

MODULE



Transformational Leadership

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

- John Quincy Adams

Time Period and Situation

The term transformational leadership was first introduced by James V. Downton in 1973, and has been the focus of researchers since the early 1980s (Northouse 161). After years of success and prosperity, the United States economy crashed into what is now known as the recession. The president at that time, Ronald Reagan, put forth many changes, such as cutting taxes and building up the military to help the country recover. During this time, the US imported more goods than it exported, therefore endangering manufacturing sector. Through such abysmal times, it was important for President Reagan and his government to motivate the citizens of the US. His leadership that led to the new wave of studies in transformational leadership.

Agenda

1. Transformational Leadership Definition
2. Transformational Leadership Examples
 - a. Buddha
 - b. Mikhail Gorbachev
 - c. Ryan White
 - d. Jeff Bezos
3. Pseudotransformational Leadership
 - a. Walmart

Student Objectives:

1. Students will understand transformational leadership.
2. Students will be able to develop connections between organizational culture and transformational leadership/leadership in general.
3. Students will understand the applicability of transformational leadership in their daily lives through several examples in history.

Facilitation Notes

Transformational Leadership, as implied, takes change. And because time is change, displaying a full case of transformational leadership in one session is very difficult.

How to introduce example leaders

Ryan White

You may use this video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMLYga2h1TA>) which features a 1988 interview of Ryan White discussing AIDs and his experience with bullying. You may then discuss the historical context of his story using the crash course notes and lead the class into a discussion about the impact of his leadership.

Jeff Bezos

Jeff Bezos is an example of transformational leadership that most of the students should know about. Without just stating who they are and how they exhibit transformational leadership is the ideal way of introducing Jeff Bezos. Let's start off with "can anyone think of a CEO who is an example of transformational leadership." Of course, responses at this point will be limited and unfortunately boring and most likely will not use the same point. At this point, start giving some hints and hopefully students will guess it. Rather than explaining it as the facilitator next, give a biography of Bezos and ask the students how he fits in to the transformational leadership concept.

You may also use this video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EctzLTFrktc&t=0m52s>) which features Jeff Bezos discussing the importance of thinking about the future and taking risks. It begins at 0:52 and you may end the clip at 2:42. Afterwards, introduce more information about Jeff Bezos with the crash course and discuss with your class how he utilizes transformational leadership to create an innovative company.

Walmart

Walmart, as we know, is in this module used as an example of "psuedo-transformational" leadership. This means their leadership was supposed to be transformational but failed at it. Tell the story of Walmart listed above and then ask the students what this sounds like.

Theory

1. Transformational Leadership
 - a. Leadership as a process that transforms and changes people. In this type of leadership, a heavy focus is placed on the connection between the leader and follower. The leader inspires followers to make changes within themselves and reach their highest potential. In the process, the leader themselves is also changed (161-162).
 - b. In companies, organizations, and other such groups, the intimacy of transformational leadership can result in a change in organizational culture and performance depending on how the leadership is carried out. In an organization with little intimacy, the atmosphere is often unfriendly, resulting in minimal collaboration and decreased happiness among employees. An organization with abundant intimacy will often have cheerful, motivated employees who frequently compare ideas and share in a commitment to achieve the goal. Transformational leadership in the workforce can result in increased productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness within the workplace.
 - c. A transformational leader manages to instill in the followers an obligation to serve for the greater good instead of just fulfilling their individual needs.
 - d. Pseudotransformational Leadership is a form of transformational leadership

where the focus is on the leader instead of the followers. In this case, the leader can be self consumed, exploitative, and power oriented. The transformation comes from the leader seeking the transformation, instead of it naturally happening through leadership (Northouse 163). In this case, the pseudo transformational leader does not go forth with any tangible actions, but instead specifically tries to change the followers' minds.

Examples of Transformational Leadership

Buddha (~570-~410)

Resources:

1. "Who was Buddha?" *Diamond Way Buddhism*, <https://www.diamondway-buddhism.org/buddhism/buddha/>. Accessed 15 June 2019.
2. "Buddhist Countries 2019." *World Population Review*, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/buddhist-countries/>. Accessed 15 June 2019.

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Originally born Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha was a Nepali prince with legitimate power. When he realized the immense suffering of the world, he left the royal life to set out on a spiritual journey towards peace and enlightenment. He traveled far and wide learning from the people that he met. Finally, after six years, he meditated for six days and six nights before reaching enlightenment and became the Buddha, or the Awakened/Enlightened One ("Who was Buddha?"). After this, Buddha traveled throughout Nepal and Northern India to spread his teachings. Because the Buddha's enlightenment experience could not be entirely explained, he taught people to experience enlightenment for themselves. During his time, Buddha sought to improve the well being of his followers in order to guide them toward enlightenment ("Buddhist Countries 2019"). Only through enlightenment he believed the suffering in the world could be terminated.

Discussion Questions:

1. What other religious movements exhibit transformational leadership? How?
2. How do you measure whether or not someone/something has been "transformed"?

Mikhail Gorbachev (1931-Present)

Resources:

1. "Mikhail Gorbachev." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 21 June 2019. Accessed 25 June 2019.

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Mikhail Gorbachev served as the first president of the USSR, serving from 1990 to 1991. He became a member of the communist party in 1952 and continued to hold leadership roles in the USSR. His leadership experiences made him realize that the USSR was not a good place for its people. As general secretary, Gorbachev introduced the concept of glasnost (openness) in 1987/88. This policy widely expanded freedom of expression, information, broadcast, and press. Gorbachev's second policy, perestroika (restructuring), made attempts to democratize the USSR. Eventually, Gorbachev's efforts and policies led to the dissolution of the USSR and

the fall of communism, and in his eyes at least partially accomplished the goals of his followers. As a transformational leader, Gorbachev worked toward his goal of dissolving communism by helping to enlighten his followers to a new idea of what they deserve from their government.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways did Gorbachev use Transformational Leadership?

Ryan White (1971-1990)

Resources:

1. "Who was Ryan White?" *HRSA Ryan White & Global HIV/AIDS Program*, Health Resources and Service Administration. Accessed 25 June 2019.
2. "Ryan White." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 4 Apr. 2019. Accessed 25 June 2019.

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Ryan White was a teenager who raised the American people's awareness of AIDS. Following a blood transfusion, White was diagnosed with AIDS at the age of 13 ("Who was Ryan White?"). In the 1980s, there was a lack of information and education regarding AIDS, and Ryan was extensively bullied due to misperceptions of the danger of AIDS and the stigma surrounding homosexuality. Because of his work, he became a spokesperson for increasing government support of AIDS research (Northouse 162). His funeral was attended by over 1,500 people, and shortly after his death a federal act to provide medical support to individuals and families with HIV/AIDS was signed into law. In the organizational world, transformational leadership often takes the form of a manager encouraging change in the corporate values of their team to reflect more humane and/or just standards, as seen in Ryan's case.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you be a transformational leader without actively trying to change something?
2. Can leadership be more powerful if it's after someone else's legacy?

Jeff Bezos

Resources:

1. de Andrés, Félix. "Jeff Bezos: The Best Living Transformational Leader as Example." LinkedIn, LinkedIn.
2. "Jeff Bezos." Edited by Biography.com, Biography.com, A&E Networks Television, 1 July 2019.
3. Sata, Stella, and Stella Sata. "Uncovering Leadership Styles: An Analysis of Jeff Bezos and Amazon.com." Academia.edu, www.academia.edu/10333555/Uncovering_Leadership_Styles_An_Analysis_of_Jeff_Bezos_and_Amazon.com.

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Transformational leadership is all about making the best out of a follower possible. Jeff Bezos successfully convinced his employees into believing that his budding organization had the potential to become the world's best e-commerce company. Even when investors did not believe that the company had the ability to bring positive financial returns, Bezos was able to

establish a vision, inspire his employees, and grow their services. He found that the best way to make progress was connect the company’s long term goals with the employee’s personal values. Their mission statement to become the “Earth’s most customer-centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online” appeals to the ideals of global interconnectivity, a customer focus, and a limitless selection of products. Although Amazon started as a book retailer, they quickly expanded into a company that offers more than 15 million products today and offers cloud services, Kindle reading devices, a membership program that includes movie access, and other areas.

Discussion Questions

1. How does transformational leadership within a company differ from other contexts?
2. What enables transformational leadership to be disruptive?
3. Is transformational leadership the best type of leadership for an expanding startup?

Examples of Pseudo-transformational Leadership

Walmart

Resources:

1. “Our History.” Walmart. Accessed 25 June 2019.
2. Robertson, David. “Pseudo-Transformational Leaders.” DMR Publications, 5 Jan. 2015. Accessed 25 June 2019.
3. Neuman, S. “Wal-mart to pay \$81 million for hazardous waste dumping.” National Public Radio, 28 May 2013.

CORE Crash Course (CCC):

Walmart serves as an example of pseudotransformational leadership. In 2005, Walmart suddenly declared a commitment to environmental sustainability. They established that they would strive towards creating zero waste and using only renewable energy (“Our History”). This made Walmart look great in the public’s eyes and made their shoppers feel as though Walmart’s vision aligned with their own (Robertson). However, Walmart has since been found to have dumped massive amounts of hazardous waste in California and Missouri. These violations occurred in 2003 and 2005, right when Walmart announced their environmental sustainability plans (Neuman). This can be seen as an example of pseudotransformational leadership due to the discrepancy between Walmart’s statements and their actual deeds. Instead of inspiring its followers by following through with their bold statement, Walmart cared more for its own self image.

Discussion Questions:

1. How could selfish actions of the leader affects the goals and actions of the followers?
2. Does pseudotransformational leadership take away the value of leadership?

Activities

Transactional vs. Transformational Leadership

Ask for two student volunteers. Pretend the class is a workplace. Ask one to demonstrate the role of transactional leadership by going to each “worker” and using a punishment/rewards system to encourage everyone to complete tasks. Ask the other to use a more motivational approach towards leadership and have them go around encouraging each worker. Afterwards, have the students reflect on the different

leadership styles then transition into transformational leadership.

Finding a Solution

Pull out 3-4 students into the hallway. The remaining students will discuss problems they have at IMSA. Preferably, these problems can not be solved by a simple revision in policy. Possible problems can include:

- Sleep deprivation
- Time management
- Organization
- Homesickness
- Procrastination

Once the students decide on the most prominent problem, the students in the hallway will come back inside. The larger group of students will vocalize their problem to the smaller group, and the smaller group will be tasked with devising a solution. To do so, they will have to interrogate each member of the larger to find why the students are suffering. In their solution, they must identify the needed change, create a vision, and inspire the larger group towards positive change. The purpose of this activity is for some students to take the position of a transformational leader and work with their peers to determine a strategy towards positive change.

In-line Discussion

Since some of the discussion questions aren't specific to the case study. Instead, we can do in-line with the discussion questions.

1. Does pseudotransformational leadership take away the value of leadership?
2. Can you be a transformational leader without actively trying to change something?
3. Can leadership be more powerful if it's after someone else's legacy?
4. Is transformational leadership the best type of leadership for an expanding startup?
5. Do all religious leaders have to exhibit transformational leadership?

Supplemental Content

References

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyN5LPHEQ_0