



## Situational, Transformational, and Transactional Leadership and Leadership Development

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### Abstract

*In order to advance our knowledge of leadership, it is necessary to understand where the study of leadership has been. McCleskey (2014) argued that the study of leadership spans more than 100 years. This manuscript describes three seminal leadership theories and their development. Analysis of a sampling of recent articles in each theory is included. The manuscript also discusses the concept of leadership development in light of those three seminal theories and offers suggestions for moving forward both the academic study of leadership and the practical application of research findings on the field.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Situational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Development, Review

### Introduction

This manuscript analyzes three seminal leadership theories: situational leadership, transformational leadership (TL), and transactional leadership. It begins with introductory comments about the academic field of leadership, continues with a look at the three theories including their history and development, and proceeds to a micro-level, examining several recent published studies in each area. It presents a comparison and contrast of the key principles of each. The manuscript also discusses modern leadership challenges and leadership development in the context of all three theories. First, a brief history of leadership follows.

### Leadership Theory

One of the earliest studies of leadership, Galton's (1869) *Hereditary Genius* emphasized a basic concept that informed popular ideas about leadership (Zaccaro, 2007). The idea is that leadership is a characteristic ability of extraordinary individuals. This conception of leadership, known as the great man theory, evolved into the study of leadership traits, only to be supplanted later the theories under discussion here (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010). Before discussing leadership, it is useful to define the term. The question of the correct definition of leadership is a nontrivial matter. Rost (1993) discovered 221 different definitions and conceptions of leadership. Some of those definitions were narrow while others offered broader conceptions. Bass (2000; 2008) argued that the search for a single definition of leadership was pointless. Among multiple

definitions and conceptions, the correct definition of leadership depends on the specific aspect of leadership of interest to the individual (Bass, 2008). This manuscript focuses on three specific conceptions of leadership: situational, transformational, and TL. The next section begins with situational leadership.

### **Situational leadership**

Situational leadership theory proposes that effective leadership requires a rational understanding of the situation and an appropriate response, rather than a charismatic leader with a large group of dedicated followers (Graeff, 1997; Grint, 2011). Situational leadership in general and Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) in particular evolved from a task-oriented versus people-oriented leadership continuum (Bass, 2008; Conger, 2010; Graeff, 1997; Lorsch, 2010). The continuum represented the extent that the leader focuses on the required tasks or focuses on their relations with their followers. Originally developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969; 1979; 1996), SLT described leadership style, and stressed the need to relate the leader's style to the maturity level of the followers. Task-oriented leaders define the roles for followers, give definite instructions, create organizational patterns, and establish formal communication channels (Bass, 2008; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; 1979; 1996; 1980; 1981). In contrast, relation-oriented leaders practice concern for others, attempt to reduce emotional conflicts, seek harmonious relations, and regulate equal participation (Bass, 2008; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; 1979; 1996; 1980; 1981; Shin, Heath, & Lee, 2011). Various authors have classified SLT as a behavioral theory (Bass, 2008) or a contingency theory (Yukl, 2011). Both conceptions contain some validity. SLT focuses on leaders' behaviors as either task or people focused. This supports its inclusion as a behavioral approach to leadership, similar to the leadership styles approach (autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire), the Michigan *production-oriented* versus *employee-oriented* approach, the Ohio State *initiation* versus *consideration* dichotomy, and the *directive* versus *participative* approach (Bass, 2008; Glynn & DeJordy, 2010). It also portrays effective leadership as contingent on follower maturity. This fits with other contingency-based leadership theories including Fiedler's *contingency theory*, *path-goal theory*, *leadership substitutes* theory, and Vroom's *normative contingency* model (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010; Bass, 2008; Yukl, 2011). Both conceptualizations of SLT admit that task-oriented and relation-oriented behaviors are dependent, rather than mutually exclusive approaches. The effective leader engages in a mix of task and relation behaviors (Cubero, 2007; Graeff, 1997; Shin et al., 2011; Yukl, 2008; 2011; Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). The level of maturity (both job and psychological maturity) of followers determines the correct leadership style and relates to previous education and training interventions (Bass, 2008; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Some scholars criticize SLT specifically and situational leadership in general.

### **Criticisms of situational leadership**

SLT was a popular conception of leadership; however, as experience with the original Hersey & Blanchard model accrued, problems with the construct appeared. Nicholls (1985) described three flaws with SLT dealing with its consistency, continuity, and conformity. Bass (2008) agreed, noting lack of internal consistency, conceptual contradictions, and ambiguities. Other scholars suggested additional weaknesses of SLT (Bass, 2008; Glynn & DeJordy, 2010). Research revealed that no particular leadership style was universally effective and behavioral theories relied on abstract leadership types that were difficult to identify (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010). A number of recent studies utilized the situational leadership approach. Next, this manuscript describes two of them.

## **Research articles on situational leadership**

Paul and Elder (2008) presented a guide for the analysis of research articles. Paul and Elder (2008) suggested that the examination of an article explicitly consider the purpose, question, information, concepts, assumptions, inferences, point of view, and implications in the study. Arvidsson, Johansson, Ek, and Akselsson (2007), used a situational leadership framework in the study of air traffic control employees. Arvidsson et al. (2007) set out to investigate how leadership styles and adaptability differ across various situations, conditions, structures, and tasks in the air traffic control arena. The authors asked a variety of research questions about the relationship between leadership adaptability, task-orientation of the leader, leadership style, working situation, operational conditions, organizational structure, and level of leadership experience (Arvidsson et al., 2007). The information contained in the article included a discussion of the literature linking leadership and safety and a relationship between leadership and reduced stress levels. The article described the SLT model, the study, methods, results, and discussion. The specific concepts presented included leadership and SLT. The authors' implicit assumptions included a relationship between effective leadership and workplace safety as well as a relationship between leadership effectiveness and stress and between stress and poor workplace performance. The authors also assumed that differences among coworkers require leaders to exhibit sensitivity to and the ability to diagnose varying levels of maturity or readiness among employees (Arvidsson et al., 2007). The point of view of the article is quantitative, positivist, and objectivist. The authors hypothesize a correlation between independent and dependent variables and then set out to investigate and confirm that relationship (Creswell, 2009). Arvidsson et al. (2007) discussed implications of their work. In particular, despite the fact that previous research indicated that relation-oriented leadership is preferred over task-oriented leadership, task-orientation is suitable in some situations. Assigning tasks and job roles, specifying procedures, and clarifying follower expectations result in increased job satisfaction (Arvidsson et al., 2007). The next section examines another recent study.

Larsson and Vinberg (2010) conducted a study to identify common leadership behaviors at a small group of successful companies and to organize those behaviors into suitable categories to discuss theoretical implications of situational aspects of effective leadership. The study attempted to uncover common leadership behaviors as they related to quality, effectiveness, environment, and health perceptions. The implicit questions included which leadership behaviors relate to outcomes, situational aspects, effectiveness, productivity, quality, and job satisfaction (Larsson & Vinberg, 2010). The information in the article covered situational leadership theories, theoretical constructs of effectiveness, and a description of four case studies of effective organizations. The study addressed the concepts of leadership effectiveness, task orientation, relation orientation, change leadership, and case study methodology. Larsson and Vinberg (2010) started from the position of endorsing the relationship between leadership and organizational success. Then they sought to identify the behaviors common to successful leadership across four subject organizations. Larsson and Vinberg conducted the study from a qualitative, comparative, positivist point of view (2010). The authors discuss the implications as well as the need for additional research. Larsson and Vinberg (2010) conclude that successful leadership includes both universally applicable elements (task-oriented) and contingency elements (relation and change-oriented). The authors suggest additional research in leadership and quality, and in leadership and follower health outcomes (Larsson & Vinberg, 2010). The next section presents the transformational leadership theory.

## **Transformational leadership (TL)**

Over the past 30 years, TL has been “the single most studied and debated idea with the field of leadership” (Diaz-Saenz, 2011, p. 299). Published studies link TL to CEO success (Jung, Wu, & Chow, 2008), middle manager effectiveness (Singh & Krishnan, 2008), military leadership (Eid, Johnsen, Bartone, & Nissestad, 2008), cross-cultural leadership (Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen, & Lowe, 2009), virtual teams (Hambley, O’Neill, & Kline, 2007), personality (Hautala, 2006), emotional intelligence (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006), and a variety of other topics (Diaz-Saenz, 2011). Burns (1978) operationalized the theory of TL as one of two leadership styles represented as a dichotomy: transformational and transactional leadership. While distinct from the concept of charismatic leadership (see Weber, 1924/1947), charisma is an element of TL (Bass, 1985; 1990; 2000; 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Conger, 1999; 2011; Conger & Hunt, 1999; Diaz-Saenz, 2011). Burns (1978) defined a transformational leader as “one who raises the followers’ level of consciousness about the importance and value of desired outcomes and the methods of reaching those outcomes” (p. 141). The transformational leader convinced his followers to transcend their self-interest for the sake of the organization, while elevating “the followers’ level of need on Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy from lower-level concerns for safety and security to higher-level needs for achievement and self-actualization” (Bass, 2008, p. 619). Based on empirical evidence, Bass (1985) modified the original TL construct. Over time, four factors or components of TL emerged. These components include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Researchers frequently group the first two components together as charisma (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The transformational leader exhibits each of these four components to varying degrees in order to bring about desired organizational outcomes through their followers (Bass 1985; 1990; 2000; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Idealized influence incorporates two separate aspects of the follower relationship. First, followers attribute the leader with certain qualities that followers wish to emulate. Second, leaders impress followers through their behaviors. Inspirational motivation involves behavior to motivate and inspire followers by providing a shared meaning and a challenge to those followers. Enthusiasm and optimism are key characteristics of inspirational motivation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Intellectual stimulation allows leaders to increase their followers’ efforts at innovation by questioning assumptions, reframing known problems, and applying new frameworks and perspectives to old and established situations and challenges (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Intellectual stimulation requires openness on the part of the leader. Openness without fear of criticism and increased levels of confidence in problem solving situation combine to increase the self-efficacy of followers. Increased self-efficacy leads to increased effectiveness (Bandura, 1977). Individualized consideration involves acting as a coach or mentor in order to assist followers with reaching their full potential. Leaders provide learning opportunities and a supportive climate (Bass & Riggio, 2006). These four components combine to make leaders transformational figures. In spite of significant empirical support, a number of criticisms of TL theory exist.

## **Criticisms of transformational leadership**

Empirical research supports the idea that TL positively influences follower and organizational performance (Diaz-Saenz, 2011). However, a number of scholars criticize TL (Beyer, 1999; Hunt, 1999; Yukl, 1999; 2011). Yukl (1999) took TL to task and many of his criticisms retain their relevance today. He noted that the underlying mechanism of leader influence at work in TL was unclear and that little empirical work existed examining the effect of TL on work groups, teams, or organizations. He joined other authors and noted an overlap

between the constructs of idealized influence and inspirational motivation (Hunt, 1999; Yukl, 1999). Yukl suggested that the theory lacked sufficient identification of the impact of situational and context variables on leadership effectiveness (1999; 2011). Despite its critics, an ongoing and vibrant body of research exists on TL and an analysis of two recent articles follows below.

### **Recent articles on transformational leadership**

Gundersen, Hellesoy, and Raeder (2012) studied TL and leadership effectiveness in international project teams facing dynamic work environments. As noted previously, Paul and Elder (2008) presented guidelines for the analysis of research articles. The article presented an examination of the relationship between TL and work adjustment including the mediating role of trust. The research questions created included the relationship between TL and team performance, the mediating role of trust, the moderating role of a dynamic work environment, the relationship between TL and work adjustment, and the relationship between TL and job satisfaction. Information contained in the article included brief reviews of TL, team performance, dynamic work environment, trust, work adjustment, and job satisfaction. The article also discussed the study sample, measures, statistical procedures, limitations, future research suggestions, implications, and overall conclusion. The specific concepts presented included TL, trust, dynamic work environment, team performance, work adjustment, and job satisfaction. The assumptions of the authors included three explicit premises. The suitability of TL varies according to context, the need for additional empirical work on the relationship between TL and team outcomes exists, and no previous empirical studies on work adjustment in international settings as an outcome of leader behaviors exists (Gundersen et al., 2012). The authors write from a quantitative, positivist, objectivist viewpoint with a confirmatory purpose. The authors hypothesized a correlation between independent and dependent variables and then set out to investigate and confirm that relationship (Creswell, 2009). Gundersen et al. (2012) argue that their study increases knowledge of the drivers of organizational effectiveness. Specifically, TL behaviors affect performance on international assignments in a variety of complex projects by contributing to work adjustment and positive outcomes. These implications apply to high-stakes organizational outcomes including selection of organizational leaders. Another TL study follows below.

Hamstra, Yperen, Wisse, and Sassenberg (2011) studied transformational (and transactional) leadership style in relation to followers' preferred regulatory style, workforce stability, and organizational effectiveness. The authors intended to address a gap in the leadership literature by addressing regulatory fit in the context of turnover intentions, while integrating both transformational and transactional leadership and examining both promotion and prevention focused regulatory strategies (Hamstra et al., 2011). The research addressed the relationship between TL and turnover intentions, given a promotion-focused regulatory strategy, given a prevention-focused regulatory strategy; and the relationship between transactional leadership and turnover intentions given a promotion-focused regulatory strategy, and given a prevention-focused regulatory strategy. Information contained in the article included a brief discussion of TL, transactional leadership, workforce turnover intentions, regulatory strategy, participants and procedures, measures used, results, and a general discussion of the research findings. The specific concepts enumerated above include transactional and TL style, and followers' regulatory focus. The authors assumed that leadership influences followers turnover intentions, that a match between followers self-regulatory strategy influences organizational outcomes, and that leadership style preferences may fit with regulatory style preferences. The authors worked from a positivist, objectivist, and confirmatory point of view. The authors

hypothesized a correlation between independent and dependent variables and then set out to investigate and confirm that relationship (Creswell, 2009). Hamstra et al. (2011) discussed several implications of the study including the idea that tailoring specific leadership behaviors or styles to followers prefer self-regulatory orientation may improve employee retention, organizational stability, and the engagement of followers. The authors recommended further research on the relationship between leadership style, turnover intention, and follower commitment. The authors also suggested additional research on preferred self-regulatory orientation and other organizational outcomes variables. The next section of the manuscript explores transactional leadership theory.

### **Transactional leadership**

Transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges that occur between leaders and followers (Bass 1985; 1990; 2000; 2008; Burns, 1978). These exchanges allow leaders to accomplish their performance objectives, complete required tasks, maintain the current organizational situation, motivate followers through contractual agreement, direct behavior of followers toward achievement of established goals, emphasize extrinsic rewards, avoid unnecessary risks, and focus on improve organizational efficiency. In turn, transactional leadership allows followers to fulfill their own self-interest, minimize workplace anxiety, and concentrate on clear organizational objectives such as increased quality, customer service, reduced costs, and increased production (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Burns (1978) operationalized the concepts of both transformational and transactional leadership as distinct leadership styles. Transactional leadership theory described by Burns (1978) posited the relationship between leaders and followers as a series of exchanges of gratification designed to maximize organizational and individual gains. Transactional leadership evolved for the marketplace of fast, simple transactions among multiple leaders and followers, each moving from transaction to transaction in search of gratification. The marketplace demands reciprocity, flexibility, adaptability, and real-time cost-benefit analysis (Burns, 1978). Empirical evidence supports the relationship between transactional leadership and effectiveness in some settings (Bass, 1985; 1999; 2000; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hater & Bass, 1988; Zhu, Sosik, Riggio, & Yang, 2012). Today, researchers study transactional leadership within the continuum of the full range of leadership model (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Some researchers criticize transactional leadership.

### **Criticisms of transactional leadership**

Burns (1978) argued that transactional leadership practices lead followers to short-term relationships of exchange with the leader. These relationships tend toward shallow, temporary exchanges of gratification and often create resentments between the participants. Additionally, a number of scholars criticize transactional leadership theory because it utilizes a one-size-fits-all universal approach to leadership theory construction that disregards situational and contextual factors related organizational challenges (Beyer, 1999; Yukl, 1999; 2011; Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). Empirical support for transactional leadership typically includes both transactional and transformational behaviors (Gundersen et al., 2012; Liu, Liu, & Zeng, 2011). Next, this manuscript reviews two recent articles featuring transactional leadership theory.

### **Recent articles on transactional leadership**

Liu et al. (2011) looked at the relationship between transactional leadership and team innovativeness. The authors focused on the potential moderating role of emotional labor and examined a mediating role for team efficacy. The authors intended to contribute to the leadership field by closing an identified gap in the literature with the introduction of emotional labor and team efficacy as important factors in the existing relationship between transactional leadership and team innovativeness. The authors predicted a significant negative relationship between transactional leadership and team innovativeness. The article included an overview discussion of teams, innovativeness, transactional leadership, emotional labor, and team efficacy. The authors assumed that transactional leadership could foster team innovativeness in some settings. The authors also assumed that emotional labor was a moderating factor in that relationship. Liu et al. (2011) conducted the study from the quantitative, positivist, objectivist, and confirmatory point of view. The authors hypothesized a correlation between independent and dependent variables and then set out to investigate and confirm that relationship (Creswell, 2009). Liu et al. (2011) discussed several implications of their findings. Emotional labor acts as a boundary condition on the relationship between transactional leadership and team innovativeness. This knowledge helps deepen the understanding of the context in which transactional leadership leads to organizational effectiveness. Liu et al. (2011) recommended additional research on transactional leadership and other positive organizational outcomes, and additional research on other possible boundary conditions. The next section addresses another study on transactional leadership.

Groves and LaRocca (2011) studied both transactional and TL in the context of ethical behavior. In contrast to the full range of leadership model view of transactional leadership as part of a continuum of behaviors, Groves and LaRocca see transactional leadership and TL as distinct constructs underpinned by separate ethical foundations. Specifically, transactional leadership flows from “teleological ethical values (utilitarianism)” and TL flows from “deontological ethical values (altruism, universal rights, Kantian principle, etc.)” (Groves & LaRocca, 2011, p. 511). While an in-depth discussion of ethics is outside the scope of this manuscript, it is noteworthy that other authors (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Singh & Krishnan, 2008) also discussed the relationship between ethics and transactional leadership. The concepts presented by Groves and LaRocca (2011) include corporate social responsibility, ethics, TL, transactional leadership, and managerial decision-making. The authors examined ethics in relation to leadership style and its impact on follower values and corporate social responsibility. The point of view presented by the authors is quantitative, positivist, objective, and confirmatory as evidenced by a research design that hypothesizes a correlation between independent and dependent variables and then set out to investigate and confirm that relationship (Creswell, 2009). Liu et al. (2011) confirmed empirical support for their view. Author identified limitations included: results oriented toward leaders description of what they would do rather than actual behavior, omission of measures designed to identify social desirability, and inability to generalize findings to the larger population. Additional limitations mentioned included potential common source and common method bias, lack of longitudinal data, follower response bias, and an inability to separate personal ethics from preferred leadership style (Liu et al., 2011). The authors suggested additional research to address these limitations. Next, this manuscript summarizes the key concepts in situational, transformational, and transactional leadership.

## **Situational, Transformational, and Transactional Leadership**

This manuscript analyzes three seminal leadership theories: situational leadership, TL, and transactional leadership. Situational leadership emphasized leadership behaviors along a continuum between task-orientation in relation-orientation. Situational leadership also emphasized the level of maturity, or readiness of the followers as a contingency or context that leaders need to account for in order to establish the correct fit between the leader and follower (Bass, 2008). In TL, leaders achieve results by employing idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 2000; 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006). The transformational leader exhibits each of these four components to varying degrees in order to bring about desired organizational outcomes through their followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leaders share a vision, inspire followers, mentor, coach, respect individuals, foster creativity, and act with integrity (Bass, 1990; 1999; 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Transactional leadership involves exchanges between leaders and followers designed to provide benefits to both. Leaders influence followers through contingent rewards and negative feedback or corrective coaching. Despite originating as distinct constructs, transactional and TL exist as parts of another leadership model, the full range of leadership model (Bass & Riggio, 2006). One notable difference between these three leadership theories involves the subject of charisma (Conger, 1999; 2011; Conger & Hunt, 1999; Hunt, 1999; Shamir & Howell, 1999).

Many scholars combine idealized influence and inspirational motivation under the heading charismatic-inspirational leadership or simply charismatic leadership (Bass, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hunt, 1999; Shamir & Howell, 1999). The concept of charisma entered the social sciences from religion through the work of Max Weber (1924/1947). In contrast to TL, both situational and transactional leadership theories ignore the role of individual differences between leaders (Bass, 2008). Charisma is a key example of one such individual difference.

## **Summary of key differences and similarities**

As described above, similarities exist between task-oriented leadership and transactional leadership (Bass, 1985; 1990; 1999; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978). Both focus on the exchange between leaders and followers and both emphasize work products or outcomes. Relation-oriented leadership compares to TL (Bass 1985; 1990; 1999; Burns 1978; Conger, 2011), authentic leadership (Avolio, 2010; Bass, 2008; Caza & Jackson, 2011), and servant leadership (Bass, 2008). Relation-oriented leadership is people focused, inspirational, persuasive, and intellectually stimulating (Bass, 2008). Both situational leadership theory and transactional leadership focus on leadership behaviors to the exclusion of leadership traits or individual differences, while TL looks at leadership behaviors and individual differences. Transactional and TL theories involve universal approaches to leadership. TL applies to a wide range of situations and contexts and evidence suggests TL fits a variety of diverse cultural contexts (Den Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Dorfman, 1999; Leong, 2011; Rowold & Rohmann, 2009; Tsai, Chen, & Cheng, 2009; Zhu et al., 2012). In contrast, situational leadership theories and contingent leadership approaches advocate for the right leadership style and behaviors for the context and situation faced by the organization (Bass, 2008; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; 1979; 1996; Yukl, 1999, 2008; 2011). Transformational and transactional leadership theories, and the corresponding full range of leadership theory, continue to add to an impressive 30-year history of empirical support (Diaz-Saenz, 2011; Gundersen et al., 2012; Hamstra et al., 2011; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Leong, 2011; Reichard, Riggio, Guerin, Oliver, Gottfried, & Gottfried, 2009; Yukl, 2011). However, 30 years of history does not



guarantee that transformational and transactional leadership adequately address the challenges facing the modern field of leadership.

### **Contemporary Leadership Challenges and the Future of Leadership Development**

A vital challenge to the academic leadership field involves the need to develop leaders and leadership. Day (2011) argued that over time, some leaders developed “the erroneous belief that leadership develops mainly in leadership development programs” (p. 37). Historically, leadership development targeted specific skills and competencies, while focusing on diffusion of best practices. For example, leadership development programs target self-management strategies, social competencies, and work facilitation (Day, 2009). Day (2011) suggested a transition in leadership development beyond the best practices orientation. Day argued for a more scientific approach to developing leaders and leadership. Modern leadership requires a new focus on developing leadership expertise (Day, 2009), new perspectives on the role of leader identity (Day & Harrison, 2007), and the development of adaptive leadership capacity (DeRue & Wellman, 2009). Each of the three leadership theories discussed in this manuscript approaches the subject of leadership development differently.

Situational leadership theory advocates matching the leader to the situation if possible or matching the leadership orientation (task versus relation) to the follower maturity (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; 1979; 1996). Leadership development efforts aimed at improving organizational effectiveness should use instruments designed to gauge the level of task-orientation and relation-orientation of the leader in order to establish a fit with the current level of follower maturity. Existing leaders should receive skills and competency training aimed at developing their task-oriented or relational-oriented skill deficits. Previous empirical research indicated that level of follower maturity related to previous education and training interventions (Bass, 2008; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; 1979; 1996).

Bass & Riggio (2006) suggested that TL development could not focus on specific, narrow skills. Bass (2008) argued for TL as a reflection of the “whole integrated person and their deeply held values and self-concepts” (p. 1106). Development in TL requires a broadly established educational process. Burns (1978) agreed, advocating for the joint involvement of facilitators and students in an effort to reach “higher stages of moral reasoning” and higher levels of individual judgment (Burns, 1978, p. 449). Based on these recommendations for a broad educational process, targeting the leader’s values and self-concepts, aimed at higher stages of moral reasoning, it is reasonable to doubt whether TL development is possible. This represents another key difference between TL and situational leadership.

The extant leadership literature provides little guidance on transactional leadership development. This may stem from the fact that most leaders do not need development to behave transactionally with their followers. Transactional leadership is traditional leadership (Burns, 1978). As Weber (1924/1947) indicated, a system of operation and coordination is called “traditional” if it is part of an existing system of control, and if the leader enjoys authority based on status and on the existence of personal loyalty created through a process of education (p. 341). This process of education is transactional leadership development. Real-world examples, available practice, and on-the-job training opportunities abound for the leader attempting to develop their transactional leadership behaviors. This manuscript closes with a brief description of the future of leadership.

Bass (2008) predicted the continued importance of both personal traits and situations to leadership. Bass argued that large, purely transactional organizations would give way to transformational ones as modern leaders become more innovative, responsive, flexible, and

adaptive (Bass, 2008). The study of leadership marches on toward follower-centered approaches (Bligh, 2011), hybrid configurations (Gronn, 2011), complexity theory (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011), and a variety of other arenas. The increase in theoretical pluralism, evident since the 90s, continues as the academic field of leadership continues its search for the truth (Bryman, Collinson, Grint, Jackson, & Uhl-Bien, 2011). Leadership scholars must continue to engage in thorough and thoughtful research into the connections between development and efficacy, organizations and outcomes, and between leaders and followers. That is both the future challenge and the historical past of leadership.

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