Transformational Leadership and Organizational Development: Some Reflections from Institution of Higher Learning in Himachal Pradesh

O P Monga and Anubhav Monga

1 Professor of Sociology c/o Department of Sociology, Himachal Pradesh University, Summer Hill, Shimla. 
2 Anubhav Monga, Technical Lead (HCL Technologies), Deutsche Bank, Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Abstract: Faculty's willingness to change is crucial for successful implementation of development in an organisation. This study was carried out to investigate influence of the transformational leadership style on faculty’s willingness to change. This study was conducted in a private university in Himachal Pradesh that has recently geared up its academic, research and information system to assure its place in first 200 global universities by the end of this decade. Qualitative and quantitative approaches formed basis for collection fo requisite empirical information. The qualitative insight revealed that through preaching, motivating and leading by good example a chief executive officer exerts a positive influence on faculty members’ willingness to change. In contrast to this, the quantitative investigation pointed out that there is superficial or no relationship between transformational leadership and the motivational factors of willingness to change. Above all it was observed that the most important factors of faculty members’ willingness to change are timing, involvement, emotions, necessity, salary, recognition, added value, etc. The oscillation of leadership, between transformational and transactional styles through situational does not reflect healthy trend in organizational development. To assure organizational development, quality of education and healthy nurture of faculty members’ willingness to change, transformational leadership alone seems to best suit for fulfillment of the cherished vision to find place in global arena.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Willingness to change, Resistance, organizational development.

I. Introduction

Technological revolutions, especially Internet Computer Technology (ICT) places innovation and renewal at centre of academic agenda of any university. There is general agreement among academicians, researchers, administrators and planners that change in university organization depends on its leadership. Willingness to change and capability of innovation stems from the leadership. Devos, Vanderheyden and Van den Broek held that employees' willingness to change and their capability of innovation primarily stem from their leaders. Their influence on their staff gives leaders not only a direct influence on the execution of the change process, but indirectly also on its success [1]. There are three popular theoretical explanations which highlight mechanism of change by implementing IT-based educational system. These are: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis [2], Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Fishbein and Ajzen [3], and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen [4]. TAM outlines that the measurement of the acceptance of IT changes is often based on two important determinants: (1) perceived usefulness: the degree to which a new system is thought to be better than its predecessor; and (2) perceived ease of use: the degree to which an individual expects the usage of the new system to be simple i.e. comfortable.

Willingness to change is only useful if it actually also leads to action, that is, behaviour that supports the change. Ajzen is the chief advocate and key author in this area [4]. Together with Fishbein [3], he developed a model for the correlation between attitude and behaviour. This is the theory of reasoned action (TRA). Ajzen modified the original TRA model and expanded it to three variables (motivational powers) that each exerts influence on the intention to behave in a certain way. According to him, the third variable is the experienced control over the behaviour, and the degree to which one is convinced of the attainability of the objective that has been set. Metselaar pointed out that the TPB can also be applied to the area of change management. The attitude towards change is, for the greater part, determined by the factor of uncertainty that so often comes along [5].

Lewin [6] defined resistance as the employee’s development of counter powers against changes. Whenever a certain change is introduced in an organisation, resistance against this change also emerges [7]. Resistance can be regarded as a natural tendency to repeatedly (wanting to) go back to a certain balance [8]. Zaltman and Duncan [9] defined resistance against change as "Every action that is aimed at preserving the current situation, despite the pressure of others to alter this situation". Keuning and Eppink [10] made distinction between the capability of, and the willingness to, change. The capability to change correlates with employees' qualitative abilities, whereas
their willingness to change far more depends on the mentality that exists at the moment of change. This study followed Metselaar, Cozijnsen and Van Delft [11] definition: "Willingness to change is an employee’s positive behavioural intention towards the implementation of a change in the structure, culture, or working methods of an organisation or department, resulting in an effort from this employee to actively or passively support the change process involved”, to understand phenomenon of transformational leadership and willingness to change. The model developed by them for willingness to change can be adapted to new scientific findings through evidence-based methodology (figure 1):

![Figure 1. Willingness to change model by Metselaar, Cozijnsen and Van Delft [11]](image)

This model is popularly known as Diagnostic Inventory for Assessment of willingness to change among Managers in Organisations (DINAMO) was first developed as a tool to map out the willingness to change among managers, but its later adaptation also relates it to employees. It is based on Azjen's [4] socio-psychological model. Metselaar and Cozijnsen [12] arranged the components that are said to exert influence on the willingness to change according to Ajzen three distinctions. They changed the names of the variables to ‘want to’, ‘have to’, ‘be able’. The model now has a total of thirteen factors (figure 2) which determines someone's willingness to change: Consequences of work, added value, emotions, involvement, internal pressure, external necessity, know-how and experience, control, information, adaptability, manageability, timing, and complexity of the process.

For realisation of any change in an organization, Kim and Mauborgne [13] emphasised that it is essential to involve staff in the planned change at an early stage, provide them with sufficient information, and explain why the change is desirable or necessary. These contentions can be safely applied to study organizational development in institutions of higher learning in the context of style of leadership.

![Figure 2: DINAMO Model of Change [12].](image)
II. Transformational leadership

Bass [14] distinguished between two contemporary leadership styles: transactional and transformational leadership. The former persuades employees and realised on management processes like systems, structures and control. It is reactive and deals with current issues through the system of incentives and rewards, punishment, sanctions for unacceptable performance, and targets and promising rewards for the preferred performance. The Full Range Leadership Theory propounded by Bass converges around three types of leadership, namely: transformational, transactional and laissez-faire or non-leadership. In contrast to this, the latter leadership style focuses on people, challenges the status quo, looks forward to future developments, inspires to understand and embrace new opportunities and possibilities [15].

It divides the leadership styles into component behaviours which describe the behaviour practised in that leadership style [16]. Michel, Lyons, and Cho [17] gave four dimensions of transformational leadership: first, idealised influence - the degree to which leaders reflect behaviour that attracts their followers admire, identify with, and trust them; second, inspirational motivation - has a clear vision, followers feel inspired by the vision and the leader; third, intellectual stimulation - this indicates in which leaders assess the value of the intellectual capabilities of their subordinates; and fourth, personal consideration - whereby the leaders behave as mentors and attend to subordinates’ worries, needs, and questions. Good feedback, advice, support, and encouragement comes from the senior colleagues. Transformational leaders have a vision and good rhetorical skills and use these skills to develop a strong emotional bond with their followers [18].

III. Organizational development and leadership

Various publications link leadership styles to the success or failure of organisational development/change. According to Devos et al. [1], employees' willingness to change and their capability of innovation primarily stem from their manager. Managers do not only have a direct influence on the execution of the change process, but indirectly also on its success through their influence on their staff [19, 20]. One factor in this is, the trust, in the manager, which has a positive influence on the willingness to change [21, 22]. Research by Stuart [23] and Jex and Britt [24] indicated that transformational leadership yields positive effects on employees’ willingness to change. They described a successful change manager as a manager with transformational leadership qualities. The basic concern of this study was to examine the question: To what extent does the transformational leadership style exerts influence on faculty members in a private university?

IV. Objectives:

1. To study readiness, necessity, and ability as predictors of willingness to change of faculty members.
2. To investigate association between transformational leadership and faculty members’ readiness, necessity, ability and willingness to change.

These objectives and question were investigated through five hypotheses:

H1. Transformational leadership correlates with faculty members’ willingness to change.
H2. The readiness to change, the necessity to change, and the ability to change are positive predictors of faculty members’ willingness to change.
H3. Transformational leadership correlates with faculty members’ readiness to change.
H4. Transformational leadership correlates with faculty members’ necessity to change.
H5. Transformational leadership correlates with faculty members’ ability to change.

V. Methodology

This study was conducted in one of the leading private university (name of university concealed) in Himachal Pradesh. It is five years old and besides being a research driven university, it provides UG, PG and research degree courses in engineering, pharmacy, basic sciences, biotechnology, food technology and management sciences. The top leadership is typically transformational. Though there are twelve private universities in this state, yet, focus on this university emerged from the fact that this university nurtures a distinct vision ‘to be among top global universities’ by the end of this decade and has for the last two years initiated organizational development on war footing in that direction. Both qualitative and quantitative and quantitative approaches were adopted. The qualitative information was used as the basis for quantitative investigation.

The first part comprised content analysis of speeches and interactions in meetings of the top leaders, that is, the vice-chancellor and pro vice-chancellor. The second part focussed on cross-sectional study. A sample of 50 randomly selected faculty members was used to gain insight into the faculty members' willingness to change before or during the planned alteration. A ‘Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire’ (MLQ) developed by Metselaar, Cozijnsen and Van Delft [11] was used. It is primarily based on the DINAMO model which accommodates factors: participation, time, change history, work satisfaction, and emotional involvement identified by Devos et al. [1] and factors: involvement, explanation, and clarity in expectations identified by Kim and Mauborgne [13]. It measures three leadership styles, and this study focused on the transformational leadership style. Before the
administration of the MLQ, it was tested for reliability through Cronbach's alpha. As a thumb of rule, usually 0.70 or higher is used in scientific research. Before the quantitative investigation, a clearer picture of the experiences, methods, and context of the university organisation was analysed in first part of the study. In this study, which focused on a change in the past, interviews were conducted with the top management responsible for the implementation of the new strategy to achieve its vision within a given system. Fifty faculty members' (including professors, associate professors and assistant professors) who constituted the sample were asked, how they currently scored when it came to their willingness to change and the leadership style that they experienced.

VI. Results

Analysis of qualitative information revealed that the transition towards the cherished vision was regarded as an organisational development/change. It involved changes that were carried through increasingly further, but the foundation of which had already been laid two years ago. Implementation of organizational change led to some resistance in the teaching fraternity across all faculties of this university. The most important reasons for the resistance experienced were:

- the lack of promotion and motivation by fellow deans, directors and heads of schools;
- lack of clarity about the necessity of new change where the professors were concerned;
- lack of proper understanding as to why all this "overlap of administrative role" was necessary;
- affirmation to adherence to an old, familiar system till time is ripe for change at all levels; and
- rather wanting to focus on the consolidation of primary processes.

Nevertheless, there was affirmation that without proper perception of the "vision" by one and all, 'what they intended to deliver' may not be possible for them for want of willingness and readiness of faculty members. The role of the responsible leader is crucial and so the role of the formal and informal fellow members. An enthusiastic and motivated team was perceived very crucial component by the leadership. It was felt that the core team of management, overtly and covertly, exerts a positive influence on the fellow members. Quantitative analysis showed that approximately three-fourths (74%) were male, and one-fourths (26%) female. Of them 20 percent were above 50 years and remaining were between 35 to 50 years. Of the fifty respondents, 36 percent expressed that they have been actively involved in the implementation of the new change mechanism of the university for the last two years. The readiness to change showed the strongest correlation with the willingness to change when compared with the need to change and the ability to change. The best predictors from the DINAMO model for determining the willingness to change among the faculty members were:

- the involvement in the change process;
- the emotions that the change evoked; and
- the added value of the change itself.

It was found that six (out of thirteen) factors significant positive correlation with willingness to change, and hence, hypothesis "of faculty members' willingness to change faculty members' was rejected. The six factors positively related with willingness to change are timing, involvement, emotions, necessity, added value and information. But the factor information showed a low value of Cronbach's alpha.

The presence of transformational leadership indicated positive correlation with faculty members' readiness to change, in view of a proposed vision. The correlation of transformational leadership with the variables that determine this readiness were positive for the variables of emotions, added value and involvement, but not significant, and therefore, the hypothesis “Transformational leadership correlates with faculty members' readiness to change” was rejected.

In view of the vision, the transformational leadership came out with significant correlation with need to change. The correlations of transformational leadership with the variables that determine this need are positive, but not significant. The hypothesis “Transformational leadership correlates with faculty members' necessity to change” was rejected.

The presence of transformational leadership correlated positively with faculty members' ability to change in view of the ongoing vision. The correlations of transformational leadership with the variables that describe this ability were both positive and negative and were not significant. The hypothesis “Transformational leadership correlates with faculty members' ability to change”, therefore, was rejected.

It was observed that the transformational leadership exhibited insignificant positive correlation with faculty members' willingness to change in the light of the vision. The hypothesis, "Transformational leadership correlates with faculty members' willingness to change" was rejected.

On comparative analysis of the scores for leadership style and the underlying factors, it was found that leaders i.e. deans, directors and school heads scored more positive on leadership style and the underlying dimensions than their fellow colleagues at subordinate level.

A similar observation was found in terms of the motivational factors and the willingness to change measured by the DINAMO questionnaire. Except the factor of controllability, leaders at second level are of a more favourably disposition than their subordinate fellow colleagues.
VII. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis and interpretation of results showed that the most important factors of faculty members’ willingness to change are timing, involvement, emotions, necessity, and added value. It was also revealed that there is no relationship between transformational leadership and the motivational factors of willingness to change and the willingness itself. Interestingly, no significant positive correlation was found for any of the hypotheses, or Cronbach's alpha did not meet the requirements set, and therefore, all the hypotheses stand rejected. From this, it may be concluded that the study fell short of demonstrating a positive correlation between transformational leadership and the motivational factors of willingness to change and the willingness itself. The factors of the change model, however, could be compared with the willingness to change itself. As the Cronbach’s alpha happened to be smaller than 0.70, no reliable conclusions may be drawn. Nevertheless, the results are relevant and noteworthy. The factors from the DINAMO model that showed the greatest significant correlation with willingness to change were timing, involvement, emotions, information, external necessity, and added value. This points out that the most relevant predictors of willingness to change primarily fall in the ambit of ‘readiness’.

However, it was observed from the qualitative exploration that through leading by good example, a leader exerts a positive influence on faculty members’ willingness to change. Further, it was demonstrated that the transformational leadership plays a vital role in faculty members’ acceptance of the vision and change. It also becomes clear from the qualitative observation that, when it comes to change in the direction of vision, a few issues evoke the most resistance among the employees. For instance, these are:

- the lack of promotion and motivation by fellow deans, directors and heads of schools;
- Lack of clarity about the necessity of denting at the infant existing system where the faculty members were concerned;
- Half baked approach, as to why all the administration is necessary
- Forceful pull towards familiar/old system; and
- Increased focus on the primary process.

To be explicit, flexibility and the ability to respond to a demanded and prerequisite to a change are essential and vital to achieve the goal of established vision. The world of IT, which permeates education delivery system today is characterised by quick succession of technological changes one over the other. This means that institutions of higher learning should be flexible and able to operate dynamically, and accept and perceive that the world around them changes in tune with global perspective.

Top leadership is responsible for an organization, but within the organisation deans, directors, school heads, etc., need to understand their responsibility and assess their influence on their fellow colleague and subordinates. They not only have a direct influence on execution of the change process, but indirectly also on its success. They need set role models and good example.

Unfortunately, given the circumstances, on one hand craze to lead and to realise vision, and on the other hand being transactional in terms of nurturing of irrational policies, compromise with the quality, disregard teaching and teachers, lack of recognition and pay fairness etc., indicates an amalgam of multiple leadership styles which may not auger well in future. The transformational leadership is a very sensitive phenomenon and needs to be pure and put into practice in an intelligent way, otherwise, quality of education and respect for teaching and teachers may be its first casualty, in the long run. The transformational leadership needs to nurture and cherish values of rationality, humanism and high standards of education, to thrive and serve best in global academic world.

Monga (2015) pointed out that outstanding educational leadership principles and styles may be adopted intelligently and in right direction for enhancing educational management [25].

The rhetoric amongst us continues to ponder over a very crucial issue of how to transform one’s positive willingness to change into a desired behaviour: to accept the vision and the change and thereby realise the goal. It may be pointed out, ‘greater the willingness to change, higher the chance that it will actually be transformed into desired behaviour.

References