The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Indigenous Family Businesses: A Case Study of Zimbabwe Indigenous Family Businesses

Gregory Shumbambiri
Bindura University of Science & Technology, Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to establish the influence of transformational leadership in enhancing sustainable organizational growth for family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe. Transformational leadership is a management technique whose major purpose is to improve new ways of growing and sustaining the organization's goals and aspirations. The study focused on family-owned businesses in Harare Metropolitan Province with the population for the study comprising owners, managers and employees of the family businesses. The research assumption was that family businesses that use elements of transformation leadership are more likely to survive after the death of the founding owner. Family-owned businesses creation, development and life span are basic to the achievement of the worldwide economy. Not much work has been done in the context of Zimbabwe's family businesses, more so with emphasis on transformational leadership for family businesses in particular. The study revealed that transformational leadership style influences the growth of their family-owned businesses as transformational leadership style motivates positive changes in the followers. The study also revealed that transformational leadership elevates the interests of employees and stir employees to look beyond their own self-interests for the good of the company.

Key words: Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Charismatic Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Leadership literature has gained importance in every walk of life, from politics to business and from education to social organizations (Kala, 2014). For many decades, leadership theories have been the source of numerous studies. Many scholars have tried to define what allows leaders to stand apart from the masses, leading to as many theories as there are philosophers, scholars, and professors with different schools of thought evolving in the concepts of leadership (Ahmadet al. 2017). Leadership theories have evolved over the past one hundred years, starting with the 'great man idea of heroic leaders, trait theories, behaviourist theories, situational leadership, contingency theory, and finally arriving at transactional and transformational leadership' (Khan et al 2017 :249).In as much as these theories still offer some insights into the characteristics of effective leaders, more focus has now been placed on how leaders handle varying situations and how they relate to their people as opposed to their individual traits and qualities (Khan et al 2017).Among the most important leadership philosophies that most businesses and organizations are trying to implement is transformational leadership (Mahdi & Top, 2021. According to Budur and Poturak (2021), transformational leadership can only be fully achieved when a leader meets all of the wants and needs of the people who will be working for them.

AFRICAN CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHIES

Globalization has brought diversified characteristics to how companies are managed, where upon the

dominant models are adapted to necessities, especially to local cultures (Steger, 2020). This raises a couple of questions; the main question among them being, is there any indigenous management practices that Africa can offer to the world? This has led to the unfortunate mindset that the more African management uses the western generated management practices, the uptick in the value of books about leadership in many fields, from the government to businesses to schools and nonprofits (Deressa, 2022).

For decades, academics have been exploring several leadership theories. As many philosophers, scholars, and professors have tried to describe what makes leaders unique, so too have there been as many competing theories. Metz (2018) asserts that that African indigenous philosophies are not well catered for under the English-speaking literature on leadership. Notwithstanding the fact that African philosophy has been largely oral tradition until recently, its philosophy and notions have been a way of life for at least several hundred years which deserves its value for global consideration (Metz, 2018)

According to Ogola (2018), European imperialism and Western education have effectively sidetracked and forbidden the growth and improvement of indigenous management theories and practices in Africa for a considerable period. The colonial government portrayed administration theories and methods from the West as the cause and cure for the continent's social, political, and economic progress. It is in this perspective that Ogola (2018) contends that the development of indigenous African management practices and theory should be established in the African culture, value framework and beliefs to give the real-world way for the expert and feasible running of businesses in Africa.

The researcher is compelled to suggest that most leadership practices and philosophies tend to amplify and recognize the western based philosophy. This further undermines the contribution that indigenous African philosophy has contributed to the growth of leadership in Africa and beyond. It is also the researcher's considered view that any global leadership philosophy which fails to incorporate the local culture and context might not be sustainable.

ETHNO-PHILOSOPHY AND FAMILY BUSINESS

Ethno-philosophy as defined by Ihuah (2021) is an African philosophy that is established with collective thoughts or traditions, myths and folk-wisdom. Aliye (2020)argues further that the worldview or opinion system of a single African community or all of Africa is proclaimed by ethno-philosophy. In this context, the term "African philosophy" refers to the corpus of philosophical knowledge, developed by both African and non-African philosophers, that explores the African experience and conducts a systematic analysis of it (Nyamwanza, Mavhiki & Ganyani, 2018).

One of Africa's philosophical system is called Ubuntu which works well in all sectors and across the breath of our society. It is a philosophy that emphasizes solidarity among the Bantu people of Africa and, more specifically, southern Africa. Ubuntu refers to a sense of humanity, or the willingness of individuals and communities to care for and support one another, as well as to treat others with kindness, hospitality, respect, and responsiveness (van Breda, 2019). Ubuntu is an integral leadership principle that culminates in having a society which breeds people having respect and concern for others which also culminates as a good business practice and can act as the equivalence of the 'corporate social responsibility'.

The term "Ubuntu" refers to the human qualities of compassion, community, harmony, hospitality, respect, and responsiveness that people exhibit toward one another (van Breda, 2019). It is the norms and relationships that form inside a person's extended family. Ubuntu's humane, communal, and patriotic approach to management can be seen as the philosophical cornerstone upon which the growth of Africa's indigenous management ethos can be built. The author views Ubuntu as an integral leadership principle that culminates in having a society which breeds people having respect and concern for others which also culminates as a good business practice and can act as the equivalence of the 'corporate social responsibility'.

Another African philosophy known as Ujamaa, which translates to "familyhood" or "brotherhood," upholds social justice and equality through fostering a sense of belonging, respect for others, reciprocity, and the duty to work together for the benefit of everyone (Kibona, and Woldegiorgis 2023).Ujamaa opposes colonialist schooling, which solely promoted individualized principles and prepared people for white-collar jobs and the rule of the colonizing state.When explaining socialism as a mentality that led to people caring for one another, Nyerere criticizes colonial-educated capitalist values that lead to avarice, exploitation, laziness, and inequity (Chikoto & Chivore 2014). On the other hand, he thinks that African communalism is ideally suited to promote the principles of family life.

Contemporary Leadership Theories in Business.

The latest approaches to leadership that have arisen in response to the shifting expectations and requirements of businesses of today are known as contemporary leadership theories. They concentrate on crucial facets of leadership like adaptability, cooperation, and communication. Leading in a style that promotes imagination, innovation, and unconventional thinking is a key component of contemporary leadership where leaders often strive to empower their team members and decision-making is frequently done in a more collaborative manner rather than merely basing it on the leader's judgment. The way an organisation is led at the strategic level might be referred to as its leadership style. The style of leadership includes different features, qualities, and behaviours that those in leadership use to relate with those they lead (Deressa, 2022). Harris et al., (2007) also suggested that leadership style can be well-defined as the kind of working together that is used by an individual to make people work together for a shared objective. According to contemporary leadership styles, leadership styles can be categorized as follows: (1) transformational leadership, (2) transactional leadership and (3) charismatic leadership (Subrahmanyam, 2018).

Transactional leadership style.

The Transactional leadership style is an interchange attitude that ascertains the needs of followers and offers rewards to meet those needs in interchange for anticipated performance. Transactional leadership is based on the underlying principle that there should be some exchanges of favours that occur between leaders and followers and on reward or punishment for good or poor performance.

Charismatic leadership.

The notion states that a leader's charisma is a function of both his and her actions and abilities, as well as contextual factors. Accordingly, a charismatic leadership has a good impact on team innovation behavior (Cheng &Pan, 2019). Leaders who push for changes significantly different from the status quo yet are nevertheless widely accepted by their supporters are seen as charismatic.

Transformational Leadership

'Transformational theories' are another name for relationship theories. It has become increasingly crucial to develop a highly effective and competitive workforce, and for this to happen, leaders must be able to inspire their members to go above and beyond the call of duty. One of the new leadership theories to develop as a result of this is transformational leadership. According to this belief, individuals typically follow someone who inspires them. The associations that develop between leaders and followers are emphasized by transformational theories.

Buil (2018) refers transformational leadership as a style where leaders inspire and stimulate their followers to identify and prioritize the goals and interests of the organization and put their all beyond their expectations. Transformational leadership is thus pivotal in initiating changes required for effective management.

Transformational leadership is defined by Needle (2023) in terms of its functions. Transformational leadership, according to him, is a management technique whose major purpose is to improve new ways of growing and sustaining the organization's goals and aspirations. It is interested in inspiring employees, in this case, family members of the firm, to focus on the long-term goal of the company. One of the factors that make transformational leadership more relevant to family businesses than other types of leadership is that employees will have an emotional connection to the organization through the use of transformative leadership (Budur and Demir, 2019b). This does not suggest that transformational leadership is the only leadership that works in family businesses. Achieving change in a family business requires an approach and skills that is achieved through transformational leadership which is made possible by focusing on changing members' attitudes to achieve increased commitment to the transformation objectives (Salunkhe, Rajan, & Kumar, 2021).

Transformational leadership as a leadership style, encourages innovation and acquiring of understanding thus favouring organisational performance (Needle 2023)). Leaders who exhibit transformational leadership behaviour provide intellectual stimulation for their teams and inspire them to work for an inspiring vision. A high level of transformative leadership has been shown to increase individual creativity in the same study (Needle 2023)).

According to Cherry (2023), transformational leadership tries to empower employees. In the context of family business, the transformational leader has the capacity to empower members of the family business. It also aids in driving positive change and instilling a sense of camaraderie and confidence among family company members. Therefore, transformational leadership is essential for creating a company culture that encourages learning and encourages people to take initiative in achieving the company's goals.

Transformational Leadership has four characteristics: idealized influence (having the ability to give vision and clarity of mission, respect and trust and confidence), intellectual stimulation (ability to proffer solutions in a rational manner and astuteness), inspirational motivation (ability to communicate effectively and simplifying crucial purposes in simpler), and individualized consideration (having the ability to extend support, attention and coaching to each employee individually) (Le & Lei 2019). These characteristics are fully discussed as follows:

Inspirational Motivation, is the ability to communicate effectively and simplify critical purposes in simpler. It is how well the leader can communicate a compelling and motivating vision to his or her team. Leaders who inspire their subordinates to do more by setting ambitious standards, sharing their enthusiasm for the future, and giving their work purpose. For followers to be inspired to act, it is essential that they feel they are contributing to something bigger than themselves. Meaning and purpose give a group its vitality, which in turn propels it onward. Effective leaders have vision, and the ability to articulate that vision in a way that inspires others to follow them. The adherents are inspired to work harder, are confident in their own abilities, and are upbeat about the future.

Intellectual Stimulation, is the ability to provide solutions in a rational manner and astuteness. It is how much of the time the leader spends questioning norms, taking chances, and getting input from those under their charge. Leaders that adopt this approach inspire their teams to think outside the box. Independent thinkers are fostered and flourish under their care. Such a leader places a premium on education and views setbacks as teachable moments. The followers probe, reflect, and devise novel approaches to completing tasks.

Individualized Consideration is having the ability to extend support and coaching to each employee individually. It is how well a boss cares for his or her subordinates, how much of a coach or mentor they are, nd how attentive they are to their needs. The boss shows compassion and encouragement, maintains open lines of communication, and issues challenging tasks to the team. Respect is an integral part of this, and so

a is recognizing each follower's value to the group. The adherents are driven by an inward desire to better themselves.

These leaders put in much effort to inspire their teams and value their employees' unique skills and talents. Consequently, transformational leaders exhibit actions that may affect worker enthusiasm.

Idealized Influence is the ability of the boss to provide vision and clarity of mission,

respect, trust, and confidence to the subordinates. It is when a boss provides a role model for high ethical behaviour, instils pride, gains respect and trust to the subordinates.

The transformational leadership as an approach has several strong points. It has been widely researched from several viewpoints, including but not limited to qualitative studies of noticeable leaders in established companies and has been reference point for an extensive body of leadership from the 1970s (Northouse 2018).

Transformational leadership has instinctive appeal as the transformational viewpoint defines how the leader is promoting change for others which is constant with the public standpoint as to what leadership is all about. People are therefore attracted to this leadership approach as it consistent with the general expectations of the society for the future and places a strong emphasis on followers' needs, values and has been shown to be effective in a variety of diverse situations (Northouse, 2018).

Transformative leadership possesses traits that family businesses may rely on to reduce the chance of failed transitions, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. Transformational leader therefore possesses management capabilities, expertise, and vison, as well as relational skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, as well as a constant focus on innovation all of which may help to contribute to the growth of the family business after the demise of the founding entrepreneur (do Paço et al., 2021; Nave et al. 2022). Transformational leadership is therefore considered to be one of the techniques that family firms can use to manage succession processes and stimulate family business growth. Given its enormous positive effects on worker satisfaction and business performance, transformational leadership is considered to be one of the most effective leadership philosophies available today(Mahdi & Top, 2021). Transformational Leadership is one of the most prevailing leadership theories and has received much consideration from a number of scholars (Le and Lei, 2019; Subrahmanyam, 2018). Others have also confirmed that transformational leadership has driven business performance and productivity, improved communication and collaboration withing organizations members among other benefits.

However, transformational leadership has been criticized because it has yet to be scientifically shown that its practitioners can bring about positive changes in their followers and their organizations (Cherry, 2023). Although there is some proof that transformational leadership is associated with beneficial outcomes such as organizational success, research has yet to conclusively establish a causal link between transformational leaders and changes in followers or organizations. On the other hand, Needle (2023) used an experimental approach to evaluate the impact of a transformational leadership intervention on improving an organization's performance, providing preliminary proof that transformational leadership behaviours can have the intended effect.

Another possible flaw with transformational leadership is that it may be poorly received by millennials (Needle, 2023), who may be less willing to collaborate with others to achieve common goals and who, in addition, expect frequent promotions and value extrinsic rewards, rendering the two fundamental components of transformational leadership—idealized influence and inspirational motivation—ineffective (Needle, 2023).

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS IN FAMILY FIRMS

Scholars have contended that family businesses are highly likely to have some family explicit leadership behaviours because of their distinctive leadership environments, which include paternalistic leadership behaviour (Neffe, Wilderom,, Lattuch, 2020).

Neffe, Wilderom, & Lattuch (2019) list seven general leadership cultures which have been denoted as the family firm leadership styles: participative, expert, transactional, autocratic, laissez-faire, referent, and transformational leadership style, the same will be discussed in the context of family businesses.

Autocratic leadership style is practiced with leaders who are highly task oriented and put much focus on the structural nature of hierarchies, this being common in family paternalistic leadership behaviour. They often have strong steward leadership behaviour and tend to keep all information within the organisation, manage and administer subordinates meticulously, avoid room for decisions, and prefer family members over nonfamily members with no regard to qualifications (Fries, 2021). Changing employee and the expectations from the society has led most family business to change their leadership styles to a more transformational approach in the past two or three decades (The Economic Times, 2023)

A laissez-faire leadership is a style that allocates decision making obligation to each member of the organisation and is less prevalent in family businesses (Cherry, 2022). Laisses-faire leadership style provides a larger set of goals to follow without getting into intricate details on how to accomplish them, even closely monitoring how the individuals are faring. This high level of autonomy tends to lead low level of social distinctiveness and ownership among the employees and result work against entrepreneurship behaviour (Fries et al, 2021).

Participative leadership style builds emotional connections which are a result of the all-encompassing nature of the style and the resulting mentoring relationships which are between leader and employee, no wonder why it is always associated with ownership feelings and steward leadership behaviour (Cherry, 2023). The flexibility of participative leadership style and its ensuing tolerance of divergent views encourages supportive environment that relies on change and exchange in family businesses (Fries, 2021).

Transactional Leadership style is centred on the exchange of employees' efforts and leaders' rewards where the two only transact if the conducive for both parties are met (Fries, 2021). Resultantly, transactional leaders are not likely to produce a behaviour that favours for outcomes that go beyond the expectations (Cherry, 2023).

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that is grounded on developing a common vision amongst employees, and is therefore one of the recognised leadership styles which is also prominent in family businesses (Cherry, 2023).In family business research, transformational leadership style has been given exceptional consideration as the features of transformational leaders have been found to fit well with characteristics given to family Chief Executive Officers (Cherry, 2023). A steward leadership behaviour is usually reflected in transformational family business leadership culminating in the transference of emotional affection to employees, who in turn make every effort to achieve for the same goals as exhibited by their leader in the process develop emotional ownership of the firm (Needle, 2023).

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN FAMILY BUSINESSES

According to do Paço wet al (2021), family-owned enterprises account for between 80 and 98 percent of all businesses in global free markets and provide jobs for between 50 and 75 percent of the world's labour

force. Despite the obvious relevance of family firms to the standard organizational and management studies literature, these businesses have received scant attention (Nave et al., 2022).

South Africa, which is Zimbabwe's neighbour, after noticing the importance of family businesses, created a dedicated unit called the Family Business Association of Southern Africa (FABASA) in 2011 to deal with family business governance and consultancy. FABASA is therefore the official representative for family businesses in South Africa and encourages the total growth and sustainability of family businesses throughout South Africa**.** As part of its mission, FABASA aids family businesses in areas such as corporate governance, the implementation of best practices, and the planning for the smooth transition of ownership and management (FABASA, 2020). Besides, it also enables the country to be able to produce correct and updated statistics on Zimbabwe's family businesses, which is difficult to get now. As per the author's survey, it seems that family businesses in Zimbabwe are fragmented and do not have a known representative body or unit.

The volatility of the worldwide economy, combined with quick paced advanced progression, advocates new competencies and transformational aptitudes are essential for the continued existence of family-owned organizations. For this sort of business, transformation and the advancement of transformation competencies are not a choice but a prerequisite (Salunkhe, Rajan, & Kumar, 2021).

There are a quite several studies that have explored the direct effect of transformational leadership on the performance of the organisation (Neffe, Wilderom, & Lattuch, 2019; 2020). Attributes of transformational leadership, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are amongst the main forces that are instrumental in the performance improvement for an organisation (Cherry, 2023).

As leaders are role models, they develop trust and relationships between them and their followers, resulting in the increased morale which inevitably leads to increased performance (de Carvalho et al. 2021 and organisational efficacy (Nave et al., 2022). Leaders share where the organization is heading to with their followers, proffer direction and support for the achievement of the goals of the organisation (Cherry, 2023). On the same note, leaders motivate their followers to leave old methods and learn new ways of overcoming any challenges, creativity (Salunkhe, Rajan, &Kumar, 2021), market alignment, organizational improvement and organizational learning, market and better performance of the organsiation. Needle (2023) further asserts that leaders are a source of improved organisational performance emanating from sustainable competitive advantage and managerial performance (Muller & Keller, 2021). This viewpoint points out that transformational leadership brings about responsibility, inspiration and enhanced performance in organisations (Cherry, 2022).), job consummation (Muller & Keller, 2021) and employee commitment (Neffe, Wilderom, Lattuch, 2019).

Some academics have begun to question the legitimacy of transformative leadership and its theoretical foundations. One of the criticisms levelled towards transformational leadership is that the term isnot precisely defined and can be used interchangeably with other leadership styles. When it comes to measuring transformational leadership and its impact on (organizational) performance, Cherry (2023) claim that the available tools fall short of scientific validity. Scholars have disagreed on how to define the characteristics of transformational leaders (Needle, 2023).

Research Question

The study sought to answer the following research question:

How can transformational leadership be used to stir up sustainable growth for the family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed the mixed-method research design and adopted the pragmatism research philosophy, with the case study research strategy being adopted. The study focused on family-owned businesses in Harare Metropolitan Province with the population for the study comprising owners, managers and employees of the family businesses within Harare. A combination of non-probability and probability sampling methods were used specifically stratified random sampling and purposive sampling were adopted in this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data was collected using both survey questionnaires and interviews. From the survey, the participants were sked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement to statements regarding transformational leadership and sustainable growth of family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe. The survey participants were asked if they agreed that transformational leadership style influences the growth of their family-owned businesses. In response, 67.2% (n=45) of them strongly agreed whilst 32.8% (n=22) agreed. In support, the mean of 4.67 infer that most of the participants were in strong agreement to the question. From this, it was noted that all the participants were in agreement that transformational leadership influences growth of the family-owned businesses.

Furthermore, the survey participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement on the statement that transformational leadership has an influence in enhancing sustainable organizational growth for family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe. 40.3% (n=27) strongly agreed whilst another proportion of 38.8% (n=26) agreed that transformational leadership has an influence in enhancing sustainable organizational growth for family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe. However, 20.9% (n=14) of the participants were not sure whether transformational leadership has an influence in enhancing sustainable organizational growth for family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe. Despite this, the overall results indicate that majority of the participants (about 80%) agreed that transformational leadership has an influence in enhancing sustainable organizational growth for family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe. The mean score of 4.19 also show that most of the participants agreed that transformational leadership has an influence in enhancing sustainable organizational growth for family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe.

The participants to the survey were also required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to the statement that transformational leadership style motivates positive changes in the followers. The descriptive results show that 34.3% (n=23) of the participants strongly agreed that transformational leadership style motivates positive changes in the followers followed by 25.4% (n=17) who disagreed.

A proportion of 20.9% (n=14) of the participants was undecided to the statement whilst another 19.4% (n=13) of the participants disagreed. Nevertheless, the results together with the mean of 3.63 show that most of the participants were in consensus that transformational leadership style motivates positive changes in the followers.

32.8% (n=22) of the participants strongly agreed that transformational leadership elevates the interests of employees and stir employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the company. This was followed by 25.4% (n=17) of the participants who were undecided and 22.4% (n=15) who disagreed. Another proportion of 19.4% (n=13) of the survey participants agreed resulting in an overall mean response of 3.63. This mean score of 3.63 show that most of the participants agreed that transformational leadership elevates the interests of employees and stir employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the benefit of the company.

More so, the survey participants were sked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement on whether management had the ability to develop leadership styles that result in sustained growth of the companies. The results presented in Table 4.7 show that more than half of the participants (53.7%; n=36) strongly agreed whilst 34.3% (n=23) agreed that management of the family-owned businesses had the ability to develop leadership styles that result in sustained growth of the companies. However, 11.9% (n=8) of the participants were undecided. The responses attracted a mean score of 4.42 showing that most of the participants agreed that management had the ability to develop leadership styles that result in sustained growth of the companies.

The descriptive results show that most of the participants to the survey agreed that transformational leadership enhances sustainable growth of the family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, to establish the influence of transformational leadership on sustainable organizational growth for family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe, the Pearson Correlation test was carried out.The results from the descriptive and correlation analyses indicate that transformational leadership is linked to sustainable organizational growth for family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe. Supporting evidence was also obtained from the interviews conducted by the researcher with the managers, owners or directors of the family-owned businesses to understand how transformational leadership can be used to influence sustainable growth for the family-owned businesses in Zimbabwe. From the interview data, most of the participants to the interviews stated that transformational leadership is critical towards the successfulness of the family-owned businesses.

CONCLUSION

Achieving transformation in a family business requires an approach and skills that is achieved through transformational leadership which is made possible by focusing on changing members' attitudes to achieve increased commitment to the transformation objectives (Salunkhe, Rajan, & Kumar, 2021). Because of its adaptability and pragmatism, Hunhu/Ubuntu and Ujamaa philosophies may be used to guide one in practically any aspect of your life. Thus, the idea has been prudently spread as a guiding principle or code of behaviour into fields including commerce, education, law, religion, health, agriculture, the environment, mining (van Breda, 2019). The principle can equally work well in indigenous family business. Though it is evident that some academics have issues with transformational leadership theory, the researcher does not negate the significance and effectiveness of transformational leadership. Therefore, its restrictions should be seen as chances to include other leadership philosophies such as Ubuntuand Ujamaa to strengthen transformational leadership's efficacy within African indigenous family businesses.

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