

# COMPARATIVE ANALISYS – SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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## Abstract

*Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1970) and Transformational Leadership (Burns, 1978) are the main subjects in organizational research beginning with the '70. During this period the ideas were conceptualized, studies were done to observe the effects of applying the styles inside the organizational environment, the impact on individual and group performance. During the same period were also formulated principles, characteristics and conceptual models for their implementation. Among the well-known forms of leadership, transformational and servant leadership are the most desirable forms inside organizations.*

*The purpose of this paper is to make a comparative analysis of the two concepts of leadership through the dynamics of the concepts, the features, characteristics and principles with the main focus on common elements, what is distinctive for each of the two styles, what makes the difference between transformational leadership and servant leadership.*

*The method used is qualitative research based on comparative analysis.*

*By this article we wanted to shape some arguments to sustain the feasibility of the two concepts inside different organizational contexts in Romania (hotel industry and automotive industry).*

**Keywords:** Transformational leadership, servant leadership, performance, hotel industry, automotive industry.

**JEL Codes:** M12, M14, M54

## 1. INTRODUCTION

From the beginning it's needed to be considered the accurate understanding of this scientific approach. The two objectives of this research work are: clarifying concepts and outlining common and differential elements in the Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership. The analysis is based on the famous studies in the literature about leadership.

Among the results obtained by this analytical and comparative research, here is the list of the factors which leads to these differences: the organizational context, orientation leader and, especially, its power source (primus inter pares orientation and charisma).

Starting from the premise that this two concepts: servant leadership and transformational leadership are not the same (as it might seem from a general theoretical description) nor antithetical [1] just complementary theories characterized by the need for leadership dynamic, constantly and simultaneously directed both toward achieving the organization's objectives and their influence in attracting followers to contribute to the smooth running of activities and optimal professional development.

Arguments which will result from this approach will demonstrate an analytical and comparative need for transformational and servant leadership. They are caused by the theoretical and practical particularities gave by the organizational environment (hotels environment and industrial-automotive)

which is suitable for applying this forms of leadership by leaders and managers concerned.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL INSIGHTS: SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

### **2.1 Servant leadership**

The term "servant leadership" was introduced in leadership theory by Robert Greenleaf in 1904-1990 and first published in 1970 at a seminar entitled "leader as servant / The Servant as Leader. After the book publication, "Servant Leadership" in 1979, his research is taken into account by management organizations [2].

To explain the word "servant" in Romanian we have analyzed which of the two words (servers and / or helpful) is best suited to find a correspondent (word, phrase, metaphor) for the term "servant leadership". The approach studied related to this field (hospitality industry, hotel industry) is the "leadership helpful". When this concept will be taken out of the context of this industry there will be used the term "Servant leadership" itself (used exactly in industry-automotive).

DEX defines the word "helpful" as providing services gladly and promptly. The word "servant" appears in DEX accompanied by the following connotations: a soldier serving a breath of fire or other means of struggle. / (Rarely) janitor with special duties in certain institutions / person performing various technical works in an institution/ fr. Servant [3].

However, the term "helpful" has also the connotation of emotional involvement in serving others, while the "servant" term lacks this component.

Spears (1995) has identified 10 key elements in explaining, training and practice servant leadership. Unfortunately he didn't carry on his research and the identified elements could not be incorporated into an integrated model.

There were other authors attempting to synthesize different variations of the ten elements in synthetic models, but they all presents limitations [4].

Passing over these limitations and combining conceptual models with empirical results obtained by measuring the Servant Leadership, Van Dierendonck (2010) builds a model based on the following six components (p.6):

1. empowerment, enthusiasm and people development. This approach leads to transformational leadership assimilation;
2. humility - refers to the ability of recognizing that you can get the help and others expertise, the interests of others first; modesty by withdrawing into the shadows when a task has been accomplished (Patterson, 2003, Greenleaf, 1996, p.6) [4];
3. authenticity - being constantly (Harter, 2002, p.4) [4];
4. interpersonal acceptance - ability to understand the experiences, feelings and place of origin of individuals (George, 2000) to drop out wrong perceptions and tags (McCullough, Hoyt și Rachal, 2000, p.7) [4];
5. providing a way - individuals know what their leader expects from them and agrees to follow;
6. stewardship - is the willingness to take responsibility and be helpful instead of pursuing only their own interests and only to control things (Spears 1995, p.7) [4]. This is associated with teamwork, loyalty and responsibility.

According to the recent studies, the researcher Dirk van Dierendonck (2010) draws attention to various combinations of managers about Servant Leadership such as idealistic approach, negative connotation (which rather inspires weakness, passivity) percept by managers of the word "servant / helpful" risk of being manipulated by the followers (Whetstone 2002, p.24) [4]. So, it should be considered the moral component in applying leadership based on the strength of help to avoid manipulation.

### **2.2 Transformational Leadership**

Prior to define leadership transformational approach should be considered Dirk van Dierendonck approach which stated, in his proposed model, that the first component on the conceptualization of Servant Leadership

is that one related to empowerment, enthusiasm and development, meaning that draws attention to the assimilation of transformational leadership by Servant Leadership. [4]

We found another vision in the PhD thesis of K. Patterson in 2003 in which it states that "transformational leadership is a logical extension of servant leadership" [5].

A closer look at the timeline reveals that both forms of leadership have been studied even before their 70<sup>s</sup> and their conceptualization have been done until the 80<sup>s</sup>. Assigning the first place for one of them can be risky because they are interconnected and should not be studied antithetical.

Transformational leadership concept was initiated and developed in terms of its organizational application by MacGregor Burns (1978) and Bernard M. Bass (1985). The researcher Yukl (1998) stated that transformational leadership is a process of engagement in achieving the common objectives of the organization and only after that a process of encouraging followers to carry them [1, p.350].

In his book "Leadership and performance beyond expectations" Bass (1985) [6] transferred the concept of transformational leadership in an organizational context and examined the characteristics of transformational leadership, both public and private organizations and highlighted four factors of transformational leadership: charisma, inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration of the followers (Avolio, 1991, p.350) [1].

Definition and conceptualization of transformational leadership was often compared to transactional leadership. Thus, Barnett (2001) abstracted conceptualization of transformational and transactional leadership as [8]:

- a) Transactional leadership is based on a relational exchange where the involvement expected from followers is rewarded with prizes for their duties.
- b) Transformational leaders know their followers on the results importance and the methods by which those results are achieved increasing their responsibility towards the collective mission and vision.

In the political leadership study, Downton (1973) introduced for the first time the transformational leadership transaction based on the differences between revolutionary leaders, rebellion instigators and reformers used. In his view, transformational leadership is characterized by a mutual relationship between leader and follower-motivation [8].

This difference between the transformational leadership guidelines and transactional one was used later, by Burns, in his 1978 publication, "Leadership", which examined the dimensions of political, social and psychological aspects of leadership and moral dimension using, then the hierarchy of Kohlberg's moral development in 1963 [9].

Transformational leadership approach during the research will be in line with teachers` Levinta E. vision (2006), adapted from Bass and Avolio's approach [7]: "Transformational leadership encourages development and human interaction and promotes motivation and collective results ".We consider the following explanation to be added: "This transforms thinking and employee behavior and leads him to take, consciously and voluntarily commitment to achieve personal and professional goals."

In Stone, Russell and Pattersons` research (2003, p 353) they attempted to identify some attributes to highlight similarities and differences between these two forms of leadership. These results were adapted and are presented in Table 1..

**Tabel 1. Similarities and differences of the two approaches of leadership through their attributes**

<b>Transformational leadership attributes</b>	<b>Servant leadership attributes</b>
<b>Idealized influence (charismatic)</b>	<b>Influence</b>
Vision Trust Respect Risk sharing Integrity Modeling	Vision Trust Credibility and competence Delegation Honesty and Integrity Modeling and visibility Service (service to be one)
<b>Inspirational motivation</b>	
Commitment in achieving Communication Enthusiasm	Stewardship Communication
<b>Intellectual stimulation</b>	

Rationality Oriented problem solving	Conviction Pioneering
<b>Individualized consideration</b>	<b>Appreciation of others</b>
Attention to themselves Mentoring Active listening Animation (Empowerment)	Encouragement Learning Active listening Animation (Empowerment)

*After Stone, Russel and Patterson, 2003, p. 353 [1]*

According to this attributes, the individuals are encouraged to transform their thinking about problems, situations and are encouraged to have a new vision in line with personal and organizational goals.

As it can be seen in Table 1, the authors Stone, Russell and Patterson argue that the greatest similarities are found in the composition of the attributes "the consideration individualized" and "appreciation of others." Also, we identify similarities in the type of influence exerted: the servant leadership focus is on the element of "serving disciples" and for the transformational one on the charisma which the leader is endowed with.

### 3. LEADERS PORTRAIT IN THE TWO APPROACHES OF LEADERSHIP

In the literature often meet the leader defined as a person who has followers and is recognized such as by them and followed willingly. Here is the statement demonstrated "leaders can be formed or inborn".

Addressing the leader in terms of innate abilities (ex. charisma) is conclusive but not sufficient to develop and shape as a leader. As an artist's talent if not polished and processed through daily training, it will not really get to exercise his all potential. That's why it is imperatively to respect and appropriate the elements (traits, skills, etc.) to take effectively and efficiently actions in daily leader-follower relationship.

Major differentiation made in approach of the two forms of leadership is focusing on leader: orientation and source of power. Although both leaders are oriented towards the good of followers, servant leader is more oriented to show concern about being helpful and in helping others and especially to hand

down to their followers this behavior.

The power of transformational leader is given by idealized influence (charisma) and the inclination of the native servant in serving others, in being "primus inter pares" ("first among equals").

Servant leader is the one who transcends beyond self-interest, beyond affirmation and power (Luthans and Avolio, 2003) [4]. In other words, they put others before self oriented towards "the great common good."

There were many times when the servant leader, has been associated with religious motivations. The fundamentals of servant leadership (focusing on individual and ethical practices) come to confirm this association and become very relevant and very helpful for the hotel organizations which serving host-guest relationship and to automotive industry as well, where teamwork and the leader coordination is essential.

Making a brief of the most important researchers of literature who initiated and written about leadership and servant leadership, we can identify the most common characteristics of servant leader as follows:

Greenleaf (1970):

- a. "first among equals" - "primus inter pares";
- b. servant leader is the person which if wants to be served should serve first (the one who Wants to serve, to serve first) and the servant leader is the one who offers assistance / service and then expect the same behavior;
- c. Main quality is "active listening" to identify the person's need and only then to ask questions;
- d. only an authentically servant leader can react automatically; for any issue focuses on "active listening first and foremost";

Patterson (2003):

- a. emphasizes the ethical component of a servant leader: "right things at the right time with good intentions" [10];
- b. provides an agape love, act with humility, is selfless, visionary, reliable, inspires his followers, is helpful [5];

Farling (1999): servant leader power has

its roots in spiritual values obtained in time [4].

Bass (1985) stated that most of transformational leader behavior is guided by the following unique elements that lead to individual and group performance:

- a) idealized influence (charismatic role);
- b) inspirational motivation (detection and vision transmission);
- c) cognitive stimulation (promoting creativity and innovation);
- d) individualized consideration (coaching and mentoring). [1]

Thus, this leader is the person who, by his charismatic attitude and behavior, transforms and changes behavior and life of his followers developing a commitment to their personal and organizational objectives.

Both transformational leader and servant leader are two new types of leaders needed in any area where the focus is on comfort, satisfaction and employee satisfaction and loyalty of its customers.

#### **4. ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING THE FEASIBILITY OF THIS CONCEPT IN SOME ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXTS**

##### **4.1 Hospitality industry - hotel industry**

Servant leadership is seen as a new form of leadership to be implemented frequently in the hospitality industry. If you would study more empirical results there would undoubtedly be "modest" because managers are not oriented toward changing and to acquiring characteristic of leaders. A first step should be done in the area of training the servant leaders through the implementation of some awareness programs and acquiring features appropriate for such leaders. Without this the relevance of what added value for the hotel industry through the servant leadership would reduce their essence.

However we find hotel leaders oriented toward accommodating and they perform without much effort very naturally their work. This is a reason for that servant leadership must increasingly more present in the leadership style of managers or hoteliers leaders.

The most common empirical research in the last two decades is related to transformational leadership style. Studies in countries such as Australia, Canada, Turkey and China have shown that transformational leadership is the most common, effective and quite suitable in the hospitality industry (hotels in particular). Between reasons we list: frequent interaction employee - customer - service quality, spontaneity in action, specific interpersonal skills, ability to be able to work with employees from different countries and to lead to personal and professional achievement taking into multiculturalism account.

A relevant study in this regard was taken by Tracey and Hinkin (1994) which had as aim the researching of the excellent results obtained by hotels managers practicing transformational leadership. Also they analyzed scaling leadership instrument, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (1998) [8]. Another study by R.A. Clark Hartline and Jones (2009) on front-line employees in a hotel shows that motivation and satisfaction are the most important values and which is needed to be inspired and shared by transformational leader [11].

All in all, both transformational leadership and the servant one, not mutually exclude alternative which can be seen in some people leaders. The present research emphasizes the element of "empowerment" (empowerment, enthusiasm) through transformational leadership (the relationship between LT and the employees' desire for empowerment in hotels).

Starting from this empirical studies sustaining the arguments of the need to implement a servant and transformational leadership are: intensity of contact between staff and customer (tourist), staff attitude importance and relevance of guiding clients from the leader in this respect (leader is the model disciples follow him), motivation, enthusiasm and staff satisfaction.

##### **4.2 Automotive Industry**

In the automotive industry the greatest impact is technology. With this as crucial are people as reliable resource which organization can bring added value through their creativity and inventiveness characteristic. Another specific thing of this

industry, particularly in the area of Development and Research is teamwork.

Performing teams are characterized by the ability of performing extraordinary tasks and achieve extraordinary results with ordinary people. For this, ordinary people should be free to do extraordinary things. By freedom is meant a strong motivation to participate in the whole process and organizational climate supports it. They should feel empowered to do so [12].

Murel and Meredith believe that empowerment is a mutual influence, is a creative power distribution is responsibly shared, is vital and energy supply, is inclusive, democratic and long lasting.

So, the empowerment and action are both process of growth and development of individuals, teams and organizations as they try to bring more value to products and services that the organization delivers, based on promoting innovation and lifelong learning.

Bibu N. (2007) stated that the mandate of the team is facing a task in an innovative manner [13].

W. Bennis said that great teams need extraordinary leaders. But a team of extraordinary value is derived from brilliant people. Great teams would not exist if there are no extraordinary leaders.

A recent study conducted by Barzini Liuba, one of the automotive industry in Romania organizations, revealed that transformational leadership is practiced, recognized and contribute to affective and normative commitment of organization members [14].

There were tested five dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized attributes, idealized behaviors, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual assessment in terms of self and evaluating subordinates. From this perspective, the author has concluded that the interpretation of the results obtained for each dimension itself, is higher than that leader is perceived by subordinates.

Theoretically, from this study, we could conclude that transformational leadership can contribute to organizational outcomes by engaging and developing the engagement of members, but servant leadership brings something extra, especially in teamwork: credibility and competence, conviction,

encourage the devolution of powers and making individual subordinate ahead organization's goal.

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