achievable objectives.

The third assumption examined the relationship between intellectual stimulation and performance improvement of educator. Results from data analysis as Bass<sup>9</sup>, Riaz<sup>14</sup>, Geijsel<sup>15</sup>, Pillai<sup>16</sup>, Barnett<sup>12</sup> supported the relationship. Thus, principals are expected to motivate people look problems from different aspects and suggest new methods, examine reengineering of processes and tasks as a strategy. Previously noted things open new horizons for attitudes to problems and procedures, create new knowledge for existing problems and activities and easily accepting suggested solutions by teachers and in turn empower them.

The last assumption supported a significant relationship between individualized consideration and performance improvement of educator. The finding was observed in Bass<sup>9</sup> and Crawford<sup>21</sup>. Thus, principals are expected to monitor performance of all teachers and be aware of their conditions. Therefore, principals have to identify their conditions separately, allocate time for guiding and training them, identifying their needs, abilities and creativity and develop plans for developing these abilities.

### Conclusion

According to many authors, transformational leadership style of principals can influence on performance improvement of teachers in different ways considered here. As noted before, adaptation of a transformational leadership is derived from a social approach and new mechanisms of performance improvement among workers and within the organization; results from data analysis supported such relationship. On the other word, the more components of transformational leadership, the more performance improvement among teachers. Therefore, the new approach of transformational leadership can be considered as a basis for realizing new generation of development through knowledge management which requires more studies.

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