A Study of the Value Added by Transformational Leadership Practices to Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Katherine H. Kieres
Daniel Gutmore
Seton Hall University

Based on Bass and Riggio's (2006) Augmentation Model of Transactional and Transformational Leadership, this quantitative study sought to identify the amount of variance in teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment that can be explained by principals' transformational leadership behaviors, above and beyond the influence of transactional behaviors. Pennsylvania high school teachers totaling 156 and located in five Pennsylvania high schools were surveyed about their job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and about the leadership behaviors in which their principals engaged. The researcher then used hierarchical linear modeling to test the augmentation model within this sample group. The results of this study provide researchers with a replicable method with which to examine this leadership model. They also provide practitioners with actionable guidance on leadership behaviors that can positively influence teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Introduction

The challenges faced today by those who seek to improve American public schools will require leadership that is able to bring about what Bass (1985) referred to in his seminal text *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations* as "second-order changes:" those changes that go beyond "first-order" changes of degree that "can be handled adequately by the current emphasis on leadership as an exchange process" (p.4) and require a transformation of the environment through new ways of examining old problems. Through his extensive work on leadership theory and behavior, Bass developed the Full Range of Leadership Model, which

includes various behaviors in which leaders engage. These include transformational behaviors, which can help the leader bring about powerful changes in an organization. The model also includes more mundane but no less essential behaviors, called transactional behaviors. Bass's theory was that, although leaders regularly engage in most if not all of the Full Range of Leadership behaviors, the most effective leader would practice the transformational behaviors more frequently and the transactional behaviors less frequently. Knowing that both types of behaviors are common and necessary, it is important to examine the relative impact of all of these behaviors in the school context to see which are the most effective in bringing about powerful and sustainable change.

Transformational leadership has undergone testing in a variety of work contexts over the past thirty years, and has been the subject of various studies in educational settings since the early 1990s. Since then, according to Nguni, Sleegers, and Denessen (2006), "a large number of studies have reported evidence of effects of transformational leadership on school organizations, the implementation of large-scale innovations, teachers' psychological states and attitudes, teachers' role behavior, and student engagement" (p. 149). The research suggests that transformational school leaders are able to, "alter their environments to meet their desired outcomes…by promoting educational restructuring and innovation, focusing on building vision, encouraging collaborative participation and raising the role of followers to that of leader (Silns, 1994, as cited in Barnett, 2003, p. 3). According to Leithwood (1992), "the collective action that comes from transformational leadership empowers those who participate in it. There is hope, optimism, and energy in a kind of leadership that facilitates redefinition of a people's mission and vision, renewal of their commitment, and restructuring of their systems for accomplishing goals" (p. 17).

Bass and Riggio (2006), in their Augmentation Model of Transactional and Transformational Leadership, posit that the combination of transactional *and* transformational leadership behaviors results in heightened motivation to designated outcomes (extra effort) on the part of subordinates, leading to performance beyond expectations. Essentially, transactional practices provide the foundation on which transformational behaviors can be added to bring about this exceptional performance. Numerous studies have been conducted to identify, measure and explain the effects of principals' transformational leadership behavior on teacher job satisfaction and/or organizational commitment. However, no research has attempted to use hierarchical linear modeling to test Bass and Riggio's Augmentation Model and thereby determine whether transformational behaviors have a measurable influence on these outcome variables *beyond* the influence of the more traditional transactional behaviors.

This study seeks to identify the amount of variance in teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment that can be explained by principals' transformational leadership behaviors, above and beyond the influence of transactional behaviors. Its results are intended to provide some limited empirical support for the Augmentation Model in the field of education.

The primary question that is investigated is to determine beyond that of transactional leadership practices, what, if any, impact do principals' transformational leadership behaviors have on teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment? In addition, the following subsidiary questions considered beyond the effects of contingent reward (a transactional leadership behavior), are addressed.

1. What additional contribution does the use of idealized influence as a practice have on high school teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment?
2. What additional contribution does the use of inspirational motivation as a practice have on high school teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment?
3. What additional contribution does the use of intellectual stimulation as a practice have on high school teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment?
4. What additional contribution does the use of individualized consideration as a practice have on high school teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment?

In light of the results of the study by Marzano et al. (2005) and others like it, we believe that leadership makes a difference. Research and tools to inform principals' practice and help them create necessary change should be a national priority. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2006), a great deal of the existing literature that seeks to assess school leader effects is "entirely speculative or theoretical in nature," and is therefore a "necessary but not sufficient foundation on which to build robust understandings of school leadership." They call for more sustained research about "the nature and effects of precisely conceptualized and adequately measured forms of school leadership" (p. 201) if educators are to have an adequate base of knowledge on which to build an adequate school reform movement. The results of this study may help principals looking to identify and adopt specific behaviors to help them carry out the important work of school improvement and school reform.

No study to date has used hierarchical linear modeling to measure the added value of transformational leadership behavior above and beyond transactional practices in the field of education. The results are of interest to those who have studied transformational leadership using other methods and those who may be interested in replicating its findings either in or outside the field of education.

Literature Review

The concept of transformational leadership developed over the course of the second half of the twentieth century and continues to evolve today as it is applied and studied in various organizational contexts and associated with variables as diverse as employee creativity, productivity, and organizational commitment. An understanding of the development of transformational leadership theory is helpful in providing the reader with an appropriate context for this study..

In 1976, Robert J. House published *A 1976 Theory of Charismatic Leadership*, a paper which sought to review the traditional scholarship on the concept of charisma and "develop a speculative theoretical explanation of charisma from a psychological perspective" (p. 1) that would provide the basis for future leadership research. He began by referencing Weber's (1963) initial introduction of the term charisma and his use of this term to describe some leaders as "mystical," "personally magnetic," and "narcissistic." Weber had proposed that the charismatic leader inspires others to follow him because followers believe that he possesses a unique gift. Weber outlined four primary characteristics of charismatic leaders: they are more emotional than calculative, they cause followers to model their thoughts, behaviors and feelings after the leader, they instill self-confidence in the followers, and they can engender radical change because the beliefs and values are inconsistent with "established order" (p. 6)

House (1976) then hypothesized that charismatic leaders are different from others because they exhibit some combination of four specific personal characteristics: dominance, self-confidence, need for influence, and strong conviction that their beliefs are morally righteous.

House's work on charismatic leadership provided a partial basis for James MacGregor Burns' seminal 1978 book, *Leadership*. Burns is credited with initiating the concept of transformational leadership and contrasting it with what he called transactional leadership. He proposed that transactional leadership occurs when one person interacts with another with the purpose of exchanging things of value (payment for services rendered, for example), whereas transformational leadership happens when one or more people interact with each other and increase both their mutual motivation and morality. Another way to view this is to see transactional leadership as emphasizing tasks associated with management, while transformational leadership emphasizes those aspects of leadership that extend beyond management and into the realm of inspirational leadership. The prolific work of Bernard Bass (1985) and his colleagues incorporated the aforementioned work of House (1976) and Burns (1978) and created an operationalized definition of transformational leadership, as well as an instrument with which to measure it, called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Bass's model contains seven leadership factors. The first four factors are considered the components of transformational leadership, while the next two are considered aspects of transactional leadership and the last considered the absence of any type of leadership. The four components of transformational leadership are as follows: idealized influence (II) (transformational leaders serve as role models for followers and are admired, respected and trusted. They are seen as possessing certain unique qualities), inspirational motivation (IM) (transformational leaders motivate and inspire their followers by providing them with meaning and with challenging work experiences), intellectual stimulation (IS) (transformational leaders stimulate the thinking of their followers, encouraging innovation and creativity and involving them in the solution of a variety of problems), and individualized consideration (IC) (transformational leaders seem to care about followers, providing them with opportunities to grow personally and professionally and acting as a mentor or coach). The two components of transactional leadership are as follows: contingent reward (transactional leaders set goals for followers, and outline specific tangible rewards to be conferred upon achievement of these goals), and management-by-exception (transactional leaders address employee behaviors only when they are identified as in need of specific improvement). Finally, laissez-faire leadership is considered neither transformational nor transactional. Leaders exhibiting this component fail to engage in any identifiable leadership behaviors.

Burns (1978) viewed transactional and transformational leadership as opposite ends of a spectrum; however, Bass (1985) and colleagues saw transformational leadership as a value-added construct, whereby leaders do engage at times in contingent reward and/or management-by-exception behaviors, but those behaviors are used to complement and enhance the transformational behaviors that are at the heart of organizational change. They theorized that first-order changes of degree can be accomplished using transactional behaviors (such as contingent reward), but that higher-order changes required the addition of transformational practice. The figure below displays what is known as the Augmentation Model of Transactional and Transformational Leadership, which elucidates the interplay between these two dimensions of leadership practice. Once transactional leadership behaviors have led to subordinates achieving expected effort and performance, they are then augmented

by the transformational behaviors, leading to heightened motivation and performance beyond expectations. Thus, the full range of leadership potential is ultimately achieved through both of these styles of leadership. This model provides the conceptual framework for our study.
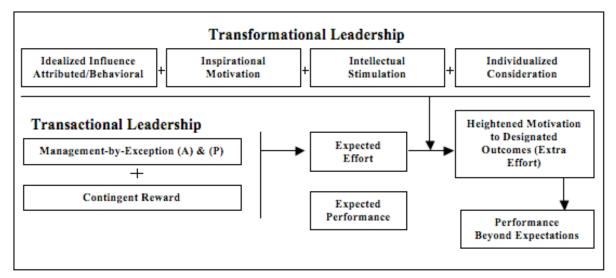

Figure 1. The Augmentation Model of Transactional and Transformational Leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Research Design

The population for this quantitative study was all certificated, instructional staff members in five high schools located in Lehigh, Bucks, Berks, or Northampton County, Pennsylvania. The school districts in this area are notable in their diversity, ranging from quite small (500 students) to very large (3,300 students) and from urban to suburban. Schools in this area also range from diverse to homogeneous in terms of the socioeconomic and racial diversity of their student populations.

The sample was selected using non-probability, convenience sampling. Also known as accidental sampling or haphazard sampling, convenience sampling allows a researcher to investigate all subjects who are available at the time of the study. Convenience sampling was particularly applicable in this case, for two reasons. *First*, it allowed all teachers in the population the same opportunity to complete the survey. *Second*, it was expected to yield higher levels of participation than random or purposeful sampling, since participation was completely optional for all potential participants. The total number of eventual participants was 156.

Three separate instruments were administered to participants in this study, using *ASSET,* a web-based survey system created by Bert G. Wachsmuth at Seton Hall University. Those instruments are The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ – 5X – Short), the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ).

Analysis of Data

Research indicates that the transactional behaviors (of which there are three) impact job performance and therefore potentially impact employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This study sought to identify the impact of the five components of transformational leadership behavior on teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment *beyond the effects of the three transactional practices*. Thus, it was necessary to first conduct exploratory regression analyses using the three transactional behaviors as predictor variables to determine what impact (if any) these behaviors had on the teachers in this sample.

Contingent reward behavior (through which transactional leaders set goals for followers, and outline specific tangible rewards to be conferred upon achievement of these goals) emerged as a significant, positive predictor of all of the outcome variables. It accounted for 9% of the variance in participants' intrinsic job satisfaction, 44% of the variance in extrinsic job satisfaction, 26% of the variance in general job satisfaction and 2% of the variance in organizational commitment. The active form of management-by-exception behavior (through which transactional leaders address employee behaviors only when they are identified as in need of specific improvement) was not a significant predictor of any of the outcome variables, while the passive form of this behavior was a significant negative predictor of all of them. Principals do not necessarily engage in transactional and transformational leadership practices separately or in isolation of each other. Thus, in order to isolate and identify the unique impact of transformational leadership behaviors on teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment, it was necessary to first control for the significant positive effect of contingent reward behavior. This was done through the use of hierarchical linear regression.

Five hierarchical linear regressions were generated for each outcome variable. In all of the regressions, Model 1 was comprised of demographic variables (gender, age, dummy coded veteran status, and dummy coded novice status); Model 2 included the demographic variables and added contingent reward behavior, since it was the one transactional variable that emerged in the exploratory regression analysis as a significant positive predictor of all of the outcome variables; and Model 3 included demographic variables, contingent reward behavior and one of the five transformational leadership behaviors. The results of these analyses allowed the researcher to fully answer the primary and four subsidiary research questions presented in this study.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study sought to identify a relationship between transformational leadership practices and teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, findings related to the contingent reward dimension of transactional leadership were striking. Contingent reward, defined as the leader setting clear expectations, providing resources and connecting achievement of goals with rewards for their subordinates, emerged as a strong and significant predictor of all of the outcome variables. In the hierarchical linear models, the addition of contingent reward behavior to demographic variables in Model 2 accounted for between 12% and 46% of the variance in teacher job satisfaction and 17% of the variance in their organizational commitment scores. Bass's (1985) work likens contingent reward to leaders'

explicitness and consistency, which "had moderate effects on reducing role ambiguity and role conflict" (p. 129). He goes on to state that "some of the contingent-reward behaviors also contribute indirectly to improved performance and satisfaction with supervision" (p. 129) as a result. In addition, The Augmentation Model of Transactional and Transformational Leadership outlined in Bass and Avolio (2006) and discussed earlier in this article, illustrates the relationship between these behaviors and indicates that contingent reward behavior provides the necessary managerial foundation on which leaders can add transformational behaviors in order to bring about heightened employee motivation and exceptional results.

An implication of this finding is that principals must set clear expectations in order to ensure that teachers are meeting acceptable standards, and also must sanction or reward them as appropriate, based on their performance. This is a basic managerial function. However, they must remember that such behaviors, though generally effective, are significantly augmented by the use of transformational behaviors, which provide the extra motivation for employees to reach their highest levels of performance.

Idealized Influence (attributed) is one of two transformational leadership behaviors that were shown in the regression analysis to account for the most amount of variance in teachers' job satisfaction and their organizational commitment, once we controlled for the influence of contingent reward. Idealized influence is associated with leaders who are role models for ethical behavior, who instill pride in followers and thereby gain their trust and respect. The "attributed" label on this type of idealized influence refers to qualities attributed to the leader, rather than specific, observed actions . These attributed qualities include instilling pride in subordinates, going beyond self-interest for the good of the group, building respect and displaying a sense of power and confidence. In this study, attributed idealized influence emerged as adding variance to teachers' extrinsic job satisfaction and their organizational commitment, even when controlling for demographic factors and significant transactional behavior (in this case, contingent reward). These findings reinforce those of Koh et al (1995) and Shaw & Reyes (1993).

As discussed in the review of relevant literature, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) argue that the idealized influence dimension of transformational leadership should be de-emphasized in schools, while Nguni et al. (2006) assert that charisma (comprised of both types of idealized influence) has been shown to have the greatest influence of all the transformational leadership dimensions on employee satisfaction and commitment. The results of this study, like the findings in the related literature, indicate that idealized influence (attributed) does have a meaningful impact on teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and thus should not be discounted in studies of leadership behavior and schools.

Individualized consideration was the second of two transformational behaviors that emerged in this analysis as a powerful influence on teachers' intrinsic, extrinsic and general job satisfaction and is therefore worthy of a detailed examination here. Individualized consideration is the extent to which a leader listens and attends to the needs of his or her subordinates, and acts as a coach/mentor. Leaders who exhibit individualized consideration see their subordinates as individuals and demonstrate interest in their growth and development. According to Bass (1985), "Consideration for others has emerged as a consistently important aspect of leader-subordinate relations. Generally, it has been found to contribute to subordinates' productivity. It is central to participative management to the extent that it focuses on the employee's needs for growth and participating in decisions affecting his work and career" (p. 82). This finding supports those of Hulpia et al. (2009), Barnett (2003)

and Lee (1983) as cited in Evans & Johnson (1990), who all identified individualized consideration as strongly related to job satisfaction.

An implication of this finding is that principals who exhibit individualized consideration can have a profound influence on teachers' commitment and job satisfaction. Schools are unique work environments, because they are comprised of many small units (classrooms), in which the employees (teachers) carry out very similar work in a largely independent fashion. Depending on the size of the school, interactions between the building principal and his or her teachers can be infrequent and often impersonal. Principals interested in increasing teacher job satisfaction and commitment would be wise to put in place specific routines that allow them to demonstrate individualized consideration. For example, principals could hold more frequent, goal-oriented meetings with teachers to discuss their personal objectives and professional development activities, and provide them with support, feedback and encouragement. Principals could also frequently take time in a more informal context (interactions in hallways or at school events, for example) to talk one-on-one with teachers and get to know them on a personal level. Given the multitude of constraints on principals' time, these interactions must be purposeful and deliberate in order to significantly improve employee perceptions about their level of exhibited individualized consideration. The behaviors associated with individualized consideration are widely considered "best practice" in human relations management, but this study and others like it provide convincing evidence that they also have a significant impact on factors (in this case, teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment) that directly influence student performance, which is the most important outcome of any school management practice.

The remaining three dimensions of transformational leadership (behavioral idealized influence, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation) had a small but statistically significant impact on only the extrinsic form of job satisfaction. This provides limited support to the assertion of Bass and Avolio (2006) that transformational leadership behavior does produce results beyond those possible as a result of transactional behaviors alone. However, these behaviors did not emerge as significant in the models that included the other outcome variables, specifically: intrinsic job satisfaction, general job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It could be valuable for more research to be conducted regarding these three behaviors and their impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Based on the results of this study, principals would achieve better results by exploring attributed idealized influence and individual consideration, the two behaviors that accounted for the most variance in the model.

Recommendations for Future Research

Some recommendations for further study and research present themselves as a result of the findings of this study:

1. This study used hierarchical linear modeling to test Bass and Riggio's (2006) Augmentation Model of Transactional and Transformational Leadership in high schools. Replication studies, or studies of elementary or middle school teachers, would be valuable further contributions to the field.
2. Research could be conducted to explore the powerful relationship between contingent reward behavior (a dimension of transactional leadership) and teachers'

job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Contingent reward behavior accounted for so much of the variance in all outcome variables, it may be that this type of behavior is particularly necessary and effective within the school context. A researcher might also seek to discover whether, within the Bass (1985) Full Range of Leadership Model, contingent reward is a foundational behavior that must be in place for principals to effectively exhibit transformational leadership behaviors.

3. Research could also be devoted to a detailed examination of individualized consideration and/or idealized influence (attributed) behavior in school principals. Specifically, a researcher could identify principals whose teachers view them as high in these behaviors and seek to determine what specific routines they engage in that allow them the time and structure necessary to exhibit them in a consistent and meaningful way. This could provide guidance to principals wishing to engage in these types of effective leadership behaviors.

4. Another interesting avenue of study would be to learn more about the connection between principals' transformational leadership behaviors and the performance of their students on various types of assessments. What connections can be made between specific leadership behaviors and student achievement outcomes? In addition, it would be valuable to examine which aspect(s) of job satisfaction–intrinsic, extrinsic or general–have the most impact on student achievement?

5. A researcher could engage in qualitative interviews or focus groups with transformational school leaders in order to determine to what extent the Full Range of Leadership Behaviors are learned through professional development, mentoring or other means and to what extent they are behaviors to which leaders are inclined as a result of personality or other inherent characteristics. This would help those who provide professional development to school administrators understand how to increase their capacity in this area.

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