# TRANSFORMATIONAL AND TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE DIVISIONAL SECRETARIATS IN JAFFNA DISTRICT

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### **ABSTRACT**

The managers and leaders play a critical role in achieving the productivity of the organizations as they are in charge to set direction and execute on behalf of all employees to achieve organizational goals. The present study attempts to investigate the effect of leadership styles on employee performance. Survey method was used and a sample of 287 employees was selected from among the combined services grade employees working in the Divisional Secretariats in Jaffna District. Leadership style was measured using Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire, Form 5x – rater form developed by Bass and Avolio (2000) and employee performance was measured using Role Based Performance Scale developed by Welbourne, Johnson, & Erez (998). The results of the study revealed that transformational and transactional leadership styles have significant positive impact on employee performance. The results of the study would be useful for the leaders and administrators of the Divisional Secretariats to get an insight about the need for adopting both transformational and transactional leadership styles to improve the performance among employees.

**Keywords:** employee performance, transformational leadership, transactional leadership and divisional secretariats

### **INTRODUCTION**

Researchers are interested in investigating the effects of leadership styles on employees' job related outcomes in various contexts and sectors. Although the transformational-transactional leadership paradigm has received increased attention from the research community over the past few decades, the nonprofit sector has been largely neglected. Several researches indicate that there are

strong interconnections between leadership styles and employee outcomes, while in Sri Lanka, especially in the Jaffna District, the work on this subject is not sufficiently reported.

Improving efficiency of public service involves continuously improving all work and business processes; educating, training, development and motivation of all levels of public sector employees and adopting new management approaches. (Amaradasa, 2012). The public service, regardless of its size and composition, must remain contemporary in its approach to management systems and procedures in line with those of other large private sector organizations in Sri Lanka. In this context, the researcher believes that effective leadership by the administrators/ managers is one of the most important aspects in improving performance of employees.

In order to undertake this, capability of managers and leaders have to be systematically developed to strengthen the productivity of the organizations. Adoption of the appropriate style will help induce trust and loyalty among employees towards the organization, in turn, leads to improved employee performance.

The intention of the researcher is to find out how far the leadership styles affect employee performance in the public sector organizations. There is no shortage of researches on the subject of leadership styles and employees' outcomes. But in the Sri Lankan public sector, there are very limited studies reported in the literature regarding the impact of leadership style on employee performance. Within the Sri Lankan public sector, it is very rare to come across studies which have been conducted on the impact of leadership style on employees' outcomes, particularly, in the Northern Province. There is evidence of few studies in the subject of leadership in Sri Lanka in few sectors; remarkably, studies on the impact of transformational and transactional leadership styles

on various outcomes such as knowledge creation in Sri Lankan Software Industry (Athukorala, Perera, & Meedeniya, 2016), employee' performance in banking industry (Chamika & Gunasekara, 2016), Union and Organizational Commitment in public sector organizations in Sri Lanka (Dhammika, Ahmad, & Sam, 2013), employees' trust and their organizational commitment for nonteaching staff of the Sri Lankan Universities (Mathotaarachchi, 2013), etc. However, still there is a need for studies in the subject of leadership in public sector organizations in the Jaffna District, where the people's cultural aspects like values, attitudes and behaviours differ noticeably. Hussain, Wan Ismail, and Javed (2017) compared the applicability of transformational leadership and substitutes-for-leadership theories in Malaysia's and Pakistan's work settings. The results suggest that the transformational leadership style is effective in both cultures, but the transactional leadership style is culturally contingent. According to Hussain et al. (2017), the above mentioned study is the first to compare the applicability of western theories in collectivist cultures that differ significantly in their power distance orientation. Therefore, investigation of the applicability of western theories in the Sri Lankan context could add knowledge to the existing literature.

There has been considerable empirical research (e.g., Basham, 2012; Bolden, Gosling, O'Brien, Peters, Ryan, & Haslam, 2012; Herbst, & Conradie, 2011; López-Domínguez, Enache, Sallan, & Simo, 2014; Sani & Maharani, 2012; Vinger, 2009) on leadership in the higher education and other sectors in various countries. However, these studies have varied widely in terms of context, purpose and methodology.

Furthermore, previous research has separately applied different types of leadership theories such as autocratic and democratic leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership and, task and people-oriented leadership theories to examine the variables of interest. For example, Hemakumara

(2011) investigated the relationship between the directive and supportive leadership styles and team cohesiveness in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka. Thus, there is a gap in the current research literature examining the effects of transformational and transactional leadership styles on employee outcomes in Sri Lankan context.

The main objective of the study is to determine the impact of transformational and transactional leadership styles as perceived by the employees on their job performance in the Divisional Secretariats in Jaffna District. The results of the study would identify the organizational leadership to determine which styles can guarantee committed and motivated employees and hence have a much better performance.

Based on the theoretical notions and findings described above, this research has been designed to address the following questions.

"What is the influence of perceived transformational and transactional leadership on employees' performance in the Divisional Secretariats in Jaffna District?"

### LITERATURE REVIEW

### Leadership

Leadership has been studied extensively in the past century in the management field (Bass & Avolio, 1997). It is a key factor that determines productivity and success of the organizations. Cole (2005) defines Leadership as a dynamic process whereby one man influences other to contribute voluntarily to the realization and attainment of the goals objectives; aspiration of values of the group that is representing the essence of Leadership is to help a group or an Organization to attain sustainable development and growth.

Nel, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono, and Werner (2004) define leadership

as the process whereby one individual influences others to willingly and enthusiastically direct their efforts and abilities towards attaining defined group or organizational goals. Leadership theories indicate that leadership behaviors can be categorized into two main styles: transformational leadership and transactional leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1997; 2000).

# **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is the most studied leadership style in various sectors and contexts.

Transformational leaders motivate subordinates by creating and representing an inspiring vision of the future (Bass & Avolio, 1997). This form of leadership involves the creation of an emotional attachment between leaders and employees. It is said that transformational leaders take a real interest in the well-being of their employees. Bass, Waldman, Avolio, and Bebb (1987) discovered that leaders scoring higher on Transformational Leadership factors have followers who display greater levels of transformational behaviors. Based on empirical research, Bass (1985) and later Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1999), Bass and Avolio (1990), and Hater and Bass (1988) have proposed the five dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence-attributes, idealized influence-behaviour. inspirational motivation. intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Inspirational motivation of transformational leadership is the articulation and representation of a vision by the leader. Idealized Influence- attributes refers to the attribution of charisma to the leader.

Because of the leaders' positive attributes, followers build close emotional attachment with the leader. Idealized Influence- behavior emphasizes a collective sense of mission and values and acting upon these values.

Intellectual stimulation includes challenging the assumptions of followers' beliefs, their analysis of problems they face and solutions they generate. Individualized Consideration is defined by considering individual needs of followers and developing their individual strengths.

### **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leaders generally use organizational power and authority to maintain control; this style of leadership is occasionally referred to as authoritative (Bennet, 2009). Bass (1985) and Podsakoff (1990) have pointed out that contingent reward, as the principal behavior to represent transactional leadership. Transactional leaders expect certain work behaviors from their subordinates and reward for these behaviors by both monetary and nonmonetary rewards. Researchers (Bass, 1985; Avolio et al., 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Hater & Bass, 1988) have hypothesized three behavior dimensions that underlie transactional leadership. They are contingent reward, management by exception- active and management by exception- passive. Contingent reward means the extent to which leaders set goals, make rewards on performance and provide rewards when performance goals are met. Management by exception-active is the extent to which leaders closely monitor followers' performance and keep track of mistakes. Management by exception-passive is the extent to which leaders ignore the problems until they become serious.

Burns' (1978) view is that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership. He contrasted transactional and transformational leadership as opposite ends of a continuum and assumed that transformational and transactional leadership were mutually exclusive styles. This means that an individual can display transformational leadership or transactional leadership, but not both. However, several other studies recognized that transactional and transformational leadership are not

mutually exclusive (e.g., Adoory & Toth, 2004; Bass, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1997, 2000; Werder & Holtzhausen, 2009; Yukl, 1994).

# **Employee Performance**

Researchers attempted to identify the dimensions of employee performance with the aim of managing employee performance in organizations. A widely accepted method of conceptualization of employee performance is the role-based model of performance (Welbourne, Johnson, & Erez, 1998). A role is generally defined as the total set of performance responsibilities associated with one's employment (Murphy & Jackson, 1999; cited in Dammika, 2013). Role of employees on the job is central to the effectiveness of the organization and measurement of employee performance should consider it. It is said that the employees' behavior on the job determines the level of performance of them. This demonstrates the fact that different behaviors of employees on the job may create job performance. Though numbers of models are available in human resource management for assessing employee performance, the task and contextual performance model (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994) and the role based model of performance (Welbourne, Johnson, & Erez, 1998) are recorded to be highly accepted two model of performance.

# Effect of Transformational and Transactional leadership on employee performance

Elgelala and Noermijatib (2014) investigated the influences of transformational leaderships on employee motivation, job satisfaction and employee's performance of the Economics and Business Faculty Employee at University of Muhammadiyah Malang. The research was conducted with all employees at Economics and Business Faculty, University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

The finding of this study revealed that transformational leadership gives positive and significant effect on employee motivation and employees' job satisfaction, but no significant effect found on employee performance. Andreani and Petrik (2016) showed that there is a positive and significant impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction, a positive but insignificant impact of job satisfaction on employee performance, and a positive and significant impact of transformational leadership on employee performance.

Cavazotte, Moreno and Bernardo (2013) investigated the connections between transformational leadership and subordinate formal and contextual performance among Brazilian employees with a sample of 107 managers from a multinational company that operates in the financial sector and suggest that perceived transformational leadership is associated with higher levels of task performance and helping behaviors. The same findings have been reported in several studies (Jiang, Lu, & Le, 2016; Sparkling, Mollaoglu, & Kirca, 2016; Andreani & Petrik, 2016; Yammarino, & Dubinsky, 1994; Spangler, & Braiotta, 1990). Based on the review of literature the following hypothesis was formulated in the present study.

# H1: Transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on perceived performance of employees.

Transactional leadership styles can affect positively or negatively on performance. It depends on employee assessment. Positive effect can occur when employees assess transactional leadership positively and a negative effect can occur if employee considers that transactional leadership styles cannot be trusted because they do not keep their promises, dishonest or not transparent. A study conducted by Howell & Avolio (1993) confirms that contingent reward leadership has a negative impact on the followers' performance. Contingent reward is viewed as an active and positive exchange

between leaders and followers whereby followers are awarded for accomplishing agreed upon objective. If managers do not effectively follow-up on the contingent reward promises, thereby displaying behavioral inconsistency, they are viewed as ineffective leaders. Furthermore, Howell & Avolio (1993) suggest that the level of contingent reward leadership is dependent on organizational context and settings. For example, an organization undergoing change might suffer from a transactional leadership style. The penalties, awarded in such a system of managing by exception, have a negative impact on performance and satisfaction. This stems from the fact the leader passively awaits problems before taking any action.

By following this strategy, the leader ensures that corrective action is taken when required and in doing so he reinforces the roles and expectations for the followers. Hence, this behavior represents an important aspect of transactional leadership (Bass 1990). According to Jayasingam, Ansari & Jantan (2009) coercive power has been linked with ineffective leadership.

Based on the review of literature the hypothesis 2 was formulated as follows.

H2: Transactional leadership has a significant positive impact on perceived performance of employees.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative survey method was used in the present study because it provides a cost-effective and efficient way of collecting data from large populations (Stacks, 2010). Employees' performance involves the self-rating of their own performance which includes job role, career role, innovator role, team role, and organization role. The targeted population for the study is the employees of combined services category who are working in the Divisional Secretariats in the Jaffna District. There are 15 Divisional Secretariats in Jaffna District,

and 10 offices were approached for collecting data. A sample of 287 employees was selected based on random sampling method.

Questionnaires were used to collect data from the research participants. Transformational and transactional leadership styles were measured using Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X - rater form, developed by Bass and Avolio (2000). Employee Performance was measured using Five Factor Performance Scale developed by Welbourne, Johnson and Erez (1998). The instruments were pretested before administering.

### DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 20.0 for Windows. To determine the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable, regression analysis was used. To determine the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance, regression analysis was used. The instruments used in the study were reliable and thus the researcher decided to proceed the analysis.

**Table 1: Distribution of sample** 

Category		Frequency	Percent
	Below 25	8	2.8
	26-35	111	38.7
Age	36-45	148	51.6
	46 and above	20	7.0
	Total	287	100.0
	Male	103	35.9
Gender	Female	184	64.1
	Total	287	100.0
	Married	231	80.5
Marital status	Unmarried	56	19.5
	Total	287	100.0
	A/Level	47	16.4
	Diploma	13	4.5
Educational	Degree	181	63.1
Qualification	PG Diploma	22	7.7
	Master Degree	23	8.0
	Total	287	100.0
Evnovionas	Below 5 years	129	44.9
Experience	6-10 years	50	17.4

	11-15 years	67	23.3
	16-20 years	28	9.8
	Above 20 years	13	4.5
	Total	287	100.0
	Managerial	76	26.5
Position	Non-managerial	211	73.5
	Total	287	100.0

In the present study, samples were selected using random sampling method. In the sample, majority of the participants were in the age group 36-45 years, were males, were married, were with degree qualification, have less than 5 years' experience and were non-managers.

The least number of participants fall in the age group of below 25 years.

**Table 2: Reliability statistics** 

Variable	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Transformational leadership		
Intellectual Stimulation	4	0.684
Inspirational Motivation	4	0.714
Individual consideration	4	0.709
Idealized Influence (attributes)	4	0.795
Idealized Influence (behavior)	4	0.742
Transactional Leadership		
Contingent Reward	4	0.660
Management-by-exception (active)	4	0.628
Management-by-exception (passive)	4	0.740
<b>Employee Performance</b>		
Job	4	0.785
Career	4	0.899
Innovator	4	0.897
Team	4	0.841
Organization	4	0.878

Source: Survey Data

The Table 2 shows the relaibility of the variables studied. The Cronbach's alpha of the items for each component ranges from 0.628 to 0.899, indicating inter-item consistency. As the alpha coefficient complies with the minimum requirement as suggested by Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2014), the data are reliable and thus we decided to continue the analysis.

# Regression analysis

Table 1-a: Model summary for transformational leadership and

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
1	.552ª	.305	.303	11.82697			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational leadership							

Table 1-b: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Mod	del	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regress ion	17500.671	1	17500.671	125.11	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1	Residua 1	39865.008	285	139.877	_	
	Total	57365.679	286			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Table 1-c: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize d Coefficients	t	Sig.		
	В	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	23.610	4.072		5.798	0 0		
Transformationa l leadership	.585	.052	.552	11.18	.00		
a. Dependent Variable: Performance							

The Table 1-a, 1-b and 1-c depict the results of regression analysis. According to the regression analysis, transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on employee performance (B=0.585) and the relationship is

b. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational leadership

significant at 0.01 level (p<0.01). The R-square value of 0.305 denotes that 30.5% of the variation in employee performance could be accounted for the variation in transformational leadership style.

Based on the results of the study, the hypotheses H1 "Transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on performance of employees" is supported.

Table 2-a: Model summary for transactional leadership and performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.399ª	.159	.156	13.01030	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional leadership

Table 2-b: ANOVAa

M	odel	Sum of	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
		Squares				
	Regression	9124.310	1	9124.310	53.905	.000b
1	Residual	48241.369	285	169.268		
	Total	57365.679	286			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance,

Table 2-c: Coefficients

Mo	odel	011000	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Si g.
		В	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	25.334	5.927		4.274	00
1	Transactional leadership	1.115	.152	.399	7.342	00

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The Table 2-a, 2-b and 2-c depict the results of regression analysis for identifying the impact of transactional leadership on employee performance. According to the regression analysis, transactional leadership has a significant

positive impact on employee performance (B=1.115) and the relationship is significant at 0.01 level (p < .01). The R-square value of 0.159 denotes that 15.9% of the variation in employee performance could be accounted for the variation in transactional leadership style.

Based on the results of the study, the Hypothesis 2: "Transactional leadership has a significant positive impact on Performance of employees" is supported.

## **Discussion of findings**

This study is based on Divisional Secretariat employees and it was revealed that transformational leadership style positively impacts on employee performance. The finding of significant positive impact of transformational style on employee performance is consistent with previous researches (Butler, 1999; Suharto, 2005; Elgelala & Noermijatib, 2014; Cavazotte, Moreno & Bernardo, 2013; Jiang, Lu, & Le, 2016; Sparkling, Mollaoglu, & Kirca, 2016; Andreani & Petrik, 2016; Yammarino, & Dubinsky, 1994; Spangler & Braiotta, 1990).

Transactional leadership style also significantly and positively impacts on employee performance. The result is not consistent with the results reported in the previous studies (Howell & Avolio, 1993; Jayasingam, Ansari & Jantan, 2009). The inconsistent finding could be because of the context and sector in which the study was conducted. The current study was conducted in the Jaffna context where people's culture and values differ noticeably. In addition, the study was conducted in the public sector and thus, the people might be highly relying on the rewards for their performance and thus they would perform well to get rewards. In other words, if they perceive that their leader is transactional, they would perform well with the expectation that they will be rewarded for higher performance.

Transactional leaders make use of reward and coercive power. Working in fear of losing one's job, fear of demotion, or fear of disciplinary transfer makes an employee worry about the consequences if the expectations of the leaders are not met and thus would work for satisfying the job demand rather than working enthusiastically. Thus, the expected causal chain where leadership style positively affects employee performance does not seem to be applicable to transactional leadership.

#### Conclusion

The primary focus of this study was to examine the impact of transformational and transactional leadership on employee performance. The findings reported from this study bring great understanding of the relationship between the variables. From this study, it becomes evident that transformational and transactional leadership have significant positive impact on employee performance. The study gives an insight that leaders and managers in the Divisional Secretariats need to adopt a combination of transformational and transactional leadership styles for making the employees perform the tasks adequately and enthusiastically.

The findings of this research will be useful for future researchers, students and academicians digesting the effects and importance of different leadership styles on employee performance.

After determining the impact of leadership styles on employee performance through the present study, the administrators of Divisional Secretariats will be able to use the findings of this research to develop leadership programmes that will help the leaders acquire relevant leadership skills for effective management and organizational performance. This study's findings will assist different leaders in identifying the best and the most appropriate leadership

style to use in relevant situations for increased employee job performance.

This study helps managers to better understand the need for adopting both transformational and transactional leadership styles to increase employee performance. The finding could add knowledge to the existing literature. It also gives a foundation for future researchers to expand the study to other districts and other public sector organizations to generalize the findings to the public sector in Sri Lanka.

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