

The Leadership & Organization Development Journal

Distinguishing between transformational and servant leadership

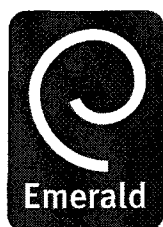
Jeanine Parolini

*Jeanine Parolini Consulting, Chanhassen, Minnesota, USA and Regent University,
Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA*

Kathleen Patterson

Bruce Winston

*School of Global Leadership and Entrepreneurship, Regent University,
Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA*



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Distinguishing between transformational and servant leadership

Jeanine Parolini

*Jeanine Parolini Consulting, Chanhassen, Minnesota, USA and
Regent University, Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA, and*

Kathleen Patterson and Bruce Winston

*School of Global Leadership and Entrepreneurship, Regent University,
Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA*

Abstract

Purpose – Although transformational and servant leadership has been in existence since the 1970s and theoretical assumptions about the differences began in the 1990s, this paper seeks to relate the first empirical investigation distinguishing between the two leaders, which was conducted recently by the first author.

Design/methodology/approach – Through a review of the literature, the first author established 19 semantic differential scales and two self-typing paragraphs to differentiate between the two leaders. The scales and paragraphs were formed into an online survey, reviewed by an expert panel, and distributed to 56 randomly selected contacts where 514 participants responded.

Findings – Through discriminant analysis, five statistically significant ($p = 0.000$) discriminant items were found that differentiated between transformational and servant leadership.

Research limitations/implications – The paper proposes that the five statistically significant items revealed by the first author's research be brought into future definitions, discussions, and research on transformational and/or servant leadership.

Practical implications – The five items proposed should also be integrated into leadership and organizational development practices, the literature, and future research.

Originality/value – The paper discusses the first empirical research study investigating the distinctions between transformational and servant leaders, two leadership styles that have existed and been discussed by scholars and theorists since the 1970s.

Keywords Transformational leadership, Leadership

Paper type Research paper



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Distinguishing between transformational and servant leadership

Although transformational and servant leadership have been in existence since the late 1970s (Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 1977) and theoretical assumptions about the distinctions between the two leaders have been made as early as the 1990s (Graham, 1991), recently Parolini (2007) conducted the first empirical research study to investigate these assumptions. As recently as the turn of this century, Bass (2000) offered a distinction between the two leaders in explaining servant leaders as going beyond transformational leaders in selecting the needs of others and serving others as the leader's main aim, whereas transformational leaders aim to align their own and others' interests with the good of the group, organization, or society yet no empirical research exists to support these assumptions. Therefore, this paper discusses the first empirical

research study by Parolini (2007) study and the resulting empirical foundation for the assumptions drawn in the literature about the differences between transformational and servant leaders including the moral, focus, motive and mission, development, and influence distinctions. The purpose of this paper is to pave the way for clearer definitions, constructs, and instrumentation as proposed by Stone *et al.* (2004).

Moral distinction

Burns (1978), Bass (1985), Graham (1991), Stephens *et al.* (1995), Whetstone (2002), and Whittington (2004) noted a distinction in the moral nature of the two leaders. Burns (1978) initially described transformational leadership as “moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led” (p. 20). Burns clarified the transformational leader as a moral and value-centered agent who engages the full person of the follower and changes followers’ self-interest into collective interests through transforming followers’ independent values into interdependent higher-order collective values. Later, Bass (1985) offered that transformational leaders could be moral or immoral depending on their values and included tyrannical leaders in the list leaders proposed as transformational. Bass’ statement seemed to be contrary and opposed Burns’ definition. This divergence induced rebuttal from Graham (1991), Stephens *et al.* (1995), Whetstone (2002), and Whittington (2004).

Graham (1991) recognized the potential moral shortcomings of the transformational leader’s allegiance to the organization’s objectives and offered servant leadership’s focus on service as a means of overcoming this moral weakness. Stephens *et al.* (1995) added that transformational leadership could violate organizational development ethical norms because of its focus on overriding the individual’s interests and values in an effort to suit the organization. Therefore, Stephens *et al.* emphasized two servant leader traits, namely leader consciousness and service orientation toward followers, as vital to overcoming the ethical concerns. Whetstone’s (2002) analysis identified the potential moral disadvantages of the transformational leader’s focus on organizational objectives as well as the moral advantages of the servant leader’s focus on serving followers. Whittington (2004) warned scholars that the transformational leader’s motive toward organizational objectives could become self-serving or egoistic, whereas the servant leader’s motive toward serving others was more altruistic in nature. While the empirical research study conducted by Parolini (2007) did not assume that one leadership style is preferred or more valuable than the other, the discussion of the moral nature of the two leaders offers insights into the distinctions between the two leaders.

Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) admitted the error of Bass’ earlier statement and re-introduced transformational leadership as morally uplifting through its emphasis on the moral character of the leader, the ethical values underlying the leader’s vision, and the fostering of a culture of shared values as well as morally grounded collective processes between leader and followers. Ultimately, Bass clarified, “Transformational leaders strive to align their own and others’ interests with the good of the group, organization, and society” (p. 30). Kanungo (2001) went on to explain that transformational leaders are moral through their use of altruistic empowering strategies as a means of transforming followers’ self-interest into collective values and interdependent goals that support organizational interests.

In contrast to the nebulous process of defining transformational leadership’s moral foundation, Covey (as cited in Greenleaf, 1977) clearly identified moral authority, or the

principled use of power and freedom, as a key to servant leadership. Covey defined natural authority as the power and freedom to choose, whereas moral authority comes with a principled use of that natural power and freedom to choose. Covey described four dimensions as key to the servant leader's moral conscience:

- (1) sacrificial service through submitting one's ego to higher purposes;
- (2) conscience that inspires servant leaders to become part of a cause worthy of their commitment;
- (3) conscience that teaches servant leaders that the ends and means are inseparable; and
- (4) conscience that moves servant leaders from independence to interdependence through relationships.

Additionally, the servant leader's morality through sacrificial service and conscience were best affirmed in Greenleaf's (1977) classic statement: "The servant leader is servant first. It begins with a natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" (p. 27). Greenleaf clarified that servant-first leaders make sure that other people's highest priority needs are served, and offered altruism as foundational to serving others. Greenleaf added that followers ought to be growing as well as becoming healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely to become servants themselves. Moreover, Greenleaf suggested that servant leaders look to their impact on the least privileged in society and determine if their service is contributing to a better way of life for the least privileged. Johnson (2001) proposed that servant leadership's self-awareness is an advantage because of its altruism, simplicity, and consciousness. Thus, Parolini (2007) concluded that the moral distinction of the servant leader is his or her conscious sacrificial and altruistic service toward individual followers' highest priority needs.

If these assumptions about transformational and servant leaders are true, then Parolini (2007) proposed the following discriminant items in Table I as part of the moral distinction between the two leaders. Prior to Parolini's study, there was no empirical research study that investigated or supported the assumptions made about the moral distinction between the two leaders.

Table I.
Moral distinction
between transformational
and servant leaders

I believe this leader focuses more of his or her benevolence and good will toward the	Organization/individual
I believe it is important to this leader that my values are ___ with/from his or her values	Aligned/separate
I believe it is important to this leader that my values are ___ with/from the organization's values	Aligned/separate
I believe is important to this leader that my values are ___ with/from his or her and the organization's values	Aligned/separate
When this leader asks me to, I believe this leader asks me to overcome self-interest for the good of the	Organization/individual
I believe this leader is interested in developing values that are	Collective/individual
I believe leader is focused on meeting the needs of the	Organization/individual

Source Parolini (2007)

Focus distinction

Greenleaf (1977), Graham (1991), Bass (2000), and Stone *et al.* (2004) proposed a distinction in the aim and focus of the two leaders. Greenleaf (1977) initially explained servant leaders as focused on individual followers in making sure followers' highest priority needs are served. Graham (1991), Bass (2000), and Stone *et al.* (2004) agreed and then added that the allegiance, aim, and focus for transformational leaders is directed toward the organization or collective goals. In an attempt to expose potentially immoral tactics, Graham proposed that "the primary allegiance of transformational leaders is clearly to the organization (or to themselves) rather than to follower autonomy or to universal moral principles" (p. 110). However, Parolini (2007) suggested that if we settle on the point that transformational leaders are also morally uplifting, as conveyed in the previous section, then it is possible to conclude from Graham's propositions that a unique feature of transformational leadership is its distinctive allegiance or loyalty toward organizational goals whereas servant leadership's allegiance or loyalty is to the individual and follower autonomy.

Bass (2000) supported the unique aim of each leader in his statement that servant leadership "goes beyond transformational leadership in selecting the needs of others as its highest priority," whereas transformational leaders "strive to align their own and others' interests with the good of the group, organization or society" (p. 30). In responding to concerns about the morality of transformational leadership's organizational focus, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) stated transformational leaders "move followers to go beyond their self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or society" (p. 188). Stone *et al.* (2004) added:

The extent to which the leader is able to shift the primary focus of his or her leadership from the organization to the follower is the distinguishing factor in determining whether the leader may be a transformational or servant leader (p. 349).

If these statements in the literature are true, then Parolini (2007) concluded the following discriminant items in Table II as part of the focus distinction between transformational and servant leaders. Although conclusions have been made about the distinctions in allegiance, aim, or focus of the two leaders, Parolini conducted the first empirical research study to investigate these conclusions.

Motive and mission distinction

Smith *et al.* (2004) offered that transformational and servant leaders operate from distinct motives and missions. Smith *et al.* (2004) proposed a mission distinction in that transformational leaders create "empowered dynamic" cultures that result in organizational growth and dignity as the organization survives a challenging external environment, whereas servant leaders create "spiritually generative" cultures (p. 80) that focus on individual growth and dignity. Smith *et al.* explained

I believe this leader's allegiance and focus is primarily toward the	Organization/individual
I believe this leader is primarily focused on achieving the goals of the:	Organization/individual

Source: Parolini (2007)

Table II.
Focus distinction
between transformational
and servant leaders

transformational leaders as being motivated by a sense of mission to recreate and change the organization which results in a dynamic internal culture. Smith *et al.* added that transformational leaders are actively engaged in responding to changes in the external environment in an effort to produce revolutionary change. On the other hand, Smith *et al.* contrasted servant leaders as being motivated by egalitarianism and a sense of mission to grow individuals which results in a stable culture that is more passive to the external environment. Therefore, servant leaders would seem to focus more on evolutionary change efforts.

In building upon the assumptions of Smith *et al.* (2004), Humphreys (2005) conducted a historical investigation of two famous leaders, Xenophon and Chief Joseph. Humphreys stated "servant leaders begin with a feeling of altruism and egalitarianism [while] transformational leaders are more motivated by organizational success, particularly within a tumultuous external milieu" (p. 1416). According to Humphreys, Chief Joseph demonstrated servant leadership through developing more satisfied and committed followers, whereas Xenophon's leadership appeared to be transformational in that it demonstrated greater effectiveness in enhancing organizational goals and change.

Therefore, Parolini (2007) offered that if these assumptions in the literature are true, we should find the following discriminant items in Table III as part of the distinction between transformational and servant leaders. Once again, assumptions have been made about the distinction in motive and mission of the transformational versus servant leader that lacked empirical investigation or reinforcement prior to the study discussed in this paper.

Development distinction

Greenleaf (1977), Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), and Bass (2000) explained a distinction in the inclination of each leader toward leading or serving and toward developing others as leaders or servants. Greenleaf proposed servant leaders as servants first and then conscious choice prompts them to lead. Greenleaf explained servant leaders as developing followers into autonomous moral servants who continue to develop others into autonomous moral servants. In this way, servant leaders invite followers to become free and autonomous to follow their own conscience rather than the leader's conscience. Greenleaf believed that the focus of a servant leader needed to be developing other autonomous servant leaders so that society would benefit.

In contrast, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) explained transformational leaders as developing their followers into leaders. Bass (1995) stated, "Transforming leaders convert followers into disciples; they develop followers into leaders" (p. 467).

Table III.
Motive and mission
distinction between
transformational and
servant leaders

I believe this leader creates an internal environment that is more	Changing/constant
When it comes to the external environment of our industry, I believe	Active/passive
this leader is ___ about wanting to make internal changes to respond	
to changes in the external environment	
I believe this leader is focused on creating change that is more	Revolutionary/evolutionary
I believe this leader is motivated to contribute primarily to the growth	Organization/individual
of the	
I believe this leader is more concerned about the dignity of the	Organization/individual

Source: Parolini (2007)

Additionally, Bass and Steidlmeier described transformational leaders as developing followers into leaders who are similar to the leader. Bass (2000) clarified that the transformational leader "encourages the follower to build a self-concept that identifies with the leader's self-concept and mission" (p. 23). In addition, Bass added that transformational leaders align their own and others' interests with the good of the group, organization, or society. In this way, the transformational leader persuades the follower toward interdependence with the leader's and the organization's mission.

If these statements found in the literature are true, Parolini (2007) proposed we should find the following discriminant items in Table IV as part of the development distinction between transformational and servant leaders. Therefore, Parolini's study was the first empirical research study to investigate these conclusions about the development distinctions of the two leaders.

Influence distinction

Burns (1978), Bass (1985), Graham, 1991; Russell and Stone (2002), and Stone *et al.* implied a distinction in the influence process of each of the leaders. Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) identified what had traditionally been known as charisma as one of the key elements of transformational leadership. Bass stated, "We see charisma as [...] probably the most general and important component of the larger concept of transformational leadership" (p. 42). As Graham (1991) proposed differences between transformational and servant leadership, she offered transformational leadership as an "enriched model of charismatic leadership" (p. 109). Graham added that transformational leaders needed moral safeguards to protect followers from becoming enthralled and then taken advantage of because of the leader's self-serving use of charisma. Graham suggested the servant leader's unique built in moral safeguard of service as its influence process is the key to overcoming leader fallibility.

Russell and Stone (2002) added to the discussion by describing servant leaders as pioneers in that they use non-manipulative processes of influence. Earlier, Block (1993), Covey (1990), Greenleaf (1977), and Kouzes and Posner (1995) offered that such leaders are influential through the use of uncommon models of influence. Greenleaf clarified that servant leadership is founded upon a new moral principle that the only authority deserving one's loyalty is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the follower to the leader in response and proportion to the servanthood of the leader. Later, Stone *et al.* (2004) stated, "Anecdotal evidence suggests that transformational leaders rely more on their charismatic attributes to influence followers, whereas servant leaders significantly influence followers through service itself" (p. 355). Stone *et al.* added that the motive of the servant leader's influence is to motivate and facilitate service and stewardship by followers rather than to direct them. Stone *et al.* offered service as a unique method of stimulating and influencing followers' behavior. On the other hand, Stone *et al.* commented, "Instead of focusing on service as a means to motivation,

I believe this leader's first inclination is to first
I believe this leader is developing me to ____ others
I believe this leader inspires me to be

Lead/serve
Lead/serve
Interdependent/autonomous

Source: Parolini (2007)

Table IV.
Development distinction
between transformational
and servant leaders

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transformational leaders rely more on their charismatic, enthusiastic nature to garner influence and motivate followers" (p. 355).

If these assumptions presented by the literature are true, Parolini (2007) concluded we should find the following discriminant items in Table V as part of the influence distinction between transformational and servant leaders. Again, no empirical research study has been conducted prior to the one discussed in this paper.

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Summary

Thus, far, this paper presented the theoretical assumptions that have developed since the 1990s regarding the distinctions between transformational and servant leaders. As the distinctions became more theoretically apparent, Parolini (2007) concluded that the distinctions appear to involve five key areas including the moral, focus, motive and mission, development, and influence distinctions. Parolini offered Table VI as a summary of the review and to set the stage for empirical research. Table VI summarizes the discriminant items developed through the review of the literature. Then, Parolini went on to empirically test the discriminant items within the five areas of distinction to confirm or contest the conclusions made about the differences between transformational and servant leaders. Parolini proposed the conclusions discussed in this paper as the first empirical research study of the distinctions between transformational and servant leaders.

Method

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the study conducted by Parolini (2007) that investigated the conclusions drawn in the literature about the differences between transformational and servant leaders including the moral, focus, motive and mission, development, and influence distinction. To empirically test the theoretical distinctions between transformational and servant leaders, the study utilized a field-based survey design. This section outlines the method that was used in the exploratory empirical study.

Research design

Parolini (2007) used an on-line questionnaire to first request that participants classify a leader of choice as either a transformational or servant leader through the use of self-typing paragraphs. The measurement instrument of self-typing paragraphs was utilized to address the theoretical and measurement gaps between the two leadership styles. Conant *et al.* (1990) explained self-typing paragraphs as requiring respondents to read short paragraph-length descriptions of each of the variables, and then select the one description that best characterizes their response. Self-typing paragraphs were tested and supported by the research of Shortell and Zajac (1990). Parolini offered the self-typing paragraphs in Table VII that were reviewed by a panel of experts as part of the on-line questionnaire. Participants read the self-typing paragraphs and marked the paragraph that best identified whether a leader's style was that of transformational leadership, servant leadership, or "neither." If a respondent selected "neither," he or she was offered

Table V.
Influence distinction
between transformational
and servant leaders

I believe this leader influences me through more ____ means
When this leader attempts to influence or persuade me,
I believe I am being/given

Customary/unconventional
Controlled/freedom

Source: Parolini (2007)

			Transformational and servant leadership
Discriminant item no.	Discriminant item description	Distinction	
1	I feel as if my leader focuses more of his or her benevolence and good will toward the: organization/individual	Moral	281
2	I feel as if it is important to my leader that my values are ___ with/from his or her values: aligned/separate	Moral	
3	I feel as if it is important to my leader that my values are ___ with/from the organization's values: aligned/separate	Moral	
4	I feel as if it is important to my leader that my values are ___ with/from his or her and the organization's values: aligned/separate	Moral	
5	When my leader asks me to, I feel as if my leader asks me to overcome self-interest for the good of the: organization/individual	Moral	
6	I feel as if my leader is interested in developing values that are: collective/individual	Moral	
7	I feel as if my leader is focused on meeting the needs of the: organization/individual	Moral	
8	I feel as if my leader's allegiance and focus in toward the: organization/individual	Focus	
9	I feel like my leader is focused on achieving the goals of the: organization/individual	Focus	
10	I feel as if my leader creates an internal environment that is more: changing/constant	Motive and mission	
11	When it comes to the external environment of our industry, I feel as if my leader is ___ about wanting to make internal changes to respond to changes in the external environment: active/passive	Motive and mission	
12	I feel as if my leader is focused on creating change that is more: revolutionary/evolutionary	Motive and mission	
13	I feel as if my leader is motivated to contribute to the growth of the: organization/individual	Motive and mission	
14	I feel as if my leader is more concerned about the dignity of the: organization/individual	Motive and mission	
15	I feel as if my leader's first inclination is to first: lead/serve	Development	
16	I feel as if my leader is developing me to ___ others: lead/serve	Development	
17	I feel as if my leader inspires me to be: dependent/self-determining	Development	
18	I feel as if my leader influences me through more ___ means: traditional/contemporary	Influence	
19	When my leader attempts to influence or persuade me, I feel: controlled/freedom	Influence	
Source: Parolini (2007)			Table VI. Discriminant items from the review of the literature

the opportunity to finish or exit the survey. Only those surveys marked servant or transformational leadership with responses to the semantic differential scales were included for analysis.

Parolini (2007) developed the 19 semantic differential scales in Table VI from the review of the literature to investigate the proposition that transformational and

Option no.	Self-typing paragraph	Leadership style
1	The leader I have in mind was ethical and focused his or her goodwill on the goals of the organization or group as a whole. The goals were moral and not immoral. To achieve what was best for the whole organization or group, I observed or experienced this leader working to align my own or others' self-interests with his or her interests. The leader's interests matched what was best for the whole organization or group. During the process, I found that participants became like-minded with the leader, with the organization or group, and with one another. Along the way, I noticed that participants contributed their skills/abilities to the organization's or group's goals, increased in self-esteem, and overcame self-interest for the good of the organization or group. Meanwhile, the leader's loyalty remained to the organization or group so much so that he or she attempted to create internal change to help the group or organization grow. I would describe this leader as a leader who developed other leaders who were aligned with the leader's and organization's/ group's goals. In this way, participants became dependent upon the leader and organization or group. I would describe this leader's personality, communication style, and mannerisms as quite persuasive to the individual participants	Transformation
2	The leader I have in mind had a strong moral conscience and focused his or her goodwill on serving the highest priority needs of other individuals. This leader's service toward others came from this strong moral conscience to serve others first. To achieve what was best for individuals' highest priority needs, I observed or experienced this leader offering power and freedom to the individual participants, developing mutual relationships, valuing people over tasks, and relying on participants. Participants felt the freedom to think for themselves. This leader was interested in helping participants to grow in health, wisdom, freedom, and self-sufficiency. I would describe this leader as willing to make self-sacrifices to serve participants in these ways. I believe this leader intended that I give up my self-interest for my own growth. I would describe this leader's loyalty as first to me and my needs and goals rather than first to the goals of the group or organization. Due to this leader's commitment to individual participants' growth and dignity, this leader created an internal stability that invited participants to grow one step at a time. I would describe this leader as one who tended to focus on serving others over leading others, and I believe this leader influenced me through the way he or she served me more than anything else. Because of this leader, I found myself desiring to serve others too	Servant

Table VII.
Self-typing paragraphs
describing the leadership
styles

Source: Parolini (2007)

servant leaders score differently on the scales. Participants were asked to describe their attitude toward the leader using the 19 scales. Katzer (1972) defined semantic differentials as commonly used instruments that can be used to "reliably measure attitudes toward a variety of objects or concepts" (p. 122). Katzer explained that each semantic differential consists of a sequence of bipolar adjective scales on which a respondent reacts, in relation to the object or concept of interest. Darnell (1966) suggested that typically seven equal intervals separate the bipolar pairs. Therefore, Parolini used seven equal interval scales and the scales were reviewed by a panel of PhD experts in leadership with concentrations in transformational and/or servant leadership. During compilation of the survey, to assure random order of the scales and bipolar pairs, each of the 19 semantic differential scales and the pairs were randomly selected and ordered. At the end of the survey, demographic data was collected that pertained to propositions in the literature and to the population of the sample.

Since the study conducted by Parolini (2007) included categorical dependent and interval predictor variables, Kerlinger and Lee (2000) propose discriminant analysis as appropriate. Kerlinger and Lee suggest logistic regression as effective with categorical or nominal dependent variables or when data is non-normal. Kerlinger and Lee offer that there is controversy surrounding the comparison of discriminant analysis and logistic regression and state "Both will yield regression estimates and both are capable of classifying individuals." At the same time, they suggest logistic regression is growing in popularity, especially when assumptions are not met. Hair *et al.* (1998) recommend logistic regression for larger data sets when potentially tests of normality and variance/covariance are not likely to be met, Hair *et al.* mention logistic regression is preferred because of its similarity to regression. Therefore, this paper will discuss discriminant analysis and utilize logistic regression to support data analysis.

Sample and population

The study by Parolini (2007) required a sample size of at least 150 participants. Williams and Titus (1988) reviewed 60 papers to summarize 142 discriminant analyses in ecology research. Williams and Titus found that the total sample size to the number of variables or discriminant items varied from 0.78:1 to more than 50:1 with a median ratio of 7.9:1. Parolini used the 7.9 participants to each discriminant item for a total sample size of 150 participants. According to Poulsen and French (2004), the smallest size that should be collected for any criterion variable needed to exceed the number of discriminant items. Thus, the smallest size that was collected for either transformational or servant leadership in the study was 20 observations.

The target population for the exploratory research study conducted by Parolini (2007) was employees, followers and/or volunteers in corporations, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and religious organizations where a representative contact was established who was willing to work with the researcher on distribution of the survey. A total database of 451 contacts was randomly selected and sorted to choose 100 potential representative contacts. An initial email request for participation was sent to the 100 potential data site representatives and 56 responded to participate in the survey. Since each survey participant was asked to select any leader in his or her life to assess for transformational or servant leadership, a willing representative contact at survey sites should not have skewed participant's responses or the data by introducing bias into the sample population. Once the data site representatives had been established,

an introductory email along with the survey was sent to those individuals who agreed to act as the 56 data site representatives. Data site representatives then contacted employees, volunteers, or followers with the request to participate in the study. To track the data to a site representative, each site representative was given the survey and a required code to help participants to complete the survey.

Data analysis

The on-line questionnaire developed by Parolini (2007) was distributed to the 56 data site representatives who then sent the survey to 2,162 potential participants. The study found that of the 903 individuals who visited the survey site, 105 respondents marked "neither," and 514 participants selected either a transformational or servant leader and responded with complete information. The data collected for each criterion variable was sufficient. Parolini disclosed the demographic information yielded from the survey in Tables VIII-XI.

Results of analyses

One of the purposes of discriminant analysis is to determine the most prudent way to distinguish among groups. In Table XII, Parolini (2007) revealed five discriminant items or semantic differential scales that distinguished transformational leaders from servant leaders. Steps 1-5 or discriminant item 7 (moral), discriminant item 15 (development), discriminant item 8 (focus), discriminant item 18 (influence), and discriminant item 19 (influence) were found to make statistically significant contributions ($p = 0.000$) to distinguishing between transformational and servant leaders.

Table VIII.
Respondent's race
or ethnicity

Race or ethnicity	<i>n</i>	%
White or Caucasian (Non-Hispanic)	450	87.5
Black or African American (Non-Hispanic)	35	6.8
Hispanic or Mexican American	13	2.5
Asian or Pacific Islander	10	1.9
Other (please specify)	2	0.4
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	0.2
Total	511	99.4

Source: Parolini (2007)

Table IX.
Respondent's
education level

Education level	<i>n</i>	%
Graduate/professional degree	286	55.6
Bachelor's/four-year degree	135	26.3
Some college	77	15.0
High school diploma or GED	11	2.1
Some high school	2	0.4
No high school	0	0.0
Total	511	99.4

Source: Parolini (2007)

Income level	<i>n</i>	%	Transformational and servant leadership 285
\$100,000 or higher	199	38.7	
\$80,000 or \$99,999	89	17.3	
\$60,000 to \$79,999	99	19.3	
\$40,000 to \$59,999	77	15.0	
\$20,000 to \$39,999	39	7.6	
Less than \$20,000	8	1.6	
Total	511	99.4	

Source: Parolini (2007)

Table X.
Respondent's yearly household income

Organizational type	<i>n</i>	%	Table XI. Respondent's leader's organizational type at the time of the leader/follower relationship
Non-profit religious/church organization	233	45.3	
For-profit organization	143	27.8	
Non-profit non-religious organization	79	15.4	
Academic institution	47	9.1	
Other	9	1.8	
Total	511	99.4	

Source: Parolini (2007)

Discriminant item	Statistic	Wilks' λ			Statistic	Exact <i>F</i>		<i>p</i>
		df1	df2	df3		df1	df2	
<i>Step 1</i>	0.525	1	1	512	463.780	1	512	0.000
Item 7 – moral								
<i>Step 2</i>	0.478	2	1	512	279.467	2	511	0.000
Item 7 – moral								
Item 15 – development								
<i>Step 3</i>	0.456	3	1	512	203.167	3	510	0.000
Item 7 – moral								
Item 15 – development								
Item 8 – focus								
<i>Step 4</i>	0.446	4	1	512	157.989	4	509	0.000
Item 7 – moral								
Item 15 – development								
Item 8 – focus								
Item 18 – influence								
<i>Step 5</i>	0.441	5	1	512	129.013	5	508	0.000
Item 7 – moral								
Item 15 – development								
Item 8 – focus								
Item 18 – Influence								
Item 19 – influence								

Note: At each step, the discriminant item that minimizes the overall Wilks' λ is entered: 1, maximum number of steps is 38; 2, minimum partial *F* to enter is 3.84; 3, maximum partial *F* to remove is 2.71; 4, *F* level, tolerance, or VIN insufficient for further computation

Source: Parolini (2007)

Table XII.
Stepwise statistics –
discriminant items
entered/removed

Since logistic regression has been suggested as an alternative or preferred method of analysis, Table XIII shows the results of logistic regression. The exact same five items that were concluded as statistically significant in discriminant analysis were found to be statistically significant through logistic regression. While items 15 and eight exchanged positions in the final model of logistic regression, both items were statistically significant and the statistical difference between the two items was minor.

Parolini (2007) demonstrated that the five semantic differential scales found in Table XIV were statistically significant in making a distinction between transformational and servant leaders.

Furthermore, the investigation by Parolini (2007) revealed several other significant statistics. The canonical correlation (0.748) revealed a high correlation between the discriminant function and the groups (transformational leaders versus servant leaders). Thus, the discriminant function established by Parolini in Table XII explained a high percentage of the distinction between transformational and servant leaders. Additionally, the Wilks' λ (0.441) and χ -square (417.636) revealed that the discriminant function was statistically significant ($p = 0.000$). Therefore, the five discriminant items or semantic differential scales that comprised the discriminant function developed by Parolini distinguished between transformational and servant leaders.

Item	Wald	df	<i>p</i>
<i>Step 1</i>			
Item 7 – moral	151.695	1	0.000
Constant	145.441	1	0.000
<i>Step 2</i>			
Item 7 – moral	113.890	1	0.000
Item 15 – development	39.674	1	0.000
Constant	134.873	1	0.000
<i>Step 3</i>			
Item 7 – moral	25.750	1	0.000
Item 8 – focus	21.123	1	0.000
Item 15 – development	34.037	1	0.000
Constant	136.554	1	0.000
<i>Step 4</i>			
Item 7 – moral	21.510	1	0.000
Item 8 – focus	18.719	1	0.000
Item 15 – development	25.313	1	0.000
Item 19 – influence	10.978	1	0.000
Constant	108.194	1	0.000
<i>Step 5</i>			
Item 7 – moral	18.691	1	0.000
Item 8 – focus	17.077	1	0.000
Item 15 – development	25.999	1	0.000
Item 18 – influence	7.813	1	0.000
Item 19 – influence	8.154	1	0.000
Constant	107.565	1	0.000

Table XIII.

Stepwise statistics –
logistic regression
variables in the equation

Note: Variable(s) entered on step 1: Item 7 moral; variable(s) entered on step 2: Item 15 development; variable(s) entered on step 3: Item 8 focus; variable(s) entered on step 4: Item 19 influence; variable(s) entered on step 5: Item 18 influence

In Table XV, Parolini (2007) disclosed the standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients that explained the relative importance of each of the five statistically significant discriminant items or semantic differential scales. The discriminant items shown in Table XV are in sequential order starting with the most important item and ending with the least important discriminant item.

In Table XVI, Parolini (2007) illustrated classification results that showed 248 or 90.5 percent of transformational leaders were categorized correctly and 196 or 81.7 percent of servant leaders were classified correctly using the discriminant function. For the sample, 86.4 percent of original grouped cases were correctly classified using the discriminant function. Additionally, the classification results of logistic regression supported these statistics and showed an overall 87.5 percent of original grouped cases as correctly classified.

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7	I believe this leader is primarily focused on meeting the needs of the: organization/individual	Moral
15	I believe this leader's first inclination is to first: lead/serve	Development
8	I believe this leader's allegiance and focus is primarily toward the: organization/individual	Focus
18	I believe this leader influences me through more ____ means: customary/unconventional	Influence
19	When this leader attempts to influence or persuade me, I believe I am being/given: controlled/freedom	Influence

Source: Parolini (2007)

Table XIV.
The five discriminant items or semantic differential scales that make a distinction between transformational and servant leaders

Discriminant item	Function 1
Item 7 – moral	0.433
Item 8 – focus	0.382
Item 15 – development	0.349
Item 18 – influence	0.0161
Item 19 – influence	0.159

Source: Parolini (2007)

Table XV.
Summary of canonical discriminant functions – standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients

		Predicted group membership			
		Paragraph	1	2	Total
Original	Count	1	248	26	274
		2	44	196	240
	%	1	90.5	9.5	100
		2	18.3	81.7	100

Note: Of the sample, 86.4% of original grouped cases were correctly classified

Source: Parolini (2007)

Table XVI.
Classification statistics – classification results

Summary

This section reported the data obtained in the exploratory study by Parolini (2007) to empirically investigate the assumptions in the literature about the distinctions between transformational and servant leaders including the leader's moral, focus, motive and mission, development, and influence distinction. Findings and analysis were reported that were derived from the on-line survey. Discriminant analysis revealed five statistically significant discriminant items or semantic differential scales that contributed to a statistically significant discriminant function. This discriminant function accurately classified 86.4 percent of original grouped cases correctly. Additionally, logistic regression was utilized to support these findings.

Discussion

Parolini (2007) empirically investigated the assumptions in the literature about the distinctions between transformational and servant leaders including the moral, focus, motive and mission, development, and influence distinctions. Of the 19 semantic differential scales or discriminant items that were developed through the review of the literature, Parolini found empirical evidence to support that five key discriminant items distinguish between the two leaders. Parolini proposed the five statistically significant discriminant items in Table XIII.

Parolini (2007) concluded that the five discriminant items should be integrated into leadership and organizational development practices to help differentiate between the need for a transformational or servant leader, to support the selection of a transformational or servant leader in hiring or other strategic processes, to consider the type of training or coaching to offer depending upon whether the leader is a transformational or servant leader, and to potentially select and apply the best strategic processes depending upon the need for transformational or servant leadership. Parolini suggested that the five discriminant items be used to assess individual leaders in key positions of leadership to assure that teams are comprised of the unique differences of both types of leaders. It is our viewpoint that key leadership teams can bring the differences and uniqueness of both styles onto teams to balance out the strengths and weaknesses of any one specific style (either transformational or servant leadership). As an illustration, the transformational leader who is focused on the needs of the organization is balanced by the servant leader who is focused on the needs of the individual.

Furthermore, Parolini (2007) proposed the five statistically significant distinctions as having the potential to influence future definitions, theoretical assumptions, constructs, and research to help differentiate between the two leaders.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study (Parolini, 2007) included participants' understanding of the terms and concepts, participants' perception of the leader's style, and the use of survey research. It was possible that respondents misinterpreted terms as well as the concepts of transformational and servant leadership and responded inaccurately. Additionally, according to Kerlinger and Lee (2000), survey information does not penetrate very deeply below the surface. At the same time, Parolini offered an exploratory research to empirically test long-term assumptions made about the distinctions between transformational and servant leaders. Therefore, depth of information was not a necessary component for the initial exploratory study.

The exploratory study offered by Parolini (2007) was limited by a highly Caucasian, educated, and wealthy sample population. Therefore, it was recommended that future research be performed on a more diverse sample population. Additionally, the study may have been limited by participants' interpretation of the paragraphs and semantic differential scales. Initial researcher bias toward servant leadership may have been a limitation of the research in the early stages of this study. However, through the process of the study, a greater respect for both styles was developed, especially as the researcher found her own style to be more transformational in nature. Furthermore, the study was limited by the significant differences in attention to transformational leadership theory and research as opposed to that of servant leadership.

Suggestions for future research

Parolini (2007) revealed the presence of both transformational and servant leadership is strong in multiple types of organizations and suggested that this research be continued on multiple levels. It was recommended that the five discriminant items found to be statistically significant in this study, along with the self-typing paragraphs describing transformational and servant leaders, be formed into a new survey. This survey could be administered to another sample to confirm the results of this study. Concurrent validity of the scales could be investigated. Additionally, the revised survey could be offered to a more diverse sample population in terms of ethnicity and education level. Also, the five discriminant items could be utilized to build consulting-based assessments. The five discriminant items could be analyzed using confirmation factor analysis to determine if there is confirmation of the distinctions.

Conclusion

This paper discusses the empirical investigation conducted by Parolini (2007) of the distinctions between transformational and servant leaders. Parolini found that transformational leaders were differentiated by their focus on the needs of the organization, inclination to lead first, allegiance toward the organization, and influence through conventional charismatic approaches as well as control. The study also identified servant leaders as differentiated by their focus on the needs of the individual, inclination to serve first, allegiance toward the individual, and influence through unconventional service as well as through offering freedom or autonomy. Through the data collection and analysis process, a high presence of transformational and servant leadership was found in organizational life. Thus, it is recommended in this paper that the five statistically significant discriminant items be included in leadership and organizational development processes along with research and writing on transformational and servant leadership.

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Corresponding author

Jeanine Parolini can be contacted at: Jeanine@Parolini.net