
Transformational Leadership Produces Higher Achievement Outcomes: A Review in Education and Military Contexts

Mary Kovach
Miami Middletown

This manuscript investigates the impact of transformational leadership in both education and military contexts. Nine studies published within the last eight years are reviewed (five education, four military) and demonstrate the positive effect of transformational leadership. This review contains a variety of extensive, international, and individual studies with particular focus of transformational leadership, with each study validating the notion that transformational leadership transcends disciplines and results in higher achievement outcomes. This manuscript concludes with an identification of gaps in the knowledge base to date and suggestions for future research work.

The purpose of this review paper is to examine the application of transformational leadership theory to both the education and military achievement contexts. The studies included within this manuscript were selected based on a number of criteria, including key words, scholarly databases, and faculty support.

The review contains a variety of extensive, international, and individual studies all related to transformational leadership, exemplifying the impact, which transcends disciplines. Table 1 highlights each of the education studies while Table 2 summarizes each of the military studies. Both tables include authors, scope of the study, and key points of the study as related to transformational leadership (see appendix).

Transformational Leadership Studies in Educational Contexts

The following five studies represent transformational leadership within educational contexts and further the argument for transformational leadership resulting in higher achievement outcomes. These studies (summarized in Table 1) were published within the last eight years and demonstrate the international impact from meta-analytical and multi-level analyses – all validating higher achievement outcome results because of transformational leadership. These results include sustained long-term

success, positive impact on change management, increase cognitive learning and academic success, student motivation to learn and teacher job satisfaction.

First, Day, Qing, and Sammons (2016) executed an empirical study in England. The purpose was to determine whether transformational and instructional leadership (i.e. providing training or specific task guidance to improve the potential for success) practices improved student outcomes and sustained improvement. The study concluded that the addition of transformational leadership to instructional leadership demonstrated long-term success, which included improved student exam scores and sustained improvement programs. Thus, transformational leadership once again has directly contributed to high achievement.

The second study showcased the value of transformational leadership and conducted by Oreg and Berson (2011), which analyzed the employee reactions to organizational change (586 teachers), moderated by a principal's transformational leadership behaviors (75 Israeli public school principals). The study confirmed that "transformational leadership can effectively influence followers" (p. 649) and concluded that a leader's values, trait characteristics, and behaviors reflected the reaction of followers' to organizational change. Moreover, transformational leaders who exhibit specific behaviors can continue to have a greater impact on outcomes, including organizations experiencing change.

Third, Balwant (2016) performed a meta-analytic study on transformational instructor-leadership in higher education. The study determined that there was a positive association with "students' motivation, perceptions of instructor credibility, satisfaction, academic performance, affective learning, and cognitive learning" (p. 38) because of transformational leadership. All of these components impact the lives of followers and have a positive impact, lasting impact as a product of transformational leadership.

Fourth, Jyoti and Bhau (2015) performed another study further exhibiting the benefits of transformational leadership in education. Here, they connected transformational leadership and job performance in higher education. They concluded that LMX acted as a mediator between transformational leadership and job performance, and that because of the transformational leadership behaviors demonstrated, the subordinates 1) displayed more admiration for their superiors, 2) were more motivated to be successful, and 3) had an increased job satisfaction. Unsurprisingly, this

study further exemplified the powerful impact of transformational leadership in education.

Lastly, and to further exemplify the relationship between transformational leadership and higher achievement, Eliophotou-Menon and Ioannou (2016) presented a meta-analytic view and confirmed positive relationships between transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction, commitment, student motivation to learn, and trust in the leader.

In education contexts, transformational leadership has led to an increase in exam scores and academic performance, sustained improvement programs, increased student motivation, improved job satisfaction, commitment, and trust in leadership. All of these favorable outcomes continue to promote the value of transformational leadership and that it acts as a catalyst in high achievement. Each of these outcomes translated into various other contexts.

These five examples are some of many dynamic international studies that continue to support the notion that transformational leadership has a positive, lasting impact on followers. In summary, these leaders demonstrated that followers move beyond simple transactions and transcend to add more value and create long-term synergies that produce leader-follower success. Similar transformational leadership outcomes showcased in the military context as well.

Transformational Leadership Studies within Military Contexts

Transformational leadership in the military has been studied and applied globally for many years. Groves and LaRocca (2011) described transformational leadership in a manner that considered the self-awareness of followers. They too underscored the value that leaders can provide by identifying the personal values of followers and aligning them with the organization's vision, and introducing goals that related to those values. Boe and Holth (2015a) also performed a study and concluded the value of self-awareness has a meaningful impact on followers and outcomes. As mentioned in the previous section, transformational leadership is a human construct used in various environments throughout the world. However, studying transformational leadership in military contexts can prove vital to the survival of a nation or culture. The studies discussed below (summarized in Table 2) continue to support the value produced because of

transformational leadership within various military settings, beginning with least current article and moving to the most current articles published.

The first study demonstrating the positive impact of transformational leadership is from Hardy, Arthur, Jones, Shariff, Munnoch, Isaacs, and Allsopp (2009). They performed two studies examining the impact of transformational leadership on follower outcomes (e.g., actions or behaviors) from the United Kingdom Royal Marine Commando group. The first study consisted of two self-reported surveys; the second study was a 3-phase intervention study with a transformational leadership intervention. The outcomes of each of these studies further supported the notion that the behaviors of transformational leaders are likely to predict follower performance outcomes, i.e. behaviors that are more transformational are more likely to produce higher performing outcomes, and less transformational behaviors as likely to produce substandard, or average, outcomes.

The second study, which demonstrated higher achieving outcomes because of transformational leadership in a military context, is from Rozčenkova and Dimdiņš (2011). They researched transformational leadership and its correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) in Latvian soldiers from the National Armed Forces division and their role within their respective units. This study demonstrated a positive correlation with a commander's transformational leadership to inspire varying aspects of EI with subordinates and a soldier's identification with their respective unit. Meaning, when a commanding officer demonstrated strong transformational leadership skills, they related better to their soldiers, and soldiers connected more closely with their units. This created comradery and group cohesion. These factors are often major contributors to delivering stronger performance, as discussed in prior sections.

Next, Reiley and Jacobs (2016) provided another example of a study performed that demonstrates how transformational leadership in the military increases the potential for achievement outcomes. They conducted a study to determine whether or not leader ethics (using a particular power dynamic, defined below) influenced followers' organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), i.e. an employee's unspoken expectations to behave (espouse and enact) professionally and ethically while a member of the organization (or associated with it). The study included 365 cadets from the U.S. Air Force Academy and concluded that when leaders exhibited transformational leader-like forms of power, for example, expert power

(strong knowledge of a given topic), referent power (likability or charisma) or reward power (awarding tangible or intangible recognition), followers exhibited higher levels of OCB. Signifying that when these cadets felt as though they were led by respectable and likable leaders, and felt they were in a rewarding environment, they were more likely to exemplify a positive image and behave in a manner aligning with organizational expectations. When leaders exhibited coercive power (incorporating a negative feeling - by words or action – to impact motivation) or legitimate (authoritative) power, followers were not as likely to demonstrate such high levels of OCB. Meaning, when cadets felt they had to comply based on their position within the organization or that they would be shamed publically or privately, they were less likely to exhibit OCB. This study demonstrated how the perceptions of followers of their leaders are very relevant in behavioral outcomes, specifically OCB. It also presented a better understanding of the influence of leader power and how the lack of transformational leadership can negatively impact performance outcomes.

Another transformational leadership study within military contexts highlighting the success of transformational leadership included García-Guiua, Moyaa, Molero, and Moriano (2016). This study included 243 members (51 different squads) of the Spanish Army. They concluded that transformational leadership positively correlated to group potency, as impacted by group cohesion (ability/strength to work with other group members) and group identification (association to a group), similar to the results of Rozčenkova and Dimdiņš (2011).

As revealed in the Hardy et al. (2009), Rozčenkova and Dimdiņš (2011), Reiley and Jacobs (2016), and García-Guiua et al. (2016) studies, transformational leadership within military settings further demonstrates the value it brings to multiple contexts. In the various military contexts mentioned above, it was revealed that the behaviors of transformational leaders had the potential to predict follower performance outcomes, that a positive correlation existed with a commander's transformational leadership to inspire varying aspects of EI with subordinates as well as a soldier's identification with his or her respective unit. It established how leader perceptions of followers of are important in seeking particular behavioral outcomes. Finally, transformational leadership improved group effectiveness and cohesion, as demonstrated across other contexts.

Summary of Research

Transformational leadership has exhibited similar research results from various disciplines. Within this manuscript, the nine different studies included some that contained large meta-analyses within the overarching investigation. Numerous constructs were examined in relation to transformational leadership, including follower outcomes, interventions, emotional intelligence, cohesion, identification, leadership factors (individualized consideration, idealized influence, inspirational commitment, and intellectual stimulation), follower satisfaction and the importance of transactional leadership (as compared to transformational leadership). The data collected within these research studies were reviewed and examined, all resulting in overwhelmingly positive results in favor of transformational leadership. For example, follower performance could be predicted with particular transformational leader behaviors (Wang, et al., 2011), such as inspiring emotional intelligence with subordinates (Rozčenkova & Dimdiņš, 2011), and follower satisfaction was positively impacted by transformational leadership. As noted earlier, research on the efficacy of transformational theory within military contexts is still somewhat in its infancy. Although the studies conducted to date (and review in the previous section) do show considerable international research interest in the topic, there remains a number of unanswered questions. The following section includes recommendations for future researchers.

Recommendations for Future Directions on the Applicability of Transformational Leadership

The intent of this section is to provide readers with a sense of the gaps within current research and to identify some unique and innovative ideas as to what researchers could do next within the transformational leadership military paradigm. One key gap is the relative absence of longitudinal studies (Reiley & Jacobs, 2016) of military leaders who have received leadership training by comparing to other leaders who did not receive training, using objective follower ratings and number of goals accomplished by each leader as compared to attempts. Another longitudinal study should include a qualitative study (based on interviews, not self-reported studies, Groves & LaRocca, 2011) with recruits of military leaders identified as transformational). This type of study would do much to identify exactly what it is that such leaders actually do in the field classified as transformation. Additionally, future research should examine existing

leaders across disciplines (e.g. military, business, and sport) for transformational qualities, and reward them according to their behaviors (Graham et al., 2015). Not only will they be further motivated to replicate behavior, but it should also illustrate to young potential leaders what behaviors the military wants in a leader. Fourth, research should examine existing leaders who are not yet transformational and request that they take on behaviors that would replicate that of transformational leaders, then assess followers both prior to the intervention as well as after, potentially to show support for new behaviors as more effective than old ones. Fifth, after confirming which transformational leader behaviors are the most impactful, longitudinal studies that train new/young leaders and holding expectations that they will exemplify those behaviors would be beneficial. Lastly, for the most significant impact research could, determine what motivates followers and correlate that to transformational leader behavior, as measured by productivity results and emotional intelligence (Rozcenkova & Dinding, 2011).

References

- Balwant, P. (2016). Transformational instructor-leadership in higher education teaching: A meta-analytic review and research agenda. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 9*(4), 20-42.
- Boe, O., & Holth, T. (2015a). Investigating correlations between personality traits and leadership styles in Norwegian military cadets. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 26*, 1173 – 1184.
- Boe, O., & Holth, T. (2015). Self-awareness in military officers with a high degree of developmental leadership. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 26*, 833 – 841.
- Day, C., Qing, G., & Sammons, P. (2016). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: How successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make difference. *Educational Administrative Quarterly, 52*(2), 221-258.
- Day, D. & Antonakis, J. (2012). *The nature of leadership*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Eliophotou-Menon, M., & Ioannou, A. (2016). The link between transformational leadership and teachers' job satisfaction, commitment, motivation to learn, and trust in the leader. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal, 20*(3), 12-22.

-
- García-Guiua, C., Moyaa, M., Molero, F., & Moriano, J. (2016). Transformational leadership and group potency in small military units: The mediating role of group identification and cohesion. *Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* 32, 145–152.
- Graham, K., Ziegert, J., & Capitano, J. (2015). The effect on leadership style, framing, and promotion regulatory focus on unethical pro-organizational behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 126, 423-436. doi: 10.1007/s10551-013-1952-3
- Groves, K., & LaRocca, M. (2011). Responsible leadership outcomes via stakeholder CSR values: Testing a values-centered model of transformational leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 98, 37-55.
- Hardy, L., Arthur, C., Jones, G., Shariff, A., Munnoch, K., Isaacs, I., & Allsopp, A. (2010). The relationship between transformational leadership behaviors, psychological, and training outcomes in elite military recruits. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21, 20-32.
- Jyoti, J. & Bhau, S. (2015). Transformational leadership and job performance: A study of higher education. *Journal of Services Research*, 15(2), 77-110.
- Oreg, S., & Berson, Y. (2011). Leadership and employees' reactions to change: The role of leaders' personal attributes and transformational leadership style. *Personnel Psychology*, 64, 627-659.
- Reiley, P., & Jacobs, R. (2016). Ethics matter: moderating leaders' power use and followers' citizenship behaviors. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 134, 69-81.
- Rozcenkova, A., & Dinding, G. (2011). Emotional intelligence as a mediator between commanders' transformational leadership and soldiers' social identification with their unity in the military. *Baltic Journal of Psychology*, (12)1, 59-72.
- Wang, G., Oh, I., Courtright, S., & Colbert, A. (2011). Transformational leadership and performance across criteria and levels: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of research. *Group & Organization Management*, (36)2, 223-270.

Appendix

Table 1	<i>Studies Summarized</i>	<i>Participants/Scope</i>	<i>Key Points</i>
<i>Educational Contexts</i>			
Day, Qing, & Sammons (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 3-year empirical study in England * Selected only schools with 3 consecutive years of improvement under the same Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Multi-level analysis of relatively uniform (structure, technology, policies, and procedures) selecting 75 Israeli public school principals and 586 teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Improved exam scores, sustained improvement programs, and demonstrated long-term success with the addition of transformational leadership to instructional leadership (e.g. providing task-specific training)
Oreg, & Berson (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Meta-analytic quantitative literature study of transformational instructor-leadership in higher education reduced from 3,896 records to 22 studies based on specific elimination criteria 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Demonstrated how transformational leadership influenced followers through values, trait characteristics, and behaviors
Bahwani (2016)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Determined positive associations between transformational leadership and student motivation, perception of instructor credibility, different types of learning and overall performance
Jyoti, & Bhau (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Study comprised of 266 teachers and 60 department heads in higher education from northern India 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Results indicated more admiration for supervisors, increased motivation for success, and improved job satisfaction as a result of transformational leadership and LMX
Eliophoton-Menon, & Ioannou, (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Meta-analytic study including global studies published after the year 2000 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Demonstrated positive relationships between transformational leadership and commitment, trust, teacher job satisfaction, and student motivation to learn

Table 2

Studies Summarized

Authors	Participants/Scope	Key Points
<i>Military Contexts</i>		
Hardy, Arthur, Jones, Shariff, Munnoch, Isaacs, & Allsopp (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Conducted 2 studies with United Kingdom Royal Marine Commando group * Study 1: 484 male recruits * Study 2: 3-phase intervention with 275 participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Outcomes demonstrated the presence of transformational leadership likely to predict follower outcomes and produce stronger performance
Rozcenkova, & Dinding (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 744 participants from Latvian National Armed Forces * 156 commanders and 588 subordinates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Exhibited positive correlation between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence and soldiers' identification with his/her unit
Reiley, & Jacobs (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 365 U.S. Air Force Academy cadets (primarily freshman, sophomores, and juniors) seeking officer status * 243 members of Spanish Army (51 squads) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Signified particular power dynamics coupled with transformational leadership, cadets' behavior aligned with expectations and exemplified a positive image
García-Guina, Moyaa, Molero, & Moriano (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Soldiers from 4 infantry companies and 2 sapper companies (light and mechanized brigades) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Concluded positive correlation between transformational leadership and group potency, cohesion, and identification

Personal Biography

Mary Kovach joined Miami University as an adjunct instructor and was hired full-time as an Assistant Professor. She graduated with her BA from Baldwin Wallace University, her MBA from Cleveland State University and is currently working on her PhD at Miami University. Her professional experience includes 15 years with Fortune 500 organizations and has held numerous leadership positions, including managing multi-million dollar global business units. She holds a LEAN Six Sigma Black Belt certification, as well as multiple Agile certifications. Mary's teaching interests include organizational behavior, management, general business, personal finance, MS Excel, and marketing.