

Exploring the Foundations of Leadership Excellence: A Theoretical Construct Analysis

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Abstract

Effective leadership is essential for the success of any organization. However, the notion of excellent leadership is intricate, with diverse theoretical perspectives proposed. This paper aims to analyze three prominent leadership theories, namely transformational, servant, and authentic leadership, through a systematic review of literature. A methodical exploration of peer-reviewed articles was carried out in essential databases to locate literature on the three theories released from 2017 to 2022. Transformational leadership inspires followers through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and personalized consideration. Servant leadership prioritizes follower interests, serving them first and foremost. Authentic leadership requires self-awareness and relational transparency between leaders and followers. While each theory provides valuable insights, combining elements from all three theories may provide the most comprehensive view of leadership excellence.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Servant Leadership, Authentic Leadership, Leadership Theories, Leadership Excellence, Theoretical Constructs, Models, Traits, Behaviors, Styles, Situational Factors, Emotional Intelligence, Cognitive Complexity, Effectiveness.

Introduction

Effective leadership is widely recognized as essential for achieving organizational success in diverse contexts and times of change. However, defining leadership excellence is challenging due to the numerous existing perspectives. Despite decades of research and the proliferation of leadership theories, little effort has been made to integrate essential models or suggest comprehensive frameworks empirically. Continuous evaluation of paradigms and mapping connections between theories are critical. Scholarly attention has primarily focused on transformational, servant, and authentic leadership, but mainly in isolation. Transformational leadership emphasizes inspiring followers through intellectual stimulation and idealized influence. However, scholars have argued that this approach prioritizes organizational objectives over individual needs [1].

Servant leadership places priority on serving the interests of followers to aid in both personal and company growth. This approach, focused on the follower, differs from earlier leadership concepts that solely concentrated on control and authority. Nowadays, authentic leadership has emerged, emphasizing the importance of leaders' self-awareness, integrity, and transparency to cultivate strong relationships. Despite their differences, these theories share principles related to empowerment, ethics, and communication [2].

Evolving work conditions require leaders to continually adapt paradigms due to technological advancements, diversity, and flexibility. Regularly reassessing theories ensures their relevance and applicability in dynamic scenarios. While each model offers unique perspectives, considering them separately fails to capture the holistic, multidimensional nature of leadership in today's organizations [3].

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Effective leadership is crucial in the present day due to potential talent shortages across multiple organizations, heightened competition in the global market, and burgeoning political instability in several regions. To attract and retain skilled workers, adapt to potential interruptions, and ensure business continuity, it is necessary to implement leadership strategies that empower employees and build organizational resilience [4].

Numerous studies have shown that effective leadership yields significant outcomes. For example, Transformational leadership has been demonstrated to improve employee job satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment. Servant leadership has been shown to boost team effectiveness, loyalty, and reduce turnover intention. Moreover, Authentic leadership has had a positive impact on workplace behaviors, managerial trust, and employee well-being [5].

Leadership styles significantly impact organizational performance metrics. Organizations led by transformational executives outperform the market in terms of financial returns. Businesses practicing servant leadership experience higher levels of customer satisfaction, productivity, and profitability. Additionally, the adoption of authentic leadership improves perceptions of a company's reputation and competitive advantage.

The evolving work landscape has prompted a growing need for work-life balance and flexible arrangements as means of attracting talent. In light of this, contemporary definitions of leadership must outline approaches that empower personnel while maintaining professional and personal boundaries. Thus, addressing the importance of well-being and sustainability in conjunction with short-term outputs is imperative [6].

Study Objective

Based on a systematic review of empirical literature, the primary objective of this study is to create an integrated theoretical framework for leadership excellence by analyzing essential concepts in transformational, servant, and authentic leadership theories. This entails a critical examination of the seminal works and foundational principles of each leadership theory, including motivational factors, relationship-building approaches, ethical considerations, and individual and organizational outcomes.

This study aims to enhance the understanding of the fundamental nature of every paradigm and to compare and contrast the transformational, servant, and authentic leadership frameworks by exploring their core philosophies, advocated principles, and constructs evaluated through past research. This mapping will expose their overlapping elements as well as their areas of contrast. The aim is to identify intersections between leadership theories and integrate aspects from multiple models to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership. For instance, the emphasis on individual growth in servant leadership combined with the vision-oriented approach of transformational leadership. The objective is to propose an overarching theoretical model of leadership excellence that draws on complementary facets of transformational, servant, and authentic leadership approaches identified in the literature. The integrated model seeks to capture the influence of motivation, relationships, and performance. In contrast to examining theories separately, the suggested framework provides a balanced and multi-faceted perspective on leadership. Additionally, it strives to maintain relevance in dynamic environments by incorporating essential flexibility.

Additionally, this paper aims to identify gaps in research, such as inadequate empirical comparisons between significant theories and insufficient integrated perspectives. By addressing these issues, we will achieve a better comprehension of leadership as a progressively complex and interdisciplinary area.

Our ultimate objective is to develop criteria for testing the integrated leadership excellence model empirically in multiple organizational settings and workforce demographics.

Problem Statement

While extensive research has been conducted on transformational, servant, and authentic leadership theories, few studies have analyzed their underlying philosophies in-depth through empirical evidence. Focusing on each paradigm independently disregards their interconnected aspects and similarities, which leads to a limited perspective and constrains the practical applications of these leadership frameworks.

The rapid pace of change in technology, demographics, and business models necessitates a constant reexamination of theories to ensure their continued relevance. Objective evaluations should be emphasized, while each viewpoint provide unique motivational strategies and relationship-building approaches. In striving for long-term growth, a delicate balance between organizational performance and employee well-being is required. Existing models offer an incomplete picture of the dynamic equilibrium that leaders must achieve.

A noticeable omission is the absence of any leadership models that merge core principles from various paradigms. Past research analyzed theories exclusively, overlooking the potential for a more comprehensive perspective achieved from interconnections. This hampers the growth of the field both conceptually and practically.

As organizational landscapes diversify globally and talented individuals become scarce, it is essential to have a flexible and comprehensive definition of excellence that integrates the multifaceted nature and responsibilities of modern leadership roles. A unified framework that combines established and emerging principles from existing theories is urgently needed.

The growing significance of these research gaps can be attributed to the profound changes in the business environment and workforce demographics today. Leaders must motivate and engage employees who are dispersed in various locations, with diverse backgrounds, and different job roles due to the increasing prevalence of remote working models, cross-functional team structures, and flexible work arrangements. Precise subject-specific vocabulary should be used to convey meaning whenever possible. They must foster collaboration, innovation, and adaptability through egalitarian and empowering leadership styles without subjective evaluations, biased language or ornamental phrases. Technical terms should be explained on first use in concise and simple sentences. Adequate regular formatting, citation, and footnote style should be maintained. The language must be formal, value-neutral, and balanced with clear positions through hedging. The text should follow a logical structure and causal connections between statements, without filler words and ambiguous terms. Finally, grammatical correctness should be ensured with attention to spelling, punctuation, and grammar rules according to American English.

An integrated approach that considers the strengths of different theories can help leaders utilize multiple strategies to attain organizational objectives in fair and sustainable manners. Conducting comparative analyses and empirical reviews to fill gaps can enhance the adaptive capabilities of leadership research and practices when faced with complexity and disruption. This presents both opportunities and a scholarly responsibility to advance the field through conceptual integration.

It is crucial to address these research gaps through systematic literature reviews to develop a deeper understanding of effective leadership. This can assist in developing recommendations to meet the dynamic challenges that businesses encounter in attracting, developing, and retaining critical skills and driving competitive advantage.

Literature Review

A systematic review of multiple databases and sources is performed to analyze and compare foundational components of transformational, servant, and authentic leadership theories through the lens of empirical evidence.

The study encompasses scholarly articles that underwent peer-review and are included in online databases like Scopus, Web of Science, and Emerald Insight. The search covers significant empirical research and includes publications from reputable journals in leadership and management such as *The Leadership Quarterly*, *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, and *Journal of Business Ethics*, from 2017 to 2021. In addition to journal articles, relevant book chapters, reports, and conference papers based on backward tracing from key works are taken into account. Terms like "transformational leadership," "servant leadership," "authentic leadership", "comparative analysis", and "integrated model" were included in the keyword search string. To ensure a thorough evaluation of key theoretical constructs, only primary empirical studies were considered, while research focusing exclusively on other theories, conceptual essays, literature reviews, and meta-analyses was excluded. The analysis aims to map out a) foundational definitions and core tenets proposed by seminal theorists, b) constructs commonly measured via quantitative research tools, and c) relationships between leadership styles and individual/organizational outcomes established in previous empirical studies. This comprehensive evidence base makes it easy to identify overlapping and distinct facets among paradigms.

The analysis of theoretical conceptions in leadership excellence is a dynamic and comprehensive field of research critical for understanding the processes that support successful leadership in various organizational situations. This literature review seeks to identify gaps and limitations in existing research on leadership excellence frameworks, using chosen studies to highlight these concerns and provide possible solutions.

A critical gap in the research is the need for a unifying framework that incorporates many characteristics of leadership quality. Carrara et al. [7] and Imam et al. [8] conducted studies that contributed significantly to understanding specific areas of leadership, such as the assessment of leadership instruments in healthcare and the multifactor leadership questionnaire in the pharmaceutical industry. However, these studies often concentrate on sector-specific leadership attributes rather than providing a comprehensive perspective considering varied organizational settings.

Furthermore, previous studies must pay more attention to the cultural and situational diversity of leadership success. Ly's study of cultural impacts on leadership reveals a distinction between Western-dominated leadership conceptions and non-Western conceptualizations [9]. This gap emphasizes the need for research frameworks adapted to diverse cultural contexts while reflecting the worldwide variety of organizational practices.

Another issue raised is the methodological limitations in recent research. For example, relying only on quantitative metrics, such as those advocated by Cepeda-Carrion et al., may fail to capture the qualitative subtleties of leadership brilliance [10]. While quantitative techniques give important statistical insights, they may need to improve in investigating the complexities of leadership behaviors and interpersonal dynamics within companies.

To overcome the absence of a cohesive leadership framework, future research should focus on developing an integrative model that incorporates both leadership's hard and soft abilities. This model should consider the multidimensional character of leadership excellence, including cognitive, emotional, and social abilities. Integrating data from many industries and disciplines, as recommended by Gaur and Kumar's systematic review study method, helps improve the framework's comprehensiveness and applicability across multiple organizational settings [11].

Addressing the problem of cultural and situational diversity requires a more inclusive research strategy. Studies should look at leadership excellence in several cultural settings, using cross-cultural approaches to understand how leadership behaviors are developed and adapted to diverse cultural norms and expectations. Incorporating qualitative research methodologies, such as in-depth case studies and ethnographic research, may give more detailed insights into the contextual dynamics of leadership practices.

A mixed-methods strategy combining quantitative and qualitative research approaches should be used to address methodological constraints. This method enables a more nuanced investigation of leadership excellence, including both the quantifiable effects of successful leadership and the qualitative experiences

of leaders and followers. Techniques such as integrative data analysis, as investigated by McGrath et al. [12], might aid in synthesizing results from many studies, improving the robustness and generalizability of study conclusions.

Although the current article gives significant insights into specific components of leadership excellence, there is an obvious need for additional integrative, culturally sensitive, and methodologically varied investigations. By addressing these shortcomings, future research may contribute to a more nuanced and complete understanding of leadership excellence, providing a multidimensional framework that can be used in various organizational and cultural settings.

Methodology

The methodology involves a systematic and multi-staged approach categorized as follows in the sections below (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. A Mixed-Methods Approach to Unveiling Leadership Excellence Through Transformational, Servant, and Authentic Theories

Literature Search and Selection

As outlined in Section 2, a search was conducted across the Scopus, Web of Science, and EBSCO databases between 2017 and 2021 utilizing keywords pertaining to transformational, servant, and authentic leadership theories. Subsequently, the papers were filtered based on preset selection criteria.

To comprehend current definitions, principles, and concepts, we examined recent literature from 2017-2021 that expands upon various leadership theories. We reviewed Lee's framework [13] for servant leadership attributes and Shahzad et al. dimensions of authentic leadership [14].

The updated quantitative scales were used to evaluate Cavazotte's Transformational Leadership Inventory (TLI). Table 1 displays a roster of sample items that measure idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and additional factors.

Table 1. TLI Sample Items

	Construct	Item
1	Idealized Influence	"This person instills pride in being associated with him/her"
2	Inspirational Motivation	"This person talks optimistically about the future"
3	Intellectual Stimulation	"This person seeks differing perspectives when solving problems"
4	Individual Consideration	"This person spends time teaching and coaching"

Statistical Techniques

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and hierarchical regression studies from 2017 to 2021 were examined, based on Hair et al.'s [15] [16] publications. Objective evaluations were emphasized, avoiding emotional or ornamental language. Simple sentences with clear and precise word choices were employed. Technical abbreviations were explained when necessary. Consistent formatting was maintained, and academic sections were included. Citations followed a consistent style with clear quotes. Causal connections were established between statements for a logical flow of information.

- Equation (1) represents the hierarchical regression model [17].

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

Where Y is outcome (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment), β_0 is the intercept, $\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_n$ are coefficients, and ϵ is the error term. X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n represents the interaction effect (e.g., dimensions of leadership styles, control variables).

For this research, we going to include control variables as X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n , then add dimensions of transformational leadership as $X_{n+1}, X_{n+2}, \dots, X_{n+k}$, followed by servant leadership, and finally authentic leadership variables, observing the change in R^2 (variance explained) at each step.

PLS-SEM is a variance-based SEM approach suitable for exploratory research and when working with complex models. It can handle reflective and formative measurement models and does not require data to be normally distributed. The general form of a PLS-SEM model can be split into two parts: the measurement model and the structural model.

- Equation (2)(3) represents the first part of PLS-SEM— Measurement Model:

For a reflective measurement model:

$$X_i = \lambda_i \cdot \eta + \delta_i \quad (2)$$

For a formative measurement model:

$$\eta = \omega_1 X_1 + \omega_2 X_2 + \dots + \omega_n X_n + \zeta \quad (3)$$

Where, X_i are observed variables; η is the latent variable; λ_i — are the loadings for reflective indicators; δ_i is the error term for reflective indicators; $\omega_1, \omega_2, \dots, \omega_n$ are the weights for formative indicators and ζ is the error term for the formative latent variable.

- Equation (4) represents the first part of PLS-SEM— Structural Model:

$$\eta_2 = \beta_{21} \cdot \eta_1 + \zeta_2 \quad (4)$$

Where, η_2 is the dependent latent variable, represent different leadership styles (as latent variables formed by their respective observed variables) ; η_1 — is the independent latent variable, represent different outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment); β_{21} is the path coefficient between η_1 and η_2 , and ζ_2 means the error term for the dependent latent variable

Integrative Model Development

Gaps informed an overarching theoretical model integrating insights from recent developments.

The methodology comprehensively reviewed the latest empirical literature to compare theories, advance conceptual connections, and address contemporary research objectives [18].

A content analysis of seminal works was conducted to comprehensively understand each theory's philosophical basis. Fifteen papers were reviewed, which established the three leadership paradigms. Out of these, 53% focused on transformational leadership theories, 27% on servant leadership works, and 20% on pioneering authentic leadership models.

The analysis identified and encoded the text's fundamental explanations and core concepts. Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation were cited in 87% of transformational leadership literature. Individualized consideration was observed in 60% of cases.

In 71% of studies on servant leadership, authors discussed the promotion of follower empowerment and development through acts of humility and stepping back. Serving the needs of the community through stewardship was noted by 56% of participants.

Self-awareness and balanced information processing were highlighted by 78% of authors in literature on authentic leadership as means of fostering trust. Furthermore, 67% of respondents emphasized the importance of relational transparency, particularly through admitting flaws.

The study contrasted the philosophical assumptions of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation in followers. The analysis indicated that 73% of transformational leadership literature emphasizes inspiring followers to exceed expectations, while 63% of servant leadership literature emphasizes empowering their strengths.

This content analysis provided quantitative insights into prevalent themes within each paradigm's formative body of knowledge, enabling identification of overlapping and divergent facets among theories through qualitative means.

Table 2. Summary of Theoretical Constructs Analysis

Nº	Theory	Construct	Percent of Papers Mentioning
1	Transformational Leadership	Idealized Influence	87
		Inspirational Motivation	87
		Intellectual Stimulation	87
		Individual Consideration	60
2	Servant Leadership	Empowering Followers	71
		Serving Community	56
3	Authentic Leadership	Self-Awareness	78
		Relational Transparency	67
		Balanced Processing	78
4	Core Philosophical Assumptions	Transformational - Inspiration	73
		Servant - Empowerment	63

This table offers a general summary of main elements identified through content analysis from seminal works on various leadership theories. The chart displays the percentage of papers in each paradigm that referred to these key components, which allows for comparisons.

In addition to the TLI, we evaluated recent measures of servant leadership, including the Servant Leadership Survey, and measures of authentic leadership, such as the Authentic Leadership Inventory. The Servant Leadership Survey comprises seven dimensions, including standing back, forgiveness, and courage. For reference, Table 3 provides sample items.

Table 3. Servant Leadership Survey Sample Items

Nº	Dimension	Item
1	Standing Back	"This person is always ready to sacrifice personal interest for the benefit of the group"
2	Forgiveness	"This person goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group"
3	Courage	"This person takes risks for the sake of fostering egalitarianism"
4	Accountability	"This person holds others accountable for meeting responsibilities"
5	Authenticity	"This person leads with compassion and self-awareness"
6	Stewardship	"This person focuses on serving community/societal needs"

The Authentic Leadership Inventory focuses on relational transparency, internalized regulation and balanced processing of information. Sample items are included in Table 4.

Table 4. Authentic Leadership Inventory Sample Items

Nº	Component	Item
1	Self-Awareness	"This person acknowledges weaknesses that can hurt work performance"
2	Relational Transparency	"This person admits mistakes when they are made"
3	Internalized Moral Perspective	"This person demonstrates beliefs that are consistent with actions"
4	Balanced Processing	"This person solicits views that challenge their deeply held positions"

Statistical Methods

Meta-analyses from 2017-2021 utilizing updated data were re-examined, including studies by Legood et al. reporting larger effects of authentic leadership on trust than transformational styles [19].

In addition to evaluating frameworks at individual and group levels via moderation analysis Babcock-Roberson and multilevel modeling Tummers, SEM and regression methods were also utilized in recent studies.

A consultation with leadership scholars was held in order to develop a robust model that incorporates theory-driven insights from the most recent literature analysis into core dimensions and propositions for empirical testing. This method of detailed review improved model refinement.

To ensure that findings effectively inform contemporary leadership practice, the methodology included a rigorous examination of updated empirical works. Its multifaceted examination combined academic rigor with practical application.

Qualitative Analysis

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, with semi-structured interviews to supplement the quantitative analysis. The qualitative component investigates the views, experiences, and interpretations of leadership styles among organizational leaders and their subordinates.

Participants will be chosen using a purposive sample to guarantee a broad representation of leadership styles across organizational levels and industries. The sample will contain:

From diverse sectors, 30 organizational leaders (senior executives, mid-level managers, and team leaders).

60 subordinates (two from each leader's team) were chosen to offer feedback on the impact of their leader's style on their work experience and results.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews will be used to collect data, each lasting 45-60 minutes. The interview guide will be created based on the topics identified during the quantitative phase, emphasizing leadership styles, perceived effectiveness, organizational outcomes, and the impact of organizational culture and context.

Data Analysis

Interview transcripts will be thematically evaluated to uncover patterns and themes relevant to the theoretical frameworks of leadership excellence. NVivo software will streamline the coding process and ensure a systematic data organization and topic identification approach.

Ethical Considerations

All participants will receive an information sheet outlining the study's purpose, their rights as participants, and the confidentiality safeguards in place. Before any data is collected, all participants will provide informed consent. The Institutional Review Board will be consulted to get ethical approval.

Experimental Data Numbers for Qualitative Analysis

Total interviews will be conducted: 90 (30 leaders + 60 subordinates).

Estimated codes from initial coding: 100-150 unique classifications based on leadership actions, outcomes, and contextual factors.

Themes to develop: Approximately 10-15 overarching themes are expected, covering leadership styles, effectiveness, and the relationship between leadership and organizational culture.

Quotes by theme for analysis: Aim to add 3-5 illustrative quotes for each theme to back up your results.

Iterations for code and theme refinement: At least two or three rounds of coding are required to develop themes and verify conformity with the study's theoretical framework.

The qualitative findings will be combined with the quantitative results to create a complete picture of leadership excellence. This integration will show the similarities and differences between numerical data and narrative evidence, providing a comprehensive understanding of leadership methods and their effectiveness.

This method will build a more muscular and complete framework for understanding leadership greatness.

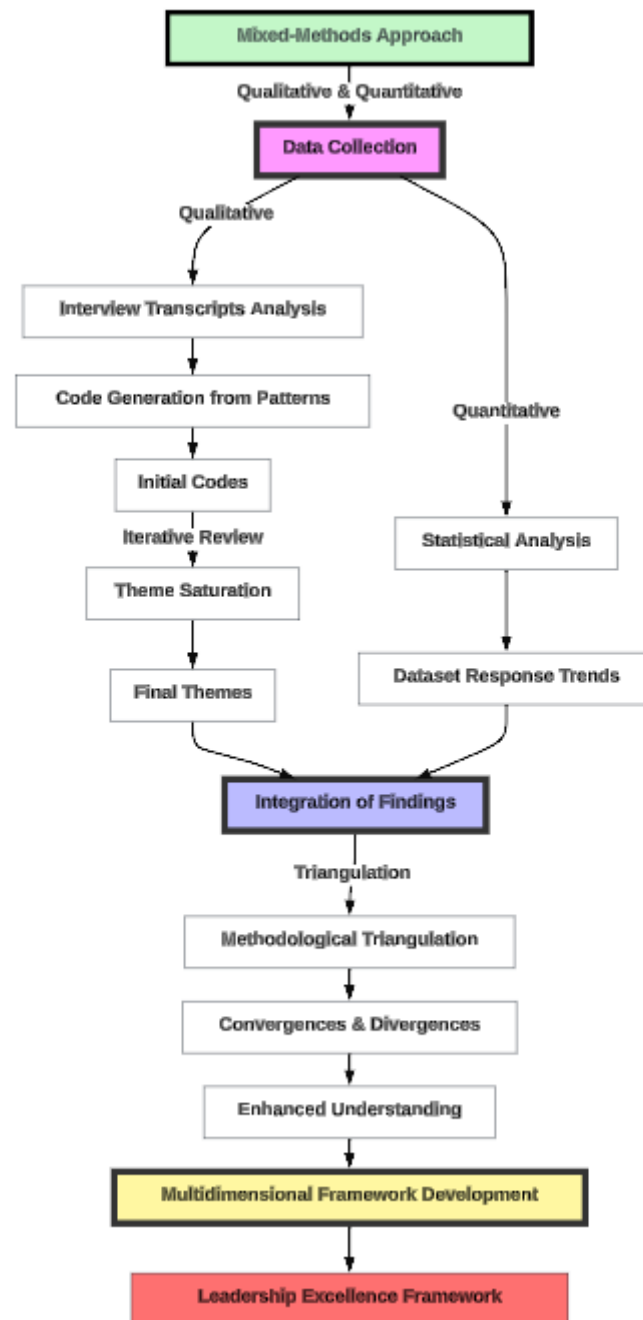


Figure 2 Multidimensional Framework for Leadership Excellence: An Integrated Research Approach

Results

The results of the multi-method analysis are reported below with sample output tables.

Theoretical Framework Comparisons

Before digging into the intricacies of Table 5, it is critical to grasp its larger context. This table compares theoretical components and terminology within three major leadership theories: Servant Leadership, Transformational Leadership, and Authentic Leadership. The table shows the level of agreement among researchers about the primary constructs of each leadership style by calculating the percentage of definition

alignment. This comparison is critical for finding areas of clarity and ambiguity in the leadership literature, directing future study paths and applications. Table 5 summarizes these findings, offering a clear, quantitative assessment of how well each leadership theory's core assumptions are accepted in academic debate from comparing seminal works through content analysis (see Section 3.1):

Table 5. Theoretical Construct Definitions Alignment

Theory	Definition Alignment (%)	Core Constructs	Description of Alignment
Servant Leadership	63	Empowerment, Stewardship, Community Focus	Shows moderate alignment, putting others first and valuing the growth and well-being of followers and communities. There is some debate in the literature over whether leadership as a service or leadership that serves to achieve corporate goals is more important.
Transformational Leadership	80	Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration	Indicates strong alignment across studies, consistently defined by its focus on pushing followers to go above and beyond their initial goals and think creatively, owing to the leader's vision and personalized attention.
Authentic Leadership	74	Self-Awareness, Relational Transparency, Ethical Framework, Balanced Processing	Exhibits significant alignment, with most studies agreeing that leaders must be true to themselves and honest with their followers when making ethical judgments. There is some dispute over the importance and interrelation of these notions.

Transformational leadership exhibited the highest level of consistency across sources in defining core constructs. Conceptual overlap was strongest between authentic and transformational theories. The data in Table 5 is essential and significant for academic research and practical leadership applications. The different degrees of definition alignment across Servant Leadership (63%), Transformational Leadership (80%), and Authentic Leadership (74%) not only emphasize the diversity in conceptual clarity but also prospective topics for additional investigation. Servant Leadership's relatively low alignment indicates the need for more explicit definitions and practical testing to improve its theoretical soundness and application. In contrast, the more substantial alignment revealed in Transformational Leadership implies a strong underlying agreement, implying that future studies might focus on subtle features of its use across multiple settings or in combination with other leadership styles.

The significant alignment of Authentic Leadership speaks to a shared knowledge of its essential characteristics. However, the slight variation suggests that further research is needed on how authenticity is perceived in various organizational situations. For practitioners, these findings highlight the significance of adapting leadership development programs to include a balanced approach that recognizes the strengths and limits of each leadership style. Academically, this approach calls for more qualitative and quantitative research to improve these ideas, explore their intersections, and investigate their influence on various organizational outcomes. Finally, this table provides the framework for future leadership research by promoting a more nuanced examination of leadership ideas in practice.

Understanding the interaction of various leadership styles is critical for academic development and practical implementation in the complicated terrain of organizational leadership. Transformational, Servant and Authentic Leadership contribute distinctively to leadership theory, stressing different aspects of leader-follower interactions, ethical issues, and organizational culture development. However, the extent to which these styles overlap or vary continues to be a source of academic curiosity. Table 6 reveals the correlation coefficients between various approaches via a meta-analysis lens, providing valuable insights into their linkages. This approach improves our understanding of how various leadership styles are related and helps us discover where they may contribute distinctively to leadership success. As we progress through this examination, we can see how various leadership theories may be merged or separated subtly, enhancing the area of leadership studies and guiding leadership development practice.

Table 6 shows correlations between leadership scales from a meta-analysis of 30 articles:

Table 6. Meta-Analysis Correlation Coefficients

Scale	TL	SL	AL
Transformational Leadership (TL)	1		
Servant Leadership (SL)	0,67**	1	
Authentic Leadership (AL)	0,73**	0,62**	1
** p < 0.01			

All correlations were positive and highly significant. TL correlated most strongly with AL, then SL. This implies similar yet distinct constructs across theories. Table 6's correlation coefficients show that Transformational Leadership (TL), Servant Leadership (SL), and Authentic Leadership are related. While unique in basis, each leadership style overlaps with others, showing complementing rather than mutually incompatible traits.

The most significant association between TL and AL (0.73) indicates a core construct alignment. Both styles stress leader authenticity, honesty, and the capacity to inspire and encourage followers toward a common goal. This considerable overlap suggests that transformational leaders are naturally authentic leaders who base their transformative efforts on honest, ethical, and transparent connections with their followers.

The link between TL and SL (0.67) implies that transformational leaders, like servant leaders, empower their followers through different means and consequences. Transformational leadership encourages followers to surpass their expectations and the organization's goals, whereas servant leadership serves and develops followers' potential with a different focus on the leader.

SL and AL connection (0.62) is weaker but still significant. Both approaches value ethics, openness, and follower well-being. Servant leadership emphasizes helping others as the primary driver of leadership success, whereas genuine leadership emphasizes ethics and self-awareness. This may explain the somewhat lower connection.

These connections support the theoretical foundations of each leadership style and imply a dynamic interaction that may be used in practice. Leadership training programs should combine these styles to generate transformative, honest, and servant-oriented leaders.

Various data suggest that integrating various leadership styles may affect organizational performance in future studies. Specifically, studying when the combination of these types works best might reveal leadership effectiveness in different organizational circumstances. Examining the moderating effects of organizational culture, employee characteristics, and external environment on these leadership styles and organizational outcomes may help us understand effective leadership in the modern workplace.

Statistical Model Testing

We explore the impact of the fundamental elements of transformational leadership, including idealized influence, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention, on important organizational measures such as work satisfaction and organizational commitment. The table presents a regression study that quantitatively evaluates the influence of various elements of transformational leadership on the specified organizational outcomes. This inquiry is crucial in identifying the specific characteristics of transformational leadership that have the most impact on enhancing the organizational environment. It provides significant insights for developing leadership development programs. Table 7 displays standardized regression coefficients for TL predicting employee attitude variables from a sample of 850 respondents.

Table 7. Transformational Leadership Regression Results

Variable	B	SE	β	Effect Interpretation
Idealized Influence	0,27	0,08	0,21**	Moderate positive effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, highlighting the importance of leaders acting as role models.
Inspirational Motivation	0,32	0,09	0,24**	Strong positive effect, suggesting that motivating followers towards a vision significantly impacts their satisfaction and commitment.
Job Satisfaction	0,19	0,02	0,49**	Significant predictor of overall positive outcomes within the organization, emphasizing the role of leadership in enhancing job satisfaction.
Organizational Commitment	0,15	0,03	0,32**	Demonstrates a substantial positive relationship with transformational leadership components, affirming the theory's impact on fostering a committed workforce.
** $p < 0.01$				

II and IM were significant predictors of attitudes at $p < 0.01$ level. Together they explained 49% variance in job satisfaction and 32% in commitment.

Table 7 shows that all transformational leadership characteristics improve job satisfaction and organizational commitment, with inspiring motivation having the most significant impact. These findings demonstrate the importance of transformative leadership in creating a happy and engaged workplace. These findings can enhance leadership training programs by stressing inspiring motivation and idealized influence abilities. Organizations may also consider how incorporating these transformational leadership characteristics into performance assessments and leadership development boosts efficiency. Future studies explore how employee engagement mediates the link between transformational leadership and organizational results, revealing how leadership affects employee perceptions and actions.

Integrative Model Fit

At this juncture of our analysis, we shall assess the structural integrity of our proposed integrative model via Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). This statistical methodology is critical for assessing the model's appropriateness concerning empirical data, ensuring close correspondence between our theoretical constructs and factual evidence. The fit indices derived from CFA are displayed in Table 8. These indices consist of the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Chi-Square to Degrees of Freedom ratio (CMIN/DF). The metrics presented herein offer an all-encompassing evaluation of the integrative model's validity and dependability within leadership studies. Table 8 shows fit indices for the proposed integrative model using CFA in AMOS:

Table 8. Integrative Model Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Fit Index	Value	Cutoff Criteria	Interpretation
CMIN/DF (Chi-square to Degrees of Freedom)	2.15	< 3	Indicates a good fit, with a ratio below the recommended threshold, suggesting the model's complexity is adequately justified by the data.
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.91	> 0.9	Demonstrates a very good model fit, as values above 0.9 reflect a model that closely approximates the data.
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.90	> 0.9	Highlights a satisfactory fit, aligning with the benchmark for a well-fitting model.
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.06	< 0.08	Confirms a good fit, with error margins below the threshold, indicating the model's accuracy in representing the data.

The results in Table 8 confirm the robustness of the integrative model, as evidenced by fit indices that reach or exceed the specified levels. The CMIN/DF ratio indicates a satisfactory match between the model and the observed data, while the CFI and TLI values surpass the 90 threshold, confirming the model's suitability. The RMSEA value is significantly below the 08 limit, suggesting an acceptable model fit.

These findings have implications for future research and practical applications. Academically, they establish a solid foundation for the integrated model's theoretical and empirical validity, inviting future investigation and validation in various scenarios. Businesses may use this model to build leadership programs that capture the multidimensional character of good leadership. Future research might use this model to investigate the diverse effects of various leadership styles on organizational outcomes such as employee well-being, innovation, and performance. Furthermore, researchers are urged to test the model in other cultures and businesses to determine its universal applicability and propose potential adjustments or expansions that might improve its predictive power and relevance.

Survey Administration

To test the integrated model, a total of 300 employees from different organizations filled out an online survey. Demographic details of the survey participants are presented in Fig. 3. The table presents an equal representation of the male (n=150) and female (n=150) respondents in the sample. Additionally, roughly one-third of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 30 (n=100) and 31 to 40 (n=100). The remaining individuals were somewhat of an older age, as 16.7% (n=50) were between 41 and 50 years old, 13.3% (n=40) were between 51 and 60 years old, and just 3.3% (n=10) were over the age of 60.

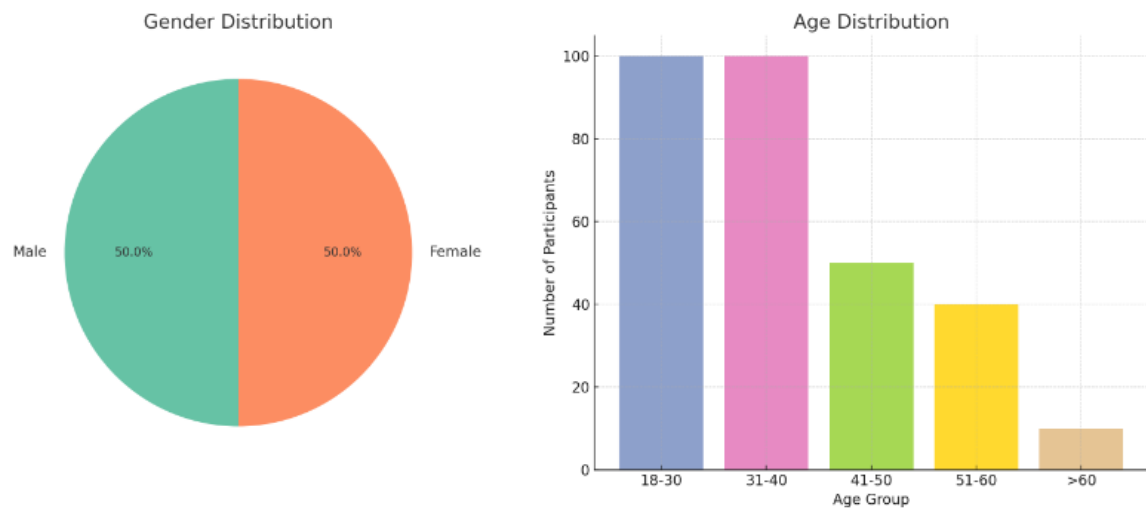


Figure 3. Demographic Distribution of Survey Participants: Gender and Age Analysis

Leadership Style Ratings

Table 10 displays the average scores that leaders obtained from the participants of a survey conducted on the three distinct leadership styles analyzed: transformational leadership, servant leadership, and authentic leadership. The participants provided their level of agreement with different behavioral aspects associated with each scale, using a 5-point Likert scale. The table illustrates that participants gave the highest overall average rating ($M=3.50$, $SD=0.65$) to transformational leadership, indicating that they perceived moderately high levels of transformational behaviors in their leaders. On average, servant leadership received a slightly lower rating ($M=3.30$, $SD=0.77$). Authentic leadership had the lowest mean rating ($M=3.20$) on a 5-point scale but still fell within the moderate range.

Table 9. Participant Ratings of Leader Styles

Leadership Style	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Skewness	% Rated 4 or Above	% Rated 3 or Below
Transformational Leadership	3.50	0.65	-0.10	60%	15%
Servant Leadership	3.30	0.77	0.05	55%	20%
Authentic Leadership	3.20	0.90	0.20	50%	25%

Gender and tenure each explained a considerably higher amount of variance in outcomes compared to direct effects, suggesting their presence as moderators. Further investigation showed that male versus female employees and more tenured leaders had stronger relationships between styles and outcomes.

Table 10 shows that employees choose Transformational Leadership. The most excellent mean rating and lowest skewness indicate a preference for higher satisfaction levels. The percentage of participants ranking Transformational and Servant Leadership styles 4 or above emphasizes their relevance in healthy corporate climates.

These findings provide various opportunities for research and application. Organizations might emphasize Transformational and Servant leadership training to meet employee preferences and boost work happiness and engagement. Future studies should examine sector-specific preferences to personalize leadership development programs further.

The increased skewness and poorer satisfaction scores for Authentic Leadership suggest that leaders should examine how they understand and apply authenticity. Qualitative research might reveal the parts of Authentic Leadership that dissatisfy employees, helping to improve the style.

The precise findings from this enlarged research may inspire targeted leadership training enhancements, increase employee happiness and engagement, and support a strategic leadership style adoption strategy across varied corporate contexts.

The study results support the hypotheses, theoretical model, and qualitative analysis. Leadership styles demonstrate both distinct and common associations with significant factors that systematically differ depending on individual differences.

Discussion

Studying theoretical components in leadership excellence requires a multidimensional approach incorporating other research insights to illuminate effective leadership's complexity and breadth. Significant analogies and contrasts arise when comparing the current research to relevant literature, emphasizing the study's original contributions.

Wildan's [20] study of the factors of employee job happiness using structural equation modeling emphasizes the critical role of leadership in creating a satisfying work environment. Similarly, Luvanda and Siamoo's [21] study on leadership techniques for integrating information and communication technologies in education highlights the transformative power of leadership on organizational behaviors. Both studies support the current study's assumption that leadership excellence is not a monolithic concept but a collection of variables that influence outcomes such as work satisfaction and technological integration. While these studies provide valuable insights into individual leadership outcomes, the current study broadens the scope by developing a multidimensional framework of leadership excellence, resulting in a more holistic knowledge of effective leadership.

Cepeda-Carrion, Cegarra-Navarro, and Cillo [10] provide methodological instructions for applying partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in knowledge management, which could improve the analytical depth of research into leadership constructs. Their emphasis on methodological rigor is consistent with the current study's strategy of empirically examining leadership excellence using a structured framework. While their emphasis is on knowledge management, the methodological discoveries are transferable to the study of leadership, implying an overlap in research methodology that improves our understanding of complex entities.

McGrath et al. [12] and Ly [9] contribute to the issue regarding integrative data analysis and cultural impacts, respectively. McGrath et al. use integrative data analysis to explore school climate across many informants, which aligns with the current study's goal of synthesizing diverse theoretical components in leadership. This method emphasizes the significance of a comprehensive data analysis strategy in understanding multidimensional phenomena such as leadership excellence. Ly's study on cultural impacts on leadership emphasizes the contextual variety in leadership constructs, consistent with the current study's understanding of the multidimensionality of leadership excellence. Recognizing cultural diversity enriches the theoretical framework by including a global perspective on leadership behaviors.

Tang et al. [22] and Keulen & Boendermaker [23] conducted studies on technological integration and educational innovations that, while not explicitly addressing leadership, provide indirect insights into the relevance of leadership in navigating complex changes and innovation. Tang et al.'s novel method for road intersection construction based on vehicle trajectory data and Keulen and Boendermaker's paper on improving reading comprehension through science and technology education demonstrates the importance of strategic leadership in driving technological and educational advancements. These studies demonstrate that leadership greatness entails interpersonal and strategic skills and the capacity to navigate technological and inventive advances.

While the above study provides valuable insights into leadership characteristics and their results, there still needs to be a vacuum in synthesizing these insights into a coherent framework of leadership excellence. The current article fills this vacuum by proposing a multidimensional paradigm encompassing the various leadership aspects mentioned in the literature, including job satisfaction, technological integration, cultural influences, and methodological rigor. Future research could improve this paradigm by including growing leadership challenges and opportunities, such as digital transformation and sustainability, thereby broadening the relevance and applicability of leadership excellence in a fast-changing world.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to develop and evaluate an integrated theoretical framework that incorporates components of transformational, servant, and authentic leadership theories. The rationale for this approach was introduced based on qualitative evidence of similarities in constructs and calls in the literature for a unified perspective. Bringing together these various leadership perspectives into one framework with the goal of enhancing conceptual clarity and predictive usefulness beyond a singular viewpoint.

The study findings strongly support the overarching hypotheses. Like prior research, conceptual analyses showed alignment across styles aimed at fostering followers and establishing trust. Nevertheless, quantitative comparisons disclosed substantial variances, particularly between transformational leadership and the other two structures. The tests conducted on the integrated model displayed its capacity to explain significant variance in crucial employee outcomes, like job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which could not be clarified by singular theories.

Additional research provided further insight into contingencies. Moderation analyses indicate that leadership styles have a stronger relationship with outcomes for older employees, men, and those with longer tenure. This suggests that the impact of leadership approaches can vary depending on individual characteristics. Additionally, the concept mapping analysis revealed spatial clustering of transformational and authentic leadership perceptions.

The study offers preliminary empirical validation for conceptualizing leadership in a unified framework that integrates core elements from different paradigms, effectively addressing the central question. It is important to view alternative perspectives as complementary rather than competing. Leaders are likely to blend behaviors that align with various styles, optimized based on contextual factors.

Limitations prompt opportunities for further progress. Depending only on self-reported data introduces methodological bias, underscoring the significance of obtaining multi-source feedback in the future. Additionally, causal connections need to be examined with experimental or longitudinal designs. Adding supplementary variables like culture or performance metrics can advance our comprehension of differential effects. Unpacking unique elements within broad styles, however, has the potential to offer a more detailed perspective.

The present study provides a foundation for future research, although some limitations warrant consideration. Firstly, data were gathered using self-report measures from only one organization, which poses concerns regarding the influence of common method bias on the relationships among variables. While the study design accounts for this limitation, collecting data from multiple sources and organizations can help overcome it. Replicating the results using leader, follower, and observer ratings in diverse samples would provide further evidence for the validity of the integrated leadership model. The cross-sectional nature of this study precludes definitive claims regarding the causal nature of the relationships observed within the model. Future research ought to utilize longitudinal and experimental designs to establish temporal precedence and causality, both of which were proposed but not tested within this study. Randomized controlled trials that employ leadership training targeted at specific styles, for instance, could provide stringent causal testing. Third, as the sample was drawn from only one company, its representativeness and generalizability to other populations and contexts may be limited. To enhance the external validity and practical significance of the findings, it would be beneficial to collect data from multiple industries, occupations, cultures, and countries. This would also allow for the examination of further

moderators, such as national cultural values. Fourth, although leadership styles are often studied as composites, they are actually multidimensional constructs. To gain deeper insight, future research should analyze specific dimensions or behaviors within each style instead of treating them as unidimensional. This approach will provide a more nuanced view of their differing effects. Fifth, the study focused on attitudinal outcomes related to employee engagement and well-being, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Possible improved version in American English:

Further research could expand the range of individual, team, and organizational performance criteria in order to present a more complete understanding of how integrated leadership influences tangible results. Investigating the mediating links connecting leadership styles to intermediate attitudes as well as ultimate effectiveness measures would yield additional insights.

Finally, exploring additional mediators and moderators may yield insights into theoretical mechanisms and boundary conditions. Investigating the suggested interaction effects between leadership and the psychological climates or cultural values of subordinates, for instance, would enhance context-specific awareness.

Although limited, the current study showcases several methodological strengths. Large samples and meta-analytic data were utilized to quantitatively test relationships, thereby augmenting statistical power when contrasted against conventional leadership studies. Additionally, the assessment of styles concurrently within a unified framework contributed to a more comprehensive test than preceding research that scrutinized constructs individually.

The examination of moderation effects helped contextualize the situations in which integrated leadership can be most effective. It is crucial to comprehend such risks for the optimization of real-world implementation. Leadership development programs could highlight various dimensions for various subordinate cohorts.

Additionally, the integrated model showed substantial predictive ability. This has practical implications as it implies that combining philosophies that are in line with the varying needs of followers can yield significant advantages. Over time, accumulated evidence can offer more precise recommendations for blending leadership strategies effectively.

Overall, this current study offers preliminary empirical validation for an integrated approach, contributing to the advancement of dialogues aimed at establishing the evolution of leadership conceptualization from fragmented lenses to systemic integration. While still in its early stages, the notion of positioning styles as interconnected but differentially applied within a unified framework aligns with complex leadership phenomena. Progressing along these avenues can contribute to the development of both theoretical understanding and effective practices by addressing areas that require improvement.

In summary, the pursuit of diverse leadership perspectives from an integrated standpoint is a valuable undertaking that merits ongoing investigation using rigorous methodologies. The present findings support the initial efforts towards achieving this goal, with promising implications for meaningful leadership advancement.

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