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Self-Assessment Tool: Are You A Transformational Leader?

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Self -Assessment Tool: Are You a Transformational Leader?

What does it mean to be a leader? According to Northouse (2009), leadership is defined as a process, the ability to influence individuals to achieve a common goal. However, as there are many styles of leadership, so do the definitions vary. Yukl and Gardner (2020), define leadership as the “process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (p. 6). The process of influencing can be thought of as the corner stone for which a transformational leader is described initially by Burns in (1978) “ as those who obtain support by inspiring followers to identify with a vision that reaches beyond their own immediate self-interests” (Judge & Bono, 2000, p. 758). Though Burns viewed transformational and transactional leadership on opposite ends of the spectrum, Bass (1985) further describes transformational and transactional leadership as having complementary styles, but the “transformational leadership style increases subordinates’ level of motivation and self-esteem, which would naturally imply actions in favor of the organization not limited to the performance of the roles prescribed for the function” (Rodrigues & Ferreira, 2015, p. 496).

Personality encompasses emotions, behaviors, patterns of thought and psychological mechanisms. The Big-Five model taps into five personality traits: conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and extraversion (Ayub, Kanwal & Kausar, 2019, p.34). Neuroticism is the only personality trait with a negative correlation to transformational leadership.

Bass and Avolio (1995) identified four interrelated behaviors or traits that are positively correlated with transformational leadership: idealized influence (II), inspirational motivation (IM), intellectual stimulation (IS), and individualized consideration (IC).

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1. Idealized influence (II)

Leaders project themselves as positive role model. Followers identify not with the leader but with his cause, while emulating their behaviors.

2. Intellectual Stimulation (IS)

Leaders heighten the followers' attention to problems, encouraging them to view from new perspectives. Followers are encouraged to be more innovative by questioning assumptions, to solve complex problems by reframing them, and to think outside of the box, using a collaborative approach if necessary.

3. Individual Consideration (IC)

Leaders support, mentor and develop followers professionally and personally, which creates a feeling of value and appreciation.

4. Inspirational Motivation (IM)

Leaders “communicate high expectations, articulates a compelling vision for the future, shows followers how to achieve the stated goals and expresses confidence in their ability to accomplish such goals” (Kao, Pai, & Zhong, 2015, p.452), by providing meaning, and challenging their followers work.

In the self-assessment tool: Are you a transformational leader, six basic leadership patterns were measured, one of which dealt with emotions, usually associated with the transformational leader. Scores range from 4-20, the higher the score, the more you are inclined or engaged in transformational leadership behaviors.

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Management by Attention

With a score of 15 out of 20 (75%), indicates that I actively communicate, focusing on the issues at hand, while helping others see the important points. I demonstrate a high level of clear ideas about the relative importance or priorities of different issues under discussion.

Management of Meaning

A score of 18 (85%) demonstrates a high level of engagement through communication, to relay the meaning of messages, innovatively if necessary.

Management of Trust

A high level of trustworthiness is indicated with a score of 18 (85%). I make a point to follow through on promises made, making and taking clear decisions, standing what's right, even when I stand alone.

Management of Self

A score of 19 (95%), indicates a high regard for self, and others. I tend to be concerned about the well-being of others and their feelings, while safe-guarding positive feelings about my-self.

Management of Risk

Again, 19 (95%) indicates a very high propensity to be fully engaged in what I do. I take risk, count the cost of situation, but I don't spend time focusing or protecting myself from failure, my objective is to continually move forward, as failure is viewed as an opinion, and used as a stepping-stone to success.

Management of Feelings

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With a score of 17 (85%), moderate high score, indicates that as a transformational leader I create a sense of meaning, competence, as they own their own behaviors. A sense of community, inclusiveness, oneness is established with colleagues and coworkers.

Weaknesses and Strengths

Weaknesses

Management of Attention

With a score of 15 out of 20, 75% a moderate range of effectiveness as a transformational trait. This is a dimension of intellectual stimulation (IS), through which followers are inspired through intellectual stimulation. Idealized influence (II) is also displayed because of my ability to understand and solve problems and because of my knowledge.

Management of Feelings

With a score of 17, of 85%, a moderate high score, but weak in comparison to the other behavior traits, a dimension of idealized consideration (II), also known as agreeableness.

Strengths

Both management of meaning, a component of intellectual stimulation (IS), and management of trust a dimension of idealized influence (II), received scores of 18 or 90%, indicating that I lead by example, take responsibility, with clear visions for success, displaying a consciousness, through inspirational motivation.

Scores of 19 is a very strong indicator at 95%, of the utilization of transformational leadership traits in management of self and management of risk, dimensions of idealized influence, displaying respect, trust and interest in followers, with self-discipline.

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If I were coaching a client with the results' I produced in this assessment tool, for professional development, I would recommend the client to continue to build upon the foundation of trust they have built. While and through communication, they are to continue to walk in confidence and knowledge, go beyond self-interest and beliefs, but focus on their views and opinions, while standing on principles, integrity and values, with a sense of purpose, which would illuminate priorities on different issues during the discussion.

To increase and master the management of feelings, continue to coach and mentor, paying close attention to individuals for their growth, continuously developing their individual strengths, through their individual capabilities, abilities and aspirations.

The promote influence through transformational behaviors and traits, leaders must be in a constant state of learning and self -reflection. Anderson and Anderson (2010), states, “leaders must turn inward and address their mindset and emotional patterns and seek to transform the aspects of their mental conditioning that limit their outcomes. Breakthrough starts on the inside” (p.256).

Validity

Validity, according to Salkind and Frey (2020), is the “property of an assessment tool that indicates that the tool does what it says it does. A valid test is a test that measures what it is supposed to and works well for its intended purpose” (p.116). “This self-assessment tool was designed as a first step to define issues that are important in the effectiveness in a leadership capacity” (ITP Nelson), through different traits and behaviors. Based on this tools ability to determine and define the effective traits of transformational leadership, through content-based validity.

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A potential inherent weakness of this tool, is the limited number of questions. Therefore, the number of questions for each leadership behavior or patterns could be increased, to be more representative of the type of leadership behaviors are preferred versus displayed.

Conclusion

Transformational leadership mediates the relationship between all the Big-Five personality traits and their effectiveness.

Transformational or Level 5 leaders embody a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will. They are ambitious first and foremost for the company, displaying compelling modesty, are self-effacing and understated. Additionally, they are fanatically driven, infected with an incurable need to produce sustained results, with a resolve to do whatever it takes ethically no matter how big or hard the decisions. All success is attributed to factors other than themselves, while they look in the mirror or take on all responsibility when results are disappointing. (Collins, 2001, p.39)

Transformational leadership is grounded in self-awareness and consciousness, which “impacts every aspect of a leader’s change leadership capability, experience, and outcome” (Anderson & Anderson, 2010, p. 82), with organizations and individuals.

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