Service and Humility in Leadership: Intriguing Theories, but Do They Actually Produce Results?

Wilbur A. Reid III, Johnson University

Abstract

This study investigates follower perceptions of bosses. The first perception to examine is the relationship between performance results of the boss and three leadership types: transformational leadership, Level 5 leadership, and servant leadership. Extensive research has shown a consistent positive relationship between transformational leadership and performance results, but there is a dearth of empirical research on servant and Level 5 leadership. Surveys were completed by 267 employees, or followers, that resulted in scores for transformational leadership, servant leadership, and Level 5 leadership, as well as the followers' perception of boss performance results. The data show that all three leadership types were statistically significant in predicting boss performance results. Although Level 5, servant leadership, and transformational leadership are different constructs and are theoretically different, there was a strong and statistically significant correlation in the followers' perception of each of these leadership types.

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Theories of leadership styles continue to grow and evolve. According to Bass (2008), the theory development and empirical research in leadership prior to the late 1970s focused almost entirely on the equivalent of transactional leadership. Transformational leadership was identified as a measurable form of leadership that is a complementary construct of transactional leadership and was popularized by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985). Bass developed the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ) to measure transactional, transformational, and passive / avoidant leadership. By 2004, scholarly research studies on transformational leadership numbered more than all other leadership theories combined (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

The next generation of leadership researchers has been intrigued with leaders who subvert their own ego-centric behaviors for the good of their followers or the organization (Chiniara & Beintein, 2016). In the business world, Level 5 leadership captured the attention of a generation of business leaders. In academia, servant leadership is the construct that has attracted the attention of most researchers (Chiniara & Beintein, 2016). These constructs are also particularly popular with Christian leaders and researchers because of their consistency with the life and teachings of Jesus (Shelley, 2006).

Jim Collins authored or co-authored six best-selling business books that have a common theme of company growth and sustainability. Of all the ideas that Collins shared in his books, perhaps the most surprising and meaningful concept was "Level 5 leadership." Collins introduced Level 5 leadership in *Good to Great* (2001), one of the best-selling and seminal business books of this generation (Covert, 2011). In his research, Collins found that all of the companies that rose from good to great were led by humble CEOs who had "an absolute, obsessed, burning, compulsive ambition for the organization (Collins & Rose, 2009)."

Greenleaf introduced the concept of servant leadership in the modern era: **"**The servant-leader *is* servant first… It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 27). Servant leadership has been gaining traction in corporate America and 5 of the top 10 Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work for in America publicly claim a servant leadership management style (Ruschman, 2002; Lichtenwalner, 2016). Its focus on the needs of followers is increasingly being presented as a desirable approach in meeting modern organizational challenges (Patterson, 2003; van Dierendonck, 2011; Brown & Bryant, 2015).

Although it has often been suggested that transformational leadership, Level 5 leadership, and servant leadership may actually be the same, each construct has a unique focus (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004; Collins, 2001; Reid, West, Winston, & Wood, 2014). Transformational leaders focus on elevating the performance of the organization by stirring their followers to "look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group (Bass, 1990, p. 21)." In contrast, servant leaders focus on serving their followers, so that

organizational objectives are subordinate (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). Collins stated that Level 5 leaders are different than servant leaders because they are in service to their organization or cause, not their followers (Shelley, 2006). In addition, the Level 5 constructs of personal will and professional humility are used to influence followers, but are not necessarily required for transformational leaders. Instead, transformational leaders influence followers through charisma, otherwise known as *idealized influence* (Bass, 1999).

While there has been extensive research documenting the effects of transformational leadership on performance results (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), there is a dearth of empirical research on the effectiveness of Level 5 or servant leadership. The research on servant leadership has been focused on construct development (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Collins provided a vivid description of Level 5 leadership (2001), but his research methodology was flawed and he did not provide an instrument to measure it (Reid et al., 2014). The purpose of this research is to evaluate the follower's perception of the effectiveness of Level 5 and servant leadership for bosses, and to evaluate the perception of followers to determine if they consider these types of leaders to be different from one another.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership

Avolio and Bass (2015) built on the prior work of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) to develop what they call a *full range leadership model* to address perceived short-comings of previous leadership models that do not account for all of the leadership characteristics for which one should account. This model identifies three broad types of leadership: (a) transformational, (b) transactional, and (c) passive / avoidant. The most effective type of leadership is transformational because followers are inspired, challenged, and stimulated to pursue a vision (Avolio & Bass, 2015). Transformational leaders address a follower's sense of self-worth and look to higher purposes (Bass B, 2008). A meta-analysis of 113 primary studies over 25 years found that transformational leadership is positively related to follower performance at the individual, group, and organization levels (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011).

To measure these different types of leadership, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was developed and has been enhanced over the past 25 years based on research in the leadership field (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Hinkin and Schriesheim (2008) note that "the vast majority of published empirical research on the topic (transformational leadership) has utilized the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)" (p. 501). The current and most frequently used version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is the MLQ-5X, which is also known as the 45-item *short* survey (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2008). This instrument will be used to measure transformational leadership.

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Level 5 Leadership

Level 5 leadership is unique because it was popularized in a best-selling business book that only contained one chapter on leadership and has not been popular in academia. The lack of scholarly research is likely due to the historical lack of a validated instrument to measure it. A validated instrument was developed in 2012, but has not yet been widely utilized (Reid , 2012; Reid et al., 2014). Part of the purpose of this paper is to introduce the construct of Level 5 leadership to academia by comparing it to the proven leadership types of transformational and servant leadership.

Collins (2001) provided the primary literature surrounding Level 5 leadership. In addition to the introduction of the term in *Good to Great*, Collins followed with diverse journal and popular press articles in publications that included Harvard Business Review (Collins, 2005; Collins, 2001), Strategy and Leadership (Finnie & Abraham, 2002), and Newsweek (McGinn & Silver-Greenberg, 2005), among others. In addition, he published three videos and 16 audio clips regarding Level 5 leadership on his web site, www.jimcollins.com, and he provided interviews and presentations that he made available on YouTube (Collins & Rose, 2009; Collins, 2011; Collins, 2009). The following sections provide an overview of the literature regarding the two constructs of Level 5 leadership: personal humility and professional will.

Personal humility. Collins (2001) identified the first facet of Level 5 leadership as personal humility. To define personal humility, he simply described what it looked like in some of the CEOs that led their organizations to greatness. He described Darwin Smith of Kimberly-Clark as a shy man who lacked of any pretense or air of self-importance. Smith reportedly felt unqualified to accept the job of CEO, and at his retirement 20 years later, he said that "he never stopped trying to become qualified for the job" (Wicks, 1997, p. 10). Colman Mockler was described as a quiet, reserved, courteous, gracious gentleman, with a placid persona. David Maxwell was an advocate first and foremost for the company and not for himself. Ken Iverson's lifestyle was simple, humble, and modest. The Level 5 leaders did not talk about themselves, but when others talked about them they said it wasn't false modesty. They used words like "quiet, humble, modest, reserved, shy, gracious, mild mannered, self-effacing, understated, did not believe his own clippings; and so forth" (Collins, 2001, p. 27). Additionally, he categorized Level 5 leaders as selfless, servant leaders.

As Collins' research team was searching for a term to describe this new type of leadership seen in the good-to-great companies, there was discussion regarding calling it "servant leadership". According to Collins (2001), however, members of the team violently objected to these characterizations. "Those labels don't ring true. . . . It makes them sound weak or meek, but that is not at all the way that I think of Darwin Smith or Colman Mockler. They would do almost anything to make the company great" (p. 30).

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Although people in the organization, as well as outside observers, credited the Level 5 leaders as the key to elevating their companies from good to great, these leaders did not accept the credit and often credited luck. Collins (2001) summarized a Level 5 leader as one who

> …demonstrates a compelling modesty, shunning public adulation; never boastful... Acts with quiet, calm determination; relies principally on inspired standards, not inspiring charisma, to motivate... Channels ambition into the company, not the self; sets up successors for even greater success in the next generation... Looks out the window, not in the mirror, to apportion credit for the success of the company – to other people, external factors, and good luck. (p. 36)

Collins concluded that humility serves as a key to successful leadership, since "we cannot see something from the perspective of another if we do not have deep humility, because without it we impose our own perspective or analyze things from our own perspective only; we will not see the other person's viewpoint" (Serfontein & Hough, 2011, p. 396). Similarly, leaders must reassess their roles regarding practice and power within the organization, and the organization must consider whether their leaders recognize and appreciate the implications of their power (Goleman, 2000).

Professional will. Ten years after the publication of *Good to Great,* Collins acknowledged that his description of Level 5 leaders "focused heavily on the humility aspect" (Collins & Hanson, 2011, p. 32). However, he and Hanson further concluded that the most important trait of Level 5 leaders includes that they serve as "incredibly ambitious, but their ambition is first and foremost for the cause, for the company, for the work, not themselves" (Collins & Hanson, 2011, p. 32). Although Collins and secondary writers have dwelt more on personal humility in leaders because it seems to appear as a novel concept in the corporate world, Level 5 leadership presents as equal parts humility and "ferocious resolve, an almost stoic determination to do whatever needs to be done to make the company great" (Collins, 2001, p. 30). After describing Darwin Smith's personal humility, Collins stated, "if you were to think of Darwin Smith as somehow meek or soft, you would be terribly mistaken. His awkward shyness and lack of pretense was coupled with a fierce, even stoic resolve toward life" (Collins, 2001, p. 18). He coupled this intense, ferocious resolve with an incredible work ethic (Collins, 2001). Likewise, he described Colman Mockler as a strong and tireless fighter with an inner intensity to make whatever he touched the best that it could be. He categorized David Maxwell as ambitious for the company and not himself. In that regard, he said: "Level 5 leaders are fanatically driven, infected with an incurable need to produce results" (Collins, 2001, p. 30). Level 5 leaders have a workmanlike diligence. They serve as clear catalysts in the transitions from good to great, and they set the standard of greatness. They will settle for nothing less.

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Research on Level 5 Leadership

The methodology that Collins used in *Good to Great* (2001) to develop Level 5 leadership has been criticized for a variety of reasons, including the lack of disconfirming research that would show how many companies that did not make the leap to greatness were also led by Level 5 leaders (May, 2006) and the small sample size of 11 CEOs of great companies from which to draw conclusions (Neindorf & Beck, 2008; Renick & Smunt, 2008), According to Sutton, "Although there are thousands of rigorous peer reviewed studies that are directly on the issues he studies -- he never mentions any of them to further bolster or refine his arguments (2008, p.1)." For example, he states that charisma is negatively correlated to effective leadership and that it is a handicap that a leader must overcome (Collins & Rose, 2009). However, this conclusion is based on a sample size of 11 great companies and 11 comparison companies and it is at odds with numerous studies that show charisma is positively correlated with effective leadership (DeGroot, Kiker, & Cross, 2000; Reid, 2012).

Since Collins did not provide a validated instrument with which to measure Level 5 leaders, additional research has been problematic. However, a 10-item validated instrument known as the Level 5 Leadership Scale (L5LS) is now available for academic research to build upon the anecdotal observations of Collins (Reid, 2012; Reid et al., 2014). The items are:

- Personal Humility
  - Genuine
  - Humble
  - A team player
  - Servant attitude
  - Doesn't seek the spotlight
- Professional Will
  - Intense resolve
  - Dedication to the organization
  - A clear catalyst in achieving results
  - Strong work ethic
  - Self-motivated

The Level 5 Leadership Scale was developed by starting with an expert panel that reviewed 99 attributes described by Collins (2005) and validated 74 as being unique and valid for a scale. Then 349 participants evaluated their bosses on a 10 point, semantic differential scale for each of the 74 attributes. Literature reviews have suggested that Level 5 leadership and servant leadership represent the same concept, thus a 10-item servant leadership scale from Winston and Fields (2015) was used to check for concurrent validity. Additionally, Collins proposed eight untested questions to determine if individuals qualify

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as Level 5 leaders. Principle component analysis resulted in two factors that explained 55.2% of the variance and these factors matched Collins' proposed personal humility and professional will constructs. The final instrument contains five attributes of personal humility and five attributes of professional will that yield Cronbach alphas of .83 and .85, respectively. The analysis also revealed statistically significant positive relationships between the Level 5 attributes, servant leadership, and a single factor that represented Collins' eight questions (Reid et al., 2014). Since Collins provided only a vague description of the level of personal humility and professional will, Reid set a scoring criteria of 7.5 on the 10 point scale to represent the mid-point between an average and a perfect response from the participant. Based on the responses from the original 349 participants, 31% of leaders were identified as Level 5 leaders (Reid, 2012).

Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (1970, 1977) observed that the focus of servant leadership is on the development and performance of the follower (Winston & Fields, 2015) and described the motivation behind the desire to lead:

> The servant-leader is servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve—after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. ..The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 13)

Following the introduction of servant leadership into modern leadership research by Greenleaf, studies have sought to define measures to quantify the attributes of a servant leader (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Patterson, Redmer, & Stone, 2003; Winston, 2003; Winston & Fields, 2015). Winston and Fields identified 10 essential servant leader behaviors:

- o   Practices what he or she preaches;
- o   Serves people without regard to their nationality, gender, or race;
- o   Sees serving as a mission of responsibility to others;
- o   Shows genuine interest in employees as people;
- o   Understands that serving others is most important;
- o   Is willing to make sacrifices to help others;
- o   Seeks to instill trust rather than fear or insecurity;
- o   Is always honest;
- o   Is driven by a sense of higher calling; and
- o   Promotes values that transcend self-interest and material success.

These behaviors integrate the body of research on servant leadership and will be used to establish a relationship between transformational and Level 5 leadership. Based on a review of the key attributes of servant leadership, it seems that servant leadership does not account for the professional will element of Level 5 leadership, but it may be the same as the facet of personal humility within Level 5 leadership.

As the millennial generation is entering the workforce, the discussion of servant leadership in corporate America is escalating. Organizations are moving away from traditional, hierarchical, patriarchal, and top-down structures where employees serve their bosses. Today, servant leadership is a more effective model for employee-centric organizations that foster innovation, engagement, and employee well-being (Crippen, 2005; Magoni, 2003; Nwogu, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2000). Christians are particularly interested in promoting servant leadership because it is consistent with the teachings of Jesus and his disciples (John 13:12-16 ESV, Mark 10:42-45 ESV, 1 Peter 5:1-14 ESV, Philippians 2:1-5 ESV).

Although there are some high profile corporations such as Chick-Fil-A, Nordstrom, SAS, Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, and Southwest Airlines that have been very successful utilizing servant leadership, there are only a few empirical studies that have evaluated the success of servant leaders in a business context. Positive correlations were found between CEO performance and servant leadership (Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012) and between sales manager and sales people (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, & Roberts, 2009). Outside of business leadership, positive correlations were found between elementary school teachers and test scores (EL-Amin & Claesson, 2013), coaches and long distance runner performance (Hammer, 2012), and mixed results were found in health care sales performance (Auxier, 2013).

Parris and Peachey (2013) found that servant leadership literature consists primarily of conceptual work, especially in terms of characteristics, measurement development, and theoretical framework development. There is "very little continued direct exploration of prior theoretical development for the purposes of incremental advancement of theory" (Brown & Bryant, 2015, p. 15).

Although Level 5, servant, and transformational leadership all are unique constructs, the differences may not be discernable to followers (Stone et al., 2004). A common perception among business leaders is that Level 5 leadership is just another name for servant leadership (Lichtenwalner, 2010). Additionally, in academia, Patterson et al. (2003) and Drury (2004) suggested that Level 5 leadership may be the same as servant leadership. Wong and Davey (2007) concluded that servant leaders are more likely to be Level 5 leaders, van Dierendonck (2011) stated that there is a clear overlap between Level 5 and servant leadership, and Morris, Brotheridge, and Urbanski (2005) found that "there are marked similarities between the behavior of those termed Level 5 leaders and the servant or humble leader" (p. 1323). In the development of a validated instrument to

measure Level 5 leadership, Reid (2012) found that there was no statistically significant difference between leaders that were identified as Level 5 leaders and servant leaders.

METHODS

Empirical leadership studies have not addressed the relationship between the humble leadership styles of Level 5 or servant leaders to perceptions of superior performance results of the leader. Although researchers have speculated on the similarities between transformational, Level 5, and servant leadership types, there has been no empirical research to confirm these hypotheses. The primary purpose of this research is to address those gaps in literature.

The research questions to be answered are:

1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between leadership type and follower perception of boss's performance results?
2. Which leadership type is the best predictor of followers' perception of boss's performance results?
3. Is there a strong correlation between follower perceptions of transformational, Level 5, and servant leaders?

Research

The research began with an online survey that was disseminated via Mail Chimp to e-mail addresses of 1,294 American adults with full time jobs and bosses. The survey was conducted on Survey Monkey, and the distribution list was compiled from professional connections of the researcher. The survey was completed by 267 participants (20.6%). Participants were asked to assess their boss on Level 5 leadership, servant leadership, and the full range leadership model which includes transformational, transactional, and passive leadership types. They were also asked to rate their perception of their boss's performance results compared to the performance results of the peers of their boss. The leadership styles are the independent variables of this study and the performance results are the dependent variables.

Independent Variables

Servant leadership was measured utilizing the aforementioned 10-item scale of essential behaviors of servant leadership from Winston and Fields (2015). A key challenge in conducting research on servant leadership is the variety of definitions and dimensions that create vagueness around the term (van Dierendonck, 2011). Winston and Fields sought to reduce this challenge by synthesizing the existing work into one concise instrument. "Since use of the terms servant and leadership together can be conceptually confusing, one goal of this study was to clarify the essential nature of how servant leadership is established

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and transmitted among members of an organization (Winston & Fields, 2015, p. 427)." Participants using this instrument rate their boss on a five point Likert scale for each of the ten essential servant leader behaviors. The ten scores were averaged to yield one overall servant leadership score for each leader. Analysis is based on this continuous variable.
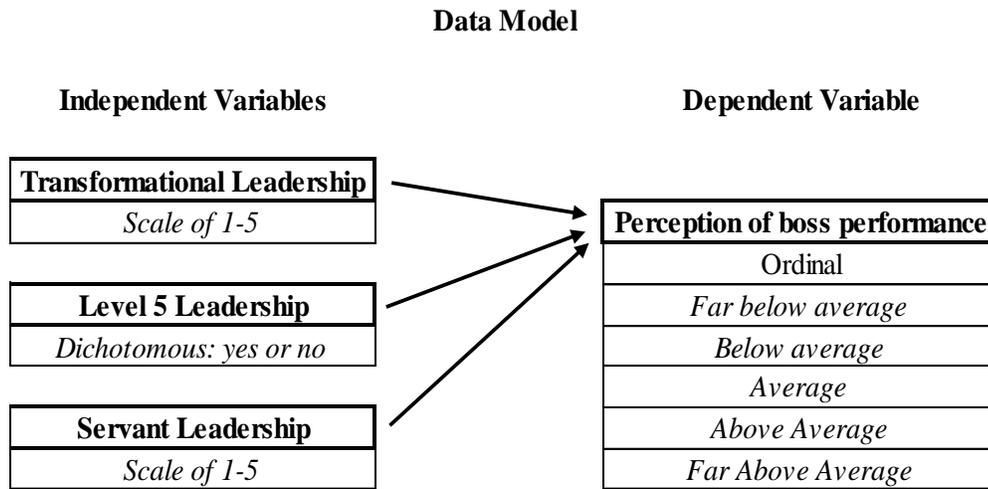
Level 5 leadership was measured using the 10 item scale from Reid (2012), which is the only validated instrument available. Participants rate their boss on a 10 point Likert scale. The first five items describe personal humility and the last five items describe professional will. Scores are averaged to yield a single personal humility score and a single professional will score. Since Collins described Level 5 leaders dichotomously, leaders are designated as either Level 5 or not Level 5. The variable is dichotomous, not continuous. Leaders that score at least 7.5 on both personal humility and professional will are considered to be Level 5 (Reid, 2012). Therefore, a leader with a score lower than 7.5 on either attribute will not be considered Level 5.

A benefit of utilizing the MLQ-5X to define transformational leadership is to utilize a known and well tested measure of leadership as a benchmark for comparison, and to evaluate the construct validity of the new servant leadership and Level 5 instruments.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is the follower's perception of the performance results that the boss achieves. Determining the success of bosses is problematic because the metrics used to evaluate success vary across industries, functions in the organization, and levels in the organization. Therefore, the success of the boss is determined by the perception of the follower. In an open text box, participants were asked to define the most important objective indicator that is used to evaluate their boss. Then they were asked how the results of this indicator compare to the peers of their boss. The choices were: far below average, below average, average, above average, far above average. Since the dependent variable was ordinal, ordinal regression was utilized for the analysis. The data model (figure 1) shows the independent and dependent variables.

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Figure 1

Data Model

Independent Variables   Dependent Variable

Transformational Leadership
Scale of 1-5

Level 5 Leadership
Dichotomous: yes or no

Servant Leadership
Scale of 1-5

Perception of boss performance
Ordinal
Far below average
Below average
Average
Above Average
Far Above Average

RESULTS

Overview of Participants and Bosses

There were a total of 267 participants in the study, representing a diverse mix of age and gender (table 1).

Table 1
Gender and Age of Participants

		Participant's Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
	Under 30	14	8	22
	30-39	21	16	37
Participant's Age	40-49	40	35	75
	50-59	54	27	81
	Over 60	34	18	52
Total		163	104	267

The job levels of the participants and the types of organizations that they work for represent a diverse set of work scenarios (table 2).

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Table 2
Types of Organizations and Job Levels of Participants

		Organization				
		For Profit Company	Education	Nonprofit	Other	Total
Participant's Job	Clerical or administrative	10	3	2	2	17
	Service	11	4	9	4	28
	Supervisor	9	6	3	1	19
	Middle management	3	2	3	1	9
	Senior management	18	17	6	1	42
	Ministry / missions	17	10	9	4	40
	Teacher / professor	12	22	0	0	34
	Individual contributor	7	0	22	2	31
	Other	21	14	8	4	47
Total		108	78	62	19	267

Table 3 shows that the bosses being evaluated were primarily male (198, 74%) and were mostly 50-59 years old (108, 40%).

Table 3
Gender and Age of Bosses

		Boss Gender		
		Male	Female	Total
Boss Age	Under 30	2	0	2
	30-39	11	8	19
	40-49	61	23	84
	50-59	79	29	108
	Over 60	45	8	53
	Don't Know	0	1	1
Total		198	69	267

Bosses were generally viewed favorably by participants, with 61% being rated as either above average (40.0%) or far above average (21.1%), as shown in table 4.

Table 4
Summary of Boss Results

		N	Marginal Percentage
Boss results	Far below average	8	3.0%
	Below Average	29	10.9%
	Average	48	18.1%
	Above Average	106	40.0%
	Far above average	56	21.1%
	Don't know	20	6.8%
Total		267	100.0%

Transformational Leadership

The full range leadership model utilizes the MLQ-5X instrument to measure transformational leadership. Since this instrument and this model have been the subject of more leadership studies than all others combined (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) and the construct and relationship to performance results are well documented (Avolio & Yammarino, 2002), inclusion into this study demonstrates construct validity with the new instruments to measure servant leadership from Winston and Fields (2015) and Level 5 leadership from Reid (2012).

Ordinal regression in table 5 shows that the relationship between transformational leadership and boss performance is positive and statistically significant.

Table 5
Model Fitting Information for Transformational Leadership and Boss Performance

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	555.396			
Final	500.664	54.732	1	.000

Link function: Logit.

The pseudo r-square calculations in table 6 show that transformational leadership accounts for up to 19.6% of the variability of the followers' perception of the performance of their boss.

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Table 6

Pseudo R-Square	
Cox and Snell	.187
Nagelkerke	.196
McFadden	.067

Link function: Logit.

The parameter estimates in table 7 show that the relationship between transformational leadership and perception of boss performance is statistically significant for all but the bosses that were perceived to be far below average. This group of bosses accounts for only 3% of the total of bosses.

Table 7

Parameter Estimates of Boss Results and Transformational Leadership

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	Far below avg	-0.207	0.549	0.143	1	0.71	-1.28	0.869
	Below average	1.639	0.478	11.775	1	0	0.703	2.575
	Average	2.949	0.498	35.089	1	0	1.973	3.925
	Above average	4.949	0.554	79.747	1	0	3.862	6.035
	Far above avg	6.701	0.61	120.49	1	0	5.505	7.898
Location	Transformational	1.058	0.141	55.978	1	0	0.781	1.335

Link function: Logit.

The results of the analysis of transformational leadership showing a statistically significant relationship with leader effectiveness are consistent with the extensive body of research on this topic (Lowe, Kroeck, & & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008; Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011).

Level 5 Leadership

The Level 5 instrument yielded a *professional will* and a *personal humility* score for each boss. Only bosses that scored above a 7.5 on both variables were identified as Level 5 leaders. In this study, 112 of the 267 bosses (41%) were identified as Level 5 leaders.

Bosses that were identified as Level 5 leaders were perceived by their subordinates to achieve better performance results.

Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of Level 5 and non-Level 5 leaders categorized by their perceived performance results. This chart shows visual evidence that Level 5 leaders are perceived to outperform non-Level 5 leaders.
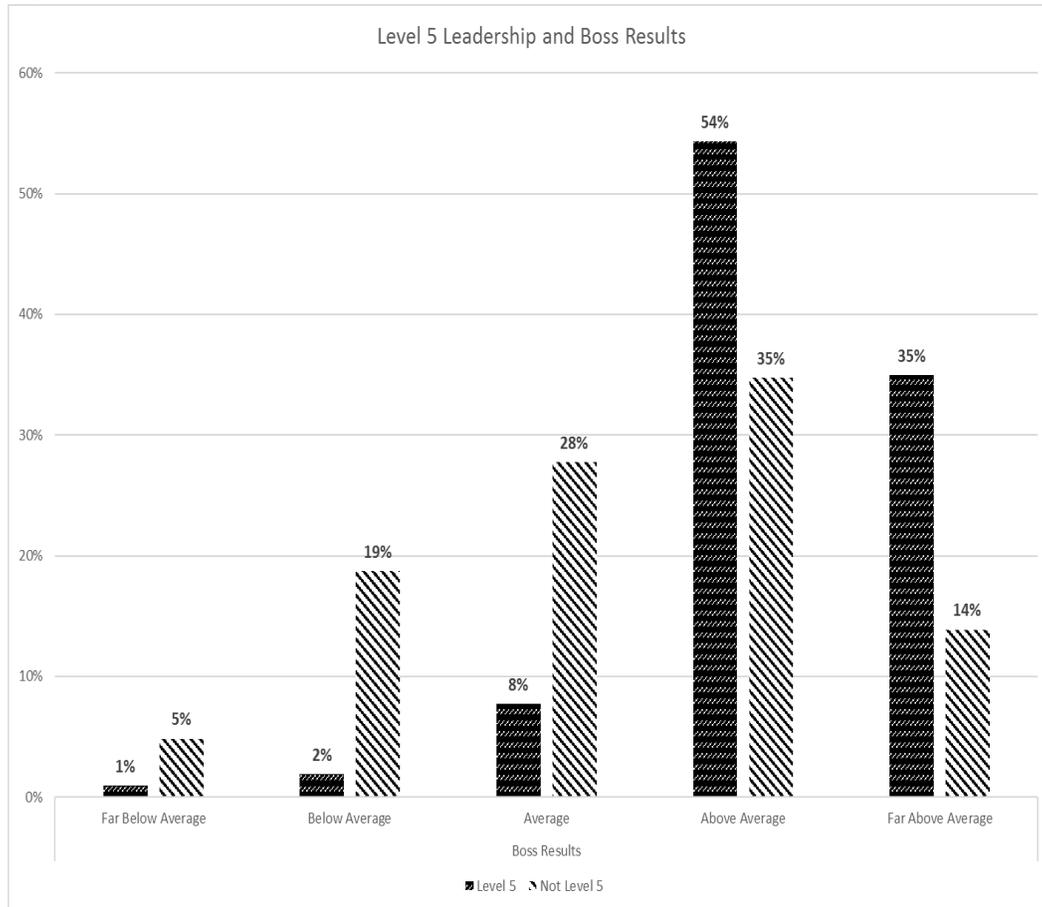
Figure 2

Table 8 confirms the positive statistical significance of the relationship between Level 5 leaders and perception of boss results.

Table 8
Model Fitting Information for Level 5 Leadership

Model	-2 LogLikelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	91.745			
Final	57.837	33.907	1	.000

Link function: Logit.

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The pseudo r-square calculations in table 9 show that Level 5 leadership accounts for up to 12.6% of the variability of the followers' perception of the performance of their boss.

Table 9
Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.120
Nagelkerke	.126
McFadden	.042

Link function: Logit.

The parameter estimates in table 10 show that the relationship between Level 5 leadership and perception of boss performance is statistically significant for all but the bosses that were perceived to be above average.

Table 10

Parameter Estimates for Level 5 Leadership

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	Far below avg	-4.454	0.406	120.6	1	0	-5.25	-3.659
	Below average	-2.754	0.254	117.95	1	0	-3.25	-2.257
	Average	-1.582	0.213	55.404	1	0	-2	-1.166
	Above average	0.323	0.184	3.094	1	0.08	-0.04	0.683
	Far above avg	2.05	0.266	59.362	1	0	1.529	2.572
Location	Level 5 leadership	-1.363	0.243	31.59	1	0	-1.84	-0.888
	Not Level 5 leadership	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership was measured by the Winston and Fields (2015) instrument that scores leaders on a scale of 1 to 5. The scores on the ten items were averaged to yield a single score for servant leadership for each boss. The relationship between servant

leadership and perception of boss performance was positive and statistically significant (table 11).

Table 11

Model Fitting Information for Servant Leadership

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	440.591			
Final	372.946	67.645	1	.000

Link function: Logit.

The pseudo r-square calculations in table 12 show that servant leadership accounts for up to 23.6% of the variability of the followers' perception of the performance of their boss.

Table 12

Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.225
Nagelkerke	.236
McFadden	.083

Link function: Logit.

The parameter estimates in table 13 show that the relationship between servant leadership and perception of boss performance is statistically significant for all but the bosses that were perceived to be far below average. This is consistent with the significance of transformational leadership.

Table 13

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	Far below avg	0.064	0.535	0.014	1	0.9	-0.984	1.113
	Below average	1.97	0.47	17.545	1	0	1.048	2.892
	Average	3.322	0.497	44.611	1	0	2.347	4.297
	Above average	5.37	0.56	92.038	1	0	4.273	6.467
	Far above avg	7.137	0.616	134.38	1	0	5.93	8.344
Location	Servant leadership	1.096	0.133	67.747	1	0	0.835	1.357

Link function: Logit.

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Combined Leadership Types

In the evaluation of each leadership type individually, the ordinal regression shows that servant leadership is the best predictor of the perception of boss performance, followed by transformational leadership and then Level 5 leadership. When the variables are combined into one model, the model is positive and statistically significant (table 14).

Table 14
Model Fitting Information of Combined Variables

Model	-2 Likelihood	LogChi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	790.068			
Final	717.415	72.652	3	.000

Link function: Logit.

The pseudo r-square calculations in table 15 show that the combined variables account for up to 25.1%, of the variability of the followers' perception of the performance of their boss. This is slightly higher than the 23.6% of servant leadership when considered independently.

Table 15
Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.240
Nagelkerke	.251
McFadden	.089

Link function: Logit.

The parameter estimates (table 16) show that, in the presence of servant leadership, transformational leadership and Level 5 leadership are not significant.

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Table 16

Parameter Estimates

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	Far below avg	-0.064	0.771	0.007	1	0.93	-1.575	1.447
	Below average	1.853	0.739	6.285	1	0.01	0.404	3.301
	Average	3.235	0.763	17.97	1	0	1.739	4.73
	Above average	5.324	0.799	44.41	1	0	3.758	6.889
	Far above avg	7.102	0.835	72.41	1	0	5.466	8.738
Location	Transformational	0.392	0.21	3.494	1	0.06	-0.019	0.804
	Servant	0.746	0.203	13.51	1	0	0.348	1.145
	Level 5	-0.26	0.295	0.775	1	0.38	-0.838	0.319
	Not Level 5	0[a]	.	.	0	.	.	.

Link function: Logit.

a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Leadership Type Correlation

The second research question asked if there is a statistically significant difference between follower perceptions of transformational, Level 5, and servant leaders. A bivariate correlation analysis shows that the correlations among each of the three independent variables are strong and significant at the 0.01 level (table 17). The strongest correlation is between transformational and servant leadership at .788, while the weakest correlation is between transformational and Level 5 at .571.

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Table 17

Correlations of Leadership Types

		Level 5	Transformational	Servant
Level 5	Pearson Correlation	1	.570**	.611**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	267	267	267
Transformational	Pearson Correlation	.570**	1	.788**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	267	267	267
Servant	Pearson Correlation	.611**	.788**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	267	267	267

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

None of the potentially moderating variables of gender or age of the participant or the boss demonstrated a statistically significant impact on any of the variable relationships.

DISCUSSION

With an abundance of research available on transformational leadership, the primary purpose of this study was to provide empirical research to advance understanding of the practical implications of Level 5 leadership and servant leadership. The theoretical models are appealing, but have limited use for application if they do not yield more effective leaders that generate results.

Research Question #1

Is there a statistically significant relationship between leadership type and follower perception of boss's performance results? The results of this study show that

transformational, Level 5, and servant leadership are all statistically significant positive predictors of perceptions of boss performance results.

Research Question #2

Which leadership type is the best predictor of followers' perception of boss's performance results? Perhaps the most surprising result of this research is the strength of servant leadership in predicting the perceptions of boss performance results. Level 5 leadership had been popularized in the business community because it intuitively made sense that a servant leader with an intense professional will would be more successful than just a servant leader. However, the lack of empirical quantitative research to confirm the speculation was problematic. The *Good to Great* research team felt that servant leadership seemed weak or meek, and these Level 5 leaders were much more than servant leaders (Collins, 2001). However, when evaluating Winston and Fields' (2015) instrument, items such as "sees serving as a mission of responsibility to others," "is willing to make sacrifices to help others," and "is driven by a sense of higher calling" seem to incorporate the idea of being driven for a purpose. Leaders with these qualities will not be doormats to be tread upon.

Research Question #3

Is there a strong correlation between follower perceptions of transformational, Level 5, and servant leaders? A bivariate correlation analysis shows that there is a strong and statistically significant relationship between transformation, Level 5 and servant leadership.

CONCLUSION

While Level 5, transformational, and servant leadership all have positive and statistically significant relationships with followers' perception of boss success, servant leadership is the strongest predictor in this study. The relationship across these three leadership styles is important because it demonstrates that, although the constructs are different, a leader that demonstrates selfless leadership is likely to be identified as all three leadership types: Level 5 leader, transformational leader and a servant leader. Based on follower perception, they are statistically the similar. Their relationship to perceived boss performance results is important because it contradicts the idea that servant leaders are simply doormats that are taken advantage of and can't be effective leaders. On the contrary, these leaders that serve their followers account for the most variability in the followers' perception of boss success.

Limitations

The key limitation of this study is the reliability of the dependent variable of perception of boss performance. The performance of the boss is based on the subordinates' perception. In addition, the snowballing technique used to generate participants may not

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yield a representative sample of the population. Another limitation is the single source bias that is a result of each participant rating all the aspects of their leader. There could be a halo effect that affects each of the individual items in the instrument. Finally, this research does not account for situational variables. For example, perhaps these selfless leadership types do not work well in turbulent times, or times of crisis.

Opportunities for Future Research

There are a number of opportunities for future research. The dependent variable of boss performance could be solidified by determining boss performance from an independent objective source and then evaluating leader behavior from followers. The relationship between the constructs of Level 5 leadership should be evaluated to determine if there is a relationship between professional will and personal humility. To address the situational limitation, a similar study of individuals leading in times of turbulence, or times of crisis, might yield additional insights.

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