"Challenging the Status Quo: A Mixed Bag Trait of Transformational Leadership."

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ABSTRACT

Guided by the theoretical framework, the PESTEL analysis, this article surveyed the risks associated with the inclination of transformational leaders to challenge the existing status quo. Through the external desk review as the methodology, the paper has cited empirical pieces of evidence that established the mixed beg of challenging the status. It argued that not every existing status quo must be challenged by transformational leaders. Doing so could contribute to the demise of the leader. As the way forward, the paper proffered an alternative approach to challenging the existing status quo that would preserve and act as the prophylaxis of the demise of transformational leaders.

Keywords: Challenging existing status quo**,** PESTLE analysis**,** Transformational Leader,

INTRODUCTION

Many traits distinguish transformational leadership from transactional leadership. Some of the traits include creativity, inspiration, open-mindedness, supportive, willingness to take responsibility, challenging the status quo, emotional intelligence, adaptability, visionary, active listening, self-awareness, encouraged communication and participation, authenticity, charisma, Individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation: and genuineness (Cherry, 2023).

Doubtlessly, these traits crucial to the forward match for a formal organization have enjoyed copious scholarly attention. However, challenging the status quo is one of the traits that seem not to enjoy too much scholarly attention, especially as a mixed bag approach employed by transformational leadership. What research copiously revealed is the positive or good side of the trait contribution to the path of organizational and society exceptional growth or transformation reflecting leadership success. For example, here are a few notable great transformational leaders who successfully challenged the status quo that eventually transformed their respective societies and organizations.

Mahatma Gandhi challenged the British rule in India through nonviolent civil disobedience. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus, sparking the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Civil Rights Movement.

Nelson Mandela fought against apartheid in South Africa and became the country's first black president (Hawaleshka, 2023). Malala Yousafzai advocated for girls' education in Pakistan and survived an assassination attempt by the Taliban (Campisi and Ahmed, 2018).

Contemporarily, Elon Musk encouraged his workforce to challenge the status quo of his companies. Through email seeking instruction for the daily operation of his two firms especially directing them to explain his wrong, asking for clarification, or executing direction, Musk successfully improved his two firms (Taplin, 2022).

On the other hand, of challenging the status quo, pieces of empirical evidence show the negative impact or consequences that explain leadership failure, downfall, or demise. Against this backdrop, this article provides insight that seeks to explore the mixed bag of challenging the status, especially on the negative side perceived to receive scanty or less scholarly attention.

By structure, the article is explored from five sub-sections. The first sub-section takes a holistic review of the concept of transformational leadership. The second sub-section lays out the theoretical framework of the paper. Particular attention is on the A PESTLE analysis and its relationship to decision-making. The third sub-section features the conceptual underpinning or understanding of the study with an emphasis on the challenging status quo as a mixed bag trait from a society perspective, and its application to the theoretical framework.

Termed as the crux of this paper, the fourth sub-section connects the status quo to transformational leadership. Particularly, it elaborates on the peril or negative impacts of challenging the existing status quo backed by a few pieces of empirical evidence. Finally, the last but not the least segment closes the paper with a logical conclusion.

METHODOLOGY AND MATERIAL

Among the different types of qualitative methods, this article adopts desk research, precisely external desk research. Somehow related to content analysis, external desk research allows the researcher to review and analyze secondary materials such as public libraries, websites, reports, surveys, journals, newspapers, magazines, books, podcasts, videos, and other sources outside the researcher's purview (Owa, 2023). The researcher's primary objective for selecting this method is not just to gather data or information related to a specific topic under study or a particular research question or problem. But to help the researcher gain insights and understanding of a particular topic or research question that would inform the conclusion of the research or study (Owa, 2023).

Contribution to Knowledge

By providing enlightenment, this article contributes to knowledge. Particularly, it adds to the literature on one of the traits (challenging the status) of transformational leadership from a different perspective. Finally, this article may serve as a blueprint for further research to be carried out on the subject matter, especially in areas it did not exhaust.

General Overview of Transformational Leadership

Inarguably, transformational leadership is one of the concepts in leadership that continues to enjoy scholarly attention. Research revealed that James V. Downton (1973) was the first to have coined the term "transformational leadership" which was later developed by MacGregor Burns in 1978 (Ugochukwu, 2024). In his book "Political Leaders", Burns conceptualizes transformational leadership as a process in which "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation" He further opined that transformational leadership creates significant change in the lives of people and organizations. It redesigns perceptions and values and changes the expectations and aspirations of employees (Burns, 1978). In short, Burns asserts that transformational leadership can be seen when "leaders and followers make each other advance to a higher level of moral and motivation" (as cited in Cherry, 2023).

Even though the root of the concept is traceable to politics. However, it resonates with other disciplines that essentially emphasize leadership. Since its introduction, many scholars have built their thoughts upon James V. Downton foundation to develop the concept. Below are a few scholars' contributions.

For his part, Bass (1985) focused on how the concept is measured. He argued that the extent to which a leader is transformational is measured first, in terms of his influence on the followers. In other words, Bass defines the concept of transformational leadership as the ability to influence followers. Accordingly, followers are influenced by the leaders' idealized influence (earlier referred to as charisma), intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

He outlined a good number of values or qualities that a transformational leader projects to influence followers. They provide followers with an inspiring mission and vision and give them an identity. More importantly, He argued that transformational leader encourages followers to come up with new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and to alter the environment to support being successful (Bass, 1985).

In the words of (Cherry, 2023), transformational leadership is a leadership style that can inspire positive changes in those who follow. She further identified some qualities that define transformational leaders. According to her, they are generally energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate. Not only are they concerned and involved in the process but are also focused on helping every member of the group succeed.

Ugochukwu (2024) sees transformational leadership as a leadership model that relies on a team's encouragement to realize overall success. He maintains that by raising a team's morale and self-confidence, the team can then align itself to an overall vision or common purpose.

Transformational Leadership is not an Abstract Perception.

In the real world, transformational leadership is not just a theory or concept. Its application to leadership is empirically evidential. Notably, research identified some leaders who practically displayed some of the traits or characteristics that define transformational leadership. Below are a few contemporary examples worth mentioning.

Barack Obama. He is famous for running the White House with a transformational style. He encouraged everyone who worked for him to be open about their ideas and thoughts for improvement. He wasn't afraid of change and encouraged it for everyone who worked with him. He made sure he was approachable for employees so they could come and communicate to him their creative thoughts and ideas. This helped him

use innovation in government to make important changes for the future of the United States of America (WGU, 2020).

Steve Jobs. Steve Jobs is known for being one of the most iconic transformational leaders in the world. Because of that, many researchers have used Jobs as an exemplar of transformational leadership over the years.

Search for information about his leadership profile revealed that people who worked for him said he was constantly challenging everyone to think beyond what they had accomplished, that he always pushed for and wanted more (Peek, 2024). He encouraged them to think about products people didn't even know they needed and go for them at full speed. He used leadership to help transform his organizational structure, improve job satisfaction, and use products to change the world. Apple is well known for innovation and that is largely due to the way Jobs encouraged employees and used transformational leadership to allow everyone to use creativity (WGU, 2020).

Jeff Bezos is another practical example. He is seen by many as a great transformational leader. His leadership style Involves always pushing employees and staff to think about new products and possibilities. Amazon has taken e-commerce and delivery to an unprecedented level due to his transformational and innovative style (WGU, 2020).

Oprah Winfrey Her communication skills, rags-to-riches story, and charismatic persona have inspired millions to dream big and pursue their passions. As a talk show host, television producer, actress, author, and media proprietor, Winfrey has used her powerful connection with her audience and her capacity to inspire and motivate people to create meaningful change in the world (Moffitt, 2023). Her incredible journey from poverty to becoming one of the most successful and influential people in the world serves as a testament to the power of transformational leadership (Moffitt, 2023).

Mahatma Gandhi History records him as the leader of the Indian independence movement. Through his inspirational vision of nonviolent resistance, Gandhi motivated and mobilized millions of people to fight for freedom and social justice. His transformational leadership style empowered his followers and individuals to believe in their own ability to effect change (Drew, 2023).

Nelson Mandela Arguably, Mandela is perhaps the best example of transformational leadership in the political realm.

After all, what's more visionary than conceiving and bringing about the end of the apartheid? His politics was focused on fostering racial reconciliation in South Africa, which greatly influenced the current racial relations in the country (Arslan, 2016).

Though his anti-colonial activism led him to spend 27 years in prison, Mandela was eventually released in 1990. By all accounts, Mandela's leadership profile reveals his persuasive power of kindness that identified him as a truly transformational leader.

The above mentioned examples plus many more not mentioned bear attestation to the fact that transformational leadership is not an abstract perception. Moreover, these examples explain the positive aspects of the mixed bag of transformational leadership.

Shortcomings of Transformational Leadership

Premised on the fact no leadership style is perfect, the transformational leadership style is no exception. Proven by research, it has a fair share of shortcomings or faults as well. For instance, there is a potential for abuse of power, manipulation, and exploitation, as well as the risk of creating unrealistic expectations, dependency, and conformity. Additionally, it can be difficult to measure and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of transformational leadership, and it requires high levels of emotional intelligence, charisma, and communication skills. Moreover, contextual, and cultural factors may affect the applicability and suitability of transformational leadership (Milicevi, 2023). Premised upon these shortcomings, it is safe to generalize that none of the transformational leaders mentioned as examples were perfect in their respective leadership positions.

Theoretical Framework – The Pestle Analysis

For this paper, the PESTLE analysis is employed as the relevant tool to guide subsequent arguments. Widely used in business environment or context, the PESTLE analysis studies the key external factors (Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal, and Environmental) that influence an organization's decision-making. Essentially, it is used as a strategic tool or framework to guide leaders, professionals, and senior managers in strategic decision-making (CIPD, 2021). The significance of this framework is not only to help maximize opportunities but more importantly minimize threats or potential risks. In other words, this theory helps people in leadership to be meticulous in making strategic decisions leading to radical change or transformation. By so doing, it cautions policymakers, business executives, professionals, practitioners, etc. to take cognizance of six factors critical to inform decisions. These factors are the acronym for PESTLE representing the following:

Political: Tax policy; environmental regulations; trade restrictions and reform; tariffs; political stability (CIPD, 2021)

Economic: Economic growth/decline; interest, exchange, inflation and wage rates; minimum wage; working hours; unemployment (local and national); credit availability; cost of living (CIPD, 2021).

Sociological: Cultural norms and expectations; health consciousness; population growth rates; age distribution; career attitudes; health and safety.

Technological: New technologies are continually emerging (for example, in the fields of robotics and artificial intelligence), and the rate of change itself is increasing. How will this affect the organization's products or services?

Legal: Changes to legislation impacting employment, access to materials, quotas, resources, imports/exports, and taxation (Shelton and Clark, n.d.)

Environmental: Global warming and the increased need to switch to sustainable resources; ethical sourcing (both locally and nationally), including supply chain intelligence. Pandemics and other emergencies (Shelton and Clark, n.d.)

By analyzing the above factors meticulously, organizations can assess any risks specific to their industry and organization and make informed decisions. To express it in other words, an analysis of any of the above factors

should be considered by a transformational leader before deciding a course of action. That is to say, a transformational leader should ponder or ask himself or herself this question. This decision I am about to initiate or take, what could be the political, economic, social, and environmental implications? How would it impact my leadership that also has implications for the organization or society?

Application of the PESTLE Analysis to Leadership

Even though the PESTLE analysis is widely useful to business organizations for profit making. However, its tentacles seem to be useful to transformational leadership in non-profit organizations saddled with the responsibility of making informed decisions that could impact the organization. The non-profit organizations include political institutions, religious institutions, educational institutions, and many more that national laws exempt from tax payments. Leaders in these institutions can make judicious use of the precept of PESTLE analysis to make informed decisions critical to change management. Put another way, leaders should be able to employ if not some of the factors of the PESTLE analysis to ponder all the implications or ramifications of the decisions they are inclined to or feel so passionate about taking. They should bear in mind the responsibility on their shoulders for paying less attention to the factors of the PESTLE analysis. Arguably, failure to articulate the outcome of the PESTLE analysis could be disastrous.

Brief Clarification of the Concept of Status Quo

In the context of this paper, the status quo connotes practices, and policies either de facto or de jure that based on years of existence have become the embodiment of organizational culture. In a simple explanation, the status quo is the current or recent state of things happening in an organization or a state (Spacey, 2023). These current or recent state of things include policies, procedures, and practices that have become part of the organization's culture. To put it another way, the status quo is defined as sticking with the current state of things, rather than doing anything to change course.

When applied to the state or country, it connotes the same but is seen as the embodiment of political culture. Some of these practices or policies are in the best interests of the organization or state while some are counterproductive or inimical to the best interests of the organization or state. Ponder on the below examples of some status quo believed to be in the best interests of the organization or state.

Societies, cultures, and organizations that have over the years placed a premium on group solidarity or harmony may heavily defend this status quo as people tend to value stability. In this context, a leader's popularity will be enhanced by maintaining this status quo (group harmony or solidarity) simply because it is in the best interests of the society, culture, or organization.

In the context of politics, voters often maintain the candidate they are already familiar with as in the best interest rather than vote for someone new.

Challenging the Status Quo- A Mixed Bag Trait of Transformational Leadership

This segment represents the crux of this article. As the name suggests, challenging the status quo is conceptualized as the inclination or deliberate determination of a leader to change, or reform systemic practices, policies, or cultures inimical to best the interest, development, or forward match of society or organization but benefit few individuals within the organization or system. In the opinion of the author of this paper, challenging the status also implies a deliberate attempt to improve the existing system or practices that

slow the development of the organization or society. In this situation, the existing status quo is not counterproductive to the development or progress of the organization or society. It only drags the progress or development. So, to accelerate progress or development, challenging the status quo is necessary.

Arguably, resistance to the existing status quo that drags the progress or development of the organization or society cannot be compared to the status quo counterproductive to the growth and development of the organization or society. This is because the existing status quo that is counterproductive to the progress or development of the organization or society seems to serve the personal best interests of those who maintained the status quo over the years. They are the ones either physically or behind the scenes will want to resist the challenge because their interests are likely to be affected.

As it relates to leadership, transformational leaders are conspicuous for challenging the status. No doubt about it being one of the defining traits of transformational leadership. Debatably, it is one of the main reasons behind the selection, nomination, appointment, or election of individuals claiming to be transformational leaders. The few examples of transformational leadership mentioned in this paper bear testimony of their appointment, nomination, selection, or election. Despite some obvious difficulties encountered, they successfully managed to challenge the existing status quo without being negatively affected.

On the flip side of the same coin, transformational leaders must be mindful that not every status quo can be easily challenged. They should employ the PESTLE analysis as the framework to carefully interrogate the obvious and latent implications of challenging the existing status quo. This is because there are some status quo that if challenged could cause the downfall of the leader. Therefore, the leader must care enough about the environment in which the status quo is being challenged despite the reasons that could be justifiable.

The truth is that the general society may be supportive of the leader's inclination to challenge the status quo because it is affecting the society. On the other hand, highly placed and connected individuals who are convinced that the challenge will affect their interests will fight back to prevent the leader even if it will mean eliminating or removing that leader from position or power. These individuals could be domestic and international. History is replete with empirical pieces of evidence about the downfall of some leaders who wanted to display the trait of transformational leadership by challenging the existing status quo. Let's begin with contemporary and historical pieces of evidence.

Donald Trump

A careful analysis of Donald Trump's defeat as a one-term President of the United States of America can be attributed to his erratic and unpredictable foreign policy that challenged some of the existing status quo.

In the international system, he challenged the existing status quo by attempting to reduce the US influence which has been maintained throughout time. History recalls the US withdrawal from several multilateral agreements characterized as 'horrible deals' that 'cheat' his country. Notable among the deals or agreements was the Paris Climate Agreement despite global calls, especially from the G7 leaders for the US to reconsider its decision. The Trump regime argued that the deal or agreement disadvantaged the interests of the US (McCarthy, 2017). Some of the agreements the US withdrew include the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), the Trans-Pacific Partnership (T.P.P.), the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (J.C.P.O.A.), more commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, and threatened to pull his country out of the World Trade Organization (W.T.O.), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (N.A.T.O.), the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS), and the North American

Free Trade Agreement (N.A.F.T.A.) (Fitzsimmons, 2022). Whatever reasons that could be employed to justify the US withdrawal from several multilateral agreements will fall short of the fact that such political behavior reduced the US influence in the international system. Arguably, it is through these agreements that the US can project its influence by dictating the trajectory of international politics. So, the conspicuous absence of the US will create space for its competitors or rivals such as China, Russia, Iran, etc. to leverage their influence on the global stage. Another move that the Trump administration employed that challenged the status quo was a policy that weaponized a long-broken immigration system. This tough immigration policy subjected more than one million Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients and Temporary Protected Status holders to deportation, including hundreds of thousands of essential frontline workers helping communities that survived the COVID-19 pandemic (Fox, 2020). Furthermore, the policies separated children from their mothers and fathers, both at the border and across the country, inflicting far-reaching trauma on children and families and harming communities (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

In short, his policies that relentlessly scapegoated immigrants ignore the fact that the United States of America is a melting pot of immigrants from different parts of the globe.

Domestically, the Trump administration threatened the status quo in so many ways to name a few. At the start of his presidency, he disrupted the Washington status quo and replaced the current elitism in both parties with a new populist-nationalist philosophy (Rigdon, n.d.) Moreover, despite large protests from Congressmen and citizens alike, Trump went on with the following. Named a strongly conservative cabinet, appointed people like Scott Pruitt and Betsy DeVos whose intention was to dismantle the departments they manage, dialing back the federal bureaucracy (Rosenberg, 2016), and also named a conservative Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch, whose impeccable credentials have pleased some skeptical conservatives (Taylor, 2017). Moreover, he introduced a ban on travelers from Muslim-majority countries, setting off global and domestic outrage (Gerstein and Lin, 2018). He fired the former acting Attorney General Sally Yates for refusing to defend the ban (VOA News, 2017), then watched as the federal courts issued a stay, halting the ban's implementation, and thus declaring it unconstitutional. Interestingly, Trump ignored advise that could have saved his presidency. A senior adviser to Mitt Romney, Kevin Madden cautioned, "If change begins to look like confusion and disruption morphs into disorder, you risk losing a certain level of confidence with voters" (Shear, 2017).

Judging from the 2024 election campaign speeches reflecting his inclination to challenge the status quo, Trump will face serious difficulties should he be elected as president of the United States of America.

William Richard Tolbert Jr.

William Richard Tolbert was the twentieth president of Liberia from 1971 to 1980. Arguably, his demise is attributed to the reformed agenda that challenged the status quo inherited from his predecessor William V.S. Tubman, the nineteenth president of Liberia.

No doubt about Tolbert inclination to challenge the status quo. For some, he succeeded without affecting his administration or causing his downfall. For example, he dismissed corrupt cabinet officers, encouraged greater freedom of the press, and lowered the voting age to 18. He also sold the presidential yacht and replaced the official Cadillac limousine with a Volkswagen (Pearson, 1980).

He inaugurated a social security fund and unemployment compensation and pushed the construction of schools and medical facilities. He also made surprise visits to government offices and installations that never

before had seen a president, including one to a prison, where he ordered sweeping changes after tasting the prisoners' food (Pearson, 1980). Moreover, Tolbert announced policies that aimed to improve the living conditions of the majority of the people: "Total Involvement for Higher Heights," "Rally Time," and "From Mat-to-Mattresses," all geared towards creating a wholesome functioning society and winning the war against Ignorance, Disease and Poverty (Duncan, 2023). "From Mat-to-Mattresses" was introduced to raise the standard of living of the majority of indigenous people and take them off the mats in shacks and put them on mattresses in affordable housing estate projects, that were built in the 1970s. Notable among these housing projects were: The Barnesville and Gardnessville Estates. Most beneficiaries of this project were civil servants who earned low salaries. These affordable housing estates provided them with decent houses. The rent which they paid through minimum salary deductions (Duncan, 2023).

On the other hand, Tolbert did not succeed in his relentless quest to challenge some of the existing status quo explained below.

Despite advised from some Knowledgeable statesmen like McKinley Deshield, Jonathan Goodridge, Harrison Grisby, and others believed to be in the circle of his confidant to slow down on his radical reform, Tolbert downplayed the unavoidable disaster his actions would have had on his administration (Duncan, 2023).

As a way of challenging the existing status quo, Tolbert abandoned Tubman's pro-West foreign policy, establishing diplomatic relations with communist nations like the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, Cuba, and several Eastern Bloc countries. He severed ties with Israel during the Yom Kippur War in October 1973 when he spoke favorite of the Palestinian people's plight for nationhood or self-determination (Momodu, 2016). This reform did not go down well with the US, Liberia's traditional ally or partner.

For the first time, shortly after being sworn in as President of the Republic of Liberia, Tolbert authorized the audits of the Executive Protection Service Formerly Special Security Service and National Security Agency formerly National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) headed respectively by Directors James Bestman and C. Wellington Campbell under his predecessor President William V. S. Tubman (Hne, 2024). Accordingly, because of the frustration of being incarcerated, Campbell died during the investigation and Bestman was required to pay every cent that he could not justify. He died later (Hne, 2024).

Due to the reform, Liberia's security and intelligence systems were fragile and porous and could not handle the flood of operatives and as a result, President Tolbert was taken by surprise and met his demise in the 1980 coup d'état by the People's Redemption Council led by Samuel Doe, marking the end of 133 years of Americo-Liberian rule in Liberia (Momodu, 2016).

Patrice Lumumba

Congo's first prime minister who assassination in 1961 with the clear involvement of foreign powers was triggered because of his impulse to change the existing status quo of both Belgium and the United States gluttonous and desperate grip on Congolese wealth. Faced with an acute crisis, Lumumba turned to the Soviet Union for assistance, further aggravating fears among Western nations. In a tragic turn of events, Lumumba was overthrown, arrested, and eventually assassinated thus ending his regime (Jones, 2023).

Salvador Allende

A socialist politician who served as the 28th president of Chile from 1970 until his death in 1973. Similar to

the case of Patrice Lumumba, Allende's death was also caused by his inclination to challenge the existing status quo of ruthless forces that sought to preserve colonial dominance in Chile. Elected as President of Chile in 1970, Allende embarked on a bold path of implementing social reforms aimed at addressing inequality, nationalizing key industries, and empowering the marginalized. His government's policies challenged the status quo, posing a direct threat to powerful domestic elites and international interests (Schlotterbeck, 2021).

Colonel Muammar Gaddafi

In the opinion of this paper, Libya's late President Muammar Gaddafi's determination to push for a "United States of Africa" that if succeeded would have challenged the status quo of Western interference or imperialism in Africa is among the factors that contributed to his demise. Even though some of his African counterparts argued his idea was impractical and would encroach on their sovereignty, Gaddafi has been pushing for an African unity government for years, saying it is the only way Africa can develop without Western interference. He asserts "*How can an African country face a Europe that is united, negotiate with the USA, Japan or China," he asked, saying that with a single government, Africa would be on an equal footing with them*" (Aljazeera News, 2007). Gaddafi further argued that the United States of Africa", is the only way to meet the challenges of globalization, end endemic poverty and resolve conflicts without interference by the West (Malone and Wallis, 2009). Had Gaddafi succeeded in his ideological push, it would have strengthened his profile as a transformational leader.

The Way Forward

This article has mentioned that judging from the framework of the PESTLE analysis, not every status quo believed to be inimical to the forward match of the society or organization must be challenged by the urge to prove transformational leadership despite the implications for leadership demise. Therefore, it seeks answers to the question about the way forward. To answer this question, there are no published precise answers. Informed by research, the workable way forward is realizing that there is no one right way to lead and the best leaders use multiple leadership styles pointing to situational leadership. It argues that based on the changing needs, leaders adjust their leadership style as needed to bring out the best and ensure successful outcomes (Wolf, 2022). Arguably, this style of leadership is critical to the continuation and completion of the leadership. This style of leadership can be used to selectively challenge the existing status quo. This is because of the situations surrounding the existing status quo. So, being situational, a leader could adopt the transactional leadership model that emphasizes maintaining the given status quo rather than changing it. In other words, based on the circumstances or situations surrounding the existing status quo coupled with the obvious or latent implications critical to the survivability of the stability of the organization, or political stability of the society, it makes sense for a leader to portray a semblance of the transactional leadership model that emphasizes maintaining or meticulously working with the existing status quo. Adapting this model of leadership does not in any way prove that the leader is not transformational. Of course, he can maintain his transformational posture by being mindful of his/her environment. History accounts for some leaders who did not temper with the existing status seem to be inimical to the society or organization but initiated workable and comfortable alternatives. For example, despite the clamors from the masses to reduce or remove the white hegemony in the economy of South Africa that disproportionately affected the black majority, Nelson Mandela perhaps understood the economic implications of challenging this status quo. So, his government introduced an affirmative policy called "Black Economic Empowerment" intended to reduce the wide gap of structural economic inequalities in South Africa (Shai, Molefinyana, and Quinot, 2019).

The example of the concept of "Black Economic Empowerment" as Mandela's alternative approach that challenged white hegemony in the economy of South Africa speaks to the concept of smart leadership that also resonates with transformational leadership. Two of the essential attributes of smart leadership employed by Nelson Mandela are intelligence and innovation. In other words, transformational leaders prove their smartness by using their ingenuity to think outside the box.

CONCLUSION

Not in any way projecting to be against the inclination of transformational leadership challenging the existing status quo, this paper through the theoretical framework has proffered an alternative approach that would preserve transformational leadership. It has established the argument that while it is true that transformational leaders are famous for challenging the existing status quo believed to be counterproductive, the same is also that not every status quo should be challenged even if it is counterproductive to the forward match of the society or organization. All the examples cited in this paper about the demise of some transformational leaders who challenged the status quo that existed during the time of their leadership validate the mixed bag impact of challenging the existing status quo.

Conclusively, intelligence and innovation could be attempted as workable alternatives to challenge the existing status quo. This simply means that transformational leaders do not necessarily need to challenge the existing status quo that from all indications would threaten their position, society, regime, or life. Regrettably, Patrice Lumumba, Willam R. Tolbert, Salvador Allende, Muammar Gaddafi, etc. could have employed intelligence and innovation to challenge the existing status quo by thinking outside the box.

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