

An Empirical Study of Transformational Leadership and Quality of Work Life in Higher Educational Institutions

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Abstract

The effectiveness of educational institutions in this competitive and knowledge-driven environment can be made better if they value and recognize their faculty members by providing them with conducive atmosphere at their workplaces. It can be achieved if educational institutions bring qualitative changes through promotion of sound quality of work life (QWL). QWL is vital not only for improving employee performance, but it also helps in enhancing institutional progress. In this regard, the role of academic leaders can be very effective in promoting sound culture in their institutions, which would foster commitment and satisfaction level of their staff. In the present study, an attempt has been made to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and QWL in sample study institutions. Moreover, the study will also analyse the impact of transformational leadership on QWL. The respondents of the study comprise of 143 faculty members taken from five constituent colleges in Srinagar district. The data whatsoever collected were analysed using SPSS 20.0. Version. The findings of the study revealed that there exists a positive relationship between transformational leadership and QWL. Moreover, the results of the study revealed that transformational leadership positively and significantly influences QWL in sample study institutions. The study suggests that transformational leadership needs to be further strengthened in order to enhance QWL in sample study institutions.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Quality of Work Life, Higher Educational Institutions, Academic Staff

Introduction

The success factor of higher educational institutions lies in their ability to empower and involve their faculty members towards attaining institutional goals and objectives. Faculty members can perform and deliver effectively if their motives and needs are being addressed. They attribute their satisfaction level in terms of monetary benefits being derived from the institutions, working environment, a culture of growth and development, and in the extent to which they are being involved in contributing towards their institutional vision. The internal environment at their places determines how much happy and satisfied they are towards their institutions. The internal environment can be developed and improved by bringing positive changes at individual and group work levels. In this endeavour, quality of work life (QWL) can have a significant effect on the overall working of the institutions. A sound QWL will help in increasing the morale and commitment of individuals towards their organizations and help in enhancing their professional growth and development. QWL facilitates organizational members to actively take part in decision making at individual, group, and organizational levels. It enables individuals in organization to continuously develop their competencies by providing them with favourable environment to work and improve.

Promoting quality work life to employees in organizations cannot be made possible without the intervention of their leaders. Organizational leadership has a significant role to play in projecting sound image among public, which

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largely depends on how organizations are catering to and rendering their activities in accordance with employees' needs and requirements. It calls for having a sound and dynamic leadership in higher educational institutions who can take their institutions to higher levels by addressing employees job and work concerns. In this regard, transformational leadership style is most suitable and effective in realising this objective. Transformational leadership can promote sound work culture by improving the QWL and thus enabling their employees to be more capable and effective in performing their tasks.

Review of Literature

Quality of Work Life (QWL)

The subject of QWL is gaining more acceptability and relevance among organizations irrespective of their nature of work. Past research evidences have highlighted that numerous studies have been conducted in the area of QWL; however, this area is yet to be explored to its fullest. Edwards et al., (2009) and Sashkin and Burke (1987) viewed that QWL is a growing area of management science and people perceive it differently as per their needs and requirements. There is no widely accepted and comprehensive definition of QWL. Various researches have tried to study the dynamics of QWL as per their understanding and knowledge. QWL includes many facets ranging from good work culture to safe working conditions. Sirgy et al., (2008) defined QWL as a combination of various factors, which include: (i) salary/compensation, (ii) work load and stress at work, (iii) promotion and professional growth, and (iv) sound psychological working environment. It constitutes all the facilities that are provided by an employer and needed by an employee to perform his/her assigned duties and tasks. Mohanraj and Ramesh (2010) concluded that QWL is very essential management practice, which improves the satisfaction level of employees and enhances their commitment towards their organization. Hamidi and Mohamadi (2012) opined that QWL is a combination of principles and philosophies which holds individuals as trustworthy, effective, responsible, and capable of making significant contribution towards his/her organization. Indumathy and Kamalraj (2012) defined QWL as the degree of happiness or dissatisfaction with one's job. Earlier Hackman & Suttle (1977) stated that

QWL is more based on the needs of individuals and the experiences, which they encounter. QWL thus focuses in meeting individuals personal needs at workplaces. QWL programs help both employees and management by building cooperation, solving problems, promoting sound work culture, and managing the resources (Rose et al., 2006).

Over the years, many authors and researchers have made an attempt to give a framework about the variables, which QWL constitutes. Swapna and Gomathi (2013) maintained that QWL could be measured through: (i) working conditions, (ii) well-being of individual, (iii) compensation, (iv) training and development, (v) work-life balance, and (vi) career and job satisfaction. Connell and Haneef (2009) pointed out that QWL comprises: (i) job content, (ii) working hours and work life balance, and (iii) managerial/supervisory style and strategies. QWL as such effects in determining how well employees perceive their emotional connection with their organization in terms of their economic situation, physical health, psychological behaviour, and working conditions.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has become one of the most effective and relevance styles of leadership being propagated and promoted by organizations world over. Transformational leadership has been regarded as an effective leadership style in improving the behaviour of individuals in attaining institutional outcomes (Bommer et al., 2004; Felfe & Schyns, 2004; Tickle et al., 2005). The significance of this style of leadership can be understood in its application of making institutions to excel and innovate according to changing environment. Transformational leadership is the ability to involve in contributing towards organizational performance. It plays a critical role in this dynamic environment characterized by growing employee expectations and needs.

Transformational leaders create a congenial atmosphere at workplaces by fostering a climate of commitment and high performance and inspiring employees to work more effectively in attaining organizational goals (Akmaliah et al., 2011; Burke et al., 2006; Erkutlu, 2008; Hogg et al., 2005; Hur et al., 2011; Kinicki & Kreitner, 2008; Noorshahi & Sarkhabi, 2008). Transformational

leadership helps in improving workplace flexibility, job security, commitment, morale, and overall job satisfaction of employees Voon et al., (2011). According to Ye et al., (2011), transformational leaders have a positive effect on employee performance, which is resulted through development of sound climate at their workplaces.

Transformational leadership comprises of five sub-variables namely: (i) *idealized attribute*: it is the extent to which a leader can instil pride among his/her followers for being in associated with them; (ii) *idealized behaviour* is aimed at how much leaders are able to communicate about their values and beliefs to their followers; (iii) *inspirational motivation* measures how much a leader

is able to inspire and motivate his/her followers towards better performance; (iv) *intellectual stimulation* enables a leader to promote creativity and innovative skills among his/her followers in achieving desired goals and objectives; and (v) *individual consideration* focuses on leaders ability to understand the problems and issues being faced by their followers. It aims at ensuring that followers needs and aspirations are been taken care of (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Jung & Avolio, 2000).

Based on the reviewing past studies, the present study has made an attempt to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and QWL.

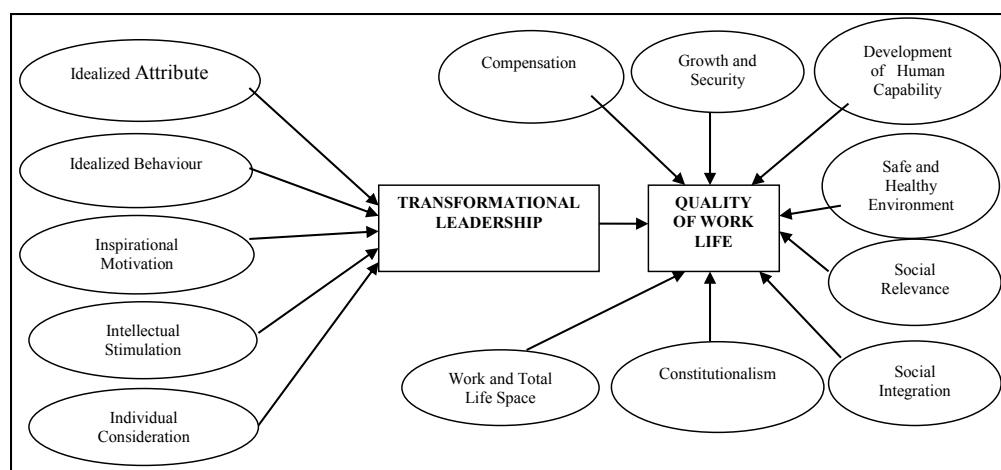


Fig. 1: Relationship Model of Transformational Leadership and QWL

Research Objectives

Based on past research studies, the following objectives have been set for the present study:

- (1) to assess the relationship that exists between transformational leadership and quality of work,
- (2) to examine the impact of transformational leadership on QWL, and
- (3) to study the perception of respondents towards QWL and transformational leadership across age.

Hypotheses

H1: There exists a positive relationship between transformational leadership and quality of work life.

H2: Transformational leadership positively and significantly influences QWL.

H3a: Perception of respondents towards transformational leadership significantly differs across age.

H3b: Perception of respondents towards QWL significantly differs across age.

Research Methodology

Research Instruments

In the present study, two instruments were used. Multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ-5x) developed by Bass and Avolio (2004) is a 20-item scale comprising of five elements idealized attribute, idealized behaviour, inspirational motivation, intellectual

stimulation, and individual consideration was used to measure transformational leadership. To measure QWL a 33-item scale was adapted from Walton's model on QWL. It consisted of eight factors namely compensation, growth and security, development of human capability, social integration, social relevance, constitutionalism, safe and healthy work environment, and work and total life space. The reliability of the study scales of transformational leadership and QWL was found to be at 0.82 and 0.76, respectively.

Data Collection and Sample Respondents

A questionnaire was distributed among 200 faculty members of sample study institutions, out of which only 161 questionnaires were received back. Out of the 161 questionnaires returned, 18 responses were found either incomplete or not fit for analysis. Therefore, only 143 questionnaires were used for final analysis representing usable response rate of 71.50%. The questionnaire also gathered information on demographic variables such as gender and age. Male staff comprised of 87 faculty members (60.83%). Academic staff having more than 50 years of age consisted of 56 (39.16%), those having

age between 40 and 50 years represented 45 (31.46%), and academic staff having age between 30 and 40 years represented 42 (29.37%).

Sampling Technique and Tools

Simple random sampling technique was used to gather responses from the respondents of the present study. The data whatsoever collected were analysed using SPSS 20.0. Version. Descriptive statistics such as mean score, % mean score, correlation, regression, and frequency were used to study the academic staff's perception towards transformational leadership practices and QWL prevailing in sample study institutions.

Sample Study Institutions

The present study was confined to the Higher Educational Institutions in Srinagar District. The sample institutions included five constituent colleges of Cluster University of Kashmir. These colleges consisted of Amar Singh College, Govt. College Women, Bemina Degree College, S. P. College, and Institute of Advance Studies.

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 1: Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Quality of Work Life (Correlations)

		<i>Transformational leadership</i>	<i>Quality of Work Life</i>
Transformational Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.428**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	143	143
Quality of Work Life	Pearson Correlation	.428**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	143	143

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Data compiled by the scholar

Table 1 depicts that there is a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership and QWL prevailing in sample select institutions. It depicts that the more we exhibit transformational leadership in study institutions, the more it will lead towards institution building. The correlation between transformational

leadership and QWL was found ($r = .428, p = 0.000$) which is both positive as well as statistically significant. Therefore, the hypotheses 1 is accepted, indicating a positive and significant relationship exists between transformational leadership and QWL.

Table 2: Correlation between Transformational Leadership Practices and Quality of Work Life

Transformational Leadership Practices		Quality of Work Life
Idealized Attribute	Pearson Correlation	.329**
	Sig. level	(0.000)
Idealized Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.319**
	Sig. level	(0.000)
Inspirational Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.344**
	Sig. level	(0.000)
Intellectual Stimulation	Pearson Correlation	.302**
	Sig. level	(0.000)
Individual Consideration	Pearson Correlation	.298**
	Sig. level	(0.000)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Data compiled by the scholar

Similarly, from Table 2 correlations were determined between transformational leadership practices and QWL. It is revealed from Table 2 that all the dimensions of transformational leadership depict positive and significant relationship towards QWL. The most positive relationship was found in case of inspirational motivation and QWL with ($r = .344, p = 0.000$), it was followed by idealized attribute ($r = .329, p = 0.000$), idealized behaviour ($r = .319, p = 0.000$), intellectual stimulation

Table 4: Perception of Teaching Staff Towards Transformational Leadership Across Age

Factor	Dependent Variable	Group	(N)	Mean Score	ANOVA	Sig*
Age	Transformational Leadership	30- 40 years	42	3.24	1.922	.091
		40- 50 years	45	3.31		
		> 50 years	56	3.34		

Note: * $p < .05$

Source: Data compiled by the author for the present study

Table 4 examines the difference in the perception of academic staff regarding transformational leadership based on variable age. It is revealed from Table 4 that employees who are above 50 years of age are having highest perception towards transformational leadership with mean score of (3.34) while as employees in between 30 and 40 age group showed least satisfaction towards transformational leadership with mean score of (3.24).

($r = .302, p = 0.000$), the least positive and significant relationship of employee engagement was found with individual consideration ($r = .298, p = 0.000$). All of these correlations were statistically significant.

Table 3: Effect of Transformational Leadership Practices on Quality of Work Life (Regression Analysis)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F-Value	Sig.
1	.428 ^a	.386	.385	92.22	.000 ^a

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational Leadership

Source: Data compiled by the scholar

Further, in order to examine the effect of transformational leadership on QWL, regression analysis was performed (Table 3). The regression analysis indicates that the perception of teaching staff regarding transformational leadership practices has a significant positive effect on QWL prevailing in sample select institutions. The value of $R^2 = 0.386$ shows that 38.06% variance is explained by independent variable (transformational leadership) in dependent variable (QWL). Thus, our hypothesis 2 is accepted. Hypothesis 2 indicates that transformational leadership impacts QWL.

The perceptual differences of respondent employees regarding transformational leadership are statistically insignificant when the differences were examined based on age factor (ANNOVA = 1.922; $p > .05$). Hence, hypothesis 3a is rejected, indicating that there exists no significant difference among faculty members across age.

Table 5: Perception of Teaching Staff towards Quality of Work Life across Age

Factor	Dependent Variable	Group	(N)	Mean Score	ANOVA	Sig*
Age	Quality of Work Life	30- 40 years	42	3.11	2.566	.075
		40- 50 years	45	3.19		
		> 50 years	56	3.24		

Note: * $p < .05$

Source: Data compiled by the author for the present study

Table 5 examines the difference in the perception of academic staff regarding QWL based on variable age. It is revealed from Table 5 that employees who are above 50 years of age are having highest perception towards QWL with mean score of (3.24) while as employees in between 30 and 40 age group showed least satisfaction towards transformational leadership with mean score of (3.11).

The perceptual differences of respondent employees regarding QWL are statistically insignificant when the differences were examined based on age factor (ANNOVA = 2.566; $p > .05$). Hence, hypothesis 3b is rejected, indicating that there exists no significant difference among faculty members across age.

Conclusion

The success of educational institutions in this knowledge-driven environment is dependent on their faculty members and as such, providing congenial atmosphere in educational institutions becomes all more important. A sound QWL will make faculty member more motivated, committed, and involved in contributing towards institutional goals and objectives, which would eventually lead in making their institutions as centres of excellence. It calls for role of academic leaders to transform their institutions by exhibiting transformational leadership style.

Keeping this in view, the present article was aimed to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and QWL in select study educational institutions. The findings of the paper highlighted that employees perceived relationship between transformational leadership and QWL that exists in their respective institutions. Further, in order to assess the impact of transformational leadership on QWL, it was found that transformational leadership positively and significantly influences QWL. It indicates that QWL among sample study institutions could be improved

if heads of departments of sample study institutions can facilitate a congenial culture at workplaces, which would help in improving the effectiveness of institutions. Moreover, the study tried to examine whether age could influence the perception of faculty members towards transformational leadership and QWL. It was revealed from the results that age of faculty members did not have a significant influence on transformational leadership and QWL.

The findings of the study suggest that the study institutions need to continuously facilitate and encourage their faculty members and must strive hard in promoting an enabling culture and sound work environment, which will foster innovation and improve service delivery and performance of faculty members in general and enhance institutional effectiveness in particular.

One of the limitations of the present study is that it has covered colleges from Srinagar District only; therefore, future research can include colleges from other districts of Kashmir as well in order generalize the findings. Further, the present study did not take into consideration the effect of gender on study variables. Therefore, it is suggested that studying this variable in future research would present a more clear view of leadership practices and QWL. Lastly, the perception of non-teaching staff was not considered in the present study, which could have presented better insights regarding leadership practices and QWL prevailing in sample study institutions.

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