

## TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN NURSING

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### ABSTRACT

*Developing a high quality, performance oriented nursing workforce has become the need for the hour and every nurse leader strive to inspire the followers in order to create committed, enthusiastic team which work beyond the requirements of the job. The concept of leadership is also changing with the emergence of various theories and frameworks. As a result, many nurse leaders have adopted various emerging leadership styles, Transformational leadership is one among them. The word transformational leadership was coined by James Victor Downton in the year 1973. James MacGregor Burns, an authority on leadership studies defined transformational leadership as “a process by which leaders raise the aspirations and motivations of others to higher levels by appealing to higher ideals and values. The transformational leadership which is grounded on moral foundations has got mainly 4 components, essentially known as the 4I’s of Transformational Leadership. They are Idealized Influence (II), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individual Consideration (IC). These four components of transformational leadership are schematically represented by the model of transformational leadership. The model suggests that even though these four components are interdependent, they must harmonize to yield a performance which is beyond expectations. The effective use of a transformational leadership will result in a performance that exceeds the organizational expectations. This is often referred as the “additive effect” of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership has got wide implications in nursing leadership and is a powerful management strategy for nurse leaders. It enables nurse leaders to implement change effectively and is an essential medium to develop an effective nursing workforce. Even though transformational leadership is considered as an effective leadership strategy, one major criticism is the use of impression management in transformational leadership. Healthcare system is dynamic and is on continuous metamorphosis, hence it is imperative for nurse leaders to embrace a leadership style that enable followers to adapt the changes and works towards the organizational vision. Transformational leadership is considered as one of the most effective leadership strategy to achieve this. As a result of transformational leadership nurses at all levels in the organization perceive that their voices are heard, their inputs are valued and their practices are being supported.*

**KEYWORDS:** Transformational leadership, Nursing leadership, Leadership theory, Full range leadership.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Developing a high quality, performance oriented nursing workforce has become the need for the hour and every nurse leader strive to inspire the followers in order to create committed, enthusiastic team which work beyond the requirements of the job. The concept of leadership is also changing with the emergence of various theories and frameworks. Leadership is the art of influencing people so that they contribute readily and actively to the organizations’ goal. The workplace success of any employee is directly reflecting the effort and effect of the leader. Effective leadership is a vehicle which helps to satisfy the consumer demands (Schwartz, Spencer, Wilson, & Wood., 2011). As a result, many nurse leaders have adopted various emerging leadership styles, Transformational leadership is one among them. When people are in a group, precipitously one person take the control of the group with very clear vision and group goals, exhibit a clear desire to work and makes the team feel enthusiastic and

energized. This is then, we identify a person as a transformational leader. The paper is organized under sections of definition, evolution of transformational leadership, characteristics of a transformational leader, transformational leadership model, additive effect of transformational leadership, transactional vs. transformational leadership, full range leadership, transformational leadership- implications in nursing, and criticisms of transformational leadership.

## **II. DEFINITION**

The term 'Transformational Leadership' has undergone lot of research and discussions at various levels. James MacGregor Burns, an authority on leadership studies defined transformational leadership as, "A process by which leaders raise the aspirations and motivations of others to higher levels by appealing to higher ideals and values" (Burns, 1978). Bass (1985) defined transformational leadership based on means by which a leader transform his/her followers. He identified three cardinal ways by which a leader transforms followers, and they were; "1. Increasing their awareness of task importance and value, 2. Getting them to focus first on team or organizational goals, rather than their own interests and 3. Activating their higher-order needs". Doody and Doody (2012) defined transformational leadership as "A process that motivates followers by appealing to higher ideas and moral values where the leader has a deep set of internal values and ideas and is persuasive at motivating followers to act in a way that sustains the greater good rather than their own interests". Northouse (2013) defined transformational leadership as "The style of leadership in which the leader identifies the needed change, creates a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executes the change with the commitment of the members of the group".

## **III. EVOLUTION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

The word transformational leadership was coined by James Victor Downton in the year 1973 (Downton J, V., 1973). Further works on this concept was done by James McGregor Burns (Goethals, Sorenson & Burns, 2004). The Transformational leadership theory was formulated by Burns, a leadership expert and presidential biographer (Smith A, M., 2011). According to Burns, transformational leadership can be seen when "leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of moral and motivation" (Burns, 1978). In a further level Bernard M. Bass worked more on Burn's ideas and developed the transformational leadership as which is currently stated as "Bass' Transformational Leadership Theory" (Bass, 1985). Bass mentioned that transformational and transactional models of leadership are not two separate entities, but they form two opposite ends of a leadership continuum. Bass identified four key interrelated leadership components with associated attributes that were believed to be essential for leaders to use to demonstrate a more transformational leadership style. The components include Idealized Influence (II), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individual Consideration (IC). These 4 components are often referred as the 4 Is of Transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Schwartz et al., 2011).

## **IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER**

A transformational leader must possess various personal and professional attributes. To be a transformational leader a person must possess and demonstrate a chain of characteristics and attributes. A transformational leader is a person of deeds and not of words. The characteristics of an effective transformational leader are given below and can be represented using mnemonic '*Transformational Leader*'.

Trustworthy	Respectful	Adaptable	Nurturing
Stable	Facilitating	Optimistic	Reliable
Motivational	Active listener	Team oriented	Inspirational
Organized	Negotiating	Assertive	Legitimate
Life-long learning	Emotionally intelligent	Appreciative	Delegating
	Effectively communicating	Risk-taking	

Figure 1: Characteristics of a Transformational Leader

## V. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL

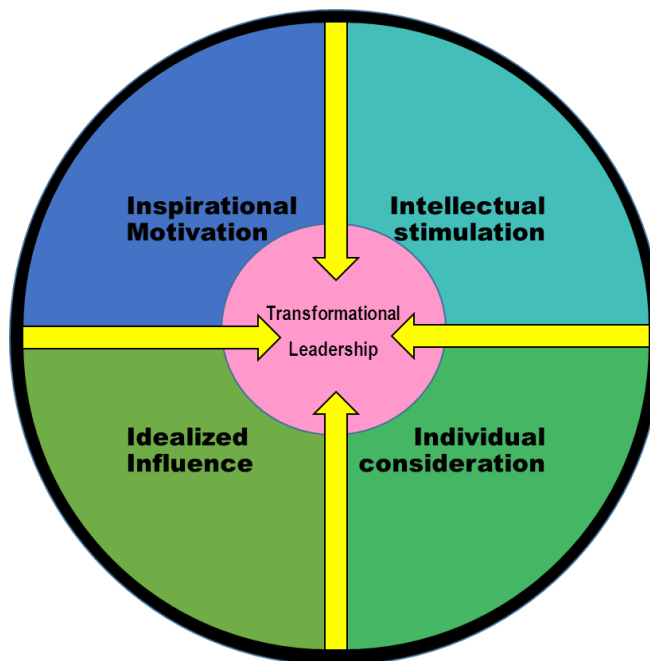


Figure 2: Transformational Leadership Model

Transformational leadership can be implemented at all levels of an organization starting from team level, department level, division level and at last the organization as a whole. The model schematically represents the four components (intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence) of transformational leadership (Managementstudyguide.com, 2015). It depicts the effect that the leader has on his followers which leads to positive changes in followers. The model suggests that even though these four components are interdependent, they must harmonize to yield a performance which is way beyond expectations of the organization.

**Inspirational Motivation:** Inspiration and motivation are two major components of transformational leadership. A transformational leader motivates the follower to accomplish the goals and objectives of the organization while inspiring them to achieve their own aims. Aligning the individual needs with the organizational needs is an essential strategy of inspirational motivation. The transformational leaders strive to foster the spirit of teamwork and commitment. A transformational leader clarify, the vision, mission and strategic goals of the organization and create a strong sense of purpose among the followers.

**Intellectual Stimulation:** The leader encourages & appreciates the innovative & creative ideas of the staff members. Staff members are never blamed or criticized publicly for the mistakes committed by them. Through intellectual stimulation a transformational leader stimulates critical thinking, enhances problem solving and empowers the followers (Thompson, E. M., 2011). A transformational leader encourages the employees to think outside of the box and encourages the imagination of the employees. In clinical settings a nurse leader intellectually stimulates the followers to think rationally and act scientifically to enhance evidence based practice. They are stirred to look out for better ways to do things. In an academic setting nurse educators strive to stimulate the staff to deliver the best possible high quality education to the students.

**Individualized Consideration:** Individualized consideration refers to the attribute of being a compassionate leader. Leaders act as mentors to their followers and reward them for creativity and innovation. A transformational leader is a master of communication skills and demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills. Transformational leaders show sincere care and compassion towards the followers. The followers are supported based on their needs and are nurtured based on their talents. The employees are often empowered to take decisions and are provided necessary support to implement those decisions. A transformational leader is interested in continuous development and growth of employees.

**Idealized Influence:** The philosophy of transformational leadership believe that unless a leader practice what he preaches, he won't be able to influence the followers. Idealized influence work on the principle of 'actions speak louder than words'. A transformational leader act as a mentor and a role model for the subordinates. Thus, a transformational leader win the trust and respect of the followers and they try to emulate the leader. When a leader becomes a role model it is unlikely to have a resistance to change from the part of followers when a new decision is being taken.

## VI. ADDITIVE EFFECT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The effective use of a transformational leadership will result in a performance that exceeds the organizational expectations. This is often referred as the "additive effect" of transformational leadership. The transformational leaders put together the four components of transformational leadership to reach a state of performance which is way beyond expectations of the organization (Northouse, 2001). The additive effect ( IS+IC+IM+II= PBE) is summarized as figure 3.

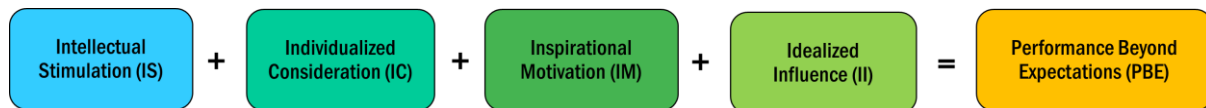


Figure 3: Additive Effect of Transformational Leadership

## VII. TRANSACTIONAL VS. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transactional and transformational leadership are two distinct leadership styles. Transactional leadership is more concerned with maintenance of standards of practice. It is often referred as "keeping the ship afloat". Transactional leaders motivate the subordinates to achieve the goals and reward them for their good work. A Transformational leader is someone who is not only concerned in the daily operations, but also is interested in the future growth of the organization. They goes beyond the level of day-to-day operations. A transformational leader envisions the future of the organization and strategize plans to achieve it.

## VIII. FULL RANGE LEADERSHIP

The theory of full range leadership (figure 4) explicates that there exists a constellation of leadership styles (behaviors) which range from transactional leadership behaviors to transformational leadership behaviors (Michel, Lyons, & Cho, 2010). The components of transactional leadership includes, Laissez-Faire (LF) leadership, Management By Exception (MBE), and Contingent Rewards (CR). Inspirational Motivation (IM); Intellectual Stimulation (IS); Idealized Influence (II); and Individualized Consideration (IC) are the components of transformational leadership. The full range leadership theory

model enables the leader to select a leadership style that is most relevant for the context or situation (lanrpubs.unl.edu, 2015).

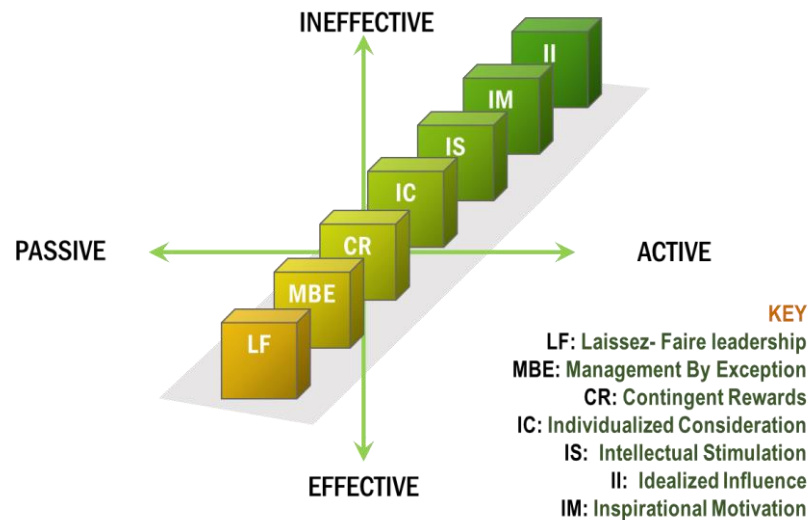


Figure 4: Schematic Representation of Full Range Leadership

## IX. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: IMPLICATIONS IN NURSING

Transformational leadership is a powerful management strategy for nurse leaders and has got wide implications on nursing administration. Transformational leadership is an excellent strategy to mentor the novice nurses. A novice nurse trained under transformational leadership develops trust and commitment to the organization. Professional values such as teamwork, accountability and responsibility can be instilled in them, so that they get transformed to be an effective team player. Transformational change enables leaders to implement change effectively. In the milieu of transformational leadership, the leaders confluence the individual goal with the organizational goal. The leader and followers works towards the organizational mission hence change is rarely followed by resistance.

Transformational leadership is an essential medium to develop an effective nursing workforce. A transformational leader generates positive vibes in the organization, by inspiring others, possessing an optimistic attitude, being genuine and encouraging. Developing a healthy work environment is a major leadership goal for a transformational leader. A transformational leader generates a mature work force that is team oriented, self-motivated and committed towards the organizational vision. This leads to improved staff satisfaction and reduced staff turnover.

The 'Magnet Recognition Program' recognizes healthcare organizations for quality patient care, nursing excellence and innovations in professional nursing practice (Nursecredentialing.org, 2015). Transformational leadership is considered as a component of 'Magnet model' by the 'American Nurses Credentialing Center' (Nursecredentialing.org, 2015). According to this, nurse leaders at all levels must be advocates for staff and patients to transform values, beliefs and behaviors. The nurse leader must be strategically positioned to successfully influence the stakeholders, including the board of directors.

Transformational nurse leaders can make positive changes in the healthcare settings, where it would be challenging to do without committed followers. Involving the fellow followers in decision making, empowers them to achieve the vision of the organization. This further transforms the followers to become effective nurse leaders of tomorrow (Rolfe P, 2011). As a result of transformational leadership nurses at all levels in the organization perceive that their voices are heard, their inputs are valued and their practices are being supported.

## X. CRITICISMS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Even though transformational leadership is considered as an effective leadership strategy, one major criticism is the use of impression management in transformational leadership. Impression management is made use of in transformational leadership and therefore sometimes, it can lead to self-promotion of the leaders. It is difficult to teach or train this theory as it is a combination of various leadership styles

and theories. It is likely that the followers might get manipulated by the leaders and might result in loss than gain (Managementstudyguide.com, 2015)

## XI. CONCLUSION

Healthcare system is dynamic and is on continuous metamorphosis, hence it is imperative for nurse leaders to embrace a leadership style that enable followers to adapt the changes and works towards the organizational vision. Transformational leadership is considered as one of the most effective leadership strategies to achieve this. A transformational leader inspires followers and creates a sense of commitment among them. The four components of transformational leadership includes inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; idealized influence and individualized consideration. Even though these four components are interdependent, they must harmonize to yield a performance which is beyond expectations. Transformational leadership is a powerful management strategy for nurse leaders and has got wide implications on nursing administration. As a result of transformational leadership nurses at all levels in the organization perceive that their voices are heard, their inputs are valued and their practices are being supported.

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