TRUST AND VALUES IN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The foremost intention of this case study is to provide an educational material to instructors and students in regard a specific leadership style, transformational leadership. This case study provides a real workplace demonstration of how transformational styles constructs can be employed. The difficulty level of this case study is appropriate for a first year graduate level. The case requires four hours of outside preparation by students and two hours of a virtual or an on-site class. Transformational leadership is a key tenet of modern business leadership, but many leaders still struggle to employ it. To better understand how transformational leadership is used in practice, a single case study was carried out to investigate the transformational leadership strategies used by a business leader with extensive experience successfully implementing transformational leadership. A single, semi-structured interview was conducted with this leader. Coding and thematic analysis yielded eight key themes: (a) Training, (b) decision involvement, (c) verbal motivation, (d) team empowerment, (e) facing difficulties, (f) diligence, (g) frequent meetings, and (h) written appreciation. These eight themes broadly align with the literature and transformational leadership theory, but also offer some new insights.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Trust, Values, Leadership, Employee satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Organizational leadership is a difficult task, and many leaders fall short of what is required. Failure as a leader has dire consequences, such as high employee turnover, low quality service due to the lack of expertise, tarnished organizational image, and authoritative leadership that ends up having more serious problems with the organization (Xu, Jiang, Hong, & Roche, 2021). One strategy to address these problems is the use of the transformational leadership style. The transformational theory is built to build values and trust in individuals by employing the constructs of the theory; however, the implementation of the constructs can be challenging for many leaders (Bass, 1990). Research has demonstrated the difficulty in creating effective leadership development programs (Lacerenza, Reyes, Marlow, Joseph, & Salas, 2017) among other barriers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the methods used to implement the constructs of the transformational leadership in order to build employee values and trust toward the leadership. These data may help better understand how to effectively implement transformational leadership efforts in the business context.

To address this research purpose, the present study was conducted using a qualitative single case study design to answer a single, overarching research question, namely: How can a leader build trust and values in individuals at a real workplace using the constructs of the transformational leadership? To answer this research question, the single case used was a highly experienced transformational leader, (X), with 17 years of experience leading in the retail sector. Not every leader can effectively apply transformational leadership to inspire followers; therefore, understanding the experiences of those who can is crucial (Hentschel, Braun, Peus, & Frey, 2018). X's experience included supervising and leading more than 50 employees in his

organization. According to (X), being a transformational leader improves the whole business image by reducing employee turnover, increasing productivity, increasing trust toward leadership, building more values, and retaining expertise.

BACKGROUND

Transformational Leadership Theory

The theory of transformational leadership has roots in Burns' (1978) work, but its full development is attributed to Bass (1990). Bass sought to develop the theory of transformational leadership primarily through a review of the leadership styles used by the most charismatic and well-regarded United States presidents. By examining the characteristics that these highly effective leaders shared, Bass sought to develop a broader theory of what it means to be a successful charismatic leader. In his original formulation of transformational leadership, Bass developed the notion expressly in contrast with transactional leadership. A transactional leader leads primarily through, as the name implies, exchanges or transactions with followers (Avolio & Bass, 2001). For example, effective employees might be given a bonus, while employees who do poorly may be docked pay.

In contrast, the transformational leader seeks to motivate followers through a personal relationship, one which is transformative for the follower (Bass, 1990). In this regard, rather than working with incentives, transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers. In the standard formulation of transformational leadership, there are four dimensions: (a) Idealized Influence, (b) Inspirational Motivation, (c) Individualized Consideration, and (d)Intellectual Stimulation. These for dimensions represent the four ways in which transformational leaders interact with and transform their followers. The first dimension, idealized influence, refers to the idea that a transformational leader leads by example. Rather than simply telling followers what to do, a leader who draws on a transformational leadership style demonstrates what is expected through his or her own example (Bass, 1990). This may include taking a personal hand in the work alongside followers. Even where it does not, idealized influence reflects modeling; for example, an executive who is not involved in the day-to-day running of the firm can still model desired behavior through actions such as careful attention to ethics, carefully reviewing work, or making personal sacrifices for the sake of firm success (Koveshnikov & Ehrnrooth, 2018).

The second dimension of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation, is the aspect of transformational leadership with the strongest ties to charisma. Inspirational motivation refers to the ways in which transformational leaders motivate their followers through inspiration rather than incentives (Shafi, Lei, Song, & Sarker, 2020). This can include praise for success, offering support to followers who are struggling, and creating inspirational goals for the organization. Inspirational motivation is the aspect of transformational leadership that differs most pointedly from a transactional leadership style, given transactional leaders' focus on incentives and sanctions.

The third dimension of transformational leadership, individualized attention, reflects the extent to which transformational leaders forge personalized relationships with their followers. Individualized attention is an important dimension of transformational leadership in the sense that the personal, individual-level relationships forged by transformational leaders can undergird other important leadership strategies (Bass, 1990). Individualized attention often takes the form of one-on-one interaction in which a transformational leader learns about each specific follower. In addition to fostering a stronger relationship, individualized attention allows the

transformational leader to familiarize him- or herself with each follower's strengths, weaknesses, and specific skills (Koveshnikov & Ehrnrooth, 2018). Such knowledge is helpful in leveraging followers' abilities within the organization.

The fourth dimension of transformational leadership, intellectual stimulation, addresses the extent to which transformational leaders seek to engage their followers. Employees who are engaged in and meaningfully challenged by their work tend to be much less likely to leave and be more committed to their work (Bass, 1990). Transformational leaders take care to offer followers engaging tasks at an appropriate difficulty level, ensuring that followers are intellectually stimulated by their work and do not grow bored (Teymournejad & Elghaei,2017). Achieving intellectual stimulation requires a strong familiar with both the work being done and with the employees' relative skill levels. In this regard, providing intellectual stimulation aligns strongly with individualized attention.

Leadership Style

Transformational leadership is one of several leadership styles that characterize the ways in which leaders choose to lead. The full-range model of leadership styles, for example (Avolio & Bass, 2001), posits that leaders exist on a spectrum of leadership styles from very active transformational leaders to very passive laissez-faire leaders. The concept of a leadership style has become ubiquitous in the recent literature on leadership as scholars have sought an appropriate way to understand the differences between different leaders (Gandolfi & Stone,2018). By characterizing different approaches to leadership based on shared characteristics, it has been possible to not only classify existing leaders' approach to leading, but also to determine which style(s) of leadership are effective and should be taught to aspiring leaders.

There are many models of leadership style in the literature beyond the full range model. One of the most commonly cited styles of leadership is, for example, servant leadership, in which leaders lead by supporting followers (Gandolfi & Stone,2018). Other leadership styles that have seen attention in the literature include ethical leadership (Schwepker & Dimitriou, 2021) and educational leadership (Sfakianaki, Matsiori, Giannias, & Sevdali, 2018). Transformational leadership, however, is arguably the most influential and desirable style of leadership, based on findings in the literature.

Benefits of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has been widely demonstrated to have measurable benefits in many aspects of the organization. The evidence for these benefits is broad, demonstrating the applicability of transformational leadership from multiple perspectives. One of the most straightforward benefits afforded by transformational leadership is work performance. Per Andriani, Kesumawati, and Kristiawan (2018), transformational research can have a measurable, positive effect on followers' work performance. This finding is echoed by scholars such as Buil, Martínez, and Matute (2019) in other industries. In particular, Buil et al. (2019) found evidence that transformational leaders improve employees' performance through the mediating factor of motivation, a finding that aligns with the underlying notion of why transformational leadership is important. Transformational leaders have multiple ways of improving motivation through the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation.

Other researchers, such as Eliyana and Ma'arif (2019), failed to find direct paths from transformational leadership to performance, but did find indirect paths through another key mediator of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is important both as a predictor of performance and as a protective factor against turnover, making it another important outcome that is often studied vis-à-vis transformational leadership. In other contexts, Boamah, Laschinger, Wong, and Clarke (2018) also linked transformational leadership to increased job satisfaction. Relatedly, a systematic review of the literature indicates that transformational leadership may, at least indirectly, impact not only job satisfaction but overall employee wellbeing (Arnold, (2017).

Another area in which transformational leadership may benefit organizations is in terms of employee creativity. When working under a transformational leader, employees have shown more creative behavior (Hadi & Tola, 2019). This link comes both directly and indirectly. From a direct standpoint, transformational leadership likely improves creativity through intellectual stimulation. In addition, Hadi and Tola (2019) found that employee motivation also drives up creativity and that transformational leadership improves motivation. PerLi et al. (2020), this effect holds not only more generally, but for more targeted types of innovation. In particular, transformational leadership was, through intrinsic motivation, demonstrated to improve green or environment-related creativity. The improvement of intrinsic motivation is also notable given that intrinsic motivation is a construct typically dictated by internal factors. The ability of a transformational leader to promote intrinsic motivation is demonstrative of why the "transformational" nomenclature was chosen, and why it remains appropriate. Per Bednall, Rafferty, Shipton, Sanders, and Jackson (2018), the relationship between transformational leadership and innovation is also robust across national cultures, at least in western nations.

Transformational leadership also may drive organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). OCBs represent ways in which employees may go above and beyond the requirements of their job to benefit the organization. Per Budur and Poturak (2021), all four dimensions of transformational leadership individually predict employees' organizational citizenship behaviors. Research by Jiang, Zhao, and Ni (2017) also strongly supports not only that transformational leadership promotes organizational citizenship, but also that OCBs mediate the effect of transformational leadership on other outcomes of interest such as organizational sustainability. Overall, a robust literature supports the link between transformational leadership and an interconnected constellation of organizational and employee outcomes. These benefits, demonstrated across a range of organizational contexts from schools to hospitals to businesses, explain the considerable focus on transformational leadership within the recent literature. Leaders who are capable of employing transformational leadership may reap significant organizational rewards. Still, for all its benefits, transformational leadership is not without complications.

Concerns with Transformational Leadership

Perhaps the foremost issue with transformational leadership is the long-standing difficulty in teaching it. The overall advantages of transformational leadership are such that there has been much interest in imparting it to organizational leaders, but these efforts have only born fruit relatively rarely; organizations are often unsatisfied with the efficacy of their own leadership training programs (Lacerenza et al., 2017). Another potential complication is that transformational leadership was originally developed as a theory of *political* leadership, not business leadership; this raises the issue of whether or not it is truly applicable in the business context (Lee, 2014). Though the significant literature reporting on the benefits of

transformational leadership would seem to suggest that it is, this mismatch cannot be ignored as a potential source of the struggle to impart transformational leadership to new leaders.

Cultural issues are another factor. Research by Budur(2020) suggests that the success of transformational leadership has significant cultural dimensions, and that transformational leaders are not as effective within the context of group-oriented cultures such as those in many Asian nations. In addition, transformational leadership has been criticized as being elitist and antidemocratic, although Asbari, Santoso, and Prasetya (2020) noted that this concern has become less prominent over time. Overall, there are significant caveats to transformational leadership, but none of these are significant enough to outweigh the persistently reported organizational benefits afforded by transformational leaders.

RESEARCH METHODS

The present study was conducted using a qualitative single case study design. Per Jonasdottir, Hand, Misener, and Polgar (2018), a single case study, if defined at the level of an individual as the case, comprises an in-depth interview with a professional who is experienced in what is he/she being asked about to gain an understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context. This approach was deemed appropriate for the present study because of the complexity of transformational leadership; the research requires a degree of contextualization to be fully understood. Although case studies focusing on a single participant are not a wholly uncontroversial research approach, they are appropriate to certain types of investigations (Zainal, 2007). Yin (2008, p.47) stated that a single case that meet all theory's testing conditions can verify, contest, or even extend the theory. In this case, this single case study investigates how a successful leader inspired his followers and retained them operating in the same workplace with a high rate of employee satisfaction. Such journey gave this researcher the opportunity to interview this leader and gain more understanding about his journey applying the constructs of transformational leadership in the workplace and what results he gained from such application.

Population and Sample

The population under study in this research was all leaders who employ transformational leadership in the business context. The population is quite broad. Per Yin (2018), when selecting the case for a single case study, there are two possible criteria: either the case should be typical and indicative of the broader phenomenon, or the case should be exceptional in some way. Given the breadth of transformational leadership's application, it may be challenging to choose a truly indicative case. Therefore, the objective was to select an exceptional case. In particular, the case of interest was a highly experienced leader who has successfully employed transformational leadership in business for a significant period.

To this end, the researcher utilized purposeful criterion-based sampling to interview a one experienced leader and to signify a unique case. To identify the participant, multiple organizations were examined to locate a leader with long-term leadership experience. Multiple such organizational leaders were contacted to ascertain if they self-identified as using a transformational leadership style and if they were interested in study participation. One such participant was identified and chosen as the single case under study. This participant had 17 years of leadership experience in the retail industry.

Data Collection

Data collection for the study involved a single semi-structured interview with the participant lasting approximately 45 minutes. Ideally, the interview and coding of data would have been conducted contemporaneously, as this would have allowed for the determination of saturation in real time. That approach was not feasible because the interview was comprised of open-ended questions and also took the participant's valuable time. Attempting to code simultaneously would have been difficult and also drawn out the interview to the detriment of the participant. Instead, the interview was audio recorded. Per the recommendation of McGrath, Palmgren, and Liljedahl (2019), the interview was conducted with a relaxed atmosphere where the data collection process could be confidential and private. The researcher collected the data in a free interruption private room to improve the confidentiality of the information and the privacy of the interviewee. As the data were collected prior to the pandemic, the interview could be safely conducted in an in-person setting. To ensure the ability of the interview responses to address the research purpose, the interview was conducted using a pre-established interview guide that was developed and validated in advance based on the extensive literature available with respect to transformational leadership.

Coding Process

Once collected, the data were transcribed for analysis. The coding procedure to analyze the data included the emerging of meaningful themes to answer the overarching question as recommended in the literature (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). The data were analyzed to gain an understanding of whether there is a place for trust and principle in transformational leadership style using NVivo 11 software. After uploading the data to the NVivo 11, Yin's (2018) five coding principles were applied to the coding and analysis of the data. Yin' guidelines included (a) data compilation, (b) data disassembling, (c) data reassembling, (d) data interpretation, and (e) study conclusion. The first step, data compilation, comprises primarily data organization (Haines, 2015). The researcher sorted the data into types and coded them into groups. In the second step, data disassembling, included dividing and segmenting the data into labeled groups. Following the division of the data, data reassembling involved arrangement, recombination, and placing the data into coding categories as recommended by Cox and McLeod (2014). In this phase, the researcher derived eight coding categories that included: (a) Training, (b) decision involvement, (c) verbal motivation, (d) team empowerment, (e) facing difficulties, (f) diligence, (g) frequent meetings, and (h) written appreciation. The researcher derived tubular forms from data rearrangement and recombination and then organized the tubular form to prioritized categories. Data interpretation is the conversion of the manipulated data to understandable information, the extraction of meaning from the data. The conclusion was the final step which reflected the answer to the research question.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the results directly from NVivo 11. The left column shows the code family derived from the data and the right column shows the frequency of codes.

Table 1
Data Analysis Results

Theme	Frequency of Theme	Percentage
Training	10	30.3%
Decision Involvement	8	24.2%
Verbal Motivation	6	18.1%
Team Empowerment	4	12.1%
Facing Difficulties	2	6.1%
Diligence	1	3%
Frequent Meetings	1	3%
Written Appreciation	1	3%
Total	33	100%
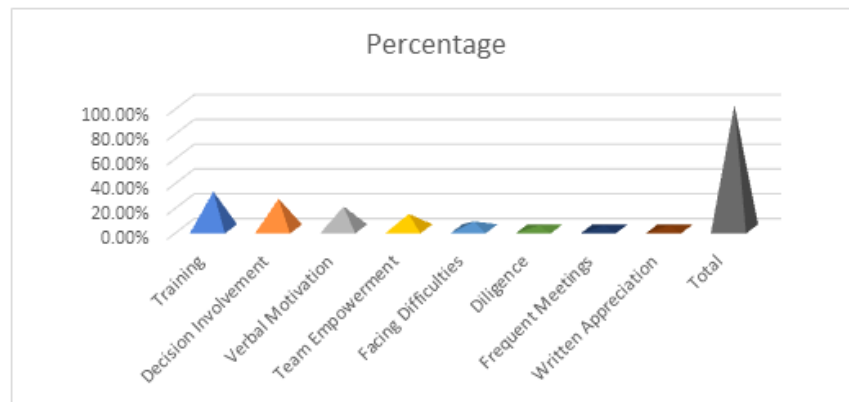
FIGURE 1
DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

Table 2	
Themes and the Supporting Statements of the Interviewees	
Theme	**X's Supporting Statement**
Training	"Training is a key motivator." "If the employee is taught about what he/she is doing, then he/she will be confident about results." "I always encourage my subordinates to keep up with the training." "If the employee is well trained, he/she will feel confident and never fail." "Training reduces the chance of leaving intention, so the employee feels that he/she has the best value in this position." "I used to train my employees on a regular basis to keep them updated with everything new." "Training is essential in reinforcing the trust between the employee and the leader." "Training gives the employee the required value." "In my journey, I noticed that well-trained employee willing stay because he/she gained the value he/she was looking for." "Trust was generated when the employee achieved his/her goals and this because that employee is highly trained."
Decision involvement	"Decision involvement let your employee feel that he/she part of the decision-making process. It is very advantageous as it improves employees' affiliation to the organization."

	"Decision involvement is a tool that greatly works when you positively try to transform your employee." "Decision involvement let your employee critically think about any business process. Also, think critically about the consequences." "Decision involvement reinforces the teamwork." "Decision involvement, definitely, give a great value to the employee, and that is an important part of transforming the employee." "Value can be generated from Decision involvement when the employee shares his/her opinion."
Verbal Motivation	"Verbal motivation is a statement I use to stimulate my employees at workplace, so they feel more confident and stimulated." "Verbal motivation on a regular basis gives great results at the process of transforming the employee." "I feel that a positive verbal motivation stimulates the intellectual part of the employee, so they become more productive." "Verbal motivation starts by reviewing of what the employee performed and ends with a recommendation mixed with appreciation." "Verbal motivation is an external motivation that increases your employee satisfaction. Also, satisfaction leads to gaining trust and values." "Verbal motivation helps in self-determination, so the employee can feel more confident."
Team Empowerment	"Team empowerment is the incorporation of the concept of individual energization. In other words, empowerment means that you give energy, so the employee feels positive, valuable, and important to the organization." "Empowerment reinforces positive feedback." "Energizing the team on a daily basis plays a crucial role in building their skills." "Similar to motivation, energizing individuals provides great value to the employee."
Facing Difficulties	"Giving the employee the opportunity to be independent in overcoming the challenges is very advantageous." "Self-confidence can be generated when the individual is able to deal with several existing problems. Also, it can be a good way to retain the individuals."
Diligence	"Giving the individual a chance to use his smartness in performing some of business operations is useful to keep motivation by killing the routine and give the chance to innovate."
Frequent Meetings	"Meet all the individuals on a regular basis boosts their trust in management but this depends on what can be discussed during the meeting. For me, I used to start with mentioning every individual's achievements. This is great to make the meeting successful and a mean of motivation."
Written Appreciation	"I used to write letters and mail them to the employees to thank them for their work and achievements. I did that because I noticed that such a way increases individuals' affiliation to the organization."

DISCUSSION

Overall, the coding and analysis of the interview yielded eight themes of (a) Training, (b) decision involvement, (c) verbal motivation, (d) team empowerment, (e) facing difficulties, (f) diligence, (g) frequent meetings, and (h) written appreciation. These themes can be meaningfully linked back to the literature and/or the key dimensions of transformational leadership. For each theme, this section serves to make those connections explicit. The first theme, training, was linked to key ideas of trust and improved performance. In the literature, multiple researchers (e.g. Andriani et al., 2018; Buil et al., 2019) attested to the link between transformational leadership and job performance. Therefore, (X)'s experiences of training as a crucial way of improving

employee outcomes within transformational leadership ties into the literature on the benefits of transformational leadership. In addition, (X) noted that "Training is essential in reinforcing the trust between the employee and the leader." This aspect of the training theme links training to the transformational leadership dimension of individualized attention. Therefore, the theme of training links to both the literature and the theory of transformational leadership.

The second theme was decision involvement. The decision involvement theme pertained to involving the employee in the decision-making process. The literature typically did not link this theme to transformational leadership. By contrast, researchers such as Asbari et al. (2020) have attested that a common criticism of transformational leadership is that it is elitist and un-democratic. In this regard, (X)'s experience-based perspective differs from the literature. It does, however, alight with transformational leadership theory. In particular, (X) noted that "Decision involvement let your employee critically think about any business process. Also, think critically about the consequences." This aligns particularly with the intellectual stimulation dimension of transformational leadership theory. Hence, the decision involvement theme represents a new contribution to the literature.

The third theme was verbal motivation. Verbal motivation was not directly addressed in the literature, but it does tie into the literature-based idea that transformational leadership can drive motivation in general, including intrinsic motivation (Li et al., 2020). Therefore, the specific focus on verbal motivation can be thought of as a refinement of the literature, focusing on a more specific type of motivation that can be used. In addition, the verbal motivation dimension aligns strongly with the inspirational motivation dimension of transformational leadership. Given that Bass (1990) developed transformational leadership theory with a focus on the leadership of US presidents, most of whom were charismatic orators, the focus on verbal motivation would seem especially aligned with the roots of transformational leadership theory.

The fourth theme was that of team empowerment. (X) defined team empowerment as "Team empowerment is the incorporation of the concept of individual energization." In other words, empowerment means that you give energy, so the employee feels positive, valuable, and important to the organization." In this regard, the theme would seem to align with Li et al.'s (2020) conclusion that transformational leadership empowers motivation. This theme also aligns strongly with transformational leadership theory. Through the motivational angle, the concept of team empowerment can be understood as a form of inspirational motivation. However, the specific definition given by (X) aligns perhaps more closely with the dimension of individualized attention. This is primarily because of its focus on ensuring that each employee feels valued and important.

The fifth theme was that of facing difficulties, which (X) characterized as "Giving the employee the opportunity to be independent in overcoming the challenges." In this regard, there is a strong alignment between the theme of overcoming difficulties and the literature pertaining to transformational leadership and innovation (Bednall et al., 2018; Hadi & Tola, 2019; Li et al., 2020). This literature strongly emphasizes the role of transformational leadership in promoting employee creativity, much as (X)'s characterization emphasizes giving employees the chance to exercise such creativity to overcome challenges. This theme is also directly aligned with the transformational leadership dimension of intellectual stimulation. By letting employees face and overcome challenges appropriate to their skill level, (X) ensured that the employees' work was intellectually stimulating and attested to the value of that situation for both the organization and the employees.

The sixth theme was that of diligence. (X) characterized diligence as "Giving the individual a chance to use his smartness in performing some of business operations." This theme was somewhat conceptually similar to that of facing difficulties, but differs in that diligence does

not necessarily refer to problematic situations but rather to more day-to-day practice. Still, the alignment with the literature is primarily with the research addressing the linkages between transformational leadership and innovation (Bednall et al., 2018; Hadi & Tola, 2019; Li et al., 2020). In this regard, offering employees the chance to be diligent offers them a chance to be creative. For that reason, the diligence theme is connected to the intellectual stimulation dimension of transformational leadership. In addition, however, there is a link to individualized attention. In order to "keep motivation by killing the routine and give the chance to innovate" as (X) notes, it is necessary to be aware of the individual circumstances of different employees and address them.

The seventh theme was that of frequent meetings. This theme was characterized as frequent contact between the leader and the followers. Within the literature, it perhaps best aligns with issues of OCBs and leader-member exchange (Budur & Poturak, 2021). (X) expressed that the greatest value of the meetings was "For me, I used to start with mentioning every individual's achievements. This is great to make the meeting successful and a mean of motivation." This characterization of frequent meetings links the theme with ideas of both individualized attention and inspiration motivation. In (X)'s telling, the meeting serves as both a form of individualized attention and as a conduit for creating inspirational motivation. In this regard, it is interesting to note the overlap between the two dimensions within not only the same conceptual space, but within the same individual actions of communication.

The eighth and final theme was that of written appreciation. (X) characterized written appreciation as the act of sending letters to employees thanking them for their efforts. (X) noted that "I did that because I noticed that such a way increases individuals' affiliation to the organization." Therefore, while the specifics of the theme are not found in the literature, its function connects to two functions of transformation leadership. First, it contributes to the job satisfaction aspect reported by scholars such as Eliyana and Ma'arif (2019) or Boamah et al. (2018). Secondly, it contributes to the development of organizational citizenship, which is also a key outcome linked to transformational leadership (Budur & Poturak, 2021; Jiang et al., 2017). Theoretically, the theme of written appreciation is most closely linked with the dimension of individualized attention, of which it represents a form.

Implications

The findings of this study are interesting from a theoretical standpoint. For the most part, the eight themes of practice identified by (X) represent a set of ways in which a leader can cultivate transformational leadership in a way that aligns with both literature and theory. Two anomalies present themselves, however. Firstly, the second theme, decision involvement, would seem to undercut a common criticism of transformational leadership, namely that it is elitist and undemocratic (Asbari et al., 2020). Instead, (X) suggests that involving employees in the decision-making process is a key way of fostering transformational leadership. This result is both novel and valuable in that it suggests a practical approach to implementing transformational leadership with one component that expressly refutes a weakness in other implementations of the leadership style. Although the elitism criticism is less pronounced than in the past (Asbari et al., 2020), a way to counteract it without impeding the benefits afforded by transformational leadership remains valuable.

A second surprising result is that (X)'s responses only supported three of the four dimensions of transformational leadership. Excluded was idealized influence, or leading by example. Although many of the themes focus on the more transformative aspects—especially inspirational motivation and individualized attention—none of them focus on the leader

modeling desired behavior. There are multiple reasons for this. It may be that the nature of (X)'s work is such that opportunities to model desired behavior do not often arise, or that (X) does not feel this is valuable. However, perhaps the most likely reason is that (X)'s characterization of transformational leadership cedes more agency to followers than most, as evinced by the decision involvement theme. A focus on this as well as ensuring intellectual stimulation through the challenges and diligence themes may have meant that (X) did not feel able to draw upon idealized influence without infringing upon their followers' creativity and autonomy. This possibility represents a potentially interesting tension within the theory between leader influence and the attested benefits of transformational leadership on innovation. If the leader exerts too much idealized influence, it could potentially stifle innovation and creativity from followers.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. The first limitation is that the study was only a single case study. While this research form was ideal for carefully analyzing one experienced leader's practice of transformational leadership, it does limit the study to one leader in one industry. On one hand, the findings of this study are all broad practices; therefore, on the surface, they would seem applicable in any industry. On the other, it is possible that this simplicity is misleading and that certain conditions in (X)'s industry led to these themes, or that certain conditions in other industry would make them inapplicable. Another limitation in this study is that it relied entirely on self-reported data, meaning the accuracy cannot be fully verified. The research took great efforts to exclude his own biases from the research process. However, that does not prevent the potential for (X)'s answers to have been driven, in part, by social desirability bias. The single case study research design increases this risk as there are no other leaders' experiences with which to compare (X)'s. However, none of the findings are unreasonable, and (X)'s success as a business leader can be objectively attested to, limiting the likelihood of social desirability bias having significantly skewed the results.

Based on the findings and these limitations, the primary recommendation for further research that can be made is to further explore the potential tension between idealized influence and innovation. This conceptual contrast arises primarily as a result of the findings of this study, but is currently a speculative explanation for the fact that (X)'s responses were not indicative of idealized influence. Understanding the perspective of other transformational leaders on this issue, particular from research focused on that specific topic, could offer considerably better insight. Such research is important as this idea would appear to contradict a small amount of research (e.g. Teymournejad & Elghaei, 2017) that currently links idealized influence to creativity.

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