

AFRICA JOURNAL OF LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE (AJOLG)

Development of a Transformational Personal Leadership Model for Effective Leadership Practice

ISSN (Online): 2959-3492

Volume 4, Issue 1

Peter Mapise

Africa Leadership and Management Academy

33 Marlborough Drive, Marlborough, Harare

Abstract

This paper explores the development of a transformational personal leadership model for effective leadership practice. The study addresses gaps in leadership scholarship and practice, where existing theories often emphasize external behaviors, follower dynamics, and situational contingencies while overlooking the critical role of personal growth, values, and character. Anchored in authentic leadership theory, transformational leadership theory, social cognitive theory, and self-determination theory, the study employed a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with ten recognised leaders drawn from business, political, and religious sectors, complemented by questionnaires with a further ten leaders from diverse backgrounds. NVivo-assisted thematic analysis revealed three central pillars of transformational personal leadership: vision, character, and personal growth. Attributes including empathy, humility, integrity, and spiritual conviction reinforced these. Collectively, these elements were found to strengthen leadership effectiveness, promote

organisational growth, and empower followers. The resulting transformational personal leadership model positions self-leadership as the foundation for organisational leadership, self-mastery as a core of community mastery, underscoring the premise that leaders cannot sustainably give what they do not possess internally. The study concludes that investing in leaders' personal development yields significant organisational benefits and cultivates resilient, ethical, and visionary leadership. It reveals that when both individuals and organisations invest in developing the person of the leader, it becomes the well of deposit from which organisations and followers draw from. It recommends that organisations integrate personal leadership development into leadership training and succession planning while encouraging leaders to pursue continuous self-reflection and growth. Future research should test the applicability of this model across cultural contexts and sectors to refine its relevance and impact.

Keywords: transformational personal leadership, vision, character, personal growth, authentic leadership, leadership effectiveness

Introduction

Leadership remains one of the most critical determinants of organisational success, yet its practice continues to evolve in response to complex and dynamic environments. Traditional theories such as transformational leadership, authentic leadership, and social cognitive perspectives have enriched the field by emphasising vision, influence, and relational dynamics (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Bandura, 1997). However, these models frequently prioritise externalised behaviours and situational contingencies at the expense of leaders' inner transformation, personal values, and character. This imbalance has generated a theoretical and practical gap: while organisations invest heavily in developing technical and

managerial competences, they often overlook the deeper personal growth processes that sustain leadership effectiveness (Northouse, 2018).

The argument that leaders must first be able to lead themselves before leading others is not new. Scholars such as Covey (1991) and Bennis (2003) contend that leadership effectiveness is ultimately anchored in self-mastery, integrity, and authenticity.

Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL) extends this position by asserting that personal growth, vision, and character are foundational to effective leadership practice. TPL suggests that a leader's ability to embody values such as empathy, humility, and integrity creates the conditions for trust, empowerment, and sustainable organisational growth. Despite the intuitive appeal of this perspective, limited empirical work has systematically explored how these personal attributes directly shape leadership outcomes across diverse contexts.

Statement of the Problem

Existing leadership theories often provide abstract principles without sufficient attention to the leader's personal transformation. As a result, organisations risk producing leaders who are technically proficient yet deficient in authenticity, empathy, or self-awareness (Kakabadse et al., 2016). Leadership practice as a result is presented as a role to be acted rather than a vocation to be pursued. In contexts such as Africa, where corruption, institutional fragility, and social pressures are prevalent, the absence of a model that integrates personal transformation with leadership practice is particularly detrimental. There is a huge need to weave leadership practice and leadership identity into one unit where the leadership function is viewed in light of the leader's character. There is, therefore, an urgent need to examine and articulate the

elements of transformational personal leadership that can bridge this gap and enhance leadership effectiveness.

Objectives

This study pursues four objectives:

1. To assess the impact of transformational personal leadership on leadership practice.
2. To identify the essential elements of effective personal leadership.
3. To establish the relationship between transformational personal attributes and leadership performance.
4. To develop a transformational personal leadership model for enhancing organisational growth.

Research Questions

1. How does transformational personal leadership affect leadership practice?
2. What are the essential elements of effective personal leadership?
3. What values and characteristics are common among successful leaders?
4. What elements constitute a transformational personal leadership model?

Significance

By proposing and empirically validating a transformational personal leadership model, this study advances leadership scholarship and practice. It contributes theoretically by integrating personal transformation into mainstream leadership discourse, and it offers practical guidance for organisations seeking to cultivate leaders who are visionary, ethical, and resilient. The study, apart from informing leadership practice, strengthens and proffers a deep dive into

the potential of intentional, focused human resource development. It presents an opportunity for organisations and institutions to revive and expand their performance by challenging and expanding the performance potential of their leaders through personal growth and development. For the African context in particular, the model highlights the potential of investing in leaders' personal development as a pathway to institutional strengthening, organisational performance, and sustainable socio-economic transformation.

Literature Review

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL) rests on the conviction that effective leadership begins with inner transformational process grounded in cultivating a compelling personal vision, strengthening character, and committing to lifelong growth. At its core, TPL emphasizes that leadership effectiveness is inseparable from personal development: leaders must first understand themselves, clarify their values, and act with intentionality in alignment with their beliefs. Authentic leadership theory further supports this perspective, highlighting that effective leaders demonstrate self-awareness, relational transparency, and moral integrity, and that their credibility arises from congruence between their values, beliefs, and actions (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008). In essence, leadership is not simply a matter of position or authority, but of inner clarity, ethical grounding, and the capacity to inspire others through consistent, value-driven conduct.

Ubuntu perspectives enrich and extend this understanding by embedding individual virtues within a communal ethic of personhood. Unlike Western individualistic frameworks, ubuntu leadership emphasizes relational interdependence, framing moral and ethical development as inseparable from community well-being. Grobler and Powell (2025) argue that

ubuntu leadership is inherently contextual: leaders are called to embody virtues such as empathy, solidarity, and humility in ways that nurture trust, cohesion, and ethical responsibility within the groups they serve. Similarly, Sipondo (2025) positions ubuntu ethics as a culturally relevant framework for public leadership in African contexts, where legitimacy stems not solely from institutional authority but from the moral integrity demonstrated in service to the collective. In this sense, ubuntu aligns with TPL's assertion that character development is central to leadership effectiveness, but it pushes further: moral and relational values must be expressed in tangible ways that strengthen the social fabric and enhance communal well-being.

Consequently, Ubuntu reframes TPL's focus on inner development by situating personal virtues as shared, relational resources rather than private attributes. Leaders' integrity, humility, and ethical clarity are not ends in themselves; they function as foundational elements that shape organizational culture, foster trust, and legitimize authority. This relational dimension transforms TPL from a model of individual growth into a framework for relational authenticity: leadership effectiveness is measured not only by the development of the self but also by the leader's capacity to positively influence, empower, and sustain the communities in which they operate. In combining personal transformation with communal ethical responsibility, TPL and ubuntu together articulate a holistic vision of leadership—one that integrates self-mastery with social impact.

Character and Ethical Integrity

Research consistently demonstrates that leaders who exhibit high levels of character—marked by integrity, humility, and resilience—tend to outperform those who lack these qualities, achieving stronger organizational outcomes and more sustainable influence (Kerns, 2003).

Character is not merely an individual trait; it is the moral foundation upon which trust,

credibility, and authority are built. Leaders with ethical integrity make decisions that are principled, fair, and considerate of long-term consequences, fostering environments where followers feel secure, respected, and motivated to contribute.

Ubuntu scholarship deepens this perspective by framing character as a form of ethical stewardship. From this standpoint, leaders are not only responsible for their own moral comportment but also serve as custodians of communal well-being. Their legitimacy and authority are derived not only from formal roles or institutional power, but from the consistent demonstration of virtues such as compassion, justice, empathy, and solidarity—virtues that actively sustain trust and social cohesion. Sipondo (2025) highlights that ubuntu ethics offer culturally grounded models for addressing governance crises, demonstrating that moral virtues are central to leadership legitimacy in African contexts. Leaders are expected to embody these virtues in ways that are observable, accountable, and responsive to the needs of their communities.

Similarly, Laloo (2022) emphasizes that ubuntu-informed leadership prioritizes collective harmony and moral responsibility. In practice, this requires that leaders' personal values and ethical commitments are continually tested against community expectations. Leadership is thus relational: the ethical worth of a leader is measured by how well their actions align with communal norms and the degree to which they enhance collective well-being.

This relational understanding of character strengthens TPL's claim that personal character development is central to leadership effectiveness, while embedding it within African traditions of moral accountability. Leaders' ethical integrity, from this perspective, transcends consistency between values and actions; it encompasses relational accountability—the

obligation to be answerable to the community for how one's virtues are enacted in everyday practice. In essence, ethical leadership is both inward and outward-looking: it requires rigorous self-discipline and moral clarity, as well as attentiveness to how one's character impacts the broader social and organizational environment.

Vision and Communal Inspiration

Transformational leadership theory emphasizes vision as a central guiding force, providing direction, motivation, and purpose for followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 1978). Within Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL), vision is understood not merely as a strategic or organizational objective but as an overflow of inner conviction—an authentic reflection of the leader's values, beliefs, and personal purpose. This inner vision inspires followers to internalize and embrace it as their own, creating alignment between individual commitment and organizational goals. Vision, therefore, is not unilateral projection but a dynamic, relational phenomenon that engages the aspirations and energies of those being led.

Ubuntu perspectives deepen and expand this conception by reframing vision as a shared moral compass rooted in communal identity. Lalloo (2022) describes Ubuntu leadership as an Afrocentric style in which vision is inseparable from the collective destiny of the community. Leaders do not merely articulate personal dreams or ambitions; they embody communal aspirations and are responsible for translating shared values into practical strategies for collective well-being. In this sense, vision becomes a moral and relational act, reflecting the interconnectedness of individual purpose and societal good.

Grobler and Powell (2025) further emphasize that ubuntu leadership requires vision to be contextually grounded, attuned to the lived realities, needs, and hopes of followers. Effective

vision is not abstract or symbolic; it is validated by its capacity to resonate with people's experiences, unify diverse perspectives, and generate a sense of shared responsibility. This relational grounding ensures that vision is not only motivational but also ethically accountable: it must advance communal welfare, sustain trust, and reflect the moral commitments of the leader.

By integrating these perspectives, TPL's emphasis on vision is enriched: it is both a personal and relational force, emerging from inner conviction but sustained through engagement with followers' realities and collective values. In African contexts, particularly under ubuntu ethics, the legitimacy and effectiveness of vision are measured not by rhetorical elegance or abstract ambition but by its capacity to bind people together in solidarity, shared purpose, and collective destiny. Vision becomes, therefore, a tangible expression of ethical leadership, an instrument through which personal transformation and communal empowerment are mutually reinforced.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that human flourishing is closely linked to the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When these needs are met, individuals experience intrinsic motivation, engage more fully in their tasks, and demonstrate greater creativity, persistence, and well-being. Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL) aligns closely with this perspective by emphasizing that transformational efforts and leadership effectiveness stem primarily from intrinsic motivation: leaders are driven by internal values, purpose, and a commitment to personal growth rather than by external rewards, recognition, or coercion. In other words,

sustainable leadership influence arises from authentic alignment between a leader's inner convictions and their actions, rather than through transactional incentives.

Ubuntu perspectives enrich and contextualize this view by emphasizing the relational and communal dimensions of motivation. While SDT identifies relatedness as a universal human need, ubuntu frames relatedness as an ethical and moral imperative: leaders' autonomy and self-determination are exercised not in isolation, but in service of collective flourishing. Leaders' motivation is validated through meaningful connections with others, and their ethical commitment is continually measured by how their actions contribute to communal well-being. Sipondo (2025) highlights that ubuntu ethics encourage leaders to prioritize collective welfare over individual gain, ensuring that personal growth and leadership purpose are relationally anchored and socially accountable.

This relational lens strengthens TPL's resonance with SDT by showing that sustained engagement, creativity, and transformational impact emerge most fully when leaders' personal development is embedded within a context of collective belonging. Leaders who cultivate autonomy and competence within themselves do not merely enhance their own capacities—they actively foster communal empowerment, modeling values and behaviors that energize followers and create shared purpose. Motivation, from this perspective, becomes both intrinsically driven and communally oriented: it is sustained not by external rewards, but by the ethical and relational satisfaction of contributing meaningfully to the growth and well-being of others.

By integrating SDT and ubuntu ethics, TPL articulates a holistic vision of motivation: effective leadership arises from the alignment of personal mastery, ethical integrity, and

relational responsibility. Leaders who thrive intrinsically, while remaining attuned to collective needs, are positioned to inspire transformative action that benefits both individuals and the broader community.

Social Cognitive Theory (1997)

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1997) underscores that human learning occurs through observation, modelling, and feedback. Individuals develop skills, attitudes, and behaviors by watching others, imitating effective practices, and adjusting based on outcomes. Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL) situates this principle within the context of leadership by emphasizing the deliberate cultivation of mastery, resilience, and competence. Leaders are not only responsible for their own growth but also for creating conditions where followers can learn, adapt, and thrive through guided observation and constructive feedback. Self-efficacy, the belief in one's capacity to succeed, is central to this process, as leaders' confidence and capability shape the behaviors and aspirations of those around them.

Ubuntu perspectives reinforce and extend this understanding by framing leaders as ethical role models whose personal transformation is inseparable from collective growth. Leaders embody communal virtues, such as solidarity, compassion, humility, and justice—not as abstract ideals, but as lived practices that guide and inspire others. Grobler and Powell (2025) argue that ubuntu leadership is inherently socially embedded: the development of the leader and the community are intertwined, with each shaping and validating the other. Laloo (2022) further emphasizes that ubuntu leaders demonstrate relational authenticity, teaching followers values through action rather than through abstract instruction or mere rhetoric. In this sense, leadership is a socially mediated process of co-development, where learning occurs not only through observation but through ethical engagement and mutual accountability.

By integrating TPL with Ubuntu principles, the emphasis on self-efficacy and modelling is enriched by a relational and ethical dimension. Leadership influence is not a top-down imposition but a shared journey of growth, where leaders and followers co-construct competence, resilience, and virtue. Leaders model behaviors that inspire imitation, shape organizational culture, and embed moral integrity within everyday practice, ensuring that development is both personal and communal. This relational approach transforms social learning from a cognitive process into a holistic, ethically grounded practice, aligning individual mastery with collective empowerment and communal well-being.

Integrating Vision, Character, and Growth

In summary, TPL weaves vision, character, and personal growth into a unified model of leadership effectiveness. Authentic leadership theory provides the moral foundation (values, integrity, trust); transformational leadership theory adds the inspirational engine (vision and charisma); self-determination theory explains why inner motivation sustains change (autonomy and intrinsic goals); and social cognitive theory shows how leaders' personal mastery is both learned and contagious (self-efficacy and modelling).

Ubuntu perspectives enrich this synthesis by grounding personal transformation in communal ethics and collective well-being. Together, they argue that leadership effectiveness is not only about who the leader is inside, but also about how those inner virtues are lived out in community. Programs that invest in character, self-awareness, and ubuntu-informed growth yield leaders who inspire trust, mobilize collective energy, and sustain ethical practice.

Thus, TPL situates personal development and values as independent variables from which critical outcomes flow, while ubuntu ensures that these outcomes are culturally grounded

in African traditions of relational authenticity. This integration demonstrates that African leadership effectiveness emerges when personal transformation is inseparable from collective flourishing, positioning TPL as both authentic and culturally grounded.

Externalized Emphasis in Traditional Leadership Theories

A pivotal critique of traditional leadership theories such as Transformational Leadership (TL), Authentic Leadership (AL), and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is that they tend to prioritize externalized behaviors and situational contingencies while giving insufficient attention to leaders' inner transformation.

Transformational Leadership (TL), for instance, is often operationalized through observable leader behaviors, articulating vision, providing intellectual stimulation, and offering individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). While these behaviors inspire followers, the model largely assumes that effectiveness can be measured through external influence rather than the leader's internal moral growth. Critics argue that these risks reduce transformation to charisma or performance outcomes, neglecting the deeper question of whether leaders themselves are transformed in values and character (Tourish & Pinnington, 2014).

Authentic Leadership (AL) was introduced to correct this gap by emphasizing self-awareness, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Yet in practice, AL research often operationalizes authenticity through follower perceptions, whether leaders are seen as transparent or ethical, rather than through the leader's own inner journey of moral and spiritual development. As Ladkin and Taylor (2010) note, authenticity risks becoming a "performance of sincerity" if not grounded in genuine inner transformation.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), similarly, highlights reciprocal causation between personal factors, behaviors, and environment (Bandura, 1997). While SCT acknowledges self-efficacy and self-regulation, its emphasis remains on how leaders model behaviors that shape follower learning. The leader's internal transformations, such as cultivating humility, compassion, or moral courage, are treated as instrumental to observable outcomes rather than as a central dimension of leadership effectiveness.

Recent African scholarship underscores this limitation. Ubuntu-based leadership perspectives argue that leaders' internal virtues, humility, empathy, and integrity are not merely antecedents to external behaviors but the very foundation of legitimate leadership (Laloo, 2022; Sipondo, 2025; Grobler & Powell, 2025). In contexts marked by corruption and institutional fragility, externalized behaviors alone are insufficient; what matters is whether leaders embody communal ethics that sustain trust and solidarity.

Thus, while TL, AL, and SCT have an advanced understanding of leadership influence, they remain behaviorally and situationally oriented, often neglecting the inner transformation of the leader. The Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL) model responds to this gap by placing personal vision, character, and lifelong growth at the center, arguing that leadership effectiveness flows not only from what leaders do but from who they are becoming.

Differentiating Inner Leadership Virtues: Covey & Bennis vs. TPL

The table clearly distinguishes the inner virtues emphasized by Covey and Bennis from those essential to Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL/PTL). This makes the extension claim academically precise and visually persuasive:

Dimension	Covey & Bennis (Self-Mastery Tradition)	Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL/PTL)
Core Focus	Intrapersonal discipline and coherence	Relational authenticity and communal transformation
Self-Mastery	Emphasis on personal discipline, habit formation, and alignment with principles (Covey’s “private victory”)	Extended into resilience and a growth mindset, leaders cultivate adaptability and lifelong learning, validated through communal outcomes
Integrity	Consistency between values and actions; credibility rooted in moral alignment	Ethical stewardship, integrity expressed as accountability to community and collective well-being (ubuntu ethics)
Authenticity	Knowing oneself and leading from one’s true identity; avoiding role-playing (Bennis)	Relational authenticity, authenticity validated by how values are embodied in service to others and communal flourishing
Vision	Personal clarity of purpose; aligning goals with inner convictions	Visionary conviction, articulating and embodying a compelling personal vision that inspires collective destiny and solidarity

Humility/Empathy	Servant-leadership traits (Greenleaf tradition) acknowledged but secondary	Communal humility, leadership as service, embedding personal transformation in the flourishing of others (Laloo, 2022; Sipondo, 2025)
Outcome Orientation	Effective leadership flows from inner coherence and credibility	Leadership effectiveness flows from inner transformation that “overflows” into collective empowerment, ethical practice, and organizational innovation

Integrative Claim

Covey and Bennis provide the foundation of self-mastery, integrity, and authenticity, focusing on the leader’s inner coherence. TPL/PTL extends this foundation by embedding these virtues in a dynamic, relational, and socially validated model. In African contexts, ubuntu perspectives sharpen this distinction: leaders’ authenticity is not only about inner alignment but about embodying values that sustain collective well-being and communal trust (Grobler & Powell, 2025; Laloo, 2022; Sipondo, 2025).

Empirical Literature Review

Interrogating Leaders' Internal Values through Ubuntu and TPL

Existing studies affirm that personal development is critical for leadership effectiveness. Bennis (2003) argues that leaders are shaped as much by self-knowledge and reflection on experience as by formal skills. Clinton (2012) similarly outlines phases of leadership development, including inner-life growth and convergence, underscoring the importance of personal transformation in shaping mature leadership. These insights resonate strongly with Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL), which emphasizes the integration of character and vision into leadership practice.

Research also highlights the role of values and integrity in leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2017) identify five practices of exemplary leadership, modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart of which relies on the leader's personal authenticity and values. Likewise, Greenleaf's (2003) servant leadership perspective foregrounds humility, empathy, and character as prerequisites for credible leadership. These findings reinforce the claim that effective leadership flows from inner transformation rather than positional authority alone.

In the African context, leadership challenges such as corruption, institutional fragility, and socio-political volatility intensify the need for values-based approaches (Katsande et al., 2022). Ubuntu perspectives provide a culturally grounded response to these challenges by emphasizing that leaders' internal virtues, humility, compassion, integrity, and solidarity are not private traits but communal assets. Recent scholarship underscores this relational dimension. Laloo (2022) argues that ubuntu leadership styles prioritize collective harmony and moral responsibility, ensuring that leaders' personal values are continuously tested against

community expectations. Sipondo (2025) highlights ubuntu ethics as a framework for ethical public leadership, positioning moral virtues as the foundation of legitimacy in African governance. Grobler and Powell (2025) further contend that ubuntu leadership is inherently contextual, requiring leaders to embody values in ways that sustain organizational trust and communal flourishing.

Empirical work by Northouse (2018) and Yukl (2012) shows that leaders who combine technical competence with moral character are more likely to inspire trust and foster sustainable change. However, critics such as Tourish and Pinnington (2014) caution against the romanticisation of transformational leadership, noting risks of manipulation and pseudo-transformational practices. TPL addresses such critiques by rooting transformation not in charisma alone but in tested personal growth, integrity, and authenticity. Ubuntu strengthens this corrective by insisting that transformation must be relationally validated: leaders' authenticity is measured by their ability to embody communal ethics and foster collective well-being.

Despite these insights, the literature reveals a gap: few studies explicitly examine the intersection of personal transformation and leadership outcomes within a structured model. Most existing leadership frameworks remain externally focused, with insufficient attention to the personal vision, growth, and character of the leader. This study seeks to bridge that gap by empirically deriving a Transformational Personal Leadership model enriched by ubuntu ethics, integrating personal transformation with organizational effectiveness. In doing so, it positions African scholarship not as peripheral but as central to advancing global leadership theory,

demonstrating that effective leadership in African contexts emerges when personal transformation is inseparable from collective flourishing.

Methodology

This study was guided by the interpretivist philosophy, which seeks to understand reality through the subjective experiences of individuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Interpretivism was appropriate because leadership effectiveness cannot be meaningfully reduced to quantifiable variables alone; rather, it is embedded in leaders lived experiences, values, and personal growth trajectories. A qualitative case study design was therefore adopted to enable in-depth exploration of the factors shaping transformational personal leadership (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The target population comprised leaders recognised for their effectiveness across business, political, and religious sectors. Using purposive sampling (Patton, 2002), ten primary participants were selected on the basis of their demonstrable track records, diversity of context, and willingness to share their experiences. These individuals represented multiple countries, including Zimbabwe, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Brazil, and the United Kingdom, thus allowing cross-cultural insights. To enhance reliability, a second group of ten leaders from varied backgrounds was engaged through a follow-up questionnaire, providing opportunities for triangulation.

Two complementary methods were employed. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the ten primary participants. Interviews, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, explored leadership journeys, challenges, values, and strategies for personal growth. With participants' consent, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Second, a

questionnaire was distributed to the supplementary group of leaders to validate and expand upon themes emerging from the interviews. Documentary sources such as speeches and publications by the participants were also reviewed to enrich the dataset.

The data were analysed using thematic analysis (Saldana, 2016), facilitated by NVivo software. Coding identified recurring themes across participants' narratives, with particular attention to the interplay between vision, character, and personal growth. Themes were iteratively refined to develop the transformational personal leadership model. Triangulation of interviews, questionnaires, and documentary sources enhanced both depth and credibility of interpretation.

Several strategies were applied to strengthen trustworthiness. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants for feedback (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation of data sources and methods mitigated biases, while detailed documentation of research procedures supported transparency and dependability. Peer debriefing among fellow researchers further enhanced confirmability.

The study adhered to ethical research standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after disclosure of the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature. Confidentiality was safeguarded by anonymising responses and securing data storage. The researcher-maintained neutrality by bracketing prior assumptions and minimising potential conflicts of interest.

Presentation and Discussion of Results

The study involved in-depth interviews with ten distinguished leaders (ages 40–70) from business, political, and religious sectors across Zimbabwe, Malawi, South Africa,

Tanzania, Brazil, and the United Kingdom. Eight of these leaders held global awards for leadership excellence, and a supplementary questionnaire was completed by an additional ten younger leaders (under 45), adding generational and cross-cultural depth to the findings. This diverse sample provided rich qualitative insights into leadership across very different contexts, consistent with literature on global leadership that emphasizes the value of varied perspectives in shaping leadership understanding.

Participants consistently described leadership in holistic terms. The data analysis revealed three core pillars of Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL): vision, character, and personal growth, each underpinned by values like empathy, humility, integrity, and spiritual grounding. These dimensions align with existing leadership theory: for example, Kouzes and Posner argue that inspiring a shared vision gives followers purpose and direction, creating motivation. Likewise, authentic leadership theory emphasizes that leaders must align personal values with their leadership (modeling the way). In the sections below, we elaborate on each pillar, highlighting how leaders' own narratives and supporting theory combine to illuminate the TPL framework.

The analysis identified three central pillars of transformational personal leadership (TPL): vision, character, and personal growth. These pillars were consistently reinforced by values such as empathy, humility, integrity, and spiritual grounding.

Vision emerged as a central pillar of TPL – the capacity to envisage and articulate a compelling future that motivates both leader and followers. One Zimbabwean leader aptly summarized this: *“Vision is not just a statement; it is the ability to imagine a future that excites you and rallying others to walk towards it”* (Participant 4, Zimbabwe). Leaders explained that a

clear vision fuels inspiration: seeing how current work contributes to a larger purpose energizes teams. Crucially, these leaders stressed that sustainability of vision depends on alignment with the leader's own values and life purpose. When their personal vision diverges from organizational objectives, they reported frustration and loss of impact. This mirrors insights from the leadership literature: Kouzes and Posner note that exemplary leaders “dream big” and “believe in the possibilities of the future,” engaging others by appealing to shared aspirations. Similarly, Bass and Riggio (2006) emphasize that transformational leaders articulate high expectations and a vision that transcends short-term self-interest.

Our findings extend these ideas by highlighting the *personal-organizational congruence* of vision. Leaders in this study experienced cognitive dissonance and diminished influence if they tried to champion a vision that conflicted with their inner values. This suggests a synergy between transformational and authentic leadership: transformational theory shows that a compelling vision drives followers towards collective goals, while authentic leadership insists that vision must spring from the leader's core values for credibility. In other words, TPL vision is meaningful only when it resonates internally as well as externally. One may see this in the example of a global NGO leader who realigned his organization's strategy to reflect his commitment to education – once his inner purpose and the organizational vision converged, both he and his team felt re-energized.

These insights align with evidence on leadership purpose. Research finds that vision and mission provide direction and are most effective when leaders embody the vision themselves. In transformational change literature, moving people toward higher ethical and moral standards is seen as part of leadership's impact. Our study underscores that TPL's vision is not a hollow promise but a lived guide: it directs strategy *and* reflects the leader's identity.

Where vision, values, and strategy interlock, leaders reported achieving more sustainable and inspired outcomes. For leadership development, this implies that programs should help leaders articulate their personal purpose and align it with their organizational role, not just teach goal-setting techniques.

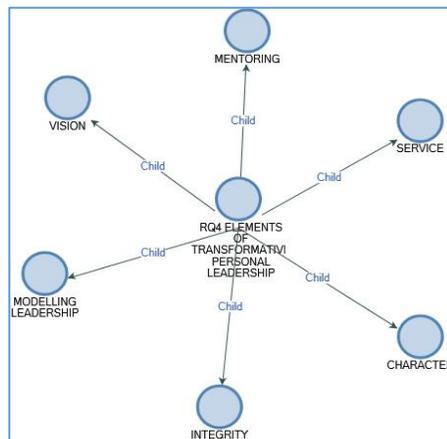


Figure : Elements of Transformational Personal Leadership here}

Character and Integrity

Participants unanimously affirmed that character is inseparable from leadership efficacy. One South African leader bluntly stated, *“When character fails, leadership also fails”* (Participant 7, South Africa). Leaders described character as moral integrity, consistency, and faithfulness – insisting that leaders must “walk the talk” in all spheres of life, not just at work. They saw integrity as congruence between words and actions: a reliable compass that guides decisions at home and in the office. This resonates strongly with leadership theory: integrity is widely recognized as fundamental to trust. For instance, Engelbrecht and Heine (2017) note that integrity (adherence to moral principles) is a key driver of ethical leadership and a major

source of follower trust. When leaders demonstrate moral consistency, subordinates report higher trust, loyalty, and willingness to go above and beyond.

This finding also recalls Lencioni's (2016) assertion that trust in teams is built on a foundation of integrity. Consistent with Burns' (1978) concept of moral leadership, our leaders implied that leadership has no moral neutrality: every decision and strategy is filtered through their character "lens." They reported that ethical lapses or ego-driven actions undermine long-term influence. Greenleaf's principles of servant leadership further illuminate why humility and service emerged alongside integrity: servant leaders prioritize others and remain modest, building solidarity rather than hierarchy. Our data suggest that these servant-leader traits (humility, caring, authenticity) were not just nice add-ons but central to credibility. One leader described how admitting mistakes and valuing team input (expressions of humility) immediately increased team commitment. This matches scholarly views that servant leaders are trusted precisely because they serve and empower their people.

In sum, TPL positions character as both the anchor and the currency of leadership. It is the integrity anchor: without it, the structure of vision and growth wobbles. It is also the currency of credibility: ethical consistency fosters the relational resources (trust, support) needed for any leader's vision to take hold. Leaders' narratives – and the literature – converge on the idea that character is not peripheral but the core of lasting influence. Organizations aiming for transformational change must therefore cultivate integrity and servant-mindedness, not just technical skills.



Figure: Character Word Tree here

The results therefore confirm that personal authenticity underpins not only credibility but also long-term organisational impact.

Personal Growth

All participants emphasized continuous personal growth as vital to leadership. They saw themselves as lifelong learners whose self-development sustains their leadership capacity. One Malawian leader captured this: *“I read, I reflect, I invest in myself daily; growth is the centre that holds leadership together”* (Participant 2, Malawi). Such statements highlight that these leaders practice what Senge (2006) calls “personal mastery” – ongoing learning and self-

improvement – as a basis for influencing others. They engage in formal training, reflective practice (e.g., journaling or mentoring), and spiritual disciplines to refresh their perspectives.

This emphasis confirms Bennis's (2003) view that great leaders continuously learn from their experiences and reflect on their assumptions. Bennis noted that leaders with vision and positive intent overcome formal skill gaps through self-awareness and experience. Our data deepen this by showing *how* growth unfolds: through deliberate habits of study, reflection, and self-investment. The connection to motivation theory was also evident: these leaders are intrinsically driven to improve. In line with Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2000), satisfying innate needs for competence and autonomy sustains their motivation to learn. As Ryan and Deci explain, when psychological needs (competence, autonomy, relatedness) are met, individuals become more self-motivated and engaged. In our participants' terms, each new insight or skill feeds their inner sense of purpose, which in turn expands their capacity to serve others.

The collective data suggest that leadership in TPL is fundamentally a transformational journey of the self. In other words, to transform organizations or communities, leaders must first transform themselves. This aligns with past research: Caves (2018) argues that organizational change is driven by leaders who commit to lifelong learning, noting that "as the organizational leader grows, the organization grows as well". Indeed, our leaders described a feedback loop: as they grow, they empower their followers' growth. A lived example is a political leader who began regular study groups on ethics; his own growth in wisdom then inspired his team to pursue higher ideals. Therefore, TPL's personal growth pillar is dynamic: it both feeds the leader and radiates outward to others. Leadership programs should incorporate

reflective and spiritual development components, not just managerial training, to honor this pillar.

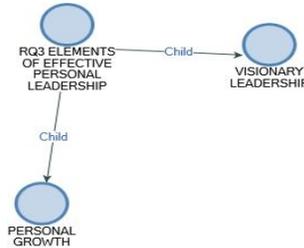


Figure 5: Elements of Effective Personal Leadership

This corroborates Bennis’s (2003) claim that leadership effectiveness is shaped as much by self-reflection and experience as by formal skills. The findings also extend Deci and Ryan’s (2000) self-determination theory by illustrating how intrinsic motivation drives leaders to continuously develop themselves.

Supporting Attributes

Beyond the three pillars, participants highlighted secondary attributes that enrich TPL: empathy, humility, service, and mentoring. These were not seen as optional traits but as qualities that give depth and relational resonance to the pillars. For example, empathy enabled leaders to truly connect with followers and stakeholders. By understanding others’ feelings and perspectives, they could validate experiences and build trust. In fact, this matches Goleman’s (1995) findings that empathy is a core component of emotional intelligence, crucial for effective leadership and trust-building. One leader observed that by listening empathetically during team crises, he maintained morale and collective problem-solving, whereas a lack of empathy in another setting had led to disengagement.

Humility was equally emphasized. Leaders described how humility (lack of ego) made them more approachable and allowed others to contribute. As one described, owning mistakes and crediting the team (rather than seeking glory) consistently improved team loyalty and innovation. This accords with the servant-leadership literature: Greenleaf teaches that servant leaders prioritize others and rise through humility. Our findings echo this: humility “mitigates the risks of ego-driven failures,” making leadership sustainable. For instance, in one multinational project, a humble approach helped integrate local staff’s insights into strategy, yielding better results than a top-down mandate might have.

Service and mentoring emerged as mechanisms for sustainability and legacy. Leaders viewed themselves as mentors and servants to those they led. By actively developing protégés and stepping aside, they ensured the next generation grew strong. This resonates with recent research showing mentoring’s power in cultivating future leaders – one study found that active mentoring cultivates ethical, adaptable, and visionary successors. Supporting values thus amplify the TPL pillars: empathy deepens the impact of vision (followers feel seen); humility reinforces the weight of character (leaders earn trust); service and mentoring extend the leader’s vision and values into the future. Notably, Northouse (2018) notes that effective leaders operate from personal values and ethics, especially in high-pressure contexts. Our data confirm that these supporting attributes enrich authenticity and relational depth, magnifying the transformational effect of vision, integrity, and growth.

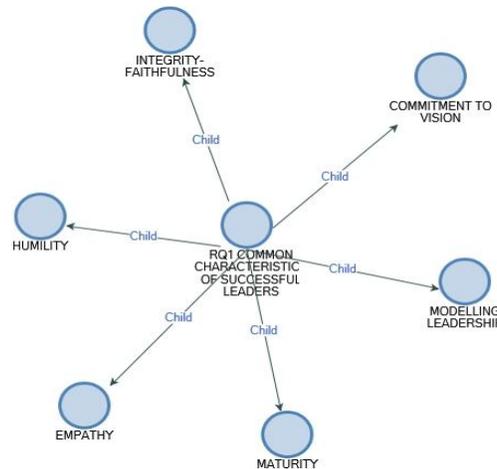


Figure : Characteristics of Successful Leaders

Effects of Personal Qualities

Leaders uniformly emphasized that these inner qualities directly shaped leadership outcomes at both micro and macro levels. For example, as one Tanzanian leader expressed, *“Empathy and humility determine how I navigate challenges and relate to my team; without them, vision alone is hollow”* (Participant 4, Zimbabwe). In practice, leaders perceived that personal qualities influenced follower motivation, loyalty, and collaboration. An empathetic, humble leader inspired far greater commitment and innovation than a technically smart but cold leader. This is consistent with research showing that leaders’ empathy and ethical conduct encourage follower well-being and engagement.

We interpret these effects as an emergent property of personal mastery: leadership effectiveness flowed not just from position or strategy, but from the leader’s moral and relational presence. Personal qualities affected micro-level interactions (daily team dynamics) and macro-level culture (norms and ethics in the organization). For instance, a leader’s consistent integrity and service orientation gradually built an organizational culture of trust and

generosity, whereas a leader lacking this bred cynicism. The literature supports this multi-layered impact: ethical leaders who model integrity and empathy create climates of trust that elevate overall performance.

Thus, the TPL model emerges: leadership is truly “the leader’s inner transformation made manifest.” Qualities like empathy, integrity, and intrinsic motivation integrate transformational (vision-focused), authentic (value-driven), and servant (other-centered) leadership principles into a unified whole. In other words, leadership becomes an emergent phenomenon of the leader’s personal development. This perspective extends Burns’s (1978) idea that transformational leadership appeals to followers’ higher values, and Avolio and Gardner’s (2005) view that authentic leadership grows out of leaders’ self-knowledge. Our findings suggest that when leaders cultivate inner virtues, both follower behavior and organizational results improve – for example, trust engenders loyalty, humility fosters innovation, and intrinsic drive yields resilience.

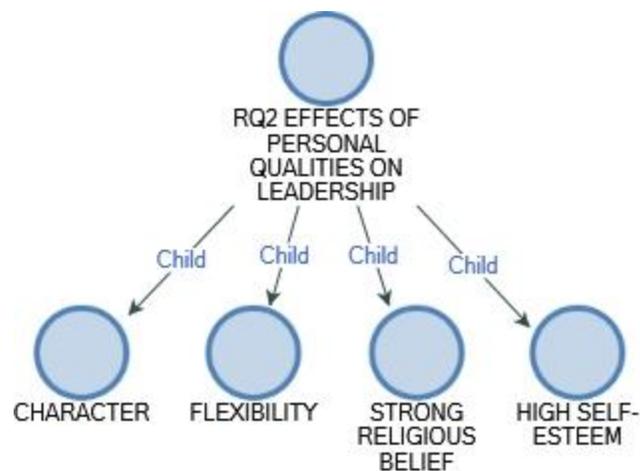


Figure : Effects of Personal Qualities on Leadership

This finding supports Northouse's (2018) view that values and character are not peripheral but central to effective leadership, particularly in volatile and high-pressure contexts.

The Transformational Personal Leadership Model

The Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL) Theory conceptualizes leadership as an embodied practice, grounded in the leader's personal growth, character, and vision, rather than solely in formal authority or externally observable behaviours. Drawing on qualitative insights from globally recognized leaders, TPL situates leadership effectiveness in the inner transformation of the leader, positing that authentic and sustainable leadership flows from self-mastery and the alignment of values, purpose, and action.

Core Pillars of TPL

Vision serves as the strategic and motivational anchor of TPL. It is not merely the articulation of organizational objectives but a reflection of the leader's inner purpose and foresight. Leaders in the study emphasized that a vision divorced from personal values lacks credibility and motivational power: "*Vision is not just a statement; it is the ability to imagine a future that excites you and others to walk towards it*" (Participant 4, Zimbabwe). TPL extends transformational leadership theory by emphasizing the synergy between personal and organizational vision, ensuring that leadership initiatives are coherent, sustainable, and inspiring (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Character is positioned at the ethical core of TPL. It encompasses integrity, moral courage, consistency, and relational authenticity. Leaders reported that failures in character inevitably undermine leadership credibility: "*When character fails, leadership also fails*"

(Participant 7, South Africa). This aligns with authentic leadership principles, which stress congruence between personal values and actions (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), and with servant leadership, which frames moral and relational virtues as central to sustainable influence (Greenleaf, 2003; Lencioni, 2016). In TPL, character is both a foundation for decision-making and a medium through which trust and organizational culture are cultivated.

Personal Growth constitutes the dynamic pillar of TPL, reflecting the leader's ongoing commitment to self-development, reflection, and skill acquisition. Leaders emphasized that leadership is sustained by intrinsic motivation and continuous learning: *"I read, I reflect, I invest in myself daily; growth is the centre that holds leadership together"* (Participant 2, Malawi). This pillar resonates with Bennis' (2003) notion of self-reflective practice and Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, highlighting the importance of autonomy, competence, and intrinsic drive in maintaining leadership effectiveness. Personal growth ensures that leaders remain adaptable, resilient, and capable of inspiring transformation in others.

Supporting Values

TPL is reinforced by empathy, humility, integrity, and spiritual conviction, which amplify the pillars' impact. Empathy fosters relational trust and follower engagement (Goleman, 1995), humility mitigates ego-driven failures and enhances approachability (Greenleaf, 2003), integrity anchors ethical consistency (Northouse, 2018), and spiritual grounding provides a moral compass and long-term perspective. Collectively, these values transform leadership from a positional role into a relational and moral practice, extending the influence of the leader's personal transformation into organizational and societal outcomes.

Leadership as Emergent and Transformational

A defining feature of TPL is that leadership is emergent: effectiveness flows from the leader's inner transformation rather than formal authority. Leaders' narratives indicated that personal mastery acts as a multiplier: as leaders cultivate vision, character, and growth, they influence followers, shape organizational culture, and promote ethical and sustainable outcomes. This conceptualization bridges transformational, authentic, and servant leadership theories, suggesting that the overflow of personal transformation is the true driver of leadership impact (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Burns, 1978; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Greenleaf, 2003).

Implications for Practice and Development

The TPL framework provides practical guidance for leadership development. Conventional programs focused solely on technical or managerial skills are insufficient. Effective development initiatives must integrate strategies that nurture self-awareness, ethical grounding, intrinsic motivation, and reflective practice. Mentoring, coaching, and value-driven experiential learning can operationalize TPL principles, preparing leaders to influence organizations and communities sustainably.

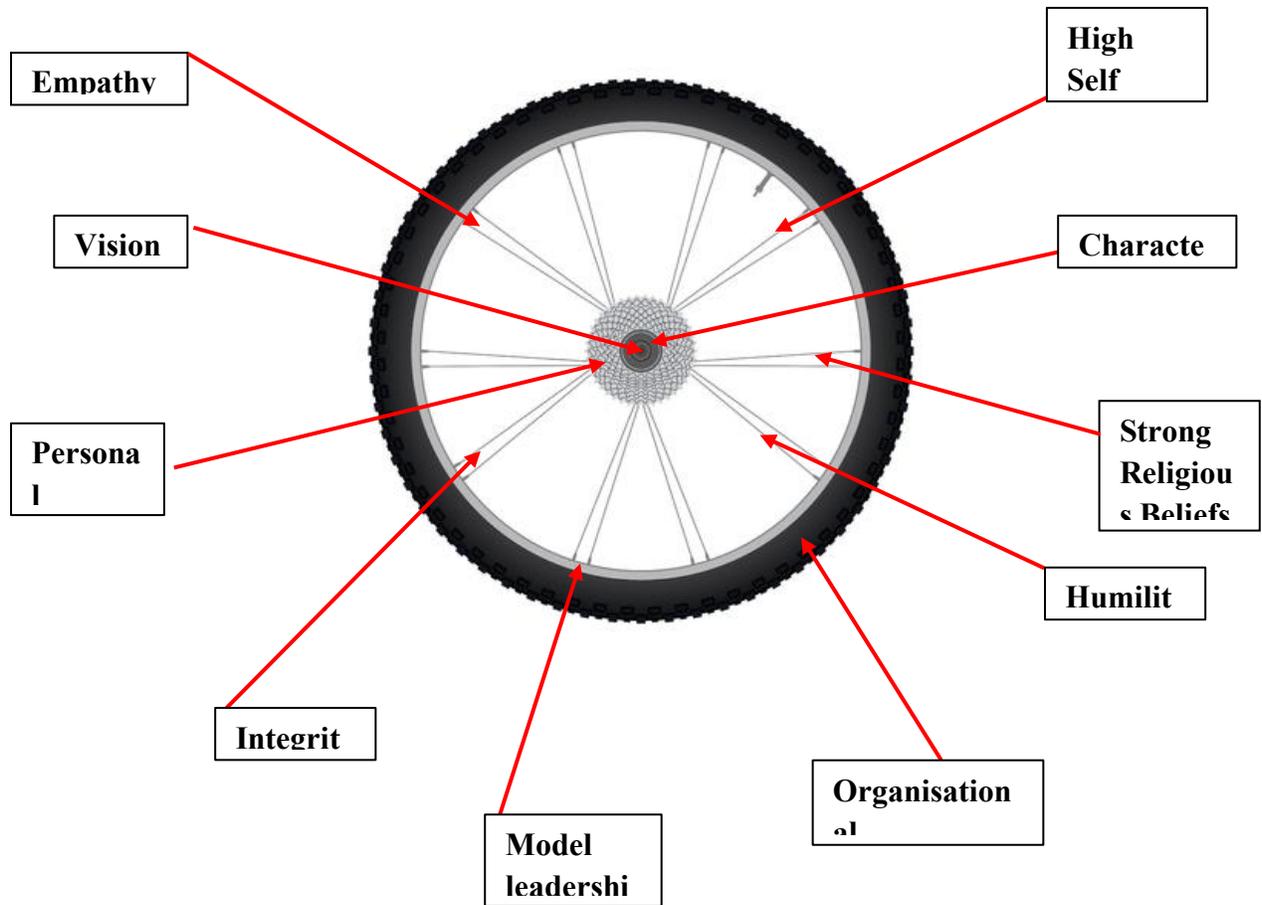


Figure: Transformational Personal Leadership Model – (Vision, Character, Personal Growth as interdependent pillars, surrounded by Empathy, Humility, Integrity, Spiritual Grounding as reinforcing values, with arrows indicating “Overflow of Personal Transformation → Leadership Outcomes”)

In sum, the Transformational Personal Leadership Theory advances a holistic, human-centric, and ethically anchored model of leadership, emphasizing that to transform others and organizations, leaders must first cultivate themselves. By integrating vision, character, personal growth, and reinforcing values, TPL provides a robust theoretical and practical lens for understanding and developing leadership in contemporary, complex contexts.

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm the central proposition that effective leadership cannot be sustained without personal transformation. The Transformational Personal Leadership (TPL) model underscores that leadership is not merely an exercise in strategy or management, but a lived practice anchored in the synergistic interplay of vision, character, and personal growth. These three interdependent pillars, reinforced by empathy, humility, integrity, and spiritual grounding, create the conditions for leaders to embody authenticity, resilience, and ethical clarity in both their personal and professional lives.

Leadership as an Embodied Practice

A central insight emerging from this research is that leadership must be understood as embodied rather than performed. Leaders' narratives revealed that organisational effectiveness does not flow from technical competence or external charisma alone, but from the overflow of an inner life that has been intentionally cultivated. Vision without integrity risks becoming empty rhetoric; character without growth risks stagnation; and personal growth without vision risks directionlessness. It is in the integration of all three pillars that leadership becomes transformational. This holistic framing resonates with Avolio and Gardner's (2005) argument that authentic leadership builds trust through congruence of values and actions, while extending Bass's (1985) notion of transformational leadership by rooting inspiration in personal mastery and integrity rather than in charisma or authority.

Addressing Critiques and Advancing Theory

The TPL model also addresses important critiques within the leadership literature. Scholars such as Tourish and Pinnington (2014) caution that transformational leadership may be vulnerable to manipulation, where charismatic leaders inspire loyalty without necessarily acting in the best interests of followers or organisations. TPL mitigates this risk by locating transformation in self-reflection and authenticity, ensuring that influence flows from character and ethical conviction rather than from image management. Similarly, Argandoña (2015) has called for more relational and inclusive approaches to leadership. The supporting attributes of empathy, humility, and mentoring found in this study respond directly to this call, situating leadership as a relational practice that values the dignity and agency of followers.

Implications for Practice

These findings carry profound implications for leadership development. Conventional leadership programs, which often focus on strategic skills, operational efficiency, or managerial competencies, are insufficient to prepare leaders for the demands of contemporary contexts. The TPL model suggests that development initiatives must deliberately invest in cultivating the inner dimensions of leadership: self-awareness, reflective practice, values alignment, and intrinsic motivation. Practical approaches could include mentorship networks that encourage intergenerational learning, reflective workshops that integrate spiritual and emotional intelligence, and structured opportunities for leaders to align personal and organisational visions. Such initiatives go beyond equipping leaders with tools, they nurture the personal mastery that sustains ethical and effective leadership over the long term.

Towards a Transformational Paradigm

The TPL framework contributes to a broader reorientation in leadership studies from behavioural and positional models toward identity-centred and value-driven paradigms. It argues that leadership effectiveness is not simply what leaders do, but who they are and what they are becoming. This perspective reframes leadership as a journey of transformation, where the leader's growth and integrity directly shape the culture, resilience, and ethical trajectory of organisations. As one participant eloquently observed, "growth is the centre that holds leadership together" (Participant 2, Malawi), highlighting the indispensable role of continuous self-investment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In closing, the study affirms that transformational personal leadership is both a theoretical and practical imperative. By integrating vision, character, and personal growth, and reinforcing these with empathy, humility, and integrity, the TPL model offers a contextually grounded, ethically robust, and globally relevant framework for leadership. It bridges existing theories while addressing their limitations, positioning leadership as an emergent property of personal transformation rather than a function of charisma or positional authority. For scholars, it provides a fertile framework for further research across diverse cultural and institutional settings. For practitioners, it offers a clear reminder that to transform organisations and societies, leaders must first be willing to transform themselves.

Recommendations

1. **Institutionalise leadership development:** Governments and institutions should embed personal leadership development into national leadership academies and training programmes, ensuring that integrity, empathy, and self-awareness are prioritised alongside technical skills.
2. **Promote ethical leadership standards:** Regulatory bodies and professional associations should establish frameworks that reward value-based leadership and penalise unethical practices.

Organisational Practice

1. **Integrate TPL into training:** Organisations should incorporate the TPL model into leadership development, succession planning, and mentoring programmes, focusing on cultivating vision, character, and personal growth.
2. **Foster reflective practice:** Leadership development initiatives should encourage leaders to engage in self-assessment, coaching, and spiritual or reflective disciplines that reinforce authenticity and humility.
3. **Align vision at all levels:** Organisations should ensure that institutional visions are harmonised with leaders' personal convictions to create coherence and sustainability.

Future Research

1. **Cross-cultural validation:** Further studies should test the applicability of the TPL model across different cultural and institutional contexts to refine its universality.

2. **Quantitative assessment:** Future research could operationalise the TPL pillars into measurable constructs to empirically test their relationship with organisational performance.
3. **Longitudinal studies:** Tracking leaders over time would provide insights into how personal transformation shapes leadership effectiveness in the long term.

References

- Alvesson, M., & Sveningsson, S. (2016). *Changing organisational culture: Cultural change work in progress*. Routledge.
- Amabile, T. M., & Kramer, S. J. (2011). *The progress principle: Using small wins to ignite joy, engagement, and creativity at work*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Antonakis, J., & Day, D. V. (Eds.). (2009). *The nature of leadership* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Argandoña, A. (2015). *The great escape from the universe: A journey to the edge of the cosmos*. Springer.
- Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (2004). *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) manual and sampler set* (3rd ed.). Mind Garden.
- Avolio, B. J., & Gardner, W. L. (2005). Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *16*(3), 315–338.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.001>

- Avolio, B. J., & Hannah, S. T. (2008). Developmental readiness: Accelerating leader development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60(4), 331–347. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1065-9293.60.4.331>
- Avolio, B. J., & Yammarino, F. J. (2002). *Transformational and charismatic leadership: The road ahead*. JAI.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1995). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations* (Rev. ed.). Free Press.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bennis, W. (2003). *On becoming a leader* (2nd ed.). Basic Books.
- Bennis, W. G. (2009). *On becoming a leader* (4th ed.). Basic Books.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (2006). Using emotional intelligence to improve leadership effectiveness. In F. Hesselbein & M. Goldsmith (Eds.), *The leader of the future 2: Visions, strategies, and practices for the new era* (pp. 159–180). Jossey-Bass.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.

Clinton, J. R. (2012). *Leading and loving: Knowing, praying, and serving for fruitful ministry*. Bethany House.

Cloud, H. (2013). *Boundaries for leaders*. HarperCollins.

Collins, J. C., & Porras, J. I. (1996). Building your company's vision. *Harvard Business Review*, 74(5), 65–77.

Covey, S. R. (1991). *Principle-centered leadership*. Simon & Schuster.

Covey, S. R. (2004). *The 8th habit: From effectiveness to greatness*. Free Press.

Creswell, J. D., & Creswell, J. W. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.

Day, D. V. (2001). Leadership development: A review in context. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 11(4), 581–613. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(00\)00061-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(00)00061-8)

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Press.

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Engelbrecht, A. S., & Heine, G. (2017). Integrity, ethical leadership, trust and work engagement. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 38(3), 368–379.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-11-2015-0237>
- Gagné, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(4), 331–362. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.322>
- Gardner, H. (1995). *Leading minds: An anatomy of leadership*. Basic Books.
- George, B. (2003). *Authentic leadership: Rediscovering the secrets to creating lasting value*. Jossey-Bass.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership that gets results. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(2), 78–90.
- Goleman, D. (2007). *Social intelligence: The new science of human relationships*. Arrow.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (2003). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness* (25th anniversary ed.). Paulist Press.

- Kakabadse, A., Kakabadse, N., & Uche, M. (2016). Personal transformation and effective leadership in Africa: A call for research. *Journal of Management Development*, 35(4), 448–463. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-09-2015-0127>
- Kerns, C. D. (2003). Creating and sustaining an ethical workplace culture. *Graziadio Business Review*, 6(3). <https://gbr.pepperdine.edu/2003/12/creating-and-sustaining-an-ethical-workplace-culture/>
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2017). *The leadership challenge* (6th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Lencioni, P. (2016). *The ideal team player: How to recognize and cultivate the three essential virtues*. Jossey-Bass.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Nanus, B. (1992). *Visionary leadership: Creating a compelling sense of direction for your organization*. Jossey-Bass.
- Northouse, P. G. (2018). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (8th ed.). Sage.
- Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization* (Rev. ed.). Doubleday.
- Tourish, D., & Pinnington, A. (2014). *The dark side of transformational leadership: A critical perspective*. Routledge.

Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., Gardner, W. L., Wernsing, T. S., & Peterson, S. J. (2008).

Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure. *Journal of Management*, 34(1), 89–126. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206307308913>

Yukl, G. A. (2012). *Leadership in organizations* (8th ed.). Pearson.