A Literature Review: Is Transformational Leadership Elitist and Antidemocratic?

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Abstract - In this study we aim to explore and determine whether transformational leadership is elitist and anti-democratic. In order to see the link with transformational leadership, we organize a literature review to locate relevant literature and extract knowledge about elitism and democratic leadership. Researcher found transformational leadership is not elitist and anti-democratic. It's empowering the employee to encouraging inspiration, idealized power, intellectual stimulation and individual judgment. It engages workers through participatory, support for new ideas and a substantial degree of flexibility and autonomy for be pro-active and take risks, also rely heavily on communication and relationships. This research only to find out whether transformational leadership is indeed elitist and anti-democratic based on a literature review and for empirical evidence further study is needed. The relation between transformational leadership and member responses to organizational change has been empirically validated by numerous studies.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, elitism leadership, democratic leadership, organization change

A. Introduction

By default, leadership is a multi-level circumstance between an individual leader and individual followers, followers' groups, and groups of followers' groups (Su, Wang & Chen, 2020). The style of leadership is regarded as an important factor in organizational change. Indeed, a leader is a person who by setting specific goals and developing a work environment that promotes the acceptance of change, can influence the implementation, acceptance and adoption of new ideas (Harb & Sidani, 2019). Managing an organization is now a very complex activity, because companies work in a shifting, the very unpredictable setting. The

business environment today requires successful leadership where leaders have a clear understanding of the complexities in that setting, and they need to recognize and meet the needs of organizational stakeholders in order to be empowered to achieve organizational objectives (Alsayyed, Suifan, Sweis & Kilani, 2020).

Researchers believe that transformational leadership, with a mediating influence from citizens' groups, has a positive effect on employee efficiency. The style of transformational leadership is a partnership founded on confidence, appreciation and reverence between leaders and followers. Transformational leaders are said to be leaders who pursue teamwork, communal respect, cooperation, and reference in order to achieve individual and organizational goals. In relation to inspirational and motivational actions towards followers, the origins of this leadership style can be tracked deep into ethical and righteous values (Khan, Anjam, Abu Faiz, Khan & Khan, 2020).

In recent years, the study of transformational leadership has attracted interest. Leaders have the potential to optimize individual orientation to achieve their organizational goals, not necessarily for their own needs, according to transformational leadership. It is recommended that leaders with transformational leadership have a positive attitude to the everyday problems that exist in their organizations. Indeed, the mentality that difficult conditions and even challenges can become opportunities can both be preserved and spread (Begum, Xia, Mehmood, Iftikhar & Li, 2020). However, Critics view transformational leadership as elitist and anti-democratic (Bass & Riggio, 2014). This raises the question, is it true that transformational leadership is elitist and anti-democratic? If this is true, can transformational leadership support organizational change with respect to environmental conditions? If transformational leadership is not elitist and anti-democratic, can transformational leadership support organizational change by taking into account the conditions of the surrounding environment? We aim to explore and determine whether transformational leadership is elitist and anti-democratic.

B. Literature Review

1) Organizational change

Change is usually a part of the world of industry. Thus, in order to boost their competitiveness and ensure their sustainability in markets that have become highly competitive, companies must embark on a course of transformation. The ability of a company to adjust and adapt to its climate has become increasingly necessary for its capacity to expand

in a sustainable manner. A key management function can then be considered to be the effective implementation of organizational change. The organizational transition relates to the organization's shift from its present state to the desired future state (Harb & Sidani, 2019; Olafsen, Nilsen, Smedsrud & Kamaric, 2020).

Organizational change refers to the process by which the beliefs and attitudes of organizational members are changed to support change. Current organizations and future organizations find themselves in changing situations; consequently, several factors are as important as employees' attitudes to change events (Olafsen et al., 2020).

2) Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership has been at the center of the leadership literature for nearly three decades. It is recognized as a leadership style that increases the awareness of organizational members of the need to achieve common goals. Transformational leaders would inspire their workers across four dimensions to go beyond their personal interests in working for the organization's common good: encouraging inspiration, idealized power, intellectual stimulation and individual judgment (Harb & Sidani, 2019). Intellectual stimulation leaders inspire followers to be imaginative and inventive in coping with old issues in new ways. To approach of follower as an individual and to take into account their individual needs, desires, and skills, leaders display individual concern. Individualized leaders help followers create their own abilities and spend time leading followers and educating them (Busari, Khan, Abdullah & Mughal, 2019).

In several respects, transformative leadership is an extension of transactional leadership, can be direct or participatory, and is not one or a proposal, and has something in common with charismatic leadership, but charisma is only a part of transformative leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2014).

3) Elitism leadership

From industry to politics, the media and even ethnic groups, faith, and education, there are many forms of elites. The "social superiority" of a single person or community is what all these types of elites have in common, as suggested by the lexical concept of "elite." However, "elitism" has a more precise definition, namely, "leadership or rule by an elite." By combining these definitions, "elitism" can be defined as a form of leadership in which leaders are irregular within any type of organization. Superiority, whether provided by members of

an association to leaders or merely presumed by the leaders themselves, is therefore a distinctive characteristic of elitist leadership (Michaud, 2019).

4) Democratic leadership

The notion of democratic leadership as a team-oriented normative process, in which professional team members take a substantive role in the decision-making process related to the vision, and initiatives of the organization designed to achieve that vision which emphasizes collaboration, and involvement of other members within a group (Moneva & Pedrano, 2019; Liggett, 2020). It is emphasized that among other leadership types, democratic leadership was more effective for group success, because a group's objectives are not focused on the leader himself, but rather accomplished by the group as a whole (Moneva & Pedrano, 2019).

Researchers define a democratic leadership culture as the divided achievement of skillful goals through sustained voice commitment among professionals as a faction, which is naturally organized into formal managerial settings (Liggett, 2020) and democratic leaders use an egalitarian approach (Caillier, 2020). There are four core principles of the central phenomenon of democratic leadership, namely:(1) interdependence between partnership teams;(2) teamwork as a means of creating a culture that preserves mutual dependence;(3) trust in the building' positive relationships between practitioners, formal leaders and groups; and (4) a widespread supportive atmosphere with a common emphasis on goals aimed at improving (Liggett, 2020). Democratic leadership is predicted to firmly affect performance valuations, because it is closely related to individuals' conceptions of leaders or their prototypes of leaders (Caillier, 2020).

C. Method

The first step is to define the subject, research questions and keywords that we will use in this study. Transformational leadership has been genuine interest among researchers as the key topic and it is very easy to find recent articles using Google scholar. Keywords used (1) elitism leadership, (2) democratic leadership, (3) relation transformational leadership and organization change, and (4) organization change. Except that all non-English articles are not used, all articles applicable to our study question are used. To get the latest study findings, all articles must be written from 2019 onwards.

In order to see the link with transformational leadership, we continue to organize a literature review to locate relevant literature and extract knowledge about elitism and democratic leadership.

D. Result and Discussion

1) Is transformational leadership elitist?

In general leadership philosophies can be understood as leaning towards the idealist or realist viewpoint, and elitism can be exposed as a characteristic of idealism of leadership (Michaud, 2019). In elitism, people are seen as incapable of self-regulation for various reasons that depend on the context: they are perceived as less educated, morally weak, or too emotional. For this or other reasons, it is argued that they should only have passive democratic rights, limiting active government to the elite (Schoor, 2019).

When we look into transformational leadership, which inspires their workers in four dimensions to go beyond their personal interests in working for the common good of the organization: fostering inspiration, idealized power, intellectual stimulation and individual judgment (Harb & Sidani, 2019), it is hard to believe that this type of leaders will feel more idealist from their subordinate. On the other hand, they will more emphasize in realism behavior, where the ability to lead can be taught, and, thus, acquired (Michaud, 2019). With these arguments, researchers believe transformational leadership is not elitist.

2) Is transformational leadership anti-democratic?

Although democratic leadership concentrates on communication and commitment, transformative leadership explores construct relationship ties in both leaders and followers that increase motivation and morality. Transformational leadership confides on particular charisma, intellectual stimulation and individualized deliberation of the needs of followers to develop that person to their greatest possible level of capacity (Wilson, 2020).

In 1998, Lewin observed that workers under a democratic leadership style were less productive than autocratic leadership styles, however, the quality of their work was observed to be more substantial because they were offered more opportunities for contribution and creativity under the leader's guidance. It is a form of leadership consulting that integrates into its decisions, the ideas and innovation of its employees. Therefore, the degree of correspondence between employer and employee and the flow of communication is strong. These two forms not only identify and direct efforts toward the achievement of goals, but also

engage workers through participatory and transformational leadership actions that allow for changes in work formats, recognition of effort, support for new ideas and a substantial degree of flexibility and autonomy for be pro-active and take risks (Ekiyor & Dapper, 2019).

Although each focus differs, democratic and transformative leadership relies heavily on relationships and communication. Communication is "a skill that is fundamental to successful leadership," and is an impressive way of making individual feel valued. Good communicators must share meanings, show their vision, give praise and compliments and remain reachable. Furthermore, it is important that contact between leadership and employees remains coherent, transparent and two-way. A leader must not only consider communication strategies and priorities, but also the stage of the relationship they have with their followers. As the relationship evolves, the forms of contact and significant aspects of communication can differ (Wilson, 2020).

Although there is no empirical evidence that transformational leadership is democratic, researchers conclude that transformational leadership is not anti-democratic. In2020, Wilson found that leaders highlight the most mixed democratic and transformative concerns, including engagement in the decision-making, partnership building, regular and truthful contact, equality, and environmental awareness. It indicates that leaders should put considerable emphasis on democratic methods of engagement while achieving transformational leadership performance. For one style to collaborate with another means no objections from the other side. Furthermore, in the context of a democratic country, we find that future leaders should consciously try to instill a transformational leadership style to fulfill their constitutional goals and responsibilities in delivering democratic dividends to key constituents (private citizens and corporations) and function as agents of change, necessary for state transformation (Ejo-Orusa & Egobueze, 2020).

3) Transformational leadership relation to organization change

In order to be sustainable, potential companies should reflect on their willingness to adapt, and this requires more exposure to sustainability as an organizational issue (Olafsen et. al., 2020). Leadership is a process which makes it possible for management to be proactive in shaping its own future rather than reactive. A focused organizational leader provides and develops his organization with visionary leadership. He knows the complex essence of the market world and appreciates it. Instead of only recognizing and reacting to change, predicting or even creating change, He formulates sensitive options for changes in the market

environment through feasible strategies focused on sustainable competitive advantages (Dim & Nzube, 2020).

The relation between transformational leadership and member responses to organizational change has been empirically validated by numerous studies. Using meta-analysis, transformational leadership showed;(1) a favorable partnership with determination to change, openness to change and ability to change;(2) a negative connection with resistance to change and the cynicism of change;(3) a marginal correlation with change support. Using Bass and Avolio's scale, transformational leadership demonstrated a firmer interaction with refusal to change. Moderation studies found that transformational leadership displayed a greater association with openness to change and skepticism regarding change in cross-sectional (vs. Longitudinal designs). Transformational leadership displayed a vigorous association with dedication to change, openness to change, and support for change in low-level (vs. high-level) articles. Transformational leadership has shown a firmer association with promise to change and resistance to change in the Eastern (vs. Western) culture sense. The findings of Peng, Li, Wang & Lin (2020) encourage the role of transformative leadership in organizational change, and stress the importance of integrating the theory of transformative leadership into the study of reactions to change in order to better recognize how leaders promote or obstruct organizational change.

E. Conclusion

The questions and complexities of current processes are stressed by transformational leaders, which means that the leader acts as a change-oriented role model. Employees incline more likely to consider change strategies and develop psychological relationships with organizational change by witnessing and researching the change-oriented principles and attitudes of transformational leaders (Peng et al., 2020).

Transformational leadership is not elitist and anti-democratic. It's empowering the employee to encouraging inspiration, idealized power, intellectual stimulation and individual judgment (Harb & Sidani, 2019). Both with democratic leadership style, transformational leadership style engages workers through participatory, support for new ideas and a substantial degree of flexibility and autonomy for be pro-active and take risks (Ekiyor & Dapper, 2019), as they rely heavily on communication and relationships (Wilson, 2020). Bass and Riggio also stated that transformational leadership can be directive in addition to being participatory.

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