

AN EVALUATION OF THE OSHANA REGION SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' ON THE SEVEN FACTORS RELATED TO TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the level to which School Principals in Oshana Region Namibia utilise the transformational leadership style in their daily school administration. The study used a quantitative research design through the use of a questionnaire which was administered to 40 school principals in selected schools in Oshana Namibian School Region. Findings of the study show that the school principals still lack most of the factors for transformational leadership. Another finding was that school principals are using the Laissez-faire type of leadership and management by exception. The study recommended that the school principals

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need to undergo continuous staff development on transformational leadership style for them to improve their administration strategies.

KEYWORDS: Transformational leadership, Leadership, School management: *Idealized*, Influence or charisma, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, Individualized consideration, Contingent reward, Management-by-exception.

INTRODUCTION

The discipline of leadership is one of the most important fields of study that is elusive and has been misunderstood since time in memorial. It is a phenomenon which has so many definitions but very difficult to comprehend and summaries them in a single sentence. One of the most frequently asked question in any leadership discourse and discussion is whether leaders are born or made, (Nikodemus, 2009). This is supported by Omeke and Onah (2012) and Simon (2008) who expounded that leadership is the key to progress and survival of any organisation and it is indispensable to educational administration due to its far reaching effects on the achievement of school programmes, objectives as well as the accomplishment of educational goals. During the 19th century, functions of the principal were merely focused on controlling, monitoring and planning. The contemporary role of the school principal has expanded and additional responsibilities have been added on the principal's shoulders. The school principal is expected to double as a father figure, a mentor and a coach to both learners and staff at the school. School principals are expected to motivate, inspire, instil positive values and create an enabling work environment needed for effective teaching and learning at school. School leaders must play a vital role by creating a sense of belonging and altruistic purpose among teachers, learners and all educational stakeholders.

It is important to note that leaders and managers have different roles to play in any given work situation. However, leaders are mainly concerned with the vision and the strategy of the organisation, while managers must deal with all activities which are concerned with the implementation of the vision and the organisational strategy by ensuring that the strategy of the organisation is operational and have been converted into workable plans to achieve organisational objectives. Ryan (2008) expounded that in the absence of a proper viable leadership style, effective performance among learners and staff members will be a pipe dream. School principals need to acquire sound knowledge, skills and expertise in employing relevant leadership styles to achieve both school as well as national educational goals.

In Namibia, formal education has been a priority of the government since independence in 1990. The education sector has been receiving a large portion of the national budget. The government of the Republic of Namibia has adopted a 15-year strategic plan through the Education and Training System Improvement Programme (ETSIP) (Ministry of Education, 2008: 21). This educational plan covers the period from 2005-2020 and it focuses on the need to improve the quality of education in the country. The ETSIP programme is guided by the country's national vision statement, Vision 2030 which sets a very ambitious target that by 2030, Namibia should join the ranks of high income countries and affords all its citizens a quality of life comparable to that of developed countries (Republic of Namibia, 2007).

The Ministry of Education in schools in Northern Namibia is concerned about the poor performances of learners at grade 10 and 12 which have remained below 40% for the past seven years. This poor performance contradicts the governments' National Vision 2030 goal number six which states that Namibia need to be an industrialised Nation with sufficient manpower in all sectors. The goal for ETSIP was to improve performance of learners in schools with an inspiration vision and goals, who use transformational leadership style to lead their teachers. The leadership qualities of a school principal in Northern Namibia have

posed serious implications on the performance of both learners and teachers. Teachers are demotivated, and the human records for 2014 reflect that Northern Namibian schools reported the greatest number of transfers in comparison to other regions in Namibia. Schools are losing their institutional memories as more teachers are transferring to other regions of Namibia. The Ministry of Education is advocating that all the school principals should utilise the transformational leadership as their leadership style. It is hoped that as school principals utilize this style this will improve the results for grade 10 and 12 in all Namibian schools but this does not seem to be the case for Schools in Northern Namibian regions.

The level of application of the transformational leadership style influences the extent to which the teachers can execute their duties and the commitment teachers can put into their work. In the schools headed by principals utilising the transformational leadership style, teachers develop a total ownership and autonomy of the whole learning that transpires in an outside the school. Such teachers are empowered and have a sense of responsibility and accountability. Thus, it was considered suitable to have an insight into the extent to which school principals in schools in Northern Namibia are utilising the transformational leadership style in their various schools. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to use the multifactor leadership instrument (MLQ-6S) to evaluate the level of application of the transformational leadership style in the schools in Northern Namibia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study adopted the Transformational leadership theory by James Burns. Transformational leadership theory was founded in 1978 (April and Peters, 2010). This leadership theory suggests that human interaction is the one that bring about strong interpersonal relationships and these relationships will lead to the development of trust and ultimately improve on the followers' ability to be lead. This relationship will lead to a transformation of the

followers through inspiration thereby improving their productive capacity in the workplace (Yunus & Suraya, 2012). Schools are expected to thrive and obtain results in an environment dominated by uncertainty and continuous evolution of technological, social, political and economic changes. Andrea, (2014) argued that many organisations are finding themselves in precarious leadership situations which require constant adaptation. In such situations, organisations including schools need effective leadership to guide them through changes that often tend to be very diverse and difficult to manage. Schools need to transform their operations to sustain their success and must revamp their organizational culture to affect the necessary changes, to improve performance.

Bass (2014) has extensively commended that there are mainly three pillars of authority, which are tradition, rights, privileges and charisma which are like heroism and an exemplary character of a person. Among the three pillars, charisma is strongly associated with transformational leadership, where a charismatic leader attaches the utmost value to his vision, speech, capacity to take risks and above all the emotions of his subordinates. Omeke & Onah (2015) has also elaborated that transformational leaders possess the following characteristics, namely:

(1) *Idealised influence or charisma*: based on follower reactions and leader behavior. Followers identify with and admire these leaders. Such leaders are deeply respected, have referent power, set high standards and challenging goals for their followers. Charisma demonstrates the provision of a common vision and sense of mission which is necessary for effective transformation. Transformational leaders should possess clear sets of values and demonstrate them in every action and decision they take, providing a role model for their followers, to inculcate trust between the leader and follower built on moral and ethical foundation (Bass, 2014). Burger & Kabajani (2012) elaborated the concept of charismatic leadership by emphasizing that this is one of the most important value based style which leads to emotional bondage between leaders and followers. Followers transcend their self-interests because

of their beliefs in a collective purpose Yunus & Suraya (2012) further elaborated that charismatic leadership builds trust, respect, admiration and commitment to the leader.

(2) *Inspirational motivation*: these leaders make use of symbols, images and prepare for realistic examples to create and raise awareness of shared and desired organisational goals. Transformational leaders are expected to express in simplistic manner the fundamental purpose of the transformational process and clearly communicate the accompanying higher expectations (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). Followers need to have a strong sense of purpose and must be continuously motivated to perform to the best of their abilities. It is imperative that the visionary aspect of leadership be supported by effective communication skills which allow a leader to articulate his or her vision with accuracy and power in a compelling and persuasive fashion (Cossin and Caballera, 2013).

(3) *Intellectual stimulation*: leaders allow followers to think independently and reflect on their values, beliefs and expectations, including those of the organization. Omeke & Onah (2015:67) argued that intellectual stimulation offers an opportunity for a leader to challenge assumptions, take risks and solicits followers' ideas. The leader's vision creates a framework for followers to identify themselves with the leader, bonds with the organization, connects to each other as well as to the goals of the organization. It opens opportunities for followers to see a bigger picture view, establish freedom for true interaction and convention in to creatively overcome any challenges in the way of the mission (Givens, 2008).

(4) *Individualized consideration*: leaders advocate for equal treatment of followers, democratic and delegate power and authority to subordinate to provide learning opportunities (Omeke & Onah, 2015). It is at this level where the leader must be able to attend the needs of each follower, act as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to their needs and concerns. Individualized consideration advocates for

the need to respect and celebrate the individual contribution that each follower can make to the entire team. Givens (2008) argued that through individualized consideration, the leader acknowledges the dynamism and the diversity of the team that gives its true strength.

(5) *Contingent reward*, demonstrates the extent to which sound transformation and exchange is set up between a leader and followers. The leader assists followers in exchange for their efforts. In the contingent reward process, transformational leader links organizational goals to rewards, clarify expectations, provide necessary resources, set mutually agreed up on goals, and provide bench marks for successful performance (Warrick, 2011).

(6) *Management-by-exception* explains whether leaders act either to prevent or resolve challenges. Management-by-exception allows the Transformational leader to closely monitor the activities of subordinates, identify deviations from rules and standards and assume responsibility to take corrective action to reinforce rules to prevent mistakes (Bassey, 2005). A leader may choose not to intervene until problems become much more serious and this state of affair is regarded as passive management by exception. The Transformational leader may choose to pay full attention to the problem by ushering orders to subordinates and ensure that followers abide to set rules and regulations and this process is called active management but exception. The absence or avoidance of any leadership circumstance is called “Laissez-faire” leadership (Burger & Kabajani, 2012). In the Laissez-faire leadership process, the leader creates a working environment where subordinates get many opportunities to make decisions. In most circumstances, the leader abdicates and delegate crucial responsibilities to subordinates while avoiding taking decisions, leading to lack of direction among followers (Amanchukwu, et al., 2015).

Givens (2008) described how Transformational leadership connects with performance by emphasizing that when more positive rewards are

given on outperformance, employees achieve fundamental success in terms of career growth and supervisor's satisfaction. Rewards and punishments are used to enhance performance. Amanchukwu (2015) argued that Transformational leadership represents a viable way of strengthening subordinate's goal commitment by creating a fertile environment for subordinates to attain work goals and on which intrinsic and extrinsic rewards followers will receive up on goal attainment thereby motivating them to contribute meaningfully towards improving organizational productivity.

On the contrary, Udoh and Agu (2012) criticized Transformational leadership by indicating that it heavily relies on rewards, does not bring the best out of employees, and less interested in changing the working environment and as such, has been ineffective in providing skilled employees to the organization.

Yunus & Suraya (2012) emphasized that ineffective leadership in schools often leads to poor pass rates among learners as well as low productivity among teachers. Dissatisfied teachers exhibit traits which are not inconformity with school objectives and often teachers may lack the drive to prepare well for school work. Unhappy teachers and staff members could experience a host of psychological problems such as stress, fatigue, muscle tension and weight loss. Andrea (2014) stated that lack of teacher involvement in the decision-making process could cause teachers to lose faith in the school leadership, leading to attitudes of cynicism, resentment, apathy or anxiety.

It is therefore of paramount importance to distinguish between the two leadership models of leadership and school principals should evaluate their school situations to guarantee that academic progress is made by exploring various leadership strategies to improve learner's education. Therefore, leader's declaration of leadership by itself holds very little value, unless if it is attached what the leader does, or does not do, who the leader is, or is not or what a leader values, or does not value (Bass, 2014).

Many strategies have been proposed that can improve the principals' use of the transformational leadership style. Most of the school principals are not having qualifications in educational leadership; as such they need in service staff developments for them to be able to utilize the transformation leadership style (Ader, 2008). The Ministry of Education need to have programmes that are set aside specifically for school principals for them to learn how to improve their leadership styles (April & Peters, 2010). In addition, the Ministry needs to have a standalone office that caters for principals' developmental needs.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative research design that aims to examine empirical evidence by considering the primary data on the evaluation of the school principal's leadership on the Multifactor Leadership Standardized Questionnaire (MLQ). This instrument was suitable for the current study because its different quantitative domains provides a distinct measure of the principals' leadership styles without the principals realizing the links between or among these various domains. More so, this is a standardized tool which has proven to be effective in meeting this purpose. The population for this study comprised of 40 school principals in Oshana Region Namibia. This study employed a stratified purposeful sampling strategy to select the 40 school principals for schools which have been performing badly for the academic year 2012 to 2015 during the grade 12 national examinations. In addition to that, the following inclusion criteria was used to select the Oshana Region school principals: (1) Only government-funded public senior secondary schools participated in this study; (2) The school could be at least five years old at the time of collecting data for this study (3) The school should have had the same principal for two years at the time of collecting data for this study. This study used a closed ended questionnaire to collect data from the participants. The Microsoft Excel software was used to analyze the quantitative findings which were tabulated and graphs were generated on the various factors for

transformational leadership. The questions on the MLQ were grouped into the following factors: idealized influence (1, 8 and 15), inspirational motivation (2, 9 and 16), intellectual stimulation (3, 10 and 17), individual consideration (4, 11 and 18), contingent reward (5, 12 and 19), and management by exception (6, 13 and 20) and laissez-faire leadership (7, 14 and 21). These seven factors related to transformational leadership were scored as follows: the sum of the three questions on each factor was determined to give an overall rating which was High (9-12) average rating, Moderate (5-8) and Low (0-4). Based on these score ratings a decision was made on the level to which the school principals are employing transformational leadership in their various schools and findings out what could be the main factors related to transformational leadership that could be attributed to poor performance from the leadership perspective of the school principal

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

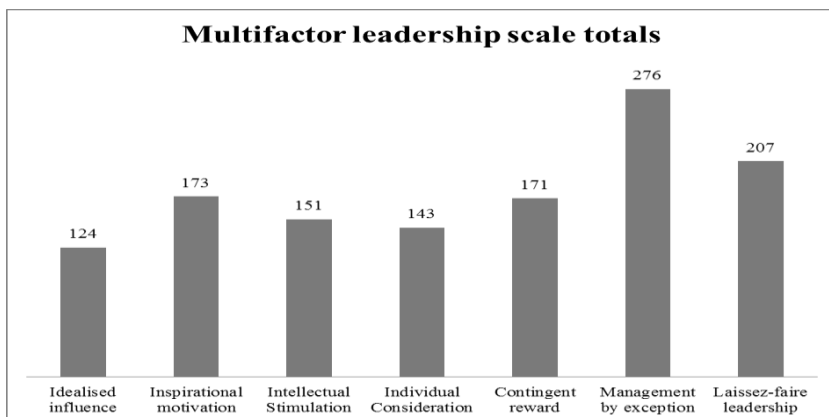


Figure 1: Multifactor leadership totals for School Principals in Northern Namibia

The study compared how school principal identify themselves with the seven factors of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire by proving answers to questions which are categorized to represent the seven factors (Udoh, Agu,& Agu, 2012).

These factors underpinned the tenets of transformational leadership and illustrate the most common factors which guide the principal’s leadership style in Northern schools of Namibia.

The table above illustrates that management by exception (factor 6) has scored the highest, which demonstrate that most principals identify themselves with this factor to guide their leadership styles at their respective schools. The second highest factor is Laissez-faire (factor 7) followed by inspirational motivation with contingent reward (factor 5) taking the fourth position. The lowest scored factor is factor 1 (Idealized Influence).

Factor 1: *Idealized Influence* indicates whether the school principal hold subordinate's trust, maintain their faith and respect, show dedication to them, appeal to their hopes and dreams and act as their role model (Abu-Hussain, 2014). Results from the table above indicated that the score rating is low, which shows that most school principals do not trust their subordinates, respect and show dedication to them and do not share into their hopes and dreams.

Factor 2: *Inspiration and Motivation* evaluates the extent to which a leader provide vision, use appropriate symbols and images to help others focus on their work, and try to make others feel their work is very important (Abu-Hussain, 2014). Evidence provided through results on the table above indicated that the score rating on inspiration and motivation is low. The low scoring on inspiration and motivation demonstrate that most school principals do not provide vision and pay little attention on motivating and helping their subordinates to focus on their work

Factor 3: *Intellectual Stimulation* shows the degree to which the leader encourages others to be creative by looking at old problems in new ways, create an environment that is tolerant of seemingly extreme positions, and nurture people to question their own values and beliefs of those in the organization (Bass, 2014). Results on the table above indicated that the score rating on intellectual stimulation is low, which demonstrated that most school principals pay little attention in encouraging their subordinates to be creative and find new ways of addressing challenges and transform them into opportunities.

Factor 4: *Individualized Consideration* indicates the degree to which a leader shows interest in other's well-being, assign projects individually, and pay attention to those who seem less involved in the group (Yunus & Suraya, 2012). Results on the table above indicated that the score rating on individualized consideration is low, which shows that most school principals pay little attention to the welfare of their subordinates

and are not considerate enough by not being able to look after those who feel, rejected in the group.

Factor 5: *Contingent Reward* shows the extent to which a leader informs others what to do in order to be rewarded, emphasize what to expect from subordinates, and recognize their accomplishments (Nikodemus, 2009).

Results on the table above indicated that the score rating on contingent reward is low, which demonstrates the inability of school principals to provide direction, set realistic targets and failure to recognize efforts of their subordinates.

Factor 6: *Management-by-Exception* evaluates the ability of the leader to tell others the job requirements, expected performance standards and instil a culture for making changes to programs and activities only when it is absolutely necessary (April & Peters, 2010). Results from the table above shows that the score rating on management-by exception is moderate, which indicated that school principals pay average attention on issues bordering on job requirements, expected performance standards, including school programs and activities.

Factor 7: *Laissez-Fair*, measures whether the leader needs little of others, are content to let things ride, and let others do their own thing (Ryan, 2008). Results from the table indicated that the score rating for laissez-fair is moderate, which demonstrate that school principals pay little attention in supervising their subordinates, allowing others to do whatever they want to do.

The study concluded that both factors 6 and 7 received the highest scores and this explains the reason why most schools in Northern Namibia are not performing. Both of these factors demonstrate lack of effective leadership in schools and could pose serious leadership and management implications due to the fact they do not encourage team work, effective supervision and proper control at all levels of school management.

Multifactor Leadership scoring interpretation.

Table 1: Multifactor Leadership scoring interpretation.

	Total score	Average score	Score rating
Idealized influence	124	3.1	Low
Inspirational motivation	173	4.325	Low
Intellectual Stimulation	151	3.775	Low
Individual Consideration	143	3.575	Low
Contingent reward	171	4.275	Low
Management by exception	276	6.9	Moderate
Laissez-faire leadership	207	5.175	Moderate

From the table above, the study provided empirical evidence that:

- a. None of the seven factors scored a score average of high.
- b. Idealized Influence (factor 1) has the lowest average score of 3.1 and it has received the score rating as low.
- c. Management by Exception (factor 6) has the highest average score of 6.9 and it has received a score rating as moderate, with Laissez- faire (factor 5) in the same category, which received a score rating of 5.2.
- d. The fact that factors 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 received the lowest average scores as compared to factors 5 and 6 demonstrated that most schools in Northern Namibia are led by leaders who need to improve their leadership qualities. The absence of leadership qualities indicated by factors 1-5 are of paramount importance, and could assist to improve the performance of the entire school, if implemented effectively.

Table 2: Strategies to be used to improve principals' utilization of the transformation leadership style

Principals in service training/retraining on implementation of transformation leadership	34
Principals staff development in transformation leadership	29
Ministry supervision on principals utilization of transformation leadership	37
Ministry's' support on principals acquisition of leadership qualification	37
Removal of under qualified principals from Northern Namibian Schools	3

The table above shows that 34 principals felt that principals training on and retraining on the implementation of the transformation leadership style would improve the principals use of this leadership style as expected, 29 felt that staff development of the principals on the use of transformation leadership would improve the situation, 37 indicated that if the ministry can do a supervision of the use of the transformation leadership would improve on the situation and 3 felt that the removal of school principals who do not have leadership qualifications would improve on the situation. These findings corroborate with the findings of Givens (2008) who stated that inservice training on principals implimentation of the transformation leadership strategy would mitigate on this challenge.

CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

The study also found that the school principals' scores were very low on the multifactor leadership questionnaire. The principals scored low on the following components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, contingent reward. However, Management by exception and Laissez-faire leadership scored moderate. The study concluded that in these components where the principals scored very low are the ones responsible for the poor performance being experienced in Northern Namibian schools. To a lesser extent the Management by exception and Laissez-faire components of the MFQ-6S are responsible for the failure of the learners in Northern Namibia.

The study found out that most of the school principals in Oshana Region Namibia are not utilizing the transformational leadership style. As a result of the failure to utilize this leadership style the performances for the learners remain below the expected standard. Specifically, the study unveiled that most of the school principals are not informing the teachers on the goals to be attained and are also not giving the teachers the autonomy to be part of the decision makers in the school. The study further found out that the school principals do not allow the teachers to find a meaning in their day to day work activities. The study concluded that most of the school Principals in Oshana Region Namibia are using the Laissez-faire leadership style in their administration of schools, an attribute that could be responsible for the poor performances being experienced in the schools at both grade 10 and 12.

This study recommended that school principals who do not have appropriate leadership training and skills should be assisted by the ministry with necessary transformational leadership training development courses for them to acquire the appropriate skills to improve management skills. The study also recommended that the ministry should undertake in-service training on a regular basis for

school principals who have not acquired the necessary skills. In addition to that the ministry should also do regular check on the transformational management needs for the principals. The study recommended that more coaching and continuous professional development programmes need to be given to the school principals in Oshana Region Namibia.

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APPENDIX 1: MULTIFACTOR LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (MLQ)

FORM 6S

This questionnaire provides a description of your leadership style. Twenty-one descriptive statements are listed below. Judge how frequent each statement fits you. The word other means your followers, clients, or group members

Key

**0-Not at all 1- Once in a while 2- Sometimes 3- fairly often
4- Frequently if not always.**

		0	1	2	3	4
1	I make others feel good around me					
2	I express with a few simple words what we could and should do					
3	I enable others to think about old problems in new ways					
4	I help others develop themselves					
5	I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work					
6	I am satisfied when others meet the agreed upon standards					
7	I am content to let others continue working in the same ways always					
8	Others have complete faith in me					
9	I provide appealing images about what we can do					
10	I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things					
11	I let others know how they think they are doing					
12	I provide recognition and rewards when others reach their goals					
13	As long as things are working, I do not change anything					
14	Whatever others want to do is ok with me					

15	Others are proud to be associated with me					
16	I help others find meaning in their work					
17	I get other to rethink the ideas they had never questioned before					
18	I give personal attention to what others who seem rejected					
19	I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish					
20	I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work					
21	I ask no more of others than what is absolutely essential					

SCORING

The MCQ-6S measures your leadership in seven factors related to transformational leadership. Your score for each factor is determined by summing up three specified items on the questionnaire. For example, to determine your score for factors 1: Idealized influence, sum up your responses for 1,8 and 15. Complete this procedure for all seven features.

Score Range: HIGH=9-12; MODERATE =5-8 LOW 0-4

Idealized influence (1,8 and 15)	Factor 1
Inspirational motivation (Items 2, 9 and 16)	Factor 2
Intellectual stimulation (Items 3, 10 and 17)	Factor 3
Individual consideration (Items 4, 11 and 18)	Factor 4
Contingent Rewards (Items 5, 12 and 19)	Factor 5
Management by inspection (Items 6,13 and 20)	Factor 6
Laissez faire Leadership (Items 7, 14 and 21)	Factor 7