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Transformational Leadership of University Librarians: A case study of University of Kashmir and University of Jammu

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Abstract

Purpose: *The study examines the level of transformational leadership and its elements among university librarians as perceived by the library staff.*

Design/methodology/approach*: The study follows survey method employing structured questionnaire. Moreover, a multitude of sources like books, journals, databases, and website of university of Kashmir and university of Jammu were consulted to get additional insights.*

Findings: *There is an above average level of transformational leadership style perceived for the university librarians with most positive perception for the University of Kashmir. Among the five dimensions of transformational leadership, university librarians are perceived to possess higher level of individual consideration followed by inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized behaviour and idealized attributes respectively.*

Research Implications/Value*: The study shows the transformation leadership style demonstrated by the university librarians and will be helpful in framing the leadership programs for the university libraries.*

Keywords*: Leadership; Transformational leadership; Effective leadership; Librarians; University libraries*

Paper type*: Research*

Introduction

Effective leadership is an essential ingredient for an organization's success, and therefore, the ability to identify and define effective leadership is crucial. Technical expertise, superior performance, and established experience are no longer only criterion of effective leadership. Effective leaders inspire, motivate, promote a positive work environment, understand and manage emotions, build bonds, so on and so forth.

Transformational leadership style is being considered as the most effective leadership style among all the styles. This leadership changes and transforms people in various ways and is concerned with ethics, values, emotions, standards, and long term goals. It includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings. Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them. It has been the focus of many research studies, since early 1980s and is now a part of the *"New Leadership''* paradigm **(Bryman, 1992)**, which gives more attention to the charismatic and

affective elements of leadership. **Lowe and Gardner (2001)** observe that one third of the research was about transformational or charismatic leadership and its popularity is attributed to emphasis on intrinsic motivation and follower development, which fits the needs of today's work groups, who want to be inspired and empowered to succeed in times of uncertainty **(Bass & Riggio, 2006)**.

The term transformational leadership was first coined by **Downtown (1973)**. Its emergence as an important approach to leadership began with a classic work titled *"Leadership"* by political sociologist **James Mac Gregor Burns (1978)**. In his work, Burns attempted to link the roles of leadership and followership. He wrote of leaders as people who tap the motives of followers in order to better reach the goals of leaders and followers.

Transformational leadership with its focus on change and developing new leaders is needed in today's university libraries. In this light, the present study investigates the perception of library staff about the use of transformational leadership by the librarians in the university libraries of J&K.

Review of literature

Transformational leaders have the ability to stimulate other leaders, colleagues, and followers to embrace new organizational perspectives, support the vision of the organization, achieve higher level of performance, and adopt higher levels of moral and ethical standards. Transformational leaders enhance follower satisfaction and performance by demonstrating Idealized leadership, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individualized consideration, referred to as Four I's **(Bass & Avolio, 1994, 2004)**.

- **Idealized leadership**: Leaders who demonstrate self-confidence and power by acting as role models for their followers. Idealized leadership is displayed in two forms:
  - **Idealized attributes:** Such leaders are admired, respected, and trusted by their colleagues and followers, because they perform in ways that are beneficial to followers, teams, and the organizations.
  - **Idealized behaviour:** Leaders seek to obtain follower buy-in, share risks, and consistently handle issues related to conduct, ethics, standards, and values.
- **Inspirational motivation:** It involves motivating and inspiring the followers by providing meaning and understanding to the objectives and work environment. The leaders use effective communication to create a team atmosphere with a shared vision for the future.

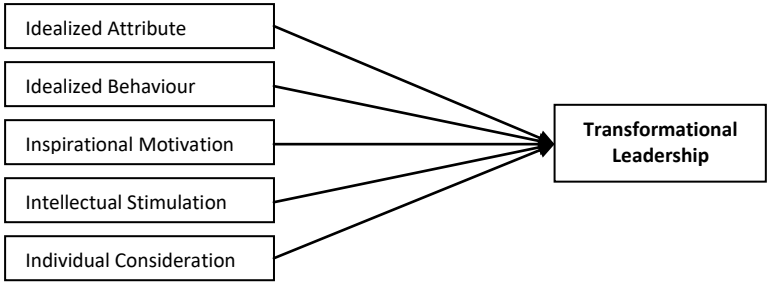
- **Intellectual stimulation:** Leaders stimulate their followers to use innovation and creativity to develop new ways of accomplishing goals and objectives. The leaders encourage critical thinking and problem solving attitude to improve performance.
- **Individual consideration:** Transformational leaders are attentive to the needs of their followers to help them to reach a higher level of performance. The leaders focus on employee development through mentoring and coaching.

Emotional intelligence appears to be an antecedent for effective transformational leadership. **Esfahani and Soflu (2011)** investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership in physical education managers of Golestan state including presidents and deputies of provinces and districts physical education offices and general department of Golestan state physical education. It is found that emotional intelligence and transformational leadership has a significant relationship. The results also reveal that personal consideration is the strongest predictive variable in transformational leadership and empathy as strongest variable in emotional intelligence. The highest mean score in transformational leadership is found for individualized consideration and least for intellectual stimulation. Similarly for emotional intelligence, the highest is for social skills and least for individual properties. **Ayiro (2014)** determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership and also analyses whether transformational leadership is positively related to leader effectiveness, team effectiveness and school climate. The study reveals that emotional intelligence is positively related with transformational leadership style, which is in turn is positively associated with leader effectiveness and service climate, but not with team effectiveness. One of the four dimensions of emotional intelligence i.e. Regulation of Emotion (ROE) is found to be highly co-related with the dimensions of transformational leadership.

Rowold and Heinitz (2007) found that transformational leadership increases the impact of transactional leadership on employees' performance and company profit. In addition, they found that transformational leadership and charismatic leadership are overlapping. Similarly, **Nemanich and Keller (2007)** examined the impact of transformational leadership with the observation that transformational leadership behaviours such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation are positively related to acquisition acceptance, job satisfaction, and performance. Likewise, **Tims, Bakker and Xanthopoulou (2011)** observe the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement for 42 employees and their supervisors in two different

organizations and notice that employees became more engaged in their work when their supervisors are able to boost subordinate's optimism through a transformational leadership style.

Fig. 1 Elements of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1995)



Significance of the study

The study is significant in the field of leadership and is expected to add new knowledge to the transformational leadership concept. The study will assist in design and development of leadership programs particularly in the university libraries of J&K.

Objectives of the study

- Examine the level of overall transformational leadership of University Librarians as perceived by the library staff members.
- Ascertain the level of transformational leadership elements of University Librarians.
- To learn whether the differences in perception between the university of Kashmir and university of Jammu are statistically significant or not.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was used for the study based on the survey method. The type of sampling employed in the study was stratified sampling. In total 100 questionnaires were distributed, of which 73 were received back. Out of 73, six questionnaires were not considered, because of incomplete information provided by the respondents. Hence, the final analysis was limited to a sample of 67 respondents. The data was collected through structured questionnaire designed for the transformational leadership by **Bass & Avolio (1995).** The scale was modified keeping in view the context of the study. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent sample tests.

Results

The perception of library staff towards their university librarian's transformational leadership and its dimensions is given in Table 1. A mean score of 3.75 and percentage score of 75% indicate that an above average level of transformational leadership is perceived by library staff for their university librarians. The standard deviation of 0.641 also support the results are reasonably trustworthy. The perception of library staff about the dimensions of transformational leadership also appears to be at above average level with mean scores of 3.56, 3.62, 3.88, 3.73, and 3.96 for idealized attribute, idealized behaviour, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration respectively.

Table 1: Transformational leadership of university librarians as perceived by library staff

Dimension	Mean score	% of Mean score	Standard Deviation	Ranking
IA	3.56	71.2	.715	5th
IB	3.62	72.4	.697	4th
IM	3.88	77.6	.714	2nd
IS	3.73	74.6	.683	3rd
IC	3.96	79.2	.649	1st
Overall TL	**3.75**	**75.0**	**.641**	

Note: IA=Idealized Attribute; IB=Idealized Behaviour; IM=Inspirational Motivation; IS=Intellectual Stimulation; IC=Individual Consideration; TL=Transformational Leadership

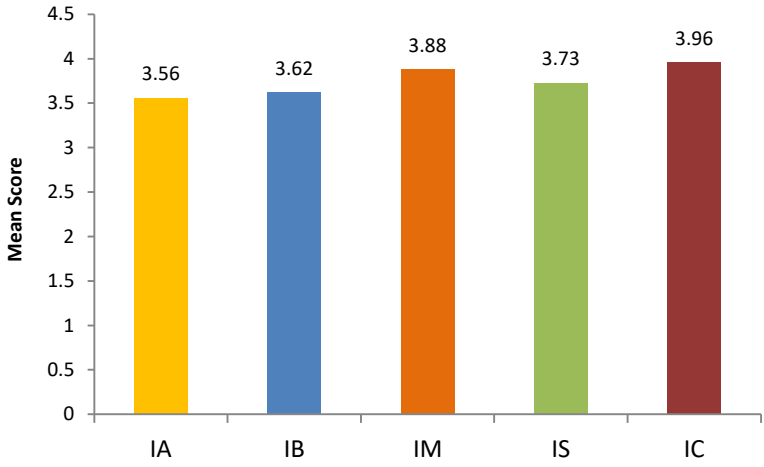
Among the five dimensions of transformational leadership, respondents report highest score for individual consideration followed by inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized behaviour and idealized attributes respectively **(Fig 2)**.

Transformational leadership across universities and its comparison

An attempt is also made to analyze and compare the perception of library staff regarding transformational leadership of their university librarians. From a comparative view point, University of Kashmir report the most favourable perception regarding the transformational leadership of their university librarian, with a mean score of 3.83 and percentage score of 76.6 percent **(Table 2).**

However, *z test* was employed to examine whether the differences between the university of Kashmir and university of Jammu are statistically significant or not. The results reveal that the difference is merely an outcome of chance factor and are not statistically significant (z value = .843; *p* value = 0.097).

Fig. 2: Dimensions of Transformational Leadership



Note: *IA=Idealized Attribute; IB=Idealized Behaviour; IM=Inspirational Motivation; IS=Intellectual Stimulation; IC=Individual Consideration; TL=Transformational Leadership*

Table 2: Transformational leadership across universities and its comparison

	Mean Score	% of Mean Score	Z Value	Sig.*
University of Kashmir	3.83	76.6	.843	0.097^{ns}
University of Jammu	3.67	73.4		

*Note: *p>.05; ns = not significant*

Conclusion

The study indicates above average level of transformational leadership is perceived for the university librarians. However, the overall perceptions specify that the university librarians need to improve the use of the transformational components to make the libraries open to change. Among the five dimensions of transformational leadership, the respondents report highest for individual consideration followed by inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized behaviour and idealized attributes respectively. The librarians are attentive to the needs of followers, helping them to reach a higher level of performance and also motivate and inspire library staff by providing meaning and understanding towards the objectives of libraries, thereby improving working environment. They stimulate staff members to use innovation and creativity to develop new ways of accomplishing goals and objectives.

Without strong, effective leadership, university libraries and the profession of librarianship cannot flourish. Transformational leaders and the use of the Four "is" will help to facilitate a successful change.

Limitations and future direction for research

- Results can't be generalized due to small sample size. More institutions can be included for generalizing the results.
- The Primary data used in the study has been collected only once. In the future, longitudinal approach should be adopted by collecting response from the respondents at different periods of time.

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