

Impact of Leader's Motives and Svadharma-Orientation on Transformational Leadership

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Abstract : *This article attempts to study the positive relationship of the five factors of transformational leadership with leader's need for power, activity inhibition, and Svadharma-orientation. It hypothesised that Svadharma-orientation will mediate the relationship that leaders' need for power and activity inhibition have with transformational leadership since Svadharma orientation involves determined pursuit of goals and duty ordained by one's own nature and transformational leaders by their very own nature inspire followers to work beyond their expectations towards a common goal. Data were collected from 102 executives (71 males and 31 females) of an Indian bank that has its branches worldwide. The data were checked for the presence of single source bias. Correlation analysis showed a positive relationship between need for power, activity inhibition, Svadharma-orientation, and transformational leadership. The method suggested by Baron and Kenney (1986) was used to test the mediation effect of Svadharma-orientation. Results show that leader's Svadharma-orientation mediates the positive relationship that leaders' need for power and activity inhibition have with each of the five factors of transformational leadership.*

Keywords : Need for power, activity inhibition, transformational leadership, Svadharma-orientation.

Transformational leadership is the need of the hour in the current global scenario where leaders need to achieve the organisational goals by focusing on the employees and getting the best out of them, sometimes even beyond their own expectations. Transformational leaders are charismatic and motivate followers to achieve a common goal by inspiring them, considering them individually and stimulating their individual needs. Many previous studies have shown positive relationship of transformational leadership with need for power (House, Spangler & Woycke, 1991; Rahman & Rahman, 2011; Tran & Woodside, 2010), activity inhibition (House, Spangler & Woycke, 1991), and Svadharma-orientation (Mehra & Krishnan, 2005). Need for power may be defined as an individual's desire to be influential and take charge of work. Activity inhibition is an

individual's predisposition towards achieving group goal rather than individual goal. Svadharma-orientation may be defined as the unconscious and preconscious perceptions of one's own call in life. Dharma is nothing but righteousness, a code of ethics, of morality, of duty and of philanthropy or more precisely "the law of being," meaning "that which makes a thing or being what it is". Very little has been studied about all these constructs together.

One's desire to take charge of work and work towards a common goal may result in enhancing one's duty orientation, which in turn may lead to enhancing the transformational leadership. The article attempts to study whether the relationship of transformational leadership with need for power as well as activity inhibition is mediated by Svadharma-orientation. It also further explains how the concept can be applied in organisations to create ethical transformational leaders.

Theory and Hypotheses

Needs

Primary motives are found to orient, select, and energize an individual's behaviour in ways that likely involve unconscious thinking and doing (Tran & Woodside, 2010). Needs may be defined as a set of such intrinsic or extrinsic factors that act as drivers and motivate individuals towards attaining their goals. Various theories and definitions have evolved with researches that have brought into limelight the following needs:

Need for Power. Power needs can be defined as individuals' desire to be influential. This could manifest itself in attempts to make others behave in a manner that one wants them to and this can be different from what they otherwise would have exhibited. The need thus aims at achieving solidarity within a group and directing the group towards an extended goal. In other words, individuals that have high need for power seek position power to compel the actions of others. Those high in this need are often found to be highly competitive, self-driven, actively seeking the trappings of status, and simultaneously ensuring that the methods are well in their control. Individuals high in need for power like to work, respect institutional authority, and are concerned with discipline and self-respect (McClelland & Burnham, 1995). Individuals who are in high need for power exhibit a concern with strong vigorous action that affects others, action that has strong emotional impact on others, reputation and status (House, Spangler & Woycke, 1991).

Development of power motivation is explained by four-stage hierarchy of growth. All individuals start at stage one and while some individuals remain at this

level, others move up the hierarchy. At stage one, individuals depend on others for guidance and strength and thus attach themselves to strong people and benefit from the relationship. Stage two involves a feeling of self-actualization where a feeling of power is derived from being oneself and doing one's own thing. At stage three power satisfaction results from dominating others, winning at competitive levels and helping others. The fourth and the final stage is attained when power satisfaction is attained by influencing others for the purpose of some greater good, such as corporate success (Street & Bishop, 1991).

Activity inhibition may be defined as an individual's use of power to achieve institutional rather than personal goals (House et al., 1991). Individuals high on activity inhibition use their powers to achieve institutional goals and in the process might neglect self or others' individual goals.

The three needs – need for power (n-Pow), need for affiliation (n-Aff) and need for achievement (n-Ach) proposed by McClelland are among the most prevailing theories of motivation and are often referred to as “Big Three motives”. These motives represent learnt responses that stabilize in mature individuals. They are often identified as one's key drivers not only in personal but professional life. Higher nPow was observed in managers than in non-managers (Street & Bishop, 1991) and nPow has also been identified as dominant constituent of high managerial motivation (Stahl, 1983). Healthy individuals possess all the above needs in varying degrees but the dominant of all tends to define what an individual's behaviour is more likely to be. Over a period of time researches have proved that effective leader is more likely to possess high need for power (e.g. House et al., 1991; Rahman & Rahman, 2011; Tran & Woodside, 2010).

In an effort to dig into the fact as to what gives rise to such needs researches have been carried out to study the impact of gender, age and group gender, ethnicity and cross-culture and religious affiliation on these motivations or manifest needs. (Chusmir&Koberg, 1988 ;Schultheiss&Brunstein, 2001). Values in general impact attitudes and thus Chusmir and Koberg (1988) studied the impact of religious values on work attitudes. Job satisfaction, job involvement, n-Ach, n-Aff and organizational commitment showed little or no relation to religious affiliation but n-Pow was found to be related to religious affiliation with individuals with no religious affiliation scoring higher than the followers of religions in consideration such as Protestants, Catholics, or affiliates of Eastern religion. Further, low religiosity was reported at managerial levels than at non-managerial levels.

Stahl (1983) used Job Choice Exercise (JCE) and concluded that a person who scored high on n-Pow on JCE can be categorized high in managerial motivation and vice-versa but no evidence was found of differences in either high

or low motivation between sexes or between minorities and majorities. Given that significant differences were apparent in college samples it was concluded that early identification and selection of managerial motivation is possible.

Transformational Leadership

Leadership is a dynamic relationship that is based on mutual influence between leaders and followers, which results in a higher level of motivation and development as it promotes changes. The theories of leadership have evolved from traits, behaviours and situations to a more change-oriented approach (McLaurin & AlAmri, 2008).

Leadership has been found to exist within full range of transactional and transformational leaderships but for ease we consider transactional leadership as one that has much more to do of the transactional than the transformational and similarly a transformational leadership as the one in which leaders are more likely to have attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and values consistent with transformational than transactional leaders. Transactional leadership involves contingent reinforcement wherein the leaders react to whether the followers carry out what the leaders and followers have transacted to do. In such case, the followers are motivated by promises, praise, and reward or they are corrected by negative feedback, threats, or disciplinary actions. While an active transactional leader watches and searches for deviations from rules and standards to take corrective action, a passive transactional leader intervenes only if standards are not met (Bass, 1990).

Transformational leadership contains four components: charisma or idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Bass, 1990). Idealized influence consists of two sub-factors—idealized influence attributed and idealized influence behaviour. Such style of leadership encourages the followers to achieve much beyond the expected by the use of tools like empowerment, role modelling and vision creation while the transactional style leads to specific predefined goals (McLaurin & Al Amri, 2008). Though formulation of transformational leadership is in a relatively universal manner a leader might have to act differently in different culture as the uniqueness of cultures does not permit this universality and it is only after a leader familiarises with the culture of society that insights into underlying drives, motives and values of individuals may be captured (Singh & Krishnan, 2005).

Transformational leaders motivate their followers to perform beyond normal expectations by transforming their thoughts and attitudes. They enlist their followers to buy into their vision and strive for its fulfilment. Individualized

consideration behaviours involve delegation, empowerment, support of subordinates, and paying special attention to each individual's needs, abilities, and aspiration. These behaviours compel followers to commit to and actively support the leader's vision, forsake the status quo in favour of innovative approaches, accept greater responsibility, and perform effectively (Krishnan, 2012; Wofford, Whittington & Goodwin, 2001).

It can thus be concluded that merely being good at one's own job would not be sufficient for becoming a transformational leader. Emphasis should be on being relationship-oriented and moral involvement with the followers. A leader who maintains a socially appreciable image (simple living) and encourages behaviours that are socially valued (selfless behaviour, loyalty, culture of giving and personal touch) is more likely to emerge as a transformational leader (Singh & Krishnan, 2005).

Needs and transformational leadership. The kind of persuasive skills required by transformational leaders to influence the followers and gain satisfaction make it imperative that they are high on need for power. Further it may be argued that since transformational leaders influence and motivate their followers to achieve a common goal that is beneficial to all, they achieve it by addressing the followers' needs and not wants. In the process they are more likely to be high on activity inhibition that takes into account the focus on collective efforts.

It is therefore hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1. Transformational leadership is positively related to leader's need for power and activity inhibition.

Svadharna

Whether an organization wants the entire person or not, the whole person reports to work, where whole person refers to all, spiritual, physical, emotional and mental aspects of one's personality. The spiritual aspect here may be a set of one's values and ethics where ethics focuses on seeking answers to three basic questions: 'Is it fair?', 'Is it proper?', 'Is it moral or immoral?'. Spirituality at workplace, which is a multi-dimensional, multi-level phenomenon, can be defined through four components: self-workplace integration, meaning in work, transcendence of self and personal growth of one's inner life at work (Pandey, Gupta & Arora, 2009). Here, transcendence refers to 'connection with something greater than oneself' and is the experience of being absorbed in work, losing any sense of self, and becoming one with the activity. Self-workplace integration refers to the specific form of work feeling that energizes the actions, and refers

to individuals' alignment to the work. It is about finding meaning and purpose in work. This can in a broader sense be referred as duty-orientation. Variables like quest for feeling good, profound feeling of well being, joy at work, inner-life at work, self-actualization indicate the underlying theme of 'harmony with self' (Pandey et al., 2009).

The organizational change and leadership literature explains that leaders are at their best when they are guided by their deepest values and thus one may take Svadharma (one's own dharma) as a sub-construct from traditional literature for explaining spirituality at work (Banerjee, 2010). The term dharma comes from Vedic literature. Ordinarily it means religious code; but it is nothing but righteousness, code of ethics, of morality, of duty and of philanthropy, etc., but the original Sanskrit term means "the law of being", meaning "that which makes a thing or being what it is". It is the, dharma of the fire to burn, of the sun to shine, etc.

To find out and follow the Svadharma (self-dharma or one's own dharma) is the ideal of human life and is based upon the unconscious and preconscious perceptions of one's own call in life. Emotions, intellect and ego are three dimensions of human self which act as a vehicle for this search.

Since Svadharma comes out of one's own call and is not imposed on by anyone else, one's own Svadharma gives maximum satisfaction, fulfilment to oneself and deeper connectedness with work. Performance of one's Svadharma finally leads to making the mind quiet and peaceful. Thus if any action leads to agitation it is not Svadharma.

The thought of existence of interconnectedness in the world rests on the fact that each entity in this world has its own function to perform and thus either affects or gets affected by a particular set of entities that further have their own specific and designated set of functions to perform. Thus, worldly actions performed by one according to Svadharma is in harmony with self, and world maintenance becomes a spiritual pursuit where spirituality at workplace has to do with how you feel about your work whether it is a job or a calling (Pandey et al., 2009).

Svadharma and transformational leadership: Transformational leaders who have an insight into the followers' needs and values also have an ability to build on these. What makes a leader out of an individual is the followers and it is these followers and their better interest that a leader then is obliged to address. It is the Svadharma of the transformational leaders to love and respect their followers and work towards achieving the common goal. Svadharma-orientation

makes the individuals motivated, adaptable and committed to their work. This in turn demands being absorbed in work completely and making those around involved in the work (most often making them realize their Svadharma). These qualities should logically be reflected in one's influencing strategies. During these encounters, the one in consideration is mentally evaluating the experience and forming a lasting opinion about the individual as person who listens to his inner voice, who has the capacity to heal oneself and others, who has impeccable integrity and can persuade, inspire, energize people and is committed to the development of people. Thus other things remaining equal, such an individual is more likely to emerge as a leader whom others are willing to follow because of the impact created by such encounters. Since the relationship established here is due to one's charisma or due to the ability to draw others into one's own vision, this form of leadership may be considered to be transformational. Thus it is proposed that there exists a relationship between transformational leadership and one's Svadharma orientation.

It may thus be hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2: Leader's Svadharma-orientation is positively related to transformational leadership.

Svadharma, transformational leadership and motivational needs. Svadharma stresses on not the job but the calling. The pursuit of work according to the role in which one is naturally placed is likely to contribute more effectively to the realization of the aim and anything going against the grain of one's own duty is likely to impede the attainment of one's goal. Leadership is a relationship between leaders and followers, Svadharma being a fundamental aspect of the interpersonal relationship. In such a scenario duty-orientation becomes indispensable to real leadership as it supports the leader to achieve organizational goals (Mehra & Krishnan, 2005). Calling which is from within and not enforced by externalities tends to affect one's belief and behaviours. Manifest needs of transformational leaders, which are also a set of drivers that affect one's behaviour by conscious or unconscious thinking or doing, may thus be thought of as being affected by one's Svadharma-orientation.

The rationale lies in the fact that leaders, if they are Svadharma-oriented, are more likely to be oriented towards their duty of attaining common goals by addressing their follower needs and stimulating them to perform much beyond their individual expectations and in pursuit of the said shall be oriented towards gaining power and identification among the followers. Extending the same, one can also deduce that once oriented, a transformational leader is more likely to be firm on neither addressing the wants of followers nor bothering much about individual or self-centred goals or their achievements.

It may thus be deduced that leaders who are driven to perform their Svadharma have a disposition to achieve the team goals and in the process of doing so will not be driven by their individual goals or feelings to be liked by all.

It may thus be hypothesized:

Hypothesis 3. Leader's Svadharma-orientation mediates the relationship of transformational leadership with leader's need for power and activity inhibition.

Method

Sample : The respondents in this study were 102 executives working in various branches spread across cities all over India of a reputed Indian bank. The bank employs more than 80,000 employees and has a network of over 2800 branches with a worldwide presence. It focuses on creating young leaders and in a view of the same offers various leadership programs to its new as well as existing employees. The data were collected from a single organisation to keep the cultural differences across various industries as well as across various organisations of same industry to minimal levels.

The respondents were observed to have a median age of 27 years, ranging from 21 years to 56 years and included 71 males and 31 females. The total work experience of the respondents in the organisation ranged from 0 to 46 years (median = 3 years). All the respondents either had spent a minimum of six months with the organisation or had recently joined the organisation after taking a minimum six months' duration leadership/executive course offered by the organisation itself. The questionnaire was designed to let respondents respond about themselves and the fact that the responses were anonymous was made clear to them at the beginning.

Measures

Need for power was measured using the five items (Robbins, 1998: 241): (1) I enjoy competition and winning; (2) I enjoy being in charge; (3) I confront people who do things I disagree with; (4) I enjoy influencing other people to get my way; (5) I often work to gain more control over the events around me. One of the items "I confront people who do things I disagree with" was dropped from the scale to increase the reliability from 0.47 to 0.54. Since the measure of internal consistency is necessary for homogeneity but not sufficient and level of alpha is dependent on the length of the test (Schmitt, 1996), we went ahead and used the measure despite the low level of alpha.

Inhibition was measured using the five items (Iyer & Krishnan, 2002): (1) At times, there are matters and decisions that take priority over my personal benefit; (2) I do not consider my and my friends' welfare and convenience when I work out a plan to implement an organization-wide project; (3) If a friend is not serving the group's common purpose, I will not support him/her, irrespective of whether I benefit from that friend or not; (4) Even if I want something for myself, I will give it up if it is at a great cost to someone else, or at a great cost to my organization; (5) After successful completion of a group project, I will give due credit to everybody in the group.

Svadharm-orientation was measured by using the 9-item scale developed by Mehra and Krishnan (2005) to measure its five constituent elements -- unselfish pursuit of goals, sacrifice, concern for others, ethical conduct and commitment. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement on a five point scale (5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree).

Transformational leadership was measured using Krishnan's 30-item Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (Loganathan & Krishnan, 2010) developed for the Indian context (Singh & Krishnan, 2007) that measures the five factors of transformational leadership -- idealized influence attributed (IIA), idealized influence behaviour (IIB), inspirational motivation (IM), intellectual stimulation (IS) and individualized consideration (IC) through six items per factor. The respondents here were asked to judge the frequency of how much each statement fits them on another five point scale (5= Frequently, if not always; 4= Fairly often; 3= Sometimes; 2= Once in a while; 1= Not at all).

Common Method Variance

Since all data were collected from a single organisation, common method bias could be suspected. To check for its presence, one of the widely used techniques, Harman's one factor (or single-factor) test was used. The method involves examining the unrotated factor solution to determine the number of factors that account for the variance in the variables and assumes that if a substantial amount of common method variance is present, either a single factor will emerge from the factor analysis or one general factor will account for the majority of the covariance among the measures (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Jeong-Yeon, & Podsakoff, 2003). For the present study, principal components analysis was done on all the eight variables, and it was found that two factors emerged (Eigen value >1) giving the confidence that common method bias may not have significantly affected the results.

Results

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, Cronbach coefficient alphas, and correlations between all the variables included in the study. All the variables were found to be significantly positively related to each other, thus supporting Hypotheses 1 and 2.

Table I - Correlations between variables ^a

| (N=102) | M | S.D. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | | |
|----------|------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. nPow | 4.10 | 0.54 | (0.54) | | | | | | | |
| 2. Inhib | 3.69 | 0.56 | ** .46 | (0.45) | | | | | | |
| 3. IIA | 3.94 | 0.47 | ** .43 | ** .39 | (0.72) | | | | | |
| 4. IIB | 4.02 | 0.50 | ** .39 | ** .34 | ** .75 | (.74) | | | | |
| 5. IM | 3.92 | 0.48 | ** .31 | ** .34 | ** .76 | ** .81 | (0.70) | | | |
| 6. IS | 3.85 | 0.55 | ** .23 | ** .40 | ** .56 | ** .65 | ** .66 | (0.73) | | |
| 7. IC | 3.87 | 0.50 | ** .32 | ** .41 | ** .61 | ** .64 | ** .60 | ** .74 | (0.72) | |
| 8. Sva | 8.85 | 0.45 | ** .56 | ** .54 | ** .41 | ** .44 | ** .48 | ** .41 | ** .45 | (0.68) |

nPow = Need for power. Inhib = Activity inhibition. IIA = Idealized Influence Attributed. IIB = Idealized Influence Behaviour. IM = Inspirational Motivation. IS = Intellectual Stimulation. IC = Individualized Consideration. Sva = Svadharma-orientation. ^a Alphas are in parentheses along the diagonal. † = $p < .10$. * = $p < .05$. ** = $p < .01$. *** = $p < .001$.

Mediation. We followed Baron and Kenny (1986) to test the mediating effect of Svadharma-orientation in the relationship between need for power and activity inhibition as predictor or independent variables, and various dimensions of transformational leadership as the dependent variables. Three regression models have to be tested and the following conditions must hold. First, independent variable must affect the mediator variable. Second, the independent variable must affect the dependent variable. And third, the mediator must affect the dependent variable while the independent variable is in the model (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Support for mediation requires that if all the three conditions are satisfied in the predicted direction, then when both the independent and mediator variables exist in the model in the third regression equation, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be less compared to the second equation. This is considered to be proof for the mediation effect. Perfect mediation holds if the independent variable has no effect when the mediator is controlled. Sobel's test needs to be done to prove that the decrease in the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable is statistically significant.

Tables 2 shows the results of mediation tests for the effect of need for power. Need for power affected Svadharma-orientation in the first equation. Need for power affected transformational leadership in the second equation. Svadharma-orientation affected transformational leadership in the third equation while need for power was present in the model. Thus, all the three conditions of mediation held in the predicted direction. Moreover, the effect of need for power on transformational leadership was less in the third equation than in the second. When Svadharma-orientation (mediator) was introduced in the third equation, the effect of need for power was reduced but remained significant in the case of idealized influence attributed (suggesting partial mediation), and it became non-significant in the case of the remaining four factors of transformational leadership (indicating full mediation). Sobel's test was done, and it showed that the decrease in the effect of need for power was statistically significant for all the five factors of transformational leadership. Svadharma-orientation partially mediated the relationship between need for power and transformational leadership in the case of one factor (idealized influence attributed) and fully mediated in the case of the remaining four factors.

Table 2. Need for power as predictor of transformational leadership, Svadharma-orientation as mediator

| | Dependent variable | | Independent variable | Parameter estimate | T | Model R ² | Model F |
|---|--------------------|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------|----------------------|----------|
| 1 | Svadharma | 1 | Need for Power | .48 | ***6.83 | .31 | ***46.7 |
| 2 | IIA | 2 | Need for Power | .38 ^a | ***4.76 | .18 | ***22.64 |
| | | 3 | Need for Power | .26 ^a | **2.71 | | |
| | | | Svadharma | .26 | *2.30 | .21 | ***14.45 |
| 3 | IIB | 2 | Need for Power | .36 ^b | ***4.19 | .14 | ***17.51 |
| | | 3 | Need for Power | .19 ^b | 1.90 | | |
| | | | Svadharma | .35 | **2.99 | .20 | ***13.92 |
| 4 | IM | 2 | Need for Power | .28 ^c | **3.29 | .09 | **10.82 |
| | | 3 | Need for Power | .06 ^c | .58 | | |
| | | | Svadharma | .47 | ***4.17 | .22 | ***15.01 |
| 5 | IS | 2 | Need for Power | .24 ^d | *2.39 | .05 | *5.71 |
| | | 3 | Need for Power | .003 ^d | .03 | | |
| | | | Svadharma | .50 | ***3.66 | .15 | ***9.9 |
| 6 | IC | 2 | Need for Power | .30 ^e | **3.37 | .09 | **11.38 |
| | | 3 | Need for Power | .09 ^e | .90 | | |
| | | | Svadharma | .43 | ***3.64 | .19 | ***13.03 |

IIA = Idealized Influence Attributed. IIB = Idealized Influence Behaviour. IM = Inspirational Motivation. IS = Intellectual Stimulation. IC = Individualized Consideration. Sobel test statistic for Svadharma-orientation mediating the effect of need for power on aIIA = 2.23 ($p < 0.05$), bIIB = 2.68 ($p < 0.01$), cIM = 3.63 ($p < 0.001$), dIS = 3.17 ($p < 0.001$), eIC = 3.18 ($p < 0.01$). * = $p < 0.05$. ** = $p < 0.01$. *** = $p < 0.001$.

Tables 3 shows the results of mediation tests for the effect of activity inhibition. Activity inhibition affected Svadharma-orientation in the first equation. Activity inhibition affected transformational leadership in the second equation. Svadharma-orientation affected transformational leadership in the third equation while activity inhibition was present in the model. Thus, all the three conditions of mediation held in the predicted direction. Moreover, the effect of activity inhibition on transformational leadership was less in the third equation than in the second. When Svadharma-orientation (mediator) was introduced in the third equation, the effect of activity inhibition became non-significant in the case of idealized influence behavior and inspirational motivation (indicating full mediation), and it was reduced but remained significant in the case of the remaining three factors of transformational leadership (suggesting partial mediation). Sobel's test was done, and it showed that the decrease in the effect of activity inhibition was statistically significant for all the five factors of transformational leadership. Svadharma-orientation fully mediated the relationship between activity inhibition and transformational leadership in the case of two factors (idealized influence behavior and inspirational motivation) and partially mediated in the case of the remaining three factors. Thus, Svadharma-orientation mediated both the relationship between need for power and transformational leadership as well as the relationship between activity inhibition and transformational leadership. This supported Hypothesis 3.

Table 3. Activity inhibition as predictor of transformational leadership, Svadharma-orientation as mediator

| | Dependent variable | | Independent variable | Parameter estimate | T | Model R2 | Model F |
|---|--------------------|---|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| 1 | Svadharma | 1 | Inhibition | .44 | ***6.36 | .28 | ***40.41 |
| 2 | IIA | 2 | Inhibition | .34 | ***4.29 ^a | .15 | ***18.4 |
| | | 3 | Inhibition | .21 | *2.31 ^a | | |
| | | | Svadharma | .29 | *2.64 | | |
| 3 | IIB | 2 | Inhibition | .30 | ***3.60 ^b | .11 | ***12.99 |
| | | 3 | Inhibition | .13 | 1.39 ^b | | |
| | | | Svadharma | .39 | ***3.37 | | |
| 4 | IM | 2 | Inhibition | .29 | **3.58 ^c | .11 | **12.80 |
| | | 3 | Inhibition | .10 | 1.08 ^c | | |
| | | | Svadharma | .44 | ***4.04 | | |
| 5 | IS | 2 | Inhibition | .40 | ***4.31 ^d | .15 | ***18.59 |
| | | 3 | Inhibition | .25 | *2.35 ^d | | |
| | | | Svadharma | .34 | *2.60 | | |
| 6 | IC | 2 | Inhibition | .37 | ***4.53 ^e | .16 | ***20.49 |
| | | 3 | Inhibition | .22 | *2.32 ^e | | |
| | | | Svadharma | .35 | **3.09 | | |

IIA = Idealized Influence Attributed. IIB = Idealized Influence Behaviour. IM = Inspirational Motivation. IS = Intellectual Stimulation. IC = Individualized Consideration. Sobel test statistic for Svadharma-orientation mediating the effect of activity inhibition on aIIA = 2.43 (p<0.01), bIIB = 2.89 (p<0.01), cIM = 3.37 (p<0.001), dIS = 2.41 (p<0.05), eIC = 2.84 (p<0.01). * = p < 0.05. ** = p < 0.01. *** = p < 0.001.

Discussion

The results show that need for power, activity inhibition, and Svadharma-orientation are all positively related to transformational leadership. Svadharma-orientation mediates both the relationship between need for power and transformational leadership as well as the relationship between activity inhibition and transformational leadership.

Theoretical Contribution

The study further extends support to previous studies on positive relationship between transformational leadership and need for power and activity

inhibition (House et al., 1991; Rahman & Rahman, 2011; Tran & Woodside, 2010) as well as transformational leadership and Svadharma-orientation (Mehra & Krishnan, 2005). Its primary contribution however is providing another dimension to our understanding of the relationship between transformational leadership and motivational needs and Svadharma-orientation. This study provides evidence for Svadharma-orientation being the mediating variable in the positive relationship between transformational leadership and need for power and activity inhibition.

Managerial and Organizational Implications

The findings suggest that transformational leaders are committed and follow an ethical conduct. Such leaders have concern for others and pursue the goals unselfishly. Such leaders may be seen as role models not only by the subordinates but by the peers and supervisors. If the organization as a whole recognises and rewards duty-orientation, makes its employees accountable by increasing their control over work environment, they may feel motivated and this may result in increasing their transformational leadership qualities. Further if the organisation is able to instil in its employees the priority of organizational as well as group goals at the cost of self-interests it will be able to cultivate better transformational leaders.

One of the major contributions of this study is that the relationship between transformational leadership and motivational needs is mediated by Svadharma-orientation of the leader. The finding provides important pointers to managers and organizations. Organisations may focus on giving its managers control of events around and making them in charge of activities which might inculcate in them the willingness to forgo their self-interests. That should also help them focus on needs and interests of subordinates and the organization as a whole without compromising on the ethical code of the organization. This might in turn result in the evolution of better transformational leaders who exhibit consistency in their behaviour when it comes to core values, coordinate well between multiple factions or subgroups of the organisation and lead by example thus influencing others not to be selfish but to think of others. This may be helpful to organizations in creating more business ready leaders.

Managers should be encouraged to exhibit behaviours such as thinking beyond one's own interests and convenience while working out a plan to be implemented in an organisation-wide project and giving due credit to everyone in the group after completion of the group projects. Such behaviour will enhance their concerns for others and instil in them a sacrificing nature which would further enhance one's clarity in thoughts and action and develop fantastic sense of visualisation of future outcomes as leaders.

Limitations and suggestion for future research

The sample size was not an exact representation of the entire population nor was it of a sufficiently large size to be able to generalize the results. The Cronbach's alpha of need for power is .54 and that of activity inhibition is .45 which may bring in data reliability issues. Same source bias is another possible limitation of the study. Respondents were chosen from a single organization which might result in responses that reflect the organizational work culture. Future researchers may also consider studying the variables and their relationships across various organizations of the same industry or different industries.

Future researchers may measure the various variables by considering dyadic data longitudinally which will help capture a greater essence of transformational leadership of leaders over a period of time thereby allowing the researchers to carry an in-depth study of leader-follower relationship. Also the current study limits itself to the study of only two motivational needs i.e. need for power and activity inhibition. Future studies could consider a model that contains all the motivational needs and their effect as a whole on transformational leadership and Svadharma-orientation.

CONCLUSION

This study has revealed Svadharma-orientation as a mediating variable between transformational leadership and leader's motivational needs, thus extending and supporting leadership research literature. Therefore, organizations should consider Svadharma-orientation as a critical factor of organizational leadership style and inculcate it to bring in an ethical code of conduct in the work environment which in turn may improve the corporate ethics making the organizations transparent and in turn trustworthy by all stake holders. Since transformational leadership focuses on addressing the real needs of the followers and Svadharma-orientation focuses on performing one's own dharma, a Svadharma-oriented leader will view the follower's needs as one's duty and work towards fulfilling them without any personal interests. This will in turn not only inspire the followers too to work towards common organizational goals selflessly but also inspire them to look up to their leaders and to be like them, in turn creating new moral leaders. The effect of need for power and activity inhibition on transformational leadership is mediated by Svadharma-orientation. The study provides initial support for the mediation role of Svadharma-orientation. A focus on inducing Svadharma-orientation may result in training leaders to be more transformational.

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