

THE BEST PRACTICES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING QUALITIES OF GOOD TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

It has been reported that transformational leadership impacts significantly the teachers and schools. It has also been argued that transformational leadership principles applied to teacher development is one possibility for achieving the desirable qualities among teachers. The study investigated how transformational leadership practices can help to develop the desirable qualities in teachers. The study employed a quantitative paradigm. A self-developed instrument was established. A pilot study was conducted. The preliminary findings demonstrate the best practices of transformational leadership are the desire for continuous learning, empowering, visionary, risk taking, value driven. These five principles are found to be dominant and had significant influence in developing qualities of good teachers. It can be concluded that it is important to have qualities in teachers especially those qualities developed through transformational leadership. This implies that results provides data base for the planners to forge and balance innovation in education and

leadership. Thus, The study is useful in contributing to the paradigm shift of curriculum as education is going through a period of transformtaion.

Key words: Transformational leadership, best practices, qualities of good teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

The New Enterprise Logic of School has revealed that a new concept of system school leadership' is emerging as it states, "effective in transformative leadership and curriculum management are intertwined and go hand in hand in any educational establishment to fulfill its role of imparting knowledge to students (Yeo, 2007). Obviously, transformational leadership influences significantly the teachers and the schools. Furthermore, research has been reported on the impact of transformational leadership in various settings. One central dimension of such impact is that transformational leadership has direct influence on the school cultures (Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990) and school performance (Bryman, 1992). This implies that transformational leadership not only foster the types of outcomes for schools environment but stimulate continuous professional development among teachers (Zhu, Chew and Spangler, 2005; Yeo, 2006; and Chew, 2007).

There has also been research that looks at the integration of teacher's prior experiences, self-awareness, emotional health and personal development with the effectiveness as teachers (Button, 2003), but little is researched and discussed how to foster the development of desirable qualities in teachers (Cruickshank, 2000). Nonetheless, it is argued that, transformational leadership principles applied to teacher development is one possibility for achieving the desirable qualities among teachers (Leithwood and Jantzi, 1999 and Sergiovanni, 2007). Thus, this study aims to investigate how transformational leadership practices can help to develop the personal qualities in teachers.

Qualities of Good Teachers

The question of what makes a good teacher has come again to the forefront of academic and political discussion in recent years (Cruickshank and Haefele, 2001; Sigford, 2006; Chew, 2007). It is therefore, timely as well as critical to identify the personal qualities of good teachers. Review and analysis suggested that teachers do function as leader in the classroom that is important to have the qualities in teachers especially those qualities and characteristics developed through transformational leadership (Button, 2003; Loy, 2003; Sigford, 2005; Brower and Balch, 2005).

For the first half century, teachers were evaluated on attributes deemed important by administrators and teacher educators, such as professional attitude, understanding of students, creativity, and control of class, planning, individualization and pupil participation (Cruickshank, 200). In the 1960, analytical skills were valued in teachers: the ability to methodically analyze components of their teaching and modify them if necessary. Emerging a bit later was the idea of the effective teacher: one whose students exhibited high achievement (Cruickshank, 1999). However, in the 21st century, teaching remains a relationship between a teacher and a roomful of personalities and good predictor of how well students will do in a particular teacher's class.

In addition, students' perceptions of their teacher's caring substantially associated with their evaluation of their teacher. This suggests that the collaborative and cooperative aspects of transformational leadership, such as embracing shared vision could help teachers to be more effective. So, what is transformational leadership?

Transformational Leadership

There are various conceptions towards transformational leadership. One of the common one put forth by Downtown is that transformational leadership is a leadership when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Downtown, 1973).

At the same time, Burns (1978) first introduced the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership in his treatment of political leadership, but this term is now used in organizational psychology as well. According to Burns, the differences between transformational and transactional leadership is what leaders and followers offer one another. Transforming leadership occurs when or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Their purposes, which might have started out as separate but related, as in the case of transactional leadership, become fused.

The heart of transformational leadership is the leader's desire and ability to raise the consciousness of others by appealing to powerful moral values and ideals. The leader is able to transform followers beyond the dishonorable emotions of jealousy, greed and fear to higher principles of liberty, justice and humanitarianism. As Burns (1983) would say, the followers are raised from their "everyday selves" to become "better selves." Transformational leaders influence followers by serving as a teacher, mentor and coach. They seek to

elevate and empower others to a higher level. Transformational leaders can be found within any organization and at any level in the organization. This is a leader that can influence superiors, peers or subordinates.

Bernard Bass (1990) expanded upon the earlier ideas of Burns with his own theory of transformational leadership. He defines this supervision in terms of the leader's motivational effect on followers. They feel loyalty, trust, admiration and respect toward the transformational leader. The followers are motivated to serve and achieve more than they originally were expected to. They are inspired to achieve *higher-order* needs and are made more aware of the organization's needs for their unique skills and talents. Today, it is acknowledged that there are *four* various types of transformational leadership behavior. Bass (1990) outlined four main components of transformational leadership. The four components are idealized influence; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

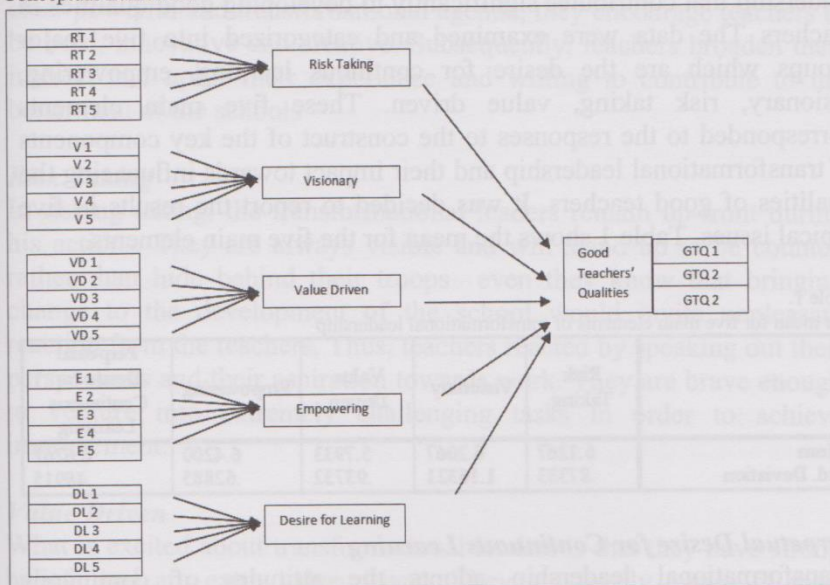
The end result of transformational leadership is empowering others to take more initiative in their work, inspiring them to be more committed and building their self-confidence. Of course, these activities can't take place in a vacuum. Transformational leaders nurture an organizational culture by giving attention to priorities and concerns, maturely reacting to crisis situations, role modeling, wise allocation of rewards, and by defining the criteria for success. The paper focuses on the elements of transformational leadership in influencing the qualities of good teachers.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative paradigm. Transformational leadership would be considered the independent variable and personal teacher qualities are the dependent variable. The five variables identified for the independent variable are risk taking, visionary, value driven, empowering and desire for learning. The criteria identified for teacher good qualities are good personalities and high professionalism. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

Figure 1.
Conceptual framework



Data Collection

A set of self developed questionnaire was established. The instrument was validated by one local referee and one international referee.

Basically, the instrument consists of 3 sections:

- i. Section A: Demographic of the respondents.
- ii. Section B: 5 components of good qualities teachers. There are 6 statements in each of the component with 7 likert-like scale.
- iii. Section C: 5 components of the best practices of transformational leadership with 7 likert-like scale.

30 respondents were identified for the pilot study. These respondents are teachers selected from a few states in Malaysia. These schools were nominated by the state Ministry of Education. These schools are suggested as the principals had reported to have made significant improvement over the past five years and the principals are considered to have practiced transformational leadership principles. Overall, all the respondents did not find the questionnaire to be disturbing and twenty-five minutes was sufficient to complete the questionnaire. The Cronbach's coefficient is 0.90.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was discovered that amongst best practices of transformational leadership that contributes significantly to developing good qualities in teachers. The data were examined and categorized into five major groups which are the desire for continuous learning, empowering, visionary, risk taking, value driven. These five main elements corresponded to the responses to the construct of the key components of transformational leadership and their impact towards influencing the qualities of good teachers. It was decided to report the results in five topical issues. Table 1 shows the mean for the five main elements.

Table 1.
The mean for five main elements of transformational leadership

	Risk Taking	Visionary	Value Driven	Empowering	Perpetual Desire for Continuous Learning
Mean	6.1267	6.2067	5.7933	6.4200	6.6267
Std. Deviation	.87333	1.16321	.93732	.62885	.48915

Perpetual Desire for Continuous Learning

Transformational leadership adopts the attitudes of continuous learning. They are effective facilitator of the learning of individuals, teams, organizations and the community. They consistently create processes and opportunities for the teachers to learn. Another core aspect of these transformational leaders is the desire to raise consciousness of others by appealing them to learn. They believe human beings and their capacity to learn to become greater person. Hence, teachers who are at the influence of this transformational leadership believe their capacity to learn is their greatest asset and address great challenges. Teachers express more satisfaction.

Empowering

Transformational leaders admitted the tasks and responsibilities are simply overwhelming amongst teachers. They manifested a high of confidence in empowering. By empowering, they observe the intended outcomes could be more regardful and strongly believe it is the right strategy to be employed once they have set the mind right amongst the teachers. Transformational leaders involve empowering the teachers to be innovative and creative, approaching old problems in new ways. Eventually, teachers get jobs done independent and foster a inter-dependent relationship.

Visionary

Transformational leaders to lead with clear vision and passion. It can further achieve great things and the felt the ways to get things done is by injecting enthusiasm and energy towards the teachers. They know exactly where to tell the teachers as where he is leading and sets out

targets. He articulates his goals and is aware of the current reality and he inspires the teachers to follow him. By being able to articulate a clear powerful and transformational agenda, they encourage teachers to be bold, innovative and creative. Subsequently, teachers broaden their interest and uplift their experience and willing to contribute to the betterment of the schools

Risk Taking

In risk taking, the transformational leaders remain up-front during his actions. They are always visible and will stand up to be counted rather than hide behind their troops even they know that bringing change to the development of the school would invite unpleasant reaction from the teachers. Thus, teachers reacted by speaking out their perspectives and their aspiration towards work. They are brave enough to venture into extremely challenging tasks in order to achieve improvement.

Value Driven

What is excited about transformational leaders is that they have strong beliefs and are extra value driven. They are totally aware of their mission and focus in on education the school. They believe the conducive environment is the place to develop wholesome individuals. In reaction to that support, teachers are brought to a higher level of motivation and morality. Significantly, teachers identified the increased values in performing their responsibilities.

4. CONCLUSION

The study provides a glimpse on the influence transformative leadership in developing qualities in teachers. It was found that transformational leadership had significant impact on some of the desirable qualities in teachers. It can be concluded, the main elements of transformational leadership which can enhance the development of qualities of good teachers are the desire for continuous learning, empowering, visionary, risk taking, and value driven. They desirable qualities which are connected to the transformational leadership allowed teachers to believe their capacity to learn is their greatest asset and could address great challenges. Besides that, teachers express more satisfaction. In relation to transformational leaders who are visionary lead teachers to get jobs done independent and foster a inter-dependent relationship. Through embracing empowering, the leaders influence the teachers to be brave to venture into extremely challenging tasks in order to achieve improvement. By having extra value attitude amongst the transformational leaders, teachers are brought to a higher level of motivation and morality. Significantly, teachers identified the increased values in performing their responsibilities

This study provided valuable information for stakeholders to link educational policy with practical educational development. For example, the elements of transformational leadership identified through this research simply are good pointers for policy makers and educators from varying philosophical framework to develop strategies into developing qualities of good teachers.

However, the study raises a number of interesting research question for future research. For instance, what assumptions do we have about the readiness of our teachers towards transformative leadership? Did the influence or transformation by transformative leadership within the community hold and people had continued to have changed in appreciating transformative leadership. Many tasks remain; alternative epistemological truths are required to describe the process to educators.

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