



# The Adaptable Emphasis Leadership Model: A More Full Range of Leadership

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the processes of transformational leadership and servant leadership and how they can lead to distinctly different outcomes. Transformational leadership can place significant pressure on followers in order to achieve the desired organizational outcomes which may result in unethical actions taken by followers. On the other hand, servant leadership can provide significant personal development opportunities for followers but may place organizational objectives as secondary which can lead to falling short on those objectives. However, both leadership models have significant advantages, of which this paper attempts to exploit at the opportune times by applying the adaptable emphasis leadership model. This higher-order model involves a more full range of leadership and offers a new perspective on leadership by applying a contingency approach to the transactional, transformational, and servant leadership models. By being aware of one's situation, having a foundation in leadership, and applying the proposed model in a contingency fashion, leaders can take advantage of each of the leadership models discussed to maximize follower and organizational effectiveness.*

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Servant Leadership, Transactional Leadership

As markets, companies, and business environments are changing faster than ever before, leadership may now be playing more of a role in maximizing the effectiveness of organizations and their followers' well-being (Macik-Frey, Quick, & Cooper, 2009). Two major leadership models have emerged in recent decades in an attempt to achieve effective leadership within organizations: transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Avolio & Bass, 1999) and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1991). Transformational

leadership emphasizes achieving organizational outcomes (Bass, 1985; Bass, 2000) and servant leadership emphasizes service to followers (Greenleaf, 1991; Stone, Russell, and Patterson, 2003; Keith, 2008). Transactional leadership and transformational leadership, as developed through the work of Bass and Avolio, have foundations in theory and empirical support (Bass, 1985; Bass, 2000). Yet much of the servant leadership literature in the last few decades has not created that same foundation but rather has attempted to create an identity separate from that of transformational leadership. Because Greenleaf never specifically defined or established empirical support for servant leadership, much of the academic work on servant leadership has developed independently and interpretations are less related and connected to Greenleaf's original concept (van Dierendonck, 2011). Consequently, the concept of servant leadership has become more divergent within itself in an attempt to identify independently from transformational leadership. Nevertheless, the emphasis difference between the two models still stands and serves as the first key distinctive difference to be examined.

Thus, the first question to discuss is, how much of a difference does the intention of the leader really make on the process and the outcome? In an effort to answer this question, researching both models shows theoretical differences in outcomes, but also many commonalities between the two (Stone et al., 2003; Choudhary, Akhtar, & Zaheer, 2013; Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko, 2004). It has also been found that transactional leadership serves as not only a groundwork for transformational leadership (Bass, 1990) but theoretically appears necessary for servant leadership as well. The second question to discuss is, what is the most effective leadership model? To fully answer this, a servant leadership model would have to be established and empirically tested, followed by an empirical analysis between the two models. Yet the research may not be conclusive because of several likely factors that cannot be controlled, such as the specific situation, context, and operating environment. Therefore, this paper proposes that leaders seek a long-term oriented contingency approach that incorporates transactional, transformational, and servant leadership models to maximize the effectiveness of their organization and its people by taking advantage of each model's strengths and mitigating each model's weaknesses. The framework and more full range of leadership proposed in this paper helps to clarify the differences between the three while serving as a collaborative higher-end model to better understand how transactional, transformational, and servant leadership models can theoretically relate to and complement one another.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is defined as broadening and elevating the interests of employees, generating awareness and acceptance of the purpose and mission of the group, and inspiring employees to look beyond their own self-interests for the good of the group (Bass, 1990). Transformational leadership is further described as a process of creating buy-in to the organization's objectives and empowering followers to accomplish those objectives (Yukl, 1998). Bass (1996) also adds that transformational leaders are adaptive and serve as role models who also focus on the followers' need for growth. Transformational leadership consists of four principles, *idealized influence*, *inspirational motivation*, *intellectual stimulation*, and *individualized consideration*, as described by

Bass and colleagues (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). Idealized influence is described as ethical charisma in which followers identify with and emulate their leaders (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Bass et al., 2003). Inspirational motivation attempts to provide a meaningful purpose to inspire followers (Bass et al., 2003). Intellectual stimulation involves the leader to take actions to provoke innovation and solutions from followers (Bass et al., 2003). Lastly, individualized consideration is defined by leaders recognizing each individual's strengths and weaknesses and taking action to develop and empower each individual to fit their specific capabilities (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Bass et al., 2003).

### **Servant Leadership**

Servant leadership is simply defined as a leadership model in which the leader is primarily focused on serving others (Keith, 2008; Stone, et al., 2003). Servant leadership is the desire to motivate and guide followers, offer hope, and provide a more caring experience through established quality relationships (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002). Servant leadership has a strong foundation in ethics and caring through empowering and developing followers that better the quality of organizational life (Spears, 2010). However, much of the academic literature on servant leadership proposes varying definitions and characteristics in an attempt to theoretically explain and further define what it is and how it differentiates from transformational leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011). There's no real unanimous model that is undisputed among servant leadership academic circles, primarily because of sparse empirical evidence. Regardless of the model used for servant leadership, the premise behind it is that the leader is servant first (Greenleaf, 1991).

“The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, will they not be further deprived” (Greenleaf, 1991).

### **The Ethical and Achievement Outcomes Distinction**

*Transformational leadership.* The concept of transformational leadership did not always have a moral and ethical foundation even though that foundation was present in transforming leadership when Burns (1978) described it as raising ethical standards of followers. Transformational leadership theorists initially suggested that transformational leaders could be unethical and that the likes of Hitler and other tyrants were transformational leaders (Bass, 1985; Graham, 1991). Graham (1991) recognized that transformational leaders' emphasis on individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation leads to the neglect of critical moral analysis by the followers. However, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) and Bass (2000) further progressed transformational leadership to require leaders to be of moral character, morally uplifting, and possess ethical values. Leaders who were not, were described as *pseudo-transformational* leaders, in that they differ in their values, power motive, and concern for follower development (Bass, 2000; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) go on

to describe *authentic transformational leadership* as being morally uplifting and pseudo-transformational leadership as false, clarifying Bass' (1985) mistake of identifying Hitler as an (authentic) transformational leader. Barling, Christie, and Turner (2008) later empirically found that pseudo-transformational leaders showed high inspirational motivation (charisma) but low idealized influence, consequently creating higher perceptions of fear, obedience, and job insecurity by followers, similar to that of a tyrant.

Yet this does not completely answer Graham's (1991) initial concern over how the process itself, of committing to the organization first, influences moral and ethical outcomes. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) answered *who* transformational leaders should be and not *what* results from the process of transformational leadership independent of the leader's character. Transformational leadership clearly relies on leaders already possessing ethical and moral values to authenticate the process. If leaders are not moral, then the process results in a pseudo-transformational leadership style where the leader would initially appear authentic but is manipulating followers as described by Bass (2000). As transformational leaders commit to the organization's goals, those objectives serve as their primary focus and source of motivation (Patterson, Redmer, Stone, 2003; Stone et al., 2003). This leads to transformational leaders becoming results-oriented (Patterson et al., 2003) which can lead to one of three concerns in the transformational leadership model: (1) Ethical and moral leaders can feel pressure to manipulate followers in order to achieve goals that were otherwise unattainable; (2) Ethical and moral followers can feel pressure from transformational leaders to achieve objectives and consequently act in an unethical manner to accomplish those desired objectives; (3) followers who are not in positions to contribute to organizational goals may fall into an out-group, becoming alienated and lack development opportunities (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The first and second concerns will inevitably lead to a deontological versus teleological ethics debate because some may argue for the case of utilitarianism by justifying unethical actions to achieve a greater good. Addressing the ethics of the first two concerns clearly extends beyond the scope of this paper, yet identifies two valid issues with a strictly transformational approach to leadership. The first concern addresses an issue of teleological ethics (i.e. utilitarianism) in that ethical leaders may conduct unethical actions because they believe the ethical ends will justify the unethical means. The second concern addresses the pressures transformational leaders may place on followers unintentionally that leads to them behaving unethically because of the results-oriented culture created. In addition, the third concern addresses how transformational leadership can exacerbate the negative aspects of the leader-member exchange and forge in and out-groups that decrease the overall effectiveness of out-group followers unless leaders are capable of mitigating those effects (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Nevertheless, these three issues demonstrate concerns with a leadership process that prioritizes the completion of objectives.

Consider the Atlanta Public Schools cheating scandal of 2009: 140 teachers along with 38 principals were found to have been fixing incorrect answers on students' tests prior to submitting them to the state. The district set unrealistic test-score goals which created a culture of pressure to achieve those objectives and gain public praise,

consequently leading to the initial acts of cheating (Vogell, 2011). Once those objectives were achieved, the standards and expectations continued to raise, ultimately forcing the cheating and unethical practices to continue and exacerbate in order to keep up with the district's goals (Vogell, 2011). As shown through fallible human actions, when objectives become the priority there exists the inevitable possibility of overriding moral and ethical values to achieve those objectives. No doubt that those school teachers and staff may have very well done this with the best interests of their students at heart and were focused on the greater good, nevertheless, they acted in an unethical manner to achieve the standard that was set. Though it can be argued that it is the culture that motivates people to behave unethically and not the results-orientation, I would proffer that it is indeed the results-orientation that can lead to an unethical culture. Joosten, Dijke, and Hiel (2014) suggest that organizations that exert constant pressure on leaders, such as a result of transformational leaders, can be so demanding that it leads them to more likely behave in an unethical manner.

Depending on the transformational leader's stance on what is ethical or not, can also be troubling. If the principals or superintendent viewed ethics in a teleological manner, they viewed the cheating as a means to later serve the greater good. In addition, Bass (2000) suggests that transformational leaders develop followers to exhibit a self-concept that is aligned with the leader's self-concept. Transformational leaders initially influence followers to override their own perspectives and values to conform to the organization, which can include moral and ethical values (Whittington, 2004). Therefore, the teachers who approached ethics from a deontological perspective may have aligned their ethical views to be more teleological. Although Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) might suggest that this instance would be a form of pseudo-transformational leadership, it's evident that this results from the process of transformational leadership in collaboration with an ethical dilemma. Pseudo-transformational leaders, who emphasize high inspirational influence and charisma, behave unethically, which likely leads to an unethical climate within organizations and leads to employees following suit (Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012).

*Servant Leadership.* Servant leadership on the other hand is argued to be less results-oriented when compared to transformational leadership (Patterson et al., 2003) and therefore can be seen as more process-oriented. The primary focus of servant leaders differs in that they commit to followers and focus on service to them first (Patterson et al., 2003; Stone et al., 2003). In fact, organizational goals are not a priority or central to the servant leadership model. Transformational leadership strives to align followers' interests with the good of the group, organization, or society, but servant leadership goes beyond transformational leadership by serving the needs of others as the highest priority (Bass, 2000). Graham (1991) additionally suggests that servant leadership takes transformational leadership even further by developing the moral reasoning capacity and moral autonomy within followers. Servant leadership produces outcomes such as followers' growing wisdom, building autonomy, and becoming more service oriented (Greenleaf, 1991) in addition to building their moral reasoning capacity (Graham, 1991). However, the fundamental flaw of servant leadership is that servant leaders, to an extent, assume that followers will act in alignment with the organization. They trust followers to

take actions that are in the best interest of the organization (Patterson et al., 2003), even though servant leaders put the focus of others before the organizational objectives. Servant leadership therefore relies on the followers' objectives to align with the organization. While servant leadership goes beyond transformational leadership because it leads to developing servant leaders that will freely choose to be responsible moral agents at work and in society (Graham, 1991), it does not mean that they will primarily focus on helping the organization achieve its objectives. Servant leadership can be contagious, motivate, and inspire followers (Graham, 1991), but it may motivate them in different directions than where the organization is going.

While some transformational leaders attempt to manipulate followers, it's argued that servant leaders can be susceptible to manipulation by their followers (Whetstone, 2002). Whetstone (2002) suggests that followers will attempt to take advantage of a weakness, particularly a perceived naivety, in servant leaders. Yet, this suggestion only takes into account the "servant" aspect of the term servant leader and not the "leader" part, because a true leader of any sort has competency, tenacity, and presence and would not be so "naive" as Whetstone would imply. However, Stone et al. (2003) identified a more likely source of manipulation which servant leaders could use in an unethical manner. The principle of reciprocation can be used by servant leaders in the form of performing acts of service for followers in order to induce them to return the courtesy (Stone et al., 2003). Consequently, leaders could use this as coercion against followers and guilt and pressure them into returning acts of service that could very well be selfish or unethical. Obviously, this would not fall into the model of servant leadership because of the selfish nature of such action, so analogous with pseudo-transformational leadership, this might be called *pseudo-servant leadership*. Nevertheless, as pseudo-transformational leadership is not part of the transformational leadership process, pseudo-servant leadership falls outside the realm of the servant leadership process because it violates the foundation of the character a servant leader should possess. Identical to pseudo-transformational leadership, a pseudo-servant leader possesses an unethical character that violates the principle foundation of who a servant leader should be. Both pseudo-type leaders corrupt the true nature of both leadership processes.

### **Transactional Leadership Setting the Foundation**

As leaders build their leadership skills through experience and practice, they will develop their ability to practice transformational leadership and servant leadership. However, transactional leadership can be seen as a foundation to support transformational leadership. Transactional leadership, also known as active management by exception, is defined by followers acknowledging to behave in a manner such that there is an exchange for praise, resources, rewards, or avoidance of disciplinary action from the leader (Bass, 1985). Transactional leadership can build a base level of trust in the leader as he or she reliably executes what has been agreed to over time (Bass et al., 2003) and emphasizes rewarding followers for achieving performance standards (Whittington, 2004). Bass (1990) explained how transformational leadership augments transactional leadership and takes it further to incorporate a relational component. Transactional leadership is psychologically contractual in nature and does not align and build the leader and follower

(Whittington, 2004). The strength in transactional leadership is that it greatly helps to maintain the status quo, yet fails to significantly develop followers or help organizational change. However, leaders set the ethical tone of an organization not by just having a moral identity, but by actively modeling behaviors and using transactional styles to influence followers' behaviors (Mayer et al., 2012). By identifying the collaborative connection between transactional and transformational leadership, Avolio and Bass (1999) proposed that transactional leadership provides the base for transformational leadership to have a greater impact on motivation and performance. Avolio (1999) further described this as "full range of leadership" in which the most effective method of transformational leadership is in conjunction with transactional leadership practices (Whittington, 2004). Transactional leadership is needed to establish clear standards and expectations of performance objectives so that followers understand what is expected of them (Bass et al., 2003). In their study examining Army platoons in field training environments, Bass and colleagues (2003) posited that both were required to achieve higher levels of performance.

Very little theory or research has been invested into how transactional leadership sets a foundation for servant leadership. While more research is needed, it appears that volunteer organizations benefit more from a purely servant leader than a transformational leader (Schneider & George, 2011), yet those organizations are substantially different compared to for-profit and other conventional organizations. Volunteer organizations consist of individuals that are volunteering their time and generally not in need of any sort of sustainment from the organization, whereas individuals within corporate organizations are working there for many reasons, one of which is to receive compensation. While several other factors influence whether an individual works somewhere or not, one of the primary reasons is to provide for themselves, their family, and sustain a level of well-being. It is likely very difficult to motivate and empower employees without an operative system in which to compensate followers fairly. Just like transformational leadership requires transactional leadership to build the initial trust (Bass et al., 2003), so too, does servant leadership. Transactional leadership is likely necessary to be a practical servant leader. Unless operating in a volunteer organization, where followers are not seeking a means of compensation, servant leadership requires a foundation of good management, or transactional leadership. Though Greenleaf doesn't thoroughly discuss this in *The Servant as Leader*, he does suggest that using such management techniques are only adverse if the organization is people-using oriented, rather than people-building oriented (Greenleaf, 1991).

By taking Avolio's (1999) concept of "full range of leadership" and understanding the weakness of transformational leadership described earlier, one can further complement the concept with servant leadership. Even though Bass (2000, p. 27) states that "depending on the circumstances... leaders should focus on their relations with their followers," it still implies that the process is organizationally oriented and it is about developing the followers to benefit the organization still. Conversely, servant leadership serves the needs of others as the highest priority (Bass, 2000; Greenleaf, 1991; Stone et al., 2003) and creates more autonomous and moral followers (Graham, 1991). In addition, by focusing on followers, servant leaders should be able to more effectively

identify the potential in followers and not just their capabilities that bring immediate value to the organization. Yet, as already discussed, servant leadership still assumes that followers will always act in alignment with the organization, where transformational leadership serves the best interest of the organization.

Avolio's (1999) "full range of leadership" can be expanded to include the benefits of servant leadership to create a higher-order model of leadership, in which, dependent on the situation, leaders take a specific approach that is in the best interest of the leader, followers, and organization together. Transformational leadership and servant leadership can be viewed as high-order evolutions in leadership paradigms yet neither is inherently superior to the other (Stone et al., 2003). They both, however, may be superior to transactional leadership, but require forms of transactional leadership to operate effectively in today's organizations. With transactional leadership as a foundation, transformational leadership in collaboration with servant leadership may theoretically be an effective long-term approach to leadership, leading to a more developed, higher-order, and more full range of leadership.

### **Leadership from a Contingency Perspective**

The contingency view of leadership has already demonstrated how the most effective leadership behavior is based on several different situational factors. Bass (2000) suggests that transformational leadership can be effective in all situations and has done several studies to empirically support its effectiveness in broad situational ranges (Avolio & Bass, 1999). It should be acknowledged though that transformational leadership is not the best approach for every situation (Humphrey, 2012). The Hersey and Blanchard model suggests taking a laissez-faire approach over a transformational approach with highly competent and motivated subordinates (Humphrey, 2012). However, a better approach may theoretically be for leaders to adopt a servant leadership approach because of the greater sense of autonomy that can be built through empowerment while maintaining positive leadership exchanges. Much like transformational leadership advocates however, servant leadership advocates such as Greenleaf (1991) and Stone and colleagues (2003), also believe that servant leadership can be effective in all situations. However, transformational leadership advocates may argue that it's not as effective as transformational leadership would be in those same situations. Regardless of these perspectives, the best model of leadership is most likely dependent upon the situation because both bring about real change in organizations, albeit through different means (Stone et al., 2003). By employing a more full range of leadership, an effective leader can employ either a servant leadership or a transformational leadership approach over a given period and shift to the other as the organization or its people evolve or develop.

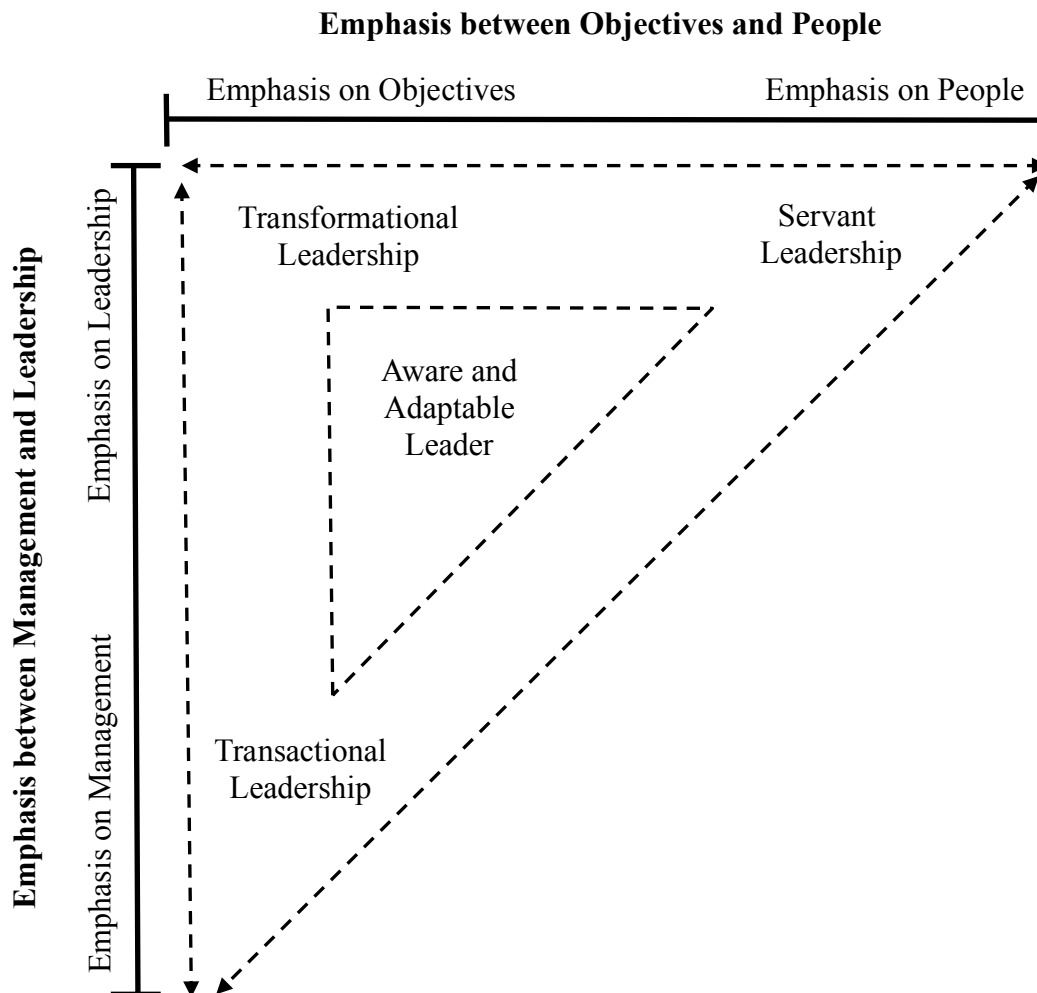
Smith et al. (2004) discuss situational factors such as political, cultural, and economic, among other contextual influences that impact the type of leadership approach or model that should be used. While both models can be effective in all situations, most scenarios may require a leader to be adaptive and aware of the contingencies present in order to employ a combination of each model or, in other cases, employ the best model



for the given contingency. In doing so, leaders can maximize their effectiveness by taking advantage of the strengths of each of the three models. Yet Smith et al. (2004) proposed that servant leadership is more effective in volunteer organizations because they are in more static environments and attract employees seeking personal growth. They also proposed that transformational leadership is more suitable for a dynamic external environment because the organizational objectives would be oriented on addressing those external challenges (Smith et al., 2004). This research was in the right direction, however, it eludes the concept that while organizations, their people, and the environments constantly change, they can be more effective if applying the most effective leadership process for the situation.

*The Adaptable Emphasis Leadership Model.* This paper proposes the adaptable emphasis leadership model as shown in Figure 1. This model advances Avolio's (1999) "full range of leadership" concept, incorporates the practice of servant leadership, stresses the awareness of emphasis between objectives and people, and operates in a contingency fashion. As seen in exhibit one below, there are two spectrums of emphasis;

**Figure 1: Adaptable Emphasis Leadership Model**



Avolio's (1999) "full range of leadership" in principle, expresses an emphasis between management and leadership as seen on the y-axis spectrum, and this model adds the emphasis between objectives and people as seen on the x-axis spectrum. Each major leadership model is associated with one another and the middle triangle represents the collaboration between the three models in which an adaptable and aware leader would operate. As discussed, transactional leadership, which emphasizes management and lacks an emphasis on leadership, is illustrated in Figure 1 at the bottom of the triangle, serving as a foundation that enables both transformational and servant leadership. Being exclusively focused on management with an emphasis on objectives, it excludes itself from placing emphasis on people. Therefore, there is no bottom right of the adaptable emphasis leadership model because it would result in a contradiction of the management-leadership dichotomy.

Both servant leadership and transformational leadership models, including transactional leadership, are complimentary but distinctly different concepts (Stone et al., 2003) that promote organizational performance (Choudhary, et al., 2013). As Patterson et al. (2003) suggest though, a leader can shift his or her focus from the organization's objective, to the service of followers, and vice versa. In other words, effective leaders would adapt their leadership emphasis while using aspects from each leadership model based on as many contingency factors the leader is aware of and adapt his or her behaviors to capitalize on opportunities to best lead the organization and its people. Leaders should recognize if the situation requires a servant leadership approach, which emphasizes a sense of egalitarianism and service to followers (Greenleaf, 1991; Stone et al., 2003; Smith et al., 2004), or if it requires a transformational leadership approach, which emphasizes a sense of organizational achievement (Bass, 1985; Bass, 2000; Smith et al., 2004). Both leadership models bring about real change in organizations, albeit through a different emphasis (Stone et al., 2003), and these different motives between servant leadership and transformational leadership inevitably create distinctly different cultures (Smith et al., 2004). Yet by identifying which model is the best fit for the situation, the organization and individual leaders can take advantage of the strengths of each model and minimize the disadvantages, thus creating a distinct culture that can potentially maximize the effectiveness of leaders and, subsequently, the organization.

### **Awareness and Adaptability**

Awareness becomes essential when analyzing the adaptable emphasis leadership model because it serves as an antecedent to be adaptable and encompasses two aspects. Self-awareness, is a sense when one is aware of oneself as a distinct entity within their environment and is aware that they interrelate with this environment (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). External-awareness comes from knowledge of behavior and through experience where one develops awareness of interconnectedness, which emerges over time given disciplined practice of techniques through consciousness raising experiences (Pavlovich & Corner, 2014). Without the awareness of everything external to leaders and of themselves, leaders become ignorant of the other models of leadership. Strictly transformational leaders or servant leaders can develop a bias in which leadership model is best because both can work in all situations as suggested by Greenleaf (1991) and Bass

et al. (2003), albeit not perfectly. Leaders are likely to continue to practice those behaviors because they were good enough to be successful. However, if leaders are developed to better understand organizational behavior and how the process of their leadership style or model influences followers in particular ways, then they are more enlightened of how to improve themselves, their followers, and the organization. Leaders must be aware of as many contingency variables as possible and focus on the most potentially impactful ones to increase the likeliness of being as effective as possible. In order to do so, leaders will be able to apply this keen sense of awareness to identify where the emphasis of leadership should be. For example, servant leadership is satisfying to organizational members, but the leaders and followers can become passive to the external environment (Smith et al., 2004). However, if applying the awareness concept, leaders would acknowledge the changing external environment, realize the need for change, adapt, and then shift their leadership emphasis to employ the most effective model that is in the best interest of all parties.

Awareness also plays into fully understanding the weaknesses of each style or how an effective approach may be ineffective or misperceived to a small cohort of followers. Take transformational leaders for example, who focus on assigning challenging objectives; they will likely lead to increasing most of their followers' self-efficacy (Robbins & Judge, 2010) but not all employees like to be challenged nor will some of them have their self-efficacy increase. This perspective further demonstrates the importance of understanding organizational behavior and the impact of contingency variables (Robbins & Judge, 2010). As proposed by the contingency approach of leadership, there must be an appropriate fit between a leader's behavior and the present and future conditions. The more aware the leader is, the more opportunities present themselves that allow for leaders to adapt and apply a different leadership approach.

### **Foundations of Leadership**

As stated earlier in this paper, transformational and servant leadership styles require a foundation of skills and experience to effectively apply the two models while avoiding their pseudo-type models. The same logic can also apply to transactional leaders (i.e. the difference between good and bad managers). The skills and characteristics necessary to be an effective leader come through experience and can be enhanced through learning and practice (Spears, 2010). Efforts in academics, reading, and self-development can also help make those experiences in leadership more valuable. This foundation creates a sense of awareness, both of one's external environment and self-awareness. The more knowledgeable one is in the subject of leadership and organizational behavior, the better one can understand how the impacts of their leadership behaviors influence their followers and the organization. Yet even at a deeper level, leaders also require a sense of desire to be a leader, to make a difference, or accomplish a vision for a better future (Daft, 2008).

## **DISCUSSION**

How does one best serve followers? How does one best serve the organization? What is it to best serve or effectively lead? The idea of a contingency approach on a

leader's emphasis would somewhat counter Greenleaf's (1991) belief that servant leaders are servants first (Stone et al., 2003; Keith, 2008). But consider the following scenarios: Scenario one: most leaders at some point served others and were followers, such as during jobs in high school and college, internships at entry level jobs, or as a family member, thus serving first and then a conscious choice to lead (Greenleaf, 1991). But, given the current nature of businesses and other organizations, leaders may not have been servants first when entering as professional managers, or leaders, yet they grow and learn from experience and may later realize they should be servants first at times, thus contradicting what Greenleaf (1991) originally proposed. Scenario two: organizations are operating in less and less stable environments particularly as technology advances, competition can easily cross industrial boundaries, and competition comes from international emerging markets (Cullen & Parboteeah, 2014). During such a period, an emphasis on achieving organizational outcomes may be what keeps the organization competitive and thus best serves its employees. This example clearly demonstrates the theoretical overlap between the two models because in a sense, the leader still emphasizes serving his followers, but is required to emphasize achieving organizational outcomes in doing so. In other words, to best serve the followers, the situation required implementation of the transformational leadership model, but later in the organization's life span, may require a servant leadership approach.

It can be argued that a servant leader is really just a transformational leader or that a transformational leader who is people-oriented is really just a servant leader. Both of those arguments however, are based on the premise that they are distinctly different models. The adaptable emphasis leadership model dissolves the border that separates the two and demonstrates how they are interrelated. Leadership in today's society requires leaders to be people-oriented regardless of the model used. When a servant leadership approach is less effective, and a transformational leadership approach is then taken, an effective leader can remain people-oriented even though the focus has shifted onto organizational objectives. The leader can still be described as a servant leader, his focus has just shifted to objectives because that is the most effective way to serve their followers. Conversely, when a transformational approach becomes less effective, a servant leadership approach may then be taken. An effective leader recognizes that the most efficient way to sometimes accomplish organizational goals is to focus on followers and become more people-oriented. Either way, the distinction between servant leadership and transformational leadership is more blurred and the adaptable emphasis leadership model unites the two that operate collaboratively to maximize leader effectiveness.

What is exciting about this higher-order model, is that not all leaders have to be either transactional, transformational, or servant leaders at the same time or in unison with the organization. An aware and adaptable leader best recognizes when to shift his or her emphasis to best serve not just the followers, but the organization and other stakeholders as well. While one department may be focused on achieving organizational goals another department may be focusing on employee development, yet even within those departments, individual leaders may be employing different models than the

broader department because they best understand their local situation and context. This flexibility may be required in the type of business environments being created today in which employee development, organizational outcomes, and innovations all have to occur simultaneously.

## **CONCLUSION**

Yes, the adaptable emphasis leadership model is purely theoretical and needs more development, but it is a step in a different and new direction that may promise to be beneficial for developing leaders. Viewing leadership from this framework can hopefully improve effectiveness within organizations because leaders should be that much more aware of how their actions can impact the organization and their followers, not just in the short term, but over the course of months and years. The adaptable emphasis leadership model can mitigate the ethical and out-group concerns of transformational leadership as well as the misalignment of motivation and manipulation concerns of servant leadership. Understanding that each leadership model is viable and can lead to increasing success and performance (Bass et al., 2003) has led to tunnel vision on the type of leadership model that leaders employ. Leaders need to be more open, aware, and recognize the impacts, both short and long term, that their behaviors have on the organization and their followers. In doing so, educated, adaptable, and aware leaders can identify when to focus more on the organization's objectives, their people, or exchanges with followers.

### **Future Research**

Since this article suggests a new perspective on the framework of leadership, there are several avenues for future research. To start with, empirical evidence can explore the proposed adaptable emphasis leadership model whether it specifically tests the concept itself or each of the leadership corners, particularly servant leadership. In addition, more empirical research on servant leadership will help clarify the adaptable emphasis leadership model and how it may be effective. Stone et al. (2003) and other servant leadership proponents suggest that more research should clearly distinguish it from transformational leadership. While this can be beneficial to better clarify the two, it has inevitably led to the previously discussed issues with the servant leadership literature becoming more divergent. The concept of pseudo-servant leadership should also be further researched in conjunction with ethics and morality. Defining pseudo-servant leadership would further define how servant leadership is practiced and who is and who is not a servant leader.

The theoretical distinction between ethical outcomes as discussed earlier can be a starting point for empirically testing the distinctions between servant leadership and transformational leadership. More quantitative and qualitative research should be focused on this model's relation to the original leadership studies encompassed in the model (i.e. people-oriented versus task-oriented). Were the Michigan and Ohio State studies just the tip of the iceberg? The adaptable emphasis leadership model expands those concepts within the situational leadership context.

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