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Transformational Leadership in Animal Farm: A Contrastive Analysis of Napoleon and Snowball

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ABSTRACT

Based on transformational leadership theory introduced by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 and extended by Bernard M. Bass in 1985, this qualitative research examined the conformity of leader characters in a contemporary literature *Animal Farm* of George Orwell. The objectives of this study were firstly to compare attributes of leader characters in *Animal Farm* to those specified in transformational leadership theory and secondly to investigate factors facilitating leader's success in *Animal Farm*. The focused leader characters included Snowball, and Napoleon. The data was from 1) narrative of thoughts and actions showing leadership of the studied characters, 2) dialogues of the focused characters to others characters and 3) narrative describing factors which facilitate leader's success. It was found that Snowball possessed all the attributes of a transformational leader, but he had no "good" supporter nor had he clever communication to the followers; in contrast, the tricky Napoleon, who showed no self-sacrifice, morality, open-mindedness, or consideration, employed a variety of leadership styles: path-goal, situational, and transactional leaderships. With loyal ward heelers and dog guards, he became a successful leader in terms of control. The findings indicate that a successful leader may not always be ethical, but he needs to be flexible in his leadership. With supportive factors such as clever and loyal supporters and the followers strictly firm to the set goal, a leader can be successful.

Keywords: Animal Farm, Transformational Leadership, Contrastive Analysis

Introduction

Leaders play the most significant roles in directing society. Some leaders are admirable and respected by people of the society because of their effort, sacrifice, and utilitarianism while others are seriously criticized and blamed for their apathetic behavior, exploitation, and power misuse. However, leaders who are seen unethical and cunning may be acceptable and more or less preferable for another society or for the same society but different times. Hence, a great number of leadership theories and concepts have been developed and proposed to explain the most effective leadership.

Among those leadership theories which are used for examining leaders' ethical conducts, transformational leadership theory which was introduced in 1978 by a historian and political scientist, James McGregor Burns, and then extended by Bernard M. Bass in 1985 is often relied upon because it not only focusing obviously on leader's ethic, but also includes leader's roles, leader-follower relationship, and impact of leadership on the followers and on the change of society (Northouse, 2004, 300). Therefore, Bass's theory of transformational leadership is used as the framework for analyzing leaders' attributes, behaviors and impacts of leaders on the followers in this study.

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Although examination of social matters can be done through various sources, it can be achieved in a limited extent due to law and other social restrictions. In the real world, it is difficult to directly criticize things or people around us, but in literature the writers have greater freedom to criticize and to express their opinion towards social phenomena because literature especially imaginative literature is a dramatized world where writers are free from legal boundary. Anything can happen. This allows readers to connect themselves to the broader cultural, philosophic, and religious world. Reading literature with critical and logical thought enables us to understand human dreams and struggles in different places and times that we would never directly experience (Edgar and Jacobs, 1989, p. 2). As a result, examination of leadership can though be effectively and possibly done through literature.

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is one of the most classic novels which, as having been agreed by a lot of scholars and literature critiques, is considered political—Russian Revolution. When politic is the matter, leadership is somewhat involved. In the story, leadership is outstandingly portrayed. When there is leader, there must certainly be followers and interaction between them. Therefore, it is interesting to examine which leadership style is employed by the leader characters and what leader behaviors facilitate the success of the leaders and the team. Therefore, this fairy novel is a suitable fiction which not only entertains readers but also illustrate leadership lesson.

Since leader characters play significant role in transforming ideas of follower characters which leads to the success of the rebellion, examining transformational leadership portrayed in *Animal Farm* will provide useful information for people no matter they are leaders or not to understand leadership better. Many people may have read or heard about this story such as the political matters, inequality treat or discrimination, or even leadership. This study aimed to show another aspect of human resources management in relation with political idea so that it will call attention of readers and educators to critically and carefully look into the detail of those effective factors which eventually bring about benefits to the social science education. Finally, the result of this study will highlight the important of literature in reflecting the reality of human being through the lenses of virtual world and entertainment literature provide for human beings.

Objectives

1. To compare attributes of leader characters in *Animal Farm* to those specified in transformational leadership theory
2. To investigate factors facilitating leader's success in *Animal Farm*

Research Questions

1. To what extent can transformational leadership theory explain attributes of leader characters in *Animal Farm*?
2. Are there any factors facilitating the leader's success portrayed in in *Animal Farm*?

Theory

Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership and attributes of transformational leader:

- 1) Consideration,
- 2) Decisiveness,
- 3) Ethic and morality,
- 4) Firmness in the set goals,
- 5) Knowledge and skill in stimulating followers,
- 6) Open-mindedness,

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- 7) Self-sacrifice and utilitarianism,
- 8) Enthusiasm and optimism to the success, and
- 9) Support and/or service to followers

Significance of Study

1. For leaders, the findings of this study will provide an example for them to apply transformational leadership into their working life; in addition, if some uncommon issues are found, leaders will have pre-warning which will allow them to improve their leadership and to avoid undesirable issues to happen.
2. For students or those who are interested in leadership, the result of this study will provide useful information for those who are interested in leadership to understand some different aspects of transformational leadership.
3. For readers in general, this study entirely emphasizes the benefit of literature as a portrayal of human world in reality.

Scope of Study

This study relied upon George Orwell's *Animal Farm* which was published by The Millennium Library. The data was collected from the dialogue and the narrative in which leadership was portrayed, and two animal characters—Napoleon and Snowball—were the focus of this study.

Methodology

This study was conducted according to qualitative research methodology, and the process was as follow.

1. Data collection

The data was collected from the content of the story but the focus was on

- 1.1. the narrative of the studied characters' actions and thoughts together with their impacts on the other characters in the story
- 1.2. the dialogues of the studied characters which imply or express leadership
- 1.3. the narrative describing actions and thoughts of animal characters which facilitate the leader's success

2. Data analysis

2.1 The data gained from the data collection was analyzed for the leader attributes.

2.2 The leader attributes and behavior from 2.1 were compared to leader attributes and behaviors specified in the analysis framework derived from Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership theory.

2.3 The factors facilitating the success of the focused characters were identified.

3. Discussion, conclusion and findings presentation

Review of Literature

Definition of Leadership

It seems difficult to give the best definition of leadership; however, many scholars, sociologists, and specialists have put much effort in delineating the most appropriate and inclusive definition of this term. For this study, some definitions are mentioned as follow.

Daft (2011), an American organizational theorist, provided a definition of leadership stating, "leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes" (p. 5).

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Lussier & Achua (2007), a professor of management at Springfield College and a professor in the Department of Business and Economics at the University of Virginia's College at Wise, proposed their definition saying, "leadership is the influencing process of leaders and followers to achieve organizational objectives through change" (p. 6).

Yukl (2002), an O'Leary Professor in School of Business at State University of New York stating, "leadership reflects the assumption that it involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization" (p. 18).

From the above definitions, we can conclude that leadership is a process in which leader performs his functions to influence the followers so as to achieve the set goal of the group and leadership consists of leader, follower, goal, and means. Because leadership is complex and it involves at least four components, a lot of theorists, scholars, and administration specialists have put their effort into the examination of different aspects of these components. As a result, their ideas have been conceptualized and leadership theories have been developed.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Among a great number of leadership theories developed and applied to the examination of leaders' qualifications and their effects on followers, transformational leadership is the only one that inclusively highlights leader's morality and ethical value during the process of transforming. Transformational leadership theory was firstly introduced in 1978 by James MacGregor Burns, a political sociologist, in his book entitled *Leadership*. Initially, Burns named this theory transforming leadership and then in 1985 Bernard M. Bass, a distinguished professor emeritus in the School of Management at Binghamton University, expanded Burn's idea in the aspects of cultural influences and then renamed to transformational leadership (Bass, 1998, ix).

Bass (1998, p. 5-6) stated that, during transforming process, leaders and followers mutually raise morality and motivation of each to higher levels through four strategies or 4I's including 1) idealized influence or charisma, 2) individualized consideration, 3) intellectual stimulation, and 4) inspirational motivation (Yukl, 2002, p. 335-6).

Idealized influence or charisma (II): Leaders act as role models for the followers. The leaders perform self-sacrifice and demonstrate high standards of ethical conduct (Zauderer, 1992, p. 12-13). This includes being honest, just, and responsible for their actions. In response, the followers trust and respect the leaders through their actions and then the followers seek to emulate the leaders. Therefore, the success in attracting the followers depends highly on the degree of ethic or morality the leaders possess (Bass, 1998, p. 5; Daft, 2011, p. 154).

Individualized consideration (IC): Leaders should nurture followers in becoming aware of their own needs, values, and purposes and assist them in integrating these with that of the leaders. In doing so, transformational leaders have to highly concern individual difference and employ different way in empowering their followers to make decisions depending on his/her talent and knowledge. This way of thoughtfulness is called individualized consideration. For so doing, the leaders themselves must be extroverted and intelligent enough to select and to implement the most effective method for each follower (Bass, 1998, p 6; Daft, 2011, p. 154).

Intellectual stimulation (IS): When transformational leaders function as coaches encouraging their followers to be innovative and creative and the leaders discard any old practice if it is found ineffective. To be able to promote followers' innovation and creativity, the leaders must be more innovative and creative than the followers. Moreover,

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transformational leaders must also be knowledgeable and skillful in stimulating their followers to think out of the box (Bass, 1998, p. 5-6; Daft, 2011, p. 154).

Inspirational motivation (IM): Aiming to foster spirit of teamwork and commitment to the group, leaders promote vision, mission, and a set of values to the followers by inspiring and challenging the followers. At the same time, the leaders must be ready to mentally and physically serve others and show enthusiasm and optimism to the success of the team and the benefit for public. In becoming able to do so, the leaders must be firm in their goals, decisive, and venturesome (Bass, 1998, p. 5; Daft, 2011, p. 154).

From the above 4I's, functions of transformational leaders are 1) setting goals for the group, 2) being moral and ethical role model for the followers, 3) inspiring and challenging the followers to be utilitarian, 4) coaching the followers to be creative and innovative, 5) negotiating mutual needs, values, and purposes between the leaders and the followers (Northouse, 2004, p. 302).

In addition, Pattana (2016) specified the attributes or characteristics of transformational leaders including 1) consideration or thoughtfulness, 2) decisiveness, 3) ethics and morality, 4) firmness in the set goals, 5) possession of knowledge and skill in stimulating follower, 6) open-mindedness, 7) self-sacrifice and utilitarianism, 8) enthusiasm and optimism to the success, and 9) support and service to followers. These nine transformational leader attributes were used as the analysis framework in this study.

Findings

The analysis showed that Napoleon did not possess all transformational leader attributes. He, considered even tricky, selfish, and authoritarian (Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 2002, p. 166), possessed four of the nine attributes namely decisiveness, firmness in the set goal, knowledge and skill in stimulating followers, enthusiasm and optimism to the success. Anyhow, he was successful in terms of firmly capturing the power in controlling his followers. In addition, there were some other qualifications excluded from those specified in the analysis framework which were shown obviously through Napoleon and those qualifications were leadership flexibility and cunning.

Snowball, in contrast, possessed all attributes of transformational leader; hence, he was a transformational leadership. However, he did not show much open-mindedness. The outstanding transformational leader attributes reflected through Snowball were self-sacrifice and firmness to the success. But, again, he did not communicate his intention so clearly to others that they sometimes did not really agree upon his actions.

When external factors which facilitated the success of leader were examined, it was found that Snowball had only the followers who were firm to the set goal while Napoleon had more. Similar to Snowball, Napoleon had followers who were firm to the goal because they were the same group of followers but he also had Squealer, a loyal ward heeler who was a skillful orator and he also had dog guards that he secretly raised them.

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The aforementioned explanation could be illustrated for more convenient understanding as the following figure.

Attributes	Napoleon	Snowball
1. Consideration		✓
2. Decisiveness	✓	✓
3. Ethics and morality		✓
4. Firmness in the set goals	✓	✓
5. Knowledge and skill in stimulating followers	✓	✓
6. Open-mindedness		✓
7. Self-sacrifice and utilitarianism		✓
8. Enthusiasm and optimism to the success	✓	✓
9. Support and/or service to followers		✓

Figure 1. The Possession of Transformational Leader Attributes of Napoleon and Snowball

Discussion

From the analysis, it was Snowball who seemed to be more ethical and transformational than Napoleon, but he lacked of external factors which allowed him to be successful. Snowball possessed all attributes of transformational leader. He was considerate and he understood feeling of other animals in the farm. He was decisive and firm to the set goal, animalism, which had been initiated by Old Major before he died. Being enthusiastic and optimistic to the success, he spent a great time and put a lot of effort into teaching himself read and write; moreover, with the knowledge he earned from reading books, he tried to pass it to others which meant that he sacrificed himself for the benefit of others and tried to support others to be able to read and write or even to do beyond their original ability. During rebellion, he showed his bravery fighting against men.

Although Snowball possessed all transformational leader attributes, he had some flaws on two attributes: open-mindedness and ethic. In the story, although he gave other animals chances to argue or to propose their ideas towards problematic issues, he always used his rhetoric to win over others. The following quote clearly proves this statement “At the Meetings Snowball often won over the majority by his brilliant speeches,” (31) In addition, when performing his task as a leader, he was always being with himself. He almost never communicated his idea or actions to others. This allowed him to be misunderstood and it became his weak point Napoleon often used to defeat him later in the story after he was exiled. When ethic was mentioned, although Snowball was considered ethical, he yet ignored an action which could allow him have a flaw on this. The action is

(The milk produced by cows had disappeared and it was discovered that the pigs preserved the milk for themselves; in addition, fruits and grass were also preserved for the pigs as well although the pigs had promised that all these would have been shared with others equally.) ... the order went forth that all the windfalls were to be collected and brought to the harness-room for the use of the pigs. At this some of the other animals murmured, but it was no use. All the pigs were in full agreement on this point, even Snowball and Napoleon. (24)

This action, no matter Snowball intended it to happen or not, caused him to be considered selfish in some way.

Napoleon, in contrast, possessed only four transformational leader attributes: decisiveness, firm to the set goal (but he deviated the goal for his own benefit), knowledge

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and skill in stimulating followers, and enthusiasm and optimism to the success. Because of his selfishness and intelligence, he could hold his power firmly. At first, it seemed that he shared the same feeling with other animals in the farm because he was one of the animals in the farm. With his greed, he was unethical leader. He defeated the purpose of the rebellion. He took the benefit for himself and he did whatever he and other animals claimed bad at the beginning of the story—before the rebellion.

One outstanding attribute Napoleon expressed while performing his task as leader was knowledge and skill in stimulating the followers. This qualification was reflected through two means: trick and symbol. Many times in the story, he stimulated other animals to do what he wanted through tricks. An example of this qualification can be seen from the following quote

Finally Napoleon raised his trotter for silence and announced that he had already made all the arrangements. There would be no need for any of the animals to come in contact with human beings, which would clearly be most undesirable. He intended to take the whole burden upon his own shoulders. (42)

Before this situation, one of the Commandments of animalism stated that animals must not contact with human. If so, it was considered disgusting. But after Napoleon gained power, he wanted to trade with human beings. This defeated the purpose of animalism, but with his greed he pretended that he would take care of this disgusting activity by himself. It seemed that he was dedicating himself for others but actually it was his trick to do as what he wanted.

Another mean of skill Napoleon used for stimulating his followers was symbol. One outstanding symbol he used was described as follows.

Napoleon sent for pots of black and white paint and led the way down to the five-barred gate that gave on the main road. Then Snowball (for it was Snowball who was best at writing) took a brush between the two knuckles of his trotter, painted out MANOR FARM from the top bar of the gate and in its place painted ANIMAL FARM. (15)

This symbol called other animals' attention and made them proud of the rebellion. It was the most important symbol of the story. With this, animals in the farm felt that the farm belonged to them. They had right to do whatever they wanted with the farm, and the result of their hard work would belong to them. Therefore, all animals in the farm respected Napoleon and the pigs for doing so.

From the aforementioned example, it could be concluded that intelligence was the most important qualification Napoleon had and he could make use of it wisely and effectively.

The findings of this study were more or less in accordance with Pattana's study entitled *Transformational Leadership and Ethics between Agamemnon and Hector: A Contrastive Analysis of the Iliad* (2016) that successful leaders needed not to be ethical. Sometimes, cunning was needed.

Apart from the qualifications specified in the analysis framework, Napoleon yet expressed two significant attributes—being a good opportunity taker or perhaps opportunist and leadership flexibility. For being a good opportunity taker, Napoleon took advantages after Snowball was exiled that all the disasters happened in the farm were by Snowball. The following example showed this incident clearly.

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Napoleon decreed that there should be a full investigation into Snowball's activities. With his dogs in attendance he set out and made a careful tour of inspection of the farm buildings, the other animals following at a respectful distance. At every few steps Napoleon stopped and snuffed the ground for traces of Snowball's footsteps, which he said, he could detect by smell. He snuffed in every corner, in the barn, in the cowshed, in the henhouses, in the vegetable garden, and found traces of Snowball almost everywhere. He would put his snout to the ground, give several deep sniffs and exclaim in a terrible voice, 'Snowball! He has been here! I can smell him distinctly!' and at the word 'Snowball' all the dogs let out blood-curdling growls and showed their side teeth. (51)

From this situation, it showed clearly that he is a good opportunity taker. As we know that dogs have better smelling skill than pigs, but Napoleon decided to do it himself instead of ordering the guard dogs to do it, he intended to blame Snowball and take this opportunity to convince other animals to agree with him. There were other incidents showing this attribute of Napoleon which he could make use of it effectively. The second attribute was leadership flexibility. Napoleon was able to exercise his leadership through various styles. Sometimes, he employed transactional leadership while other times he showed his cruel dictatorship.

In a very little while the animals had destroyed everything that reminded them of Mr Jones. Napoleon then led them back to the store-shed and served out a double ration of corn to everybody, with tow biscuits for each dog. (13)

This action showed Napoleon's transactional leadership. He rewarded the followers when they did agreeably with what he had ordered. The next example was to display Napoleon's cruel dictatorship. The situation was when he wanted hens to lay more eggs for trading but the hens disagreed and made a mess into the henhouse by laying their eggs from the rafters and then the eggs smashed to pieces on the floor. Napoleon ordered the hens' rations of food to be stopped and decreed that any animal giving even a grain of corn to a hen should be punished by death. With the dogs keeping their eyes on this, the hens had to be calmed and followed Napoleon's order unwillingly. (49-5)

Another external factor which facilitated his success was loyal ward heeler, Squealer. He was a skillful orator who served Napoleon loyally. Squealer was able to convince the animals that whatever Napoleon acted in their best interests and that Napoleon sacrificed himself for Animal Farm. For example, after Squealer was questioned about Napoleon's stealing the milk and apples, he explained that Napoleon and other pigs had to take the milk and apples because they "*contain substances absolutely necessary to the well-being of a pig.*" He also explained that, in fact, pigs dislike milk and apples but for the sake of all animals the pigs had to take the milk and apples." (23)

For all of the above discussion, it could be claimed that although Napoleon was not an ethical leader with only some transformational leader attributes, he could hold his power. While performing his duty, Napoleon employed a variety of leadership styles depending on situations and characters of the followers he was dealing with. Moreover, Napoleon had a good supporter who helped him and facilitated his power as a leader. In summary, it can be concluded that both personal ability and external factor worked together in helping Napoleon to become a successful leader, even not a transformational or ethical leader.

Limitations

This study was limited to only Bernard M. Bass's transformational leadership theory not the original transforming leadership that had been proposed earlier by James MacGregor Burns. Hence, some deviation might have appeared from the original transforming leadership theory.

Recommendation

This study was conducted through a classic literary work, *Animal Farm*, since my field is literature; hence, for those who are in other fields may be able to employ transformational leadership theory into reality such as in business firms, government organizations, or other forms of assembly.

Conclusion

From the analysis of transformational leader attributes of the two leader characters, Napoleon and Snowball, it was found that Snowball possessed all nine attributes derived from the theory which made him a transformational and ethical leader; however, he was not successful because he was too strict to the goal together with the lack of communication. In addition, he did not have good supporters. In contrast, Napoleon who was not ethical and possess only few transformational leader attributes became successful in terms of controlling his followers. This was because he flexibly employed different leadership styles. He had wise ward heelers and he was a good opportunity taker knowing a right time to do a right job. As a result, Napoleon became successful. In summary, the story showed that a successful leader did not always need to be ethical. Personal intelligence and skills were two intrinsic factors allowing a leader to perform its functions wisely and effectively, while loyal supporters and followers who were firm to the goal were two external factors facilitating a leader's success.

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