

capstone final

by Jeremy Stevens

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Transformational and transactional leadership: An analysis of the leader-follower relationship
and their influence in the workplace

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Abstract

The intent of this research and accompanying paper is to identify connections between championed models and strategies of transformational leadership relative to the purported roles of both the would-be leaders as well as targeted followers, both parties being deemed essential in the transformational organizational leadership equation. The value of this qualitative study, while not unique in nature, is its enhancement of, or at a least contribution to, an existing body of research that seeks to turn transformational leadership theory into a practical, implementable strategy that recognizes the proactive role of the follower. Particular attention was paid to the academically accepted, and at times, disparate leadership models that fall under the auspices of transformational leadership practices, identified and popularized by Burns (1978). Resources reviewed in this qualitative study were academic journals, materials used in master's program course-work, articles in favor of transformational leadership theory, and the works of authors critical of the applicability of said method. This study concludes that while transformational leadership theory is more fitting for the modern audience, it is fundamentally flawed in its assumption that traits of the leader will have transformational effects upon the follower, most significantly, an increased sense of loyalty to the organization. The recommendation is that sociologists who are concerned with organizational leadership use transformational leadership theory as a launching point, spending more resources on examining the role of the proactive follower in the successful implementation of modern leadership strategies.

Keywords: Transformational and Transactional Leadership, Motivations, Authentic Leadership, Empowerment, Autonomy, Followership Theory, Situational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence (EI/EQ), Change Management and Agency, Millennials, Generational Leadership Exchange Theory.

Transformational and transactional leadership: An analysis of the leader-follower relationship and their influence in the workplace

Leadership as a model or practice is in itself intangible, yet the absence of leadership can cripple an organization. Scholars and practitioners alike endlessly speak of and write about leadership, with a tacit agreement as to its necessity, but much debate on its origins (Burns, 1978), if and how it can be taught (Zenger & Folkman, 2009; Whitmore, 2017), and the roles of individuals involved (Raelin, 2003). Once thought of as a skill that one possessed from birth or imbued with a charismatic trait that allowed an individual to have influence over another (Weber, 1962; Burns, 1978), leadership theory has moved in a direction that presumes a mutually beneficial relationship between the leader and follower. Authors such as Zenger (2009) and Raelin (2003) suggest that leadership is a symbiotic relationship that develops as knowledge is shared and respect is reciprocated, fostering a culture wherein the follower may assume the role of leader, having been encouraged and supported developmentally, by the transformational leader (Raelin, 2003; Zenger & Folkman, 2009).

Progenitors of transformational leadership theory practices, such as Burns (1975) and Bass (1985), as well as proponents of its continued study and implementation, identify a correlative relationship between the actions of the would-be leader and the transformation of the targeted individual from a person whom is acted upon to an active participant in the success of the organization. Detractors from transformational leadership theories, most notably Gary Yukl from the Management Department at SUNY, Albany, cite a lack of empirical evidence that the actions of the leader in fact have any transformative effect upon the individual relative to

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organizational commitment or performance improvement (Yukl, An evaluation of conceptual weaknesses in transformational and charismatic leadership theories, 1999; Allix N. , 2000).

While the case for the implementation of transformational leadership practices focuses on the positive aspects of empowering the individual, increasing job autonomy, and improving collaborative efforts (Burns, 1978; Bass, Leadership and Performance, 1985), critics find ambiguities in their application and incongruent results of said practices (Yukl, An evaluation of conceptual weaknesses in transformational and charismatic leadership theories, 1999). With four decades of academic research and organizational implementation, transformational leadership theory is widely lauded to the point where it serves as the foundation for many leadership development and management training programs.

To a certain degree, the desire or urgency for the introduction of transformational practices into an organization is predicated on the idea that there exists a deficiency in the efforts of subordinates, due to a lack of motivation and/or organizational commitment, or a lack of task-related resources, training, or necessary skill-set (Van Wart & Suino, 2017). Consequently, organizations may suffer from decreased efficiency, diminished results, and a loss of competitive advantage within their respective industry. Identifying a lack of tangible resources or prescribing professional development needs are necessary management functions, and perhaps prove more straightforward endeavors than attempting to articulate the motivational factors that affect individual performance.

A key difference between traditional/transactional leadership models and transformational approaches, is the source of individual motivation (Burns, 1978; Bass, Leadership and Performance, 1985). Extrinsic motivation is rooted in a hierarchical model of reward and punishment, or the avoidance thereof, whereas intrinsic motivation inspires an

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individual to act in a certain way, or perform a task, because it is in itself internally rewarding (Cherry, 2020). It is common in the workplace to find both forms of motivation present and organically intertwined. For example, a high-performing sales representative sets a personal goal to improve their numbers by 10% over the previous fiscal year, establishing an intrinsic personal satisfaction motivational goal, with the knowledge that successfully reaching that goal would also satisfy an extrinsic motivation of increased commission based pay.

Whether your prescribed role is that of a manager or of a contributor, both forms of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic, can prove effective towards the achievement of individual and organizational goals. Researchers have examined the differences in motivational factors in disparate organizational settings and with varied age groups, in an attempt to identify certain commonalities or extrapolative theories. Categorizing and understanding the potential sources of individual motivation will help leaders and managers choose appropriate leadership practices to match the motivational preferences of their employees, team mates, or subordinates (Bottomley & Burgess, 2018; Valenti, 2019). The leadership challenge lies in the individual's ability to accurately ascertain whether their subordinates are motivated by transactional, tangible rewards, or if they prefer intrinsic motivation, requiring coaching and positive reinforcement, if they are to achieve long-term fulfillment (Valenti, 2019).

Transformational leadership models assume that employees are seeking empowerment, autonomous decision making, developed interpersonal relationships, and the ability to progress, both professionally and personally, within the organization. A reliance on intrinsic motivational factors to fill the potential gap left, both monetarily and psychologically, by an organization's inability to fulfill extrinsic motivational expectations is at the foundation of a practical understanding of transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, Leadership and

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Performance, 1985). Transactional leadership models and traditional hierarchies on the other hand, rely on extrinsic motivations to persuade employees to perform in a manner that benefits the organization and will not result in individual punishment as a result of failing to perform at a desired level (Burns, 1978; Bass, *Leadership and Performance*, 1985).

The topic of employee/subordinate motivation is itself a subject mired in an academic and theoretical quagmire, with one train of thought applying pressure to the leader, with the assumption that employees desire motivation from an outside source, while the other thought process examines the role of the follower, citing their motivations as essential to the success of both the leader and the organization as a whole (Raelin, 2003; Baker, 2007; Campion, Klinger, & Siangchokyoo, 2020) Raelin takes a more positive, pro-active approach to the presumed readiness and motivational willingness of employees, going as far as to say, “If you have to motivate ‘your people’ to get them to do something useful in your community, you have already lost them” (Raelin, 2003, p. 24).

Levi, with an eye towards vibrant group-dynamics and motivating team-building efforts, promotes a leader-subordinate relationship wherein employees feel safe to raise organizationally related questions and/or concerns, without fear of punitive retaliation on the part of management. Founded upon the integrity of genuine feedback from reputable leaders, employees are freely able to act in a manner that increases their self-motivation, as well as renewal, or strengthening of, personal commitment to the organization, its perceived vision, and professed team-oriented goals (Levi, 2017). As individual employee commitment increases, leaders theoretically gain confidence in the collective abilities of motivated employees to increase team efficacy, through the deepening of shared obligations to organizational goals, the general acceptance of a unifying

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vision, and the establishment of cohesively functioning, autonomous, self-motivating teams (Levi, 2017).

As we are evaluating the prospects of successfully implementing transformational leadership practices in a traditional leadership environment, it would be prudent to examine the ways in which a manager may seek to intrinsically motivate employees, particularly the millennial generation, a specific group plagued with negative stereotypes, slated to constitute 75% of the expected workforce by the year 2025 (Schwabel, 2012). What actions then must leaders earnestly take in a concerted effort to motivate employees, especially those raised in a culture wherein praise is routinely given and individuals are generally sheltered from self-worth damaging criticisms (Valenti, 2019)? Scholars and practitioners will presumptively agree that timely feedback is paramount to the success of subordinates, and said effective feedback should be useful to the recipient, accurate in its praise or critique, and ensure that any additional communication should be clear in its intended purpose (Ciulla, Martin, & Solomon, 2014). Van Wart furthers this concept by adding that the genuineness, or perceived quality of the feedback from management, must necessarily build organizational accountability on behalf of all involved stakeholders (Van Wart & Suino, 2017).

Leadership can be viewed and analyzed from a myriad of perspectives, and while making distinctions is valuable to our understanding of the qualities that we associate with leadership, perhaps we should observe the similarities as well. Conventional or transactional leadership is centered on, as the latter's name conveys, transactions between the leader and follower (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), whereas transformational leadership implies a transformative relationship between the two parties (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). What we have then, is a literature-based, qualitative examination of the collective processes of building and maintaining leader-follower

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relationships in the organizational setting. The purpose is to draw connections between the motivations and proactive behaviors of both the leader and follower relative to the successful implementation of transformational leadership practices, an act often perceived, yet not always perceptible (Yukl, 1999).

Literature Review

Asking the question, “Can a leader implement transformational change in a transactional business environment?” inevitably leads to other questions, most of which are predicated on the understanding of the myriad theoretical concepts that are built in to a seemingly innocuous question. By looking at the diametrically oppositional relationship between transformational and transactional leadership models, as introduced by Burns (1978) and expanded upon by Bass (1985), we begin to see the relationship between the would-be leader and assumed, or at least targeted, followers. Upon closer examination, the variances between the two leadership models may be rooted in motivation, with the transactional approach focused on business as usual, meeting established goals, while transformational leadership, as the name implies, is motivated in transforming both the individual and the organization as a whole, forming stretch goals and developing a long-term vision. As is the case with any theory worth studying, each has empirical evidence for and against a devotion to, or implementation of, said operational theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999).

At the root of the conversation, we have a dyadic (Yukl, 1999) relationship between the accepted traditional view of leadership and the modern academic study leadership as differentiated from management. There is a flaw in framing a study in these terms, because what is modern today, may be antiquated or disproven tomorrow. Burns used the terms transactional and transformational (Burns, 1978) to more accurately explain the virtues of each, jump-starting

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a debate about the very nature of the leader-follower relationship (Bass, 1985). Where once leadership was considered to be something that happened to a follower, implying a passive state, transformational leadership models require active participation to balance out the leadership equation (Baker, 2007).

Influential German sociologist Max Weber, not only provided us with notion of the charismatic leader, he also expanded the knowledge of ethical decision making with his discussion of value-related social conduct, identifying conduct that puts convictions ahead of consequences. Rational conduct, also referred to as goal-oriented, recognized that one must consider the means as well as the ends, going even further to consider the impact of alternate conduct choices, weighing possible impacts on, perhaps in the modern thought process, recognized stakeholders (Weber, 1962). Predating Burns' description of transactional leadership theory, Weber acknowledged that a social relationship can be either permanent or transient in nature (Weber, 1962). Applying this concept to the relationship between leader and follower in the traditional model, the relationship may be asymmetrical, with both gains and losses experienced, and the ability to turn from complementary to adversarial.

Weber, expanding on his theory of the charismatic leader, wrote on the topic of legitimate authority, touching upon faith, fear, acceptance of, and compliance with, contractual law, and a desire to protect self-interests (Weber, 1962). In 1959, social psychologists French and Raven, in an attempt to understand the power of influence that some individuals have over us, identified and described five bases of power (French, 1959), melding Weber's musing on fear, charisma, and legal authority. As potential sources of influence, French and Raven's model, separating positional power from what they considered personal, recognizing that while all may be efficient

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in the short-term, others are more effective techniques for leader-follower relationship building (Team, 2018).

Campion, Klinger, and Siangchokyoo (2020), in their systematic review of transformational leadership literature, posit that follower transformation is key to a leader becoming transformational, identifying three underlying assumptions that reinforce this notion (Campion, Klinger, & Siangchokyoo, 2020). The first assumption, leaders transform followers, and Burns wrote that followers were transformed as a result of their experiences with certain leaders (Burns, 1978; Campion, Klinger, & Siangchokyoo, 2020). Assumption two asserts that followers are transformed in three specific ways, motivated by transformational leaders. Bass' research lent credence to the follower, recognizing their sense of belonging, value alignment with the organization, and a bolstered notion of self-efficacy (Bass, 1985; Campion, Klinger, & Siangchokyoo, 2020). The third assumption seeks to explain variance in leadership success, claiming that without the transformation of followers, transformational leadership would prove an ineffective model for the modern organization (Campion, Klinger, & Siangchokyoo, 2020).

Followership Theory

The third underlying assumption of transformational leadership is crucial to our discussion, illustrating the interdependent relationship between would-be leaders and subordinates turned followers (Baker, 2007). Raelin, in his case for leaderful practice, asserts that leaders and followers are interchangeable parts of the transformational leadership process (Raelin, 2003). Where the term follower often carries a negative connotation, Raelin (2003) views followers as leaderful individuals capable of assuming the mantle of leadership when the situation calls for it, ensuring that organizational needs are met. Referencing the work of Robert Kelly, Raelin describes effective followers as individuals with vision, capable of working with

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others, without need for recognition, seeking only the fulfillment of a meaningful team-oriented mission (Kelley, 1988; Raelin, 2003). Seeing both parties as equal parts of leaderful practice, Raelin would reserve the use of the term follower for circumstances in which following hierarchical commands is both pragmatic and compulsory (Raelin, 2003).

Where Raelin (2003) sees the idea of followership as a term that denotes passivity and susceptibleness to an unhealthy dependence upon charismatic leaders, unable to assert their own role in achieving organizational vision (Raelin, 2003), other scholars see followership theory in a kinder light. Van Wart, referencing the work of Barbara Kellerman, recognizes that not only are followers part of the transformational leadership equation, when sufficiently engaged, themselves can become change agents within the organization (Kellerman, 2008; Van Wart & Suino, 2017). Those who are unable, due to hierarchical repression/suppression, or those who are unwilling to be engaged and self-informed, remain isolated, having little to offer the organization in terms leadership development (Van Wart & Suino, 2017). Highly engaged followers, those willing to make informed and ethical judgments about leaders, display a willingness to support leaderful individuals, while opposing those would-be leaders who fail to realize their role in the fulfillment of the organizational needs and meeting stakeholder obligations (Ciulla, Martin, & Solomon, 2014; Van Wart & Suino, 2017).

Critique of the transformational leadership model and the study thereof, stems from a lack of causal evidence linking the characteristics of the leader with the specific ways in which the follower is transformed (Yukl, 1999; Allix N. M., 2000), thus proving the transformational method to be an effective form of modern leadership (Baker, 2007; Campion, Klinger, & Siangchokyoo, 2020). While it would be remiss to ignore the leader side of the transformational equation, more research, it is argued, is necessary to better understand how the role of the

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follower relates to the organizational success of the leader (Baker, 2007; Kelley, 1988). Citing the inter-dependent nature of the leader-follower relationship, Baker suggests that as success is not completely owned by an individual, leaders cannot be studied in a vacuum, and followers can no longer be viewed as blindly obedient, passively unwitting participant (Baker, 2007).

Followership attempts to provide an academic comprehension of the interdependent relationship between successful leaders and the followers they depend on to achieve specific goals, those with whom they share responsibility, to each other, the organization, and to stakeholders (Ciulla, Martin, & Solomon, 2014). Where there is a demand for effective leaders, there is a need for active, able, and willing participant follower, one who understands their role in relation to the leader (Baker, 2007). After all, leader and follower are constructs and they do not define the people filling those roles, and in a horizontal organizational model, inverted pyramid, or any other model that encourages two-way or multiple channel communication, the border between those roles should begin to blur. Moreover, when leaders share power, whether in the form of information or autonomous decision making, followers are empowered, lasting leader-follower relationships are built on mutual trust, and there is a greater chance of organizational success (Baker, 2007).

Authentic Leadership

Leadership models that explicitly recognize the role of the follower, often times and interchangeably referred to as the coachee or mentored (Zenger & Folkman, 2009; Whitmore, 2017), those that try to create positive follower-leader relationships, illustrate the need for self-identify from followers as well as strong interpersonal skills from leaders (Baker, 2007).

Constructs such as authentic leadership encourage leaders to act ethically, strive for transparency, demonstrate an openness to followers, embrace responsibility, and above all,

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remain authentic to oneself through a devotion to reflection and self-awareness (George, Mayer, McLean, & Sims, 2007). Authentic leaders know themselves and are thus able to identify their own values and understand the influence they have upon their decision making, and subsequently must be willing to both solicit, and internalize feedback from those around them (George, Mayer, McLean, & Sims, 2007; Robbins & Judge, 2014). Whether it is in the form of 360-degree assessment, or simple conversations with trusted confidants, authentic leaders recognize that their actions must reflect their values and any observable deviance could erode the trust-based relationships that they have labored to build (George, Mayer, McLean, & Sims, 2007).

While not wanting to stray into the field of ethical leadership study, Van Wart (2017) does identify some overlap between authentic leadership and the qualities that typify an ethical leader. Leaders who rely on ethical decision making, much like authentic leaders, demonstrate deeply held beliefs, are transparent in their communications, genuinely treat others as individuals worthy of respect, not simply as a means to an end, are self-aware, hold themselves accountable, and act with integrity (Van Wart & Suino, 2017). Authentic leadership then, is an example of an ethics-based transformational leadership theory in which the self-aware and self-regulating leader develops a mutually beneficial relationship with followers (Van Wart & Suino, 2017).

Raelin (2003) weighs in on authentic leadership, pointing to employee satisfaction and retention due to the genuineness of those in leadership positions (Raelin, 2003). The concern for those leaders in traditional hierarchies and transactional environments is how to balance authenticity, compassion, and perceived genuineness, while in a position that may require them to create follower separation, sacrificing effective leaderful authenticity for the sake of efficient hierarchical management (Raelin, 2003). The misconception is that one must distance themselves instead of trusting their intuitive efforts at team building with the organization,

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regardless of anecdotal evidence or previous organizational models. Leaderful practice embraces authenticity, embracing a collective and compassionate approach to leadership, one that exhibits humility, a servant mentality, and the confidence and self-awareness of a genuinely authentic leader (Raelin, 2003).

Authenticity may also be viewed as an essential leadership quality as opposed to style unto its own. Whitmore identifies authenticity as a skill that cannot be perfected, rather it is the constant evaluation of the self, established values, recognizing how a leader's experiences shape their worldview, and the underlying need to free oneself from social and cultural constructs, false beliefs and assumptions, and fear, particularly the fear of failure (Whitmore, 2017). To achieve an elevated state of self-belief and personal power, Whitmore recommends, much like Ury, receding to the balcony, or stepping-back, in a concerted effort to become a dispassionate observer, removing the egocentric fears that may hinder relationship building and the necessary ability to make, and take ownership of, difficult decisions that may affect all involved stakeholders (Ury, 2007; Whitmore, 2017).

A key tenet of transformational leadership theory and throughout its subdivisions, including authentic leadership, is the idea that a leaderful individual seeks to mentor, coach, empower, and share information with others, for without these acts, there would be little foundational trust upon which to build the leader-follower relationship (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). Leaders who wish to be authentic must make themselves vulnerable to others, share doubts, fears, and struggles, while forever seeking enhanced self-awareness, keeping their values at the forefront of their decision making processes (Whitmore, 2017). Authentic transformational leadership requires transparent communication, mutual respect, personal integrity, a genuine concern for the follower and without these elements, a fruitful long-term trusting interpersonal

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leader-follower relationship cannot be built (Whitmore, 2017). Furthermore, as Zaremba (2010) succinctly tells us, organizational efficiency can be undermined by interpersonal leader-follower relationships that have been irreversibly damaged by poor communication, whether through a perceived lack of transparency, honesty, or both.

Change Agency and Management

A prospective leader who would seek to implement transformational, team building, leaderful practices in their organization, must become champions of change, demonstrate a willingness to take professional risks, and challenge others to question the status quo (Raelin, 2003; Zenger & Folkman, 2009). The ability to lead organizational change requires the individual to visualize where they would like the organization to be, a strategy or roadmap to get there, and the roles that stakeholders will play in the change process or the manner in which they will be impacted (Zenger & Folkman, 2009). Effective change leaders solicit support throughout the change process, provide encouragement, communicate in an honest and transparent fashion in an effort to alleviate fears, seeking to inspire confidence in the change process and clarify what is to be expected from each member (Zenger & Folkman, 2009).

An effective leader will focus on results, seek feedback, strive to innovate through educated observation, and help others to achieve positive change (Zenger & Folkman, 2009). High interpersonal efficacy, requisite for developing strong networks and lasting relationships, necessitates regular solicitation of input, and the willingness and flexibility to act upon suggestions for the betterment of the organization and recognized stakeholders. Additionally, by focusing on the strengths of subordinates, it transforms the leader's view of the relationship, evolving from a limited engagement transactional theory, to one that embraces the leaderful

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model, improving the leadership capabilities of both parties (Raelin, 2003; Zenger & Folkman, 2009).

Change is natural and as humans we have an innate fear of it, or more precisely, the uncertainty associated with change. Whether brought in as a temporary employee or having worked through the ranks, change agency can also be scary, particularly when attempting to communicate with those affected by the proposed change, determining what needs to be said, at what intervals, to whom what to be said, and of course, how to say it (Zaremba, 2010). Raelin espouses that as leaderful individuals, each of us have the ability to lead through the change process (Raelin, 2003). By embracing agency, function in a servant position, or for others, shift into a position of stabilizer, allowing the team to figure out to move from a temporary equilibrium to a state of active organizational change once again.

Viewing change agency as a collaborative effort, and communicating accordingly, will ensure that those affected by change efforts, even when things do not go smoothly, will remain encouraged and engaged (Raelin, 2003). While change may be necessary, even imminent, an effective leader understands that change cannot be forced upon someone, rather individuals must choose to change, and it is the role of the leader to model behaviors and attitudes that will inspire others, assuaging their concerns associated with the uncertainty of change (Whitmore, 2017). The role of the leader, according to Whitmore, is rather straightforward, the leader is responsible for getting the job done and developing employees along the way (Whitmore, 2017, p. 50).

Picture a not-so hypothetical scenario, one in which an organization finds itself mired in a transactional leadership crisis, wherein employees can be broken into groupings based on their desire and ability to embrace change. One group is complacent, just fine where they are, not making too much of an impact, while the middle group has the desire, but perhaps lacks the

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necessary skills, while the third group is willing and able to part of the organizational change. For those that are hungry for change and personal growth, then a trust based leader-follower transformational relationship should prove a good fit. Those who seem disinterested in an increased role will settle for the transactional limited exchange model they are accustomed to. The middle group needs more attention, requiring direction and support, and this is where the Hersey and Blanchard situational leadership model provides a rational understanding of the relationship between follower competence and organizational commitment (Van Wart & Suino, 2017).

Situational Leadership

Situational leadership theory, most often associated with the Hersey & Blanchard model, put forward in 1969, describes four different leadership styles, each to be used according to the combination of follower competence and commitment (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). In this situational leadership model, leaders theoretically match their style to the corresponding level of follower engagement, asking leaders to adopt, at a given moment, or situation, any of the four styles: directing, coaching, supporting, and/or delegating (McClesky, 2014; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Van Wart & Suino, 2017). Situational leadership theory identifies two behavioral focal points for leaders, task-oriented and relation-oriented, the former establishing roles for followers, while the latter practice pertains to the care for others, with effective leaders balancing a mix of the two behaviors (McClesky, 2014).

Proponents of situational leadership will assert that it is a team-oriented practice linking the behavior of the leader to the characteristics of the team, and more than telling the leader how to act, this model is developmental, advocating matching team maturity or readiness, with the appropriate leadership style (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Levi, 2017). While considered an

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empowerment approach, developing a team through participative decision making, the very nature of this model precludes at least two groups from active decision making if you follow the Hersey and Blanchard model (McClesky, 2014). Situational leadership model will improve collective competence and commitment to the team, although it is argued that the perceived buy-in is from those who already demonstrate competence, willingness, and resilience. There is an associated risk that the leader will have to divert too much attention to those others who are not committed to work roles and/or processes, thus negatively impacting team efficacy and organizational flexibility (Levi, 2017; McClesky, 2014).

Raelin's interpretation of situational leadership theory and in particular the Blanchard model, bridges the gap between transactional management and transformational leadership, describing the leader as a situational manager, capable of diagnosing the conditions of the organization in order to adjust their managerial style accordingly (Raelin, 2003). Citing the readiness of the followers as a foundation of Blanchard's theory, Raelin identifies the situational model as essentially one of followership, recognizing the relationship between leader and follower as the crux of leadership success (Raelin, 2003). Drawing authentic leadership theory back into the fold, Raelin asserts that situational leaders necessarily must demonstrate a renewed vigor for both personal and collective reflection, reminding the leader that their own efficacy is measured by the perceived collective successes and failures of their teammates or followers (Raelin, 2003).

Emotional Intelligence (EI/EQ)

Much has been written about the value of emotional intelligence, both as a qualitative measure and potentially a quantitative measure, with the conversation extending itself beyond the circles and influences of academia, industry journals, and the like. EQ has proponents and

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detractors alike, with coaching professionals such as Whitmore claiming that transformational coaching is the practice of emotional intelligence, focusing on awareness of the self as well as of others (Whitmore, 2017), and the ramifications of our collective actions upon those within our sphere of influence.

Channeling Daniel Goleman, Zaremba informs us that emotional intelligence not only impacts the leader-follower interpersonal interaction, it is in turn the work of all those whom work within an organization to increase this particular type of wisdom, and that the absence of demonstrable EQ will negatively affect the evolution of the organizational culture and its self-proclaimed transformational leaders (Goleman, 2005; Zaremba, 2010). Van Wart identifies four elements of emotional maturity that parallel emotional intelligence interpretations and afford a direct connection to authentic leadership, as an ethical model built upon openness and concern for the followers. The theory then, is that leaders demonstrate the following characteristics: self-awareness, self-control, responsibility for actions, and socialized power orientation (Van Wart & Suino, 2017).

Criticism of Transformational Leadership Theory

Yukl's (1999) criticism of transformational leadership theory is rooted in the idea of influence of a leader over another individual, relative to altering the behavior of the follower in an organizationally beneficial manner. With the focus on changing behavior, one person at a time, as opposed to systemically influencing teams or organizational processes themselves, transformational leadership theory is predicated on direct influence and tacit acceptance turned active participation on behalf of the would-be follower (Yukl, 1999). Yukl (1999) finds too much ambiguity in terms and application of transformational leadership, as well as little mention of, or

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even an attempt to identify, negative or unforeseen effects upon the follower as a result of direct influence transformational leadership (Yukl, 1999).

While Yukl does reserve criticism for transactional and charismatic leadership models as well, yet the author believes that any insights offered are overshadowed by the conceptual weaknesses he identifies (Yukl, 1999, p. 301). For Yukl, transformational theory fails to clearly describe the underlying influence process while also failing to prove a correlative relationship between the processes and the behaviors of the leaders themselves. The question of exactly which behaviors are essential, either innately possessed or demonstrated by the leader, itself leaves too much room for ambiguity. The lack of academic research on the underlying influence processes does not discount the theory, rather the author sees this as an opportunity for conceptual adjustment to make the theory more useful to scholars and practitioners alike (Yukl, 1999).

The leader-follower relationship as the focus of transformational leadership, puts too much emphasis on the effectiveness of the leader, failing to explain transformational success at the team and organizational levels. While transformational leadership proponents see this theory as implementable in nearly any environment, Yukl (1999) and other detractors, including re-visitations and re-evaluations by Bass (Bass, 1997), suggest that the particular needs of individual organizations must be identified, as should any possible negative side-effects resulting from attempting to implement transformational techniques upon a reluctant or ill-equipped group of individuals. Furthermore, the reduction of complex leadership theories and managerial practices into a set of individual behavioral stereotypes, will prove ineffective in practical application in the organizational setting (Yukl, 1999).

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Adopting a different critical approach to transformational leadership theory, Allix (2000) identifies incongruences plaguing Burns' idealized notion of the leader-follower relationship (Burns, 1978). While sharing a belief that the fatal flaw with the transactional model is based on power-based short-term transactional relationships (Burns, 1978; Allix N. M., 2000), devoid of any need for morality or individual development, in which "authority (is) seen as a property" (Allix N. M., 2000, p. 7). Based on Burns' emphasis on the educative nature of the leader-follower relationship of the transformational model, Allix contends that in this type of relationship, it is often presupposed that one party, the leader, having a "monopoly on moral truth, knowledge, and wisdom" (Allix N. M., 2000, p. 15) holds authority over another, in particular, a subordinate.

Where the possession of knowledge is a power-base as identified by Raven and French (Team, 2018), Allix posited that a relationship based upon the leader's assumed willingness to share power, in this case knowledge, is not equitable, favoring the intentions of the leader and ultimately the needs of the organization (Allix N. M., 2000). Rather than viewing the relationship as an organic transformative process of willing and active participants with mutual needs and concerns, we are instead presented with the theory that any perceptible change in belief or behavior on behalf of the follower was in fact achieved through coercion at worst, gentle persuasion at best, and undeniably, through direct-influence, a problematic aspect of the leader-follower relationship that troubled Yukl and Allix alike (Yukl, 1999; Allix N. M., 2000). Coupled with lack of empirical evidence to support the positive causal relationship between leader attributes and follower transformation, Allix asserts that Burns' own claim that there exists an inherent democratic element to follower's conscientious decision to enter into the

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transformational leadership relationship (Burns, 1978), is flawed to the point to which it is actually anti-democratic in practice (Allix N. M., 2000, p. 19).

Leaderful Behavior

Raelin (2003) in an almost outward attempt to dissuade leaders from following conventional leadership practices, offers four basic tenets that leaders should adhere to, or at least recognize in their organizational interactions. A conventional leader, in Raelin's estimation, is one whom is controlling and dispassionate, seeing the role of leader as something that is both serial and isolated in nature, with little value found in sharing power or knowledge, and free from the unnecessary constraints of outside interference (Raelin, 2003). While a transactional leader may prove efficient in short term production gains (Burns, 1978), their inability to develop and retain motivated, high performance employees and teammates, will in turn have a long-term deleterious effect upon the organization (Raelin, 2003; Zenger & Folkman, 2009; Whitmore, 2017).

A transformational leader by comparison, earnestly demonstrates the four critical processes of leadership attributed to Raelin (2003), recognizes the need for sustainable, collaborative organizational leadership and the establishment of a values based mission that reflects the concerns of recognized stakeholders. Transformational leaders understand that leadership is relationship based, and that they must remain open and adaptable, as they seek to establish goals, ensure sustained commitment to said organizational goals with extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, and adequately respond to changes in the business or organizational model (Raelin, 2003). A transformational leader does not covet power or authority, they actively share knowledge, develop and encourage others, while building a collective leadership model that

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removes concerns for succession and leadership vacuums that may be created when there are sudden departures at the management level of an organization (Raelin, 2003).

Transformational leadership theory provides us with powerful tools as a prospective leader seeking to improve organizational output efficiency, follower commitment, and stakeholder satisfaction, particularly where there exists direct interaction with the work-force (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Robbins & Judge, 2014). Unlike the near sighted transactional managerial counter-part, the transformational leader, in an effort to develop the leader-follower relationship, promotes change agency, comprehends the usefulness of empowerment and autonomous decision making, reflects inwardly and outwardly about the need for authenticity, while demonstrating personal accountability and a commitment to both personal and organizational transparency. Through the exemplary demonstration of consistent ethical decision making processes and active engagement in honest, two-way communication, nurtured by earnest displays of empathy and humility, both the leader and follower become active, willing participants in the transformational leadership process (Raelin, 2003; Zenger & Folkman, 2009).

If we accept that the notion of leadership is a man-made construct (Weber, 1962), a mutually beneficial relationship between the would be leader and designated follower (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), than we must understand that there are fundamental differences in identifiable leadership approaches relative to the leader-follower relationship. We may choose to revisit the observed and presumed differences between conventional or transactional leadership models and the basic tenets of transformational or modern leadership practices. Transactional leadership practice treats the relationship between leader and employee as just that, a short-term transaction that neither empowers nor develops employees. While sound in theory, transformational leadership models are flawed in their execution (Yukl, 1999), often failing to recognize the

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necessarily participative and democratic relationship between the leader and follower (Allix N. M., 2000), often overshadowed by the leader's transformative efforts to create organizational collaboration. Transformational leadership theory may have reached the theoretical and practical point at which it is no longer a viable option worth pursuing (Campion, Klinger, & Siangchokyo, 2020), yet the base-line concepts of transformational theory may prove useful for those who wish to expand upon the leader-follower relationship as a means to bring the ambitions of transformational leadership theory scholars to fruition.

Framework for Analysis

The nature of the research question lends itself to a qualitative study of existing academic literature and research. Were there ample time and additional human resources necessary to designate a target audience, develop or borrow a set of questions pertaining to preferred leadership traits or follower attitudes, distill the data into useable and meaningful figures, the study may have been able to connect its relativity to established studies. Through the thorough and independent examination of works of established scholars, the study organically developed its own conceptual roadmap, linking one concept to another, each theory offering its own little diversion, introducing new ideas and ways of thinking or behaving, each in turn enhancing the journey of academic exploration.

The bulk of the research would be focused on literature from 1978 forward, particularly in the Western hemisphere, and culling information from various social science journals. Cultural, geographical, political, and religious factors all contributed to an environment in which new and individualistic leadership models could develop. Transformational leadership theory developed in the United States as a result of societal change and a shift from manufacturing and farming professions into service related industries that promoted active participation on behalf of

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the employee through individual thought and the created the opportunity for autonomous decision making within their designated job description. While the intention of transformational theory may be to increase organizational commitment and productivity, it is not the same as lean management or the Japanese Kaizen principle of process improvement, rather the idea is to engage the employee, and seek to develop their individual skill sets with the theoretical net result being organizational improvement and stakeholder satisfaction, regardless of structure or application.

Where other cultures and political scenarios would not allow for transformational leadership techniques to take hold, the U.S. was ripe for the research and ideological examination of new ways of thinking in terms of the symbiotic transformational leader-follower relationship. Uniformly discounting the asymmetrical transactional management practices deemed too traditional to meet the needs of the contemporary employee, modern leadership theorists promoted models that embraced intrinsic motivations and knowledge-based sources of authoritative power, as opposed to traditional/positional sources that relied upon punishment versus reward models to encourage long-term employee commitment. The greater social leadership experiment, known as transformational leadership theory, is one that recognizes the role of both the leader and the follower, and is in turn a model unique to a society that lives and breathes the virtues of individualism.

More accurately, and in particular, certain concepts were used to analyze texts and glean pertinent information used for the structuring of the research process and the development of foundational support for the research question and the justification of said research. Beginning with the contradictive relationship between transformational and transactional leadership models, we then refine our research by examining ancillary leadership topics such as authentic

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leadership, followership theory, change agency/management, situational leadership, the notion of employee empowerment, the role of ethical decision making, intrinsic versus extrinsic employee motivation, and inevitably, the prominent role the millennial generation will play in the practical application, or rescinding of, transformational leadership techniques. Depending on results, the study of transformational leadership may see a decline in both academic and professional interest, paving way for the next movement in theoretical leadership practice, with or without conceptual regard for the role of the active employee versus that of the passive subordinate, despite empirical data or anecdotal evidence.

As is the case in any qualitative research, there are certain inherent limitations affecting the breadth and quality of the research. Individual researches carry within themselves latent biases that play a role in the selection of materials used as will any cognitive shortcomings or educational gaps that render some scholarly works unapproachable. It must also be addressed that there are current bodies of research on-going as well as those awaiting the results of the peer-reviewed process that have much to add to the conversation and overall body of research from which to draw upon. Although the approach of this study is qualitative, there exists room for quantitative study accompanied by statistical analysis that perhaps could further the reader's understanding of the subject matter, but due to time constraints, access to a diverse population of willing human participants, and the means to integrate the data, this study proceeded in a qualitative manner only. Further research will benefit from advances in the fields of sociology, psychology, economics, and global studies. Additionally, those conducting research will have the benefit of the use of enhanced technologies that will allow academics and practitioners alike greater access to diverse body of empirical evidence, innovative ideas, and thought processes alternate to their own.

Discussion & Analysis

The discussion should organically flow from the outcomes, or in the case of a qualitative study, the conceptual connections between various transformational leadership techniques, differences between said models and the established traditional/transactional method, and more importantly, practical implications for leaders and followers alike. Covering transformational topics such as followership theory, authentic leadership, and evaluation of the fundamentally flawed yet seductive Hersey-Blanchard or situational model, measurable emotional intelligence (EQ/EI) of leaders, the impact of leader versus subordinate change management and agency, individual empowerment as a reflection of the organizational leader, an examination of both intrinsic and extrinsic employee/subordinate motivations, and recognized characteristic traits, complacency oriented similarities, and ideological differences between age oriented employee groupings, involuntarily biased against those of accelerated age and those possessing real-world experience and conventional wisdom. Within these sub-topics, therein lies a bounty of evidence/material for continued academic research, theoretically yielding new insights into the minds of leaderful managers and follower employees alike, equally sharing the burden of the progressive transformational didactic transformational leadership relationships.

Taking into consideration sub-conscious biases of authors, the period in which each study was conducted, the reason for the research itself, we see a picture develop in which the disagreements exist, but do not require an abandonment of existing work. There are commonalities between models that allow for both criticism and praise, each helping to cement a theoretical foundation upon which to build a practical application of leadership practice that recognizes the democratic interplay between the leader and the follower. Leadership scholars and practitioners should find sufficient useful information to justify the continued allowance of

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transformational leadership theory into not just the conversation, but as a talking point of continued and future research in the field of leadership, with particular attention paid to the active role of the follower in the success of the leader-follower relationship.

Conclusion

The manner in which transformational leadership techniques and practices are presented by learned academics is fundamentally flawed, as it routinely neglects the role of the follower in the development of the transformational leader. If we are to assume a clearly discernible causal relationship between leader and follower, as transformational theorists and practitioners would have us, then we should expect some modicum of direct evidence of the proposed transformational relationship between the actions of leaderful managers and the correlative reactions of active-participant followers.

This study concludes in agreement with those scholars who find fault with transformational leadership theory based on a presumptive correlation between the transformational traits or behaviors of the would-be leader and the level of organizational commitment of the targeted follower. Transformational leadership theory relative to transactional theory does recognize the importance of the follower, yet despite its best efforts, holds the leader in a position of power or undo esteem that has a direct negative correlative effect upon the follower, turning leaderful attempts at transformational behavior into little more than organizational lip service. While transformational leadership does recognize the leader-follower relationship, by design it fails in its attempts to empower, develop, encourage modeled leaderful behavior, and ultimately, the application of transformational leadership theory is inadequate for retaining the motivated and skilled workers of tomorrow.

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Transformational leadership theory does have considerable merits relative to the awakening of our minds of transactional leadership practice shortcomings, presenting the scholarly and professional worlds with techniques, that at least theoretically, would develop employees and build organizational commitment. While the works of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) are to be commended, as well as those other scholars who have expounded on their research, we should thank critics such as Yukl (1999), Allix (2000), and Campion et al. (2020) who have shed light on the issue or causal correlation between the actions or traits of the leader and the desired transformed behaviors of the follower.

The results of this qualitative study suggest that any and all parties with a vested interest in leadership theory, from scholars, to corporations, to educational institutions, use available resources to build upon existing research with a focus on the examination of the leader-follower relationship leadership model. Scholars and practitioners should work together to construct an implementable organizational model that genuinely seeks to develop followers, not because it is what's in the best interest of the other stakeholders and not because it is how we would like to be treated. A successful leader-follower model built upon transformational leadership theory must seek to develop and empower followers because it is ethical to do so, to treat others as they deserve to be treated. We must refine our mutual understanding of the transformative nature of the leader-follower relationship, recognizing that transformational behavior stems from the mutual development of both the follower and the leader. Transformational leadership theory suffers when development of the leader-follower relationship is not mutual, resulting in a transformational leadership model that is essentially transactional in its application.

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Appendix A

Characteristic	Transformational leader	Transactional leader
Individualized consideration	Gives personal attention to others, making each individual feel uniquely valued.	Accepts organizational goals. Works within the system. Maintains a steady state.
Intellectual stimulation	Actively encourages a new look at old methods, stimulates creativity and encourages others to look at problems and issues in a new way.	Generally gets performance from others by offering rewards.
Inspirational motivation	Increases optimism and enthusiasm, communicates high expectations and points out possibilities not previously considered.	Focuses more on a series of transactions.
Idealized influence	Provides vision and a sense of purpose. Elicits respect, trust and confidence from followers.	Uses social systems with a clear chain of command.
Benefits for followers	Creates learning opportunities for followers and stimulates followers to solve problems.	Encourages followers to set goals and promises rewards for desired performance.
Sense of urgency	Is proactive and forms new expectations in followers.	Is responsive and focuses on dealing with present issues.
Knowledge sharing	Typically more effective at creating and sharing knowledge at individual and group levels.	Can be more effective at exploiting knowledge at the organizational level.
Strategy	Focuses on long-term strategic goals of the business.	Focuses on short-term, day-to-day leadership.

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(Snee, 2010)