

ABSTRACT

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The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Love as ‘choice to will the highest good’ using the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire

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Burns’s definition of transformational leadership provides a basis for assessing the processes in the dyad relationship between leader and follower. These processes are examined using psychological theories that inform an appropriate definition of love in an organizational context, to wit, love as the ‘choice to will the highest good’ and ‘empathy with action’. Analysis of the ‘Genuine Concern for Others’ (GCFO) scale within the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) using Argyris’s ‘ladder of influence’ indicated a fit with love as a ‘choice to will the highest good’, providing a basis for quantitative study. Conceptualizing and assessing the mutuality in Burns’s definition with Boulding’s theory of love as integrative power, enabled distinctive influence processes to emerge between transforming and charismatic leadership. The analyses suggest that mutuality be included as a criterion in identification of transforming leaders, that love is a more useful dimension for research in organizations than altruism, and that the TLQ has emerging theory that adds to existing theory of transforming leaders. Statistical analysis of the ratings of a sample of 123 (75% employees, 25 % colleagues/peers of the leaders being rated) with 64 Anglo and 59 Hispanic/Latino leader profiles (64 female, 59 male; 47% business/private sector and 53% public sector from 45 different organizations) indicated that the GCFO scale strongly correlated with known dimensions of transforming leadership: leading the organization, leading and developing, personal qualities, and followers’ perception of empowerment/enabling. Predominantly Anglo followers perceived Hispanic/Latino leaders as more transforming than Anglo leaders, and female leaders were perceived as more transforming than male leaders. The combined discussion and analysis of theory in combination with the quantitative analyses point to love as the ‘choice to will the highest good’ being an underlying dimension of transformational leaders. Further research is necessary to confirm these results across multiple contexts.