

A Different Way of Looking: Application of a Pattern Approach to Understanding Transformational and Transactional Leadership

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(ABSTRACT)

Prior work in the transformational leadership realm has focused primarily on relations among leader behaviors and various criteria such as subordinate satisfaction and effectiveness. This restrictive focus has limited the degree to which one of Bass's (1985a) central arguments can be directly assessed; namely, that optimally effective leaders engage in both transformational and transactional behaviors. In this study, an analytic technique known as the pattern approach was employed to effectively discern which particular pattern of leader behaviors was associated with the highest levels of subordinate satisfaction and commitment. In general, the most effective leaders used a combination of transformational (e.g., stimulating subordinates to think of old problems in new ways; presenting a charismatic and inspirational view of the future) and contingent reward (e.g., providing pay or promotions in exchange for effective subordinate performance) behaviors, coupled with a low level of passive management-by-exception behaviors (e.g., remaining uninvolved until problems emerge). These optimally effective leaders were generally more successful than leaders who used predominantly one (e.g., transformational or transactional) behavioral style.