

# Innovations

## Challenges of Implementing Transformational leadership style in the Private Higher Education Institutions of Ethiopia

Sintayehu Zeleke<sup>1</sup>

Co Author: Sapna Chauhan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>PhD candidate Parul University Management Department, Gujrat, Vadodara, Wagodia, India

Corresponding Author: Sintayehu Zeleke

---

---

### Abstract

Leadership practices of the manager have a great relation with the performance and satisfaction of workers. The objective of the study was to assess challenges of implementing transformational leadership style in Ethiopian private Higher Education Institutions. Descriptive survey was used as research design. A total of 281 respondents were considered by using stratified sampling techniques for this study. To collect relevant and reliable data from the selected sample respondents, both open and closed ended questionnaires were prepared and administered. Mean and standard deviation was used for the purpose of data analysis. The finding of the study shows that there are so many challenges that affect the implementation of transformational leadership in the Private Higher Education Institutions of Ethiopia. Some of the challenges are management related and others are employee related. Some other are related to institutional culture and the like. Specifically the following are some of the challenges that hinder the implementation of transformational leadership: unqualified staffs in management positions, lack of motivation and commitment from the side of management body to support the implementation of transformational leadership style and unwillingness to try new things and taking risk, problems related to employee motivation and self esteem, problem of staff morale and lack of commitment, lack of training from institutions, excessive workload, lack of effective and transparent communication, lack of staff motivation mechanisms, lack of facilities, lack of budget, lack of community and stakeholder's involvement, student's disciplinary problems and political pressures on the institutions. The researcher recommended that leaders in Private Higher Education Institutions need to be a role model for the qualities that they want to see in their team members. Transformational leaders are not only focused on getting the tasks done but they also show a genuine enthusiasm and passion for their work.

**Key words:** 1. Transformational Leadership, 2. leaders, 3. leadership

---

---

### Introduction

Leadership practices of the manager have a great relation with the performance and satisfaction of workers. Moreover, Barrow (1977) defined leadership as “the behavioral process of influencing individuals and groups towards set goals. In profit and non-profit-based firms, manufacturing and service, government and business,

health care, education and entertainment, work and community service. Leaders reside in every city and every country, in every position and every place. They are employees and volunteers, young and old, women and men. Leadership knows no racial or religious bounds, no ethnic or cultural borders. We find exemplary leadership everywhere we look (Jams and Barry 2003).

Burns (1978) states that Transformational leadership can be seen when “leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of morality and motivation”. Through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions and motivations to work towards common goals. This transformation of followers “is not based on a ‘give and take’ relationship but on the leader’s personality, traits and ability to make a change through example, articulation of an energizing vision and challenging goals. Transforming leaders are idealized in the sense that they are moral example of working towards the benefit of the team, organization and/or community.

### **Problem statement**

The life of a modern-day leader clearly is not easy. Inside their organizations, they need to lead and motivate a diversified group of people, work across organizational boundaries, improve efficiency, and achieve growth. Externally, they face a complex and globalized environment; they have to manage the requirements of government, keep up with competitors, and meet the expectations of other stakeholders. And within this global environment, there are many cultural considerations leaders must face to be effective. They must work across cultural boundaries and alongside others who, at times, are very different from them and have different ways of getting work completed.

In spite of the recognition of the importance of leadership for effective implementation of educational reform, studies of educational leadership within African context indicate that leaders of educational institutions remained unlocked in a constricting bureaucracy even as there was demand that they be proactive and decisive in their leadership role (Brown & Conrad, 2007). Moreover, leaders are highly engaged in mobilizing the existing human resource. Thus, effective leadership practice enables greater participation of entire work force, and can positively influence both individuals and organizational performance. Therefore, it is logical to say that the success of an organization is dependent on the leader’s ability optimize human resources inherent potential and skills. In addition, employees are the ones who play the major roles and make significant contributions to the development of the organization.

In view of such an issue, transformational leadership plays a significant role directly or indirectly in influencing its followers by promoting and managing school development. There has been empirical evidence that indicate a link between transformational leadership of the educational institutions and student ability to succeed academically (Leithwood&Jantzi, 2007; Leithwood et al. 2004). Though, no previous study has been conducted within Ethiopia to examine the relationship between the transformational leadership of school principals and school effectiveness particularly taking in to consider the measurement of school effectiveness, worldwide there are so many evidences that transformational leadership style improve effectiveness.

### Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to identify the challenges that leaders face in exercising transformational leadership in higher education Institutions of Ethiopia

### Research methodology

#### Research Approach and Design

The researcher used quantitative research approach. The quantitative approach helps to quantify or objectively measure certain variables in numeric terms, which makes descriptive analysis easy and manageable. Descriptive survey design was used as research design together with quantitative approach.

#### Data Sources and Types

Both primary and secondary data were collected from relevant sources that help to achieve the above objectives. The primary sources of information were collected from private higher institutions teachers through questionnaire and interview. On the other hand, the secondary sources mostly include: books, articles, journals, research works, internet browsing, etc. that will have relevance with the research topic.

#### Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Accordingly, the representative sample size was determined by using the formula developed by Yamane (1967) as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:  $n$  = Sample size

$N$  = Total Population

$e$  = Sampling Error

Based on this formula, the total sample size of the study is determined as follows.

$$n = \frac{948}{1 + 948(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{948}{1 + 948(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 281$$

Therefore, 281 instructors were taken as the total sample size of the study. In order to select the individual respondents, a proportional stratified sampling technique employed.

**Table 1 Sampled Instructors and name of institutions**

Name of the institutions	Population	Sample
Rift Valley University	260	77
Saint Merry University	180	53
Unity University	220	65
Alpha University College	132	39
New Generation University College	156	47
Total	948	281

Source: Own computation, 2021

### Data Collection Tools

Questionnaires were used as data collection tools.

### Questionnaire

To collect relevant and reliable data from the selected sample respondents, both open and closed ended questionnaire were prepared and administered. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data from selected respondents. It was prepared in English language and translated into the local language (Amharic) in order to make the questions clear, avoid ambiguity as well as to be easily understood by the respondents. The questionnaire includes Likert scale questions with five-point ratings. The questionnaire was edited by the English language teachers to check the equivalency of translation to the Amharic meaning. The data collection process was managed by the researcher.

### Reliability Test

Reliability test is the degree to which the measure of a construct is consistent or dependable. It is a measure of consistency between different items of the same construct. If a multiple item construct measure is administered to respondents, the extent to which respondent rate those items in a similar manner is a reflection of internal consistency. This reliability can be estimated in terms of Cronbach's alpha (Bhattacharjee, 2012). According to George and Mallery (2003), reliability score of greater than 0.9 is excellent, greater than 0.8 is good, greater than 0.7 is acceptable, greater than 0.6 is questionable, greater than 0.5 is poor and less than 0.5 is unacceptable. In this research Cronbach's alpha model was used with five-point Likert scales. Reliability was checked and its value was 0.87.

### Validity Test

Validity refers to the extent to which a measure adequately represents the underlying construct habits equal supposed to measure (Bhatteheriee, 2012). Content validity was checked by getting a comment from major advisor and co-advisors.

**Methods of Data Analysis**

Data which will be collected questionnaire was cleaned, coded, entered, edited and analyzed using SPSS software version 21. Descriptive statistical analysis such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used for the purpose of data analysis.

**Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion**

**Challenges of Transformational Leadership Style**

**Table 2 Respondents view about Management Related Challenges in implementing Transformational leadership Style**

<b>Management Body Related Challenges</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Presidents and vice presidents being are qualified in leadership and management	2.50	0.664
adequate professional support from immediate superiors	2.47	0.533
Presidents and vice presidents are reluctant to provide a shared leadership in the higher institutions	3.10	0.494

As indicated in the previous table, the three management body-related challenges were analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores. The means and corresponding standard deviations of the sample respondents show that the third management body-related challenge (presidents and vice presidents are reluctant to provide shared leadership in the higher institutions) was the highest management body-related challenge with a mean score of 3.10 and the corresponding standard deviation of 0.494, implying that the reluctant to provide shared leadership in the higher institutions were relatively high. It shows that leaders in the private higher institutions in the study area have been very reluctant to provide shared leadership but the other two items indicates mean result less than 2.60 indicating as those issues were big challenges affecting practice of transformational leadership in private higher institutions.

**Table 3 Respondents view about Employee related challenges in implementing Transformational leadership Style**

Employee Related Challenges	Mean	SD
motivation and self-esteem of staff	2.45	0.612
staff morale to ward team-spirit	2.97	0.342
commitment of teachers to develop new approaches to education	3.45	0.465

As indicated in the previous tables, the three employee-related challenges were analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores. The means and corresponding standard deviations of the sample respondents show that the third employee-related challenge (commitment of teachers to develop new approaches to education) was the highest employee-related challenge with a mean score of 3.45 and the corresponding standard deviation of 0.465 implying that the commitment of teachers to develop new approaches to education in the higher institutions were relatively high. It shows that leaders in the private higher institutions in the study area have been very committed to developing new approaches to education and the second employee-related challenge (staff moral toward team spirit) mean result 2.97 and standard deviation 0.34 shows neutral result as the staff's team spirit is medium as some extent.

**Table 4 Respondents view about Institutions related challenges in implementing Transformational leadership Style**

<b>Institution Related Challenges</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
effective training concerning leadership and management	1.42	0.980
Excessive (overload) administrative work	4.97	0.771
open and effective communication	2.17	0.494
appropriate motivation mechanism	1.98	0.654
Preparation of adequate facilities	2.45	0.764
Budget deficit	1.78	0.231

As indicated in the previous table, the six institution-related challenges were analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores. The means and corresponding standard deviations of the sample respondents show that the fifth institution-related challenge (preparation of adequate facilities) was the highest institution-related challenge with a mean score of 2.45 and the corresponding standard deviation of 0.764, implying that the preparation of adequate facilities in the higher institutions was relatively low. It shows that leaders in the private higher institutions in the study area have been bad preparation of adequate facilities.

**Table 5 Respondents view about other challenges in implementing Transformational leadership Style**

<b>Other Challenges</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
level of community involvement	2.72	0.745
Pressure of external forces (like political duties) outside	1.97	0.533
Students disciplinary problems	1.43	0.494

As indicated in the previous PowerPoint, the three other challenges were analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores. The means and corresponding standard deviations of the sample respondents show that the first other challenges (level of community involvement) were the highest other challenges with a mean score of 2.72 and the corresponding standard deviation of 0.745, implying that the level of community involvement in the higher institutions was relatively high. It shows that leaders in the private higher institutions in the study area should involve in community.

### **Conclusion**

There are so many challenges that affect the implementation of transformational leadership in the Private Higher Education Institutions of Ethiopia. Some of the challenges are management related and others are employee related. Some other are related to institutional culture and the like.

Management related problems are the following: unqualified staffs in management positions, lack of motivation and commitment from the side of management body to support the implementation of transformational leadership style and unwillingness to try new things and taking risk.

Employee related challenges are the following: problems related to employee motivation and self esteem, problem of staff morale and lack of commitment.

Institutions related challenges are: lack of training from institutions, excessive workload, lack of effective and transparent communication, lack of staff motivation mechanisms, lack of facilities and lack of budget.

Moreover, there are problems like lack of community and stakeholder's involvement, student's disciplinary problems and political pressures on the institutions.

### **Recommendation**

Transformational leaders serve as a role model for others to follow. In simple words, they are ready to walk the talk. These characteristics make the members in the group respect and admired them and they tried to emulate the behavior of the leaders. In other words, leaders in Private Higher Education Institutions need to be a role model for the qualities they want to see in their team members.

Nobody wants to follow a leader who does not sincerely care about various goals. Transformational leaders are not only focused on getting the tasks done but they also show a genuine enthusiasm and passion for their work. So, leaders in Private Higher Education Institutions again need to not just have passion but also find ways to express it. People should know that their progress is important to them. Always appreciate the contributions made by team members.



## References

1. Amabile, T. M. (1996). *Creativity in context: Update to" the social psychology of creativity."* Westview press.
2. Aarons, G.A. (2006). *Transformational and transactional leadership: association with attitudes toward evidence-based practice. Psychiatric Service; 57:1162e1169.*
3. Avolio, B. J. (1999). *Full leadership development: Building the vital forces in organizations.* Sage.
4. Barling J, Weber T, Kelloway EK. (1996). *Effects of transformational leadership training and attitudinal and financial outcomes: a field experiment. Journal of Applied Psychology ;81:827e832.*
5. Bass, B.M. (1985). *Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations.* New York: The Free Press.
6. Bass, B. M. (1990). *From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. Organizational dynamics, 18(3), 19-31.*
7. Bass and Bass. (2008). *The Bass Handbook of leadership: Theory, Research and Managerial Applications (4th edn), Free Press.*
8. Brown L. & Conrad D.A. (2007). *School Leadership in Trinidad and Tobago: the Challenge of Context. Comparative Education Review.51/2.*
9. Bush, T. 2007. *Educational leadership and management: theory, policy and practice. South African Journal of Education, 27(3):391-406.*
10. Conger, J. A. (1990). *The dark side of leadership. Organizational dynamics, 19(2), 44-55.*
11. Christian Brothers University. (2021). *Participating leadership, delegation and empowerment.* Available at: [www.facstaff.cbu.edu](http://www.facstaff.cbu.edu)
12. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *The general causality orientations scale: Self-determination in personality. Journal of research in personality, 19(2), 109-134.*
13. East Tennessee State University. (2021). *Leadership theories and styles.* Available at: [www.etsu.edu](http://www.etsu.edu). Accessed 10 May 2021.
14. Gabbar, HA, Honarmand, N, & Abdelsalam, AA. (2014). *Transformational Leadership and its Impact on Governance and Development in African Nations: An Analytical Approach. J Entrepreneur Organizational Management 3: 121 doi: 10.4172/2169-026X.1000121.*
15. Grimm, J.W. (2017). *Effective leadership: making the difference. Journal of Emerging Nursing; 36:74e77.*
16. Hanna, E. D. (2003). *Building a Leadership Vision: Eleven Challenges for Higher Education.* Washington D.C: Educause.
17. Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K.H. (1988). *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources (5th Edition).* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
18. Krishnan, V. (2002). *Transformational leadership and value system congruence. International Journal of Value-based Manage. 15:19e33.*
19. Kuhnert, K.W & Lewis, P. (1987). *Transactional and transformational leadership: a constructive/developmental analysis. Academic Management Review. 1987; 12:648e657.*
20. Lam, Y.L.J. & Pang, S.K.N. (2003). *The relative effects of environmental, internal, and contextual factors on organizational learning: the case of Hong Kong schools under reforms, The Learning Organization.*
21. Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2007). *A review of transformational school leadership research 1996-2005. Leadership and Policy in Schools, 4 (3), 177-199.*
22. Leithwood, K., Steinbach, R., & Jantzi, D. (2002). *School leadership and teachers' motivation to implement accountability policies. Educational Administration Quarterly, 38(1): 94-119.*
23. Martin, J.S, McCormack. B, Fitzsimons, D, & Spirig, R. (2012). *Evaluation of a clinical leadership programme for nurse leaders. J Nursing Management; 20:72e80.*
24. Mazurkiewicz, D. (2011). *Educational Leadership. Key Elements Supporting Teaching Learning. Contemporary Management Quarterly. 2/2011.*

25. Oduro, K.T. (2008). *Educational Leadership and Quality Education in Disadvantaged Communities in Ghana and Tanzania. Paper presented at The Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration & Management Conference, International Convention Centre, Durban, South Africa, 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>.*
26. Peter, G., & James, S. (2013). *China: Transformational leadership for policy and product innovation. Advances in Management.*
27. Shamir, B., House, R. J., & Arthur, M. B. (1993). *The motivational effects of charismatic leadership: A self-concept based theory. Organization science, 4(4), 577-594.*
28. Simola, S., Barling, J., & Turner, N. (2012). *Transformational leadership and leaders' mode of care reasoning. Journal of Business Ethics, 108(2), 229-237.*
29. Sosik, J. J., Kahai, S. S., & Avolio, B. J. (1998). *Transformational leadership and dimensions of creativity: Motivating idea generation in computer-mediated groups. Creativity Research Journal, 11(2), 111-121.*
30. Sun, J. & Leithwood, K. (2012). *Transformational school leadership effects in student achievement. Leadership and Policy in Schools, 11(4): 418-451.*
31. Tesfaw, A. T. (2014). *The relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction: The case of government secondary school teachers in Ethiopia. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 42(6): 903–918.*
32. Texas Tech University (2021). *Leadership styles. Available at: [www.depts.ttu.edu](http://www.depts.ttu.edu). Accessed 17 January, 2021.*
33. Tucker, B. A., & Russell, R.F. (2004). *The influence of the transformational leader. Journal of Leader Organ Studies; 10:103e111.*
34. Yemer, H. (2009). *Applicability of transformational leadership models in the Ethiopian context. PhD dissertation, Walden University, 3366956.*

**Corresponding emails: [zelekesintayehu123@gmail.com](mailto:zelekesintayehu123@gmail.com)**