UNLEASHING THE POWER OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: REVOLUTIONIZING THE NURSING PROFESSION IN PAKISTAN

By

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ABSTRACT

This paper supports Transformational Leadership (TL) and will present arguments regarding its importance in today's rapidly evolving world. The necessity for TL will be explored with support from both global and local literature. Additionally, this paper will examine the connection between TL and its significance in nursing, with a particular focus on the Pakistani context. Initially, the paper will provide a general overview of TL and its importance. It will then delve into specific examples and case studies that highlight the effectiveness of TL in various settings. By integrating empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives, the paper aims to demonstrate how TL fosters innovation, enhances organizational performance, and improves team dynamics. The discussion will also address the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing TL in the healthcare sector, particularly in Pakistan, where the need for strong leadership is critical to addressing the evolving demands of the healthcare system. Finally, recommendations will be offered for advancing TL practices within the nursing profession to better meet contemporary challenges and drive positive outcomes.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership in Nursing, Nursing Leadership Development, Healthcare Leadership Pakistan, Innovative Nursing Practices, Nursing Profession Reform, Leadership Strategies in Healthcare, Nursing Workforce Empowerment, Change Management in Nursing.

INTRODUCTION

Transformational Leadership (TL) is a leadership style through which leaders create new ways and ideas to help the organization grow prosperously (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). This style fosters commitment, enthusiasm, and loyalty among staff and managers, enabling them to drive essential changes in the organization's fundamentals and basis. The aim is to enhance essential competencies, explore novel directions, and achieve higher performance peaks (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016).

The term "Transformational Leadership" refers to the ability to transform individuals or entire groups. This innovative leadership style can turn followers into leaders by making positive changes in their lives. TL sets an example for others to follow (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018). Leaders employing this style use relationship-building, motivation, and empathy to engage their followers. They are known for their courageous and self-reliant behavior, often putting others' needs before their own.

Burns (1978) introduced the concept of "Transformational Leadership Theory". It was later developed by (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009). They divided the TL theory into four components: "charismatic role modeling, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation." By using
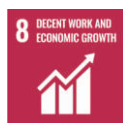
charisma, the leader inspires admiration, respect, and loyalty, while emphasizing the importance of a shared sense of mission (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009).

Transformational leaders refer to the concept that one must transcend personal self-interests to work with groups or followers to recognize and achieve desirable changes. This involves projecting an image that guides these changes through inspiration and motivation, and then translating those changes into action in collaboration with the group's dedicated followers (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018). The Full Range Leadership Model is incomplete without this aspect. Transformational Leadership (TL) occurs when a leader's actions impact and inspire those around them to exceed their own expectations and achieve what they previously thought was possible. TL motivates individuals to accomplish unexpected outcomes. This type of leadership empowers people to manage their work and make their own decisions after receiving training. There are four "I"s that transformational leaders focus on, as shown in Figure 1.

These actions are categorized into inspiring initiative, idealistic impact, intellectual stimulus, and personal courtesy. Transformational Leadership (TL) has ways to improve job satisfaction, employee morale, and follower productivity levels. Another characteristic of this leadership style is understanding and appreciating strengths and weaknesses.
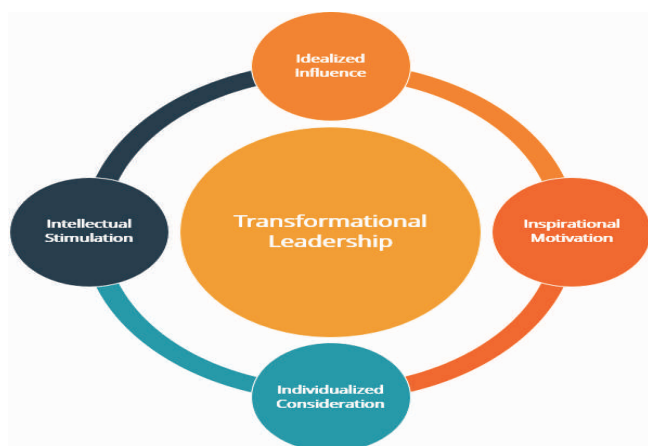

Figure 1. The 4 I's of Transformative Leadership

1. Literature Review

Chughtai et al. (2023) explain the role of adaptive leadership in learning organizations and its impact on boosting organizational innovations through change self-efficacy. This study examines how learning organizations influence organizational innovations, focusing on change self-efficacy as a mediator and adaptive leadership as a moderator. Data from employees in the pharmaceutical industry were analyzed using SPSS, AMOS, Smart-PLS, and PROCESS macro. The results show that learning organizations positively impact innovations, with change self-efficacy partially mediating this relationship. Additionally, adaptive leadership enhances the effects of learning organizations on both change self-efficacy and organizational innovations. The findings underscore the importance of adaptive leadership and change self-efficacy in fostering organizational innovations within learning organizations.

Tewes (2021) describes a bold future for human resources development in healthcare. To thrive in the rapidly growing healthcare sector, staff development must emphasize both technical skills and soft skills, particularly communication and emotional intelligence. The rise of digitization will generate vast amounts of data, leading to the automation of some tasks and the creation of new ones. Effective communication and collaboration between nursing and medical professionals are crucial, as many treatment errors stem from gaps in these areas. As technology handles more technical tasks, the human elements of emotional intelligence and crisis management will become increasingly vital in leadership roles.

Saleem et al. (2023) explicate a multilevel study of authentic leadership, collective efficacy, and team performance and commitment. Recent concerns about transparency and corruption have highlighted the need for fairer leadership. Over the past decade, authentic leadership marked by transparency and fairness has gained attention. This study shifts focus from individual outcomes to team dynamics, using a multilevel model to explore how authentic leadership affects team performance and commitment. Data from 60

manufacturing teams in Pakistan were analyzed through multilevel factor analysis and structural equation modeling. Results supported the hypothesis, revealing both direct and indirect effects of authentic leadership on team performance and commitment. The study discusses theoretical and practical implications.

2. Importance of TL

Nowadays, the world is advancing rapidly, and everyone is in a rush to achieve more. Transformational Leadership (TL) is beneficial when things are not going smoothly; it helps leaders navigate turbulence more effectively with enhanced experiences. This leadership style is comparatively superior to others (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016).

Given that this transition requires the development of new systems and the institutionalization of innovative ideas, the importance of leadership in the change management process has been highlighted. It is clear that a manager's behavior and leadership style significantly impact staff members' needs and perceptions. Organizational change responses, attitudes, and members' efforts to decide whether to support or resist changes can profoundly affect a leader's style, serving as an example of long-term behavior (Tsai, 2011). Figure 2 illustrates that TL leads to performance beyond expectations.

3. TL Need in the Nursing Profession

Examining day-by-day innovations in the field of nursing globally is significant. Transformational Leadership (TL)

Figure 2. TL Leads to Performance Beyond Expectations

can advance this noble profession. In contrast, there is a substantial gap in the public sector of Pakistan, where many public hospitals do not implement TL. As a result, many nurses become exhausted over time and leave their organizations.

This paper addresses this issue by exploring TL's positionality within organizations. Implementing TL can aid in nurse retention and yield outcomes beyond expectations. Darby Faubion, in the book titled 'How to Apply TL in Nursing?' highlights the importance of TL in nursing. It states, "TL in nursing is a management style that motivates nurses to take ownership of their roles and perform beyond minimum expectations. This leadership style inspires team members by appealing to their desire to demonstrate higher moral values and integrity in practice" (Faubion, 2023). Faubion suggests that TL can significantly enhance professional bonding and lead to positive outcomes for both patients and professionals. Moreover, it explored that the TL has five advantages in the nursing profession these are (Faubion, 2023):

- This type of leadership style enhances job satisfaction. The rationale was the prosperous environment.

- This also leads to the high morale of the employees in an organization; according to the American Heart Association, employees with low confidence are prone to Heart and psychological diseases.

- TL has an impact on positive patient outcomes and also has a significant effect on patient safety. The rationale behind this was the positive engagement of employees in an organization. TL guides the employees so that they provide quality care to clients, ultimately leading to the best client outcomes with optimistic long-term health benefits.

- TL produces an environment for active learning and creativity. Nurse leaders who adopt this leadership style always do screening and look for employees and find out who needs more development in the field. They expose their employees to new challenges by creating new opportunities for progress and improvement.

- TL nurse leaders' support fetches inspiration and eagerness to the workstation.

In contrast, most organizations in Pakistan, particularly public organizations and hospitals, lack this type of leadership style in their leaders, which negatively impacts the organization and leads to burnout among staff nurses and many healthcare workers. A cross-sectional study conducted in Lahore in 2016, which recruited 200 nurses to examine the impact of Transformational Leadership (TL) on their self-esteem, found that this leadership style significantly affects nurses' self-esteem and should be adopted by all nursing leaders to enhance it. However, many leaders still lack this style, which undermines nurses' self-esteem (Afzal et al., 2016).

As a nurse with experience in various public organizations, the researcher has observed that the absence of TL contributes to nurse burnout and reduces retention rates within organizations. This is why many nurses leave their jobs to work abroad, as a lack of self-esteem can adversely affect their personal lives.

4. Challenges in the Way of TL in Nursing: A Pakistani Context (Pressing issue)

Nursing carries significant demands worldwide, leading to a high need for skilled and professional nurses in foreign countries. Consequently, these countries offer better opportunities, attracting nurses from developing nations, including Pakistan. While Pakistan produces highly trained nurses, many express dissatisfaction with their jobs due to a negative nursing image, lack of respect, inadequate salary packages, and poor working conditions. Additionally, the shortage of nurses in Pakistan has resulted in increased fatigue and burnout among them.

In Pakistan, the healthcare system faces numerous challenges, including inadequate resources, limited access to quality healthcare services, and a shortage of skilled healthcare professionals. Within this context, the role of nursing leaders becomes crucial in driving positive change and ensuring the delivery of high-quality patient care. However, the traditional hierarchical leadership approach prevalent in many healthcare settings in Pakistan often inhibits innovation, collaboration, and empowerment among nursing staff. The lack of Transformational Leadership (TL) practices can result in a demotivated and disengaged workforce, leading to decreased productivity, increased turnover rates, and compromised patient outcomes.

Pakistan's nursing leaders must embrace TL principles to address these challenges effectively. Adopting TL can inspire and motivate their teams to strive for excellence, encourage creativity and critical thinking, and foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Additionally, TL can promote a sense of ownership and accountability among nurses, empowering them to take initiative, make informed decisions, and contribute to organizational change. This is particularly important in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, where nurses must adapt to new technologies, evidence-based practices, and complex patient needs.

The shortage of nurses is a prevalent issue faced by countries worldwide, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated this challenge due to the increased demand for healthcare services. Pakistan, like many other countries, struggled with the impact of the pandemic, resulting in a surge in demand for nurses in both the public and private sectors. Notably, in 2020 and 2021, Qatar and Kuwait witnessed a significant rise in their need for nurses, leading to an escalating trend of nurses migrating from Pakistan and other parts of the world to these countries (Afzal, 2015).

One of the main factors contributing to the challenges faced by nurses in Pakistan's healthcare sector is the lack of transformational leadership (TL). The absence of transformational leaders in nursing administration and management roles exacerbates the strained work environment, driving many nurses to seek opportunities abroad. TL is crucial for inspiring and motivating nurses to excel in their profession. However, the prevailing leadership styles in many healthcare organizations in Pakistan often lean towards authoritarian or transactional approaches rather than embracing transformational methods. This results in a lack of visionary leadership, limited empowerment of nurses, and minimal emphasis on their professional growth and development. Without

transformational leaders who can effectively communicate a compelling vision, create a positive work culture, and empower nurses to reach their full potential, nurses may experience a lack of motivation and engagement. They may feel disconnected from the organization's larger goals and undervalued in their contributions. This lack of inspiration and empowerment reduces job satisfaction and hampers the work environment (Afzal, 2015).

To address these challenges, promoting and developing TL within Pakistan's nursing profession is imperative. This can be achieved through leadership development programs, mentorship initiatives, and fostering a culture that values and nurtures TL qualities. By cultivating transformational leaders, healthcare organizations can empower nurses, improve their job satisfaction, enhance the work environment, and ultimately elevate the quality of patient care.

5. Ethics in TL

Ethical considerations play a significant role in this leadership style. Leaders must be aware of ethical principles and morals, as their decisions should reflect ethical considerations. According to a study conducted in Pakistan in 2016, Transformational Leadership (TL) significantly impacts ethical behavior among employees in the Pakistani banking sector. The study also highlighted the importance of leaders' ethical behavior as a critical factor in promoting ethical behavior among workers (Butt et al., 2016). These findings are reliable, with previous research suggesting that transformational leaders serve as ethical role models for their followers (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999).

Similarly, another study by Abolnasser and colleagues examined the relationship between ethical leadership and TL in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that ethical leadership indeed predicts TL, with this relationship being facilitated by leaders' sense of obligation and ability to adapt to change. These findings suggest that ethical considerations are especially important in times of crisis and that ethics and TL are closely related (Abolnasser et al., 2023).

Moreover, another study revealed the correlation between TL, ethical leadership, and organizational commitment among employees in the Chinese healthcare sector. The study found that both TL and ethical leadership impact employees' organizational commitment. It also revealed that ethical leadership enhances the relationship between TL and organizational commitment. The results indicated that ethical considerations are crucial for maintaining ethical behavior and fostering organizational commitment among staff (Top et al., 2015).

6. Change Management and Team Dynamics through TL

Leading organizational change through Transformational Leadership (TL) can be puzzling, and leaders must navigate numerous hindrances to ensure effective change. Some challenges of leading organizational change through TL include resistance to change, lack of buy-in from employees, inadequate planning, and insufficient resources (Bagga et al., 2023). To address these challenges, leaders can use specific strategies to implement transformation through TL effectively. One effective strategy is to involve employees in the change process. By including employees in decision-making and seeking their input, leaders can foster trust and commitment among workers, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful change implementation (Li et al., 2019).

Moreover, leaders can adopt another strategy: communicating the rationale behind the change. Leaders must clearly explain why the change is necessary, what benefits it will bring, and how it aligns with the organization's mission and values. Clear and frequent communication helps build trust and understanding among employees and nurtures a sense of shared purpose and commitment (Van der Voet, 2014).

Leaders can also inspire and motivate staff members during organizational transformations through praise and appreciation. Acknowledging and rewarding employees for their efforts and contributions strengthens their sense of ownership and commitment to the change, motivating them to work towards the change initiative's objectives (Li

et al., 2019). Additionally, leaders must allocate sufficient resources for the change endeavor. Ensuring that adequate time, money, and personnel are available is crucial for properly implementing the change (Bagga et al., 2023).

Furthermore, a study conducted in Pakistan, which collected data from 357 faculty members, examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on job stress among healthcare providers and how transformational leadership could mitigate this stress and lead to Innovative Work Behavior (IWB). The study results revealed a positive influence of TL and knowledge sharing (KNS) on creative work behavior (Rafique et al., 2022).

7. TL in Innovation and Creativity

Organizational innovation depends on several factors, but leadership style is the most important one (Jung et al., 2003). A study found that the Transformational Leadership (TL) style is closely linked to organizational innovation. They also found that TL is significant in terms of empowerment (Jung et al., 2003). This study supports the TL style, when this style is present among the leaders of an organization, employees will grow continuously, leading to the empowerment of both employees and the organization.

Furthermore, another study conducted in 2018 compared two leadership styles transformational and authentic leadership in relation to process and product innovation in higher education institutions in Jordan. The results showed that TL and knowledge sharing have a positive influence on innovation within these institutions. In contrast, authentic leadership did not demonstrate any substantial impact on innovation in the higher education sector in a non-Western country like Jordan. Additionally, knowledge-sharing norms significantly constrained the effect of TL but exhibited no moderating effect on the outcomes of authentic leadership (Elrehail et al., 2018).

The literature indicates that TL has a positive impact on organizational innovation and creativity. This leadership style helps leaders and employees overcome obstacles. Organizations with TL can experience continual growth and harmony, as it involves both leaders and staff collaborating on future decisions.

8. Employee engagement and retention (TL in Nursing Profession)

Setting high standards, offering specialized assistance, and establishing a unified purpose and vision are all critical components of the leadership style known as TL, which focuses on inspiring and encouraging team members to reach their maximum potential. Leaders should prioritize staff development and foster a positive work environment to enhance employee engagement and retention through this leadership style.

Another strategy for increasing employee engagement and retention is fostering a favorable work environment. According to a study published in the Journal of Healthcare Management (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021), employee engagement is positively correlated with a supportive work environment that includes effective communication, recognition and awards, and a sense of belonging. A systematic review indicated that a supportive workplace, which encourages teamwork and collaboration, is positively associated with nurses' job satisfaction. This study was published in the Journal of Nursing Management (Specchia et al., 2021).

Executives should also communicate a clear vision and purpose for the organization to boost staff engagement and retention (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). A study published in the Journal of Healthcare Management found that employees who perceived their leaders as transformational and who effectively communicated a clear vision were more engaged and dedicated to their organizations. Similarly, research in the Journal of Nursing Management revealed that nurses who understood the vision and values of their organization were more satisfied in their professions and less likely to quit (Jankelová & Joniaková, 2021).

9. Discussion

Transformational Leadership (TL) is pivotal for fostering growth and innovation within organizations, as it emphasizes inspiring and empowering employees to surpass their own expectations and achieve unprecedented outcomes (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016). Unlike transactional leadership styles that focus on routine

tasks and performance metrics, TL motivates employees through a vision that aligns with their values, fostering a culture of commitment, enthusiasm, and loyalty (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018). The effectiveness of TL is grounded in its core components: charismatic role modeling, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation (Avolio & Bass, 1995). These elements collectively contribute to a dynamic work environment where employees are encouraged to think creatively, challenge the status quo, and engage deeply with their roles. In the nursing profession, TL is particularly impactful, as it can enhance job satisfaction, morale, and retention by creating an environment that values professional growth and development (Faubion, 2023). Despite its benefits, the lack of TL in some contexts, such as in certain Pakistani public hospitals, leads to issues like burnout and high turnover rates (Afzal et al., 2016). This underscores the importance of adopting TL practices to improve organizational outcomes and employee well-being, highlighting a pressing need for transformational leaders who can drive positive change and inspire their teams amidst evolving challenges (Bagga et al., 2023; Chanana & Sangeeta, 2021).

Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that transformational leadership (TL) positively impacts employees. Organizations adopting the TL style experience reduced conflict among employees and managers. TL also fosters innovation and creativity, contributing to overall growth. Additionally, TL reduces employee stress and improves retention. The paper further compares TL with other leadership styles, showing that TL is comparatively superior.

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