

Athabasca University  Master of Arts - Integrated Studies

THE ROLE OF EXTROVERSION AND INTROVERSION IN  
DEFINING EFFECTIVE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores the theories of transformational leadership and the role personality traits extroversion (sometimes referred to as extraversion) and introversion have in impacting the definition of a transformational leader. It highlights the focus of society and organizations, in identifying and defining an ideal leader, has established a cultural bias towards charismatic or extroverted individuals and overlooking the leadership capabilities of less extroverted individuals. It demonstrates research has identified introverted individuals are able to be effective transformational leaders and recommends definitions of leadership can benefit from consideration of the interaction of a variety of skills and factors, such as emotional intelligence, versus a focus on dominant personality trait.

## **Title**

The role of extroversion and introversion in defining effective transformational leaders.

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Purpose**

This paper is a research study into theories of transformational leadership and the role personality traits extroversion (sometimes referred to as extraversion) and introversion have in impacting the definition of a transformational leader. In an increasingly competitive business environment where organizations are expected to adapt to market trends, competition, customer demands and resource constraints, the ability to successfully manage and lead teams has become increasingly crucial and complex. Research and studies on leadership have introduced thoughts, tools and models purported to define an effective leader. One theory often regarded as the leading theory of leadership and regularly a subject of research is transformational leadership. The intent of this paper is to look at the theories and models of transformational leadership and its' influence in defining what is considered an effective leader.

In considering what an effective leader is, equally important to determining the model of leadership is identifying the criteria organizations or followers believe define effective versus ineffective leadership. This requires a review of the characteristics or traits, as well as behaviours, of an effective leader commonly identified through research, and a review of trends in organizations which are

indicative of positive outcomes of effective leadership. This paper will, therefore, look at four areas of research: first it will consider theory and models of transformational leadership; second, it will consider the personality traits of extroversion and introversion and the link these traits have to effective transformational leadership; third, it will explore the concept “emotional intelligence” and its influence on the concept of transformational leadership; and finally, transformational leadership’s link to organizational commitment will be considered.

## **1.2 Rationale**

The concept of transformational leader typically speaks to one primary ideal, that of a charismatic leader who is exuberant, motivational and making dramatic changes to improve the work environment or improve business outcomes. The transformational leader is one who ‘transforms’ the organization, department or work team from what currently exists to the desired vision of the organization. Business literature would have us believe that the commonly accepted definition of a transformational leader accurately captures the essence of effective leadership and organizations must recruit and employ charismatic leaders in order to achieve the operational outcomes desired. This assumption is worthy of study given the importance to organizations of the effectiveness of their leaders in achieving business outcomes and maintaining business advantage in competitive marketplaces. Research indicates that extroverted, or charismatic, individuals are considered to be the best leaders. Society and businesses have

generally accepted this research. More recent research, however, is suggesting this is not necessarily accurate, and is introducing results which indicate introverted leaders can generate better performance outcomes from followers. Based on Collins' (2001) study of great organizations, the transformational leaders at the helm of these organizations do not necessarily fit the model generally described as a transformational leader, that is, they are not a charismatic or extroverted leader, but an introverted leader who embodies the attributes of a transformational leader through more pragmatic means.

“We were surprised, shocked really, to discover the type of leadership required for turning a good company into a great one. Compared to high-profile leaders with big personalities who make headlines and become celebrities, the good-to-great leaders seem to have come from Mars. Self-effacing, quiet, reserved, even shy – these leaders are a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.”

(Collins, 2001, p12)

Research outcomes such as those described above have led to more recent research questioning the generally accepted definition of an effective leader and the traits or skills which influence this definition. Effective leadership has been touted as an essential element for the success of any organization. Most research during the past decade focuses on the concepts of the transformational versus the transactional leader when defining effective leadership. A transformational leader

is commonly concluded to be of greater significance in ensuring organization success. Within the concept, or definition, of transformational leadership, a primary trait displayed by leaders identified as transformational is that of extroversion. The perspective of transformational leadership is that these leaders gain followers by way of their extroversion or charisma. Though it may be found that many leaders are extroverted, many other leaders are also introverted. Assuming there are both extroverted and introverted leaders, can introverted leaders also be transformational?

Additionally in describing elements of effective leadership, emotional intelligence, defined as the “ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them” (Mayer et al., 1999, p267), has been connected to leadership as an important skill. Research has looked at the relationship of emotional intelligence with leadership and its’ role in identifying leaders who display transformational leadership behaviours. What influence then, does emotional intelligence have in defining effective leadership and ultimately transformational leadership? Understanding the answer to these questions may improve the ability of organizations to increase organizational commitment and to define effective leadership in order to select employees for increased business success, as well as widen the candidate pool for potential leadership roles.

Research on leadership demonstrates society accepts that effective leaders are transformational. Extroverted leaders are more apt to be identified as transformational and therefore regarded as more effective than introverted leaders. This belief creates a narrow definition of effective leadership which can eliminate excellent candidates for leadership roles. The goal of this research paper is to examine the results of studies on effective leadership and investigate in what way these results enhance or constrain the definition of transformational leader. I propose that there is not a singular definition of an effective leader; however, societal need to identify and define an ideal leader has established a cultural bias towards selecting charismatic or extroverted individuals. The research considered in this study demonstrates introverted individuals are able to be effective transformational leaders. Further, the research indicates definitions of leadership can benefit from consideration of the interaction of a variety of skills and factors versus a focus on dominant personality traits such as extroversion.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. How has the concept of transformational leadership influenced the definition of what is an effective leader, and are introverted leaders able to be transformational leaders?
2. What influence does emotional intelligence have on effective leadership?



3. Do effective leaders generate greater commitment to the organization?
4. How does, or how should, the answers to the preceding questions influence organizations in preparing to select leaders to lead the organization for future success?

#### **1.4 Methodology**

This research study is undertaken as a theoretical review of literature on the subject of effective leadership using the Athabasca University on-line library search engine focusing on keywords *transformational leadership, transactional leadership, extroversion, introversion, emotional intelligence and organizational commitment*. In addition, literature written by authors on the subject areas collected through Athabasca University course readings and contained within a personal collection were reviewed for relevant information. Based on this research, this paper undertakes a critical review of selected literature and readings on transformational leadership theory, organizational commitment theory, emotional intelligence and personality traits with the intent of clarifying their relationship with effective leadership. Further to this, an analysis of this research will be completed attempting to extrapolate the impact of extroversion and introversion on leadership style and the potential impact within organizations on the selection of future leaders.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview**

It has been demonstrated through the many writings on leadership and leadership theory that there is not a single definition of leadership. Though leadership has been in existence throughout the ages and many leaders have been honoured through history for their achievements and impact on society, society has not been able to pinpoint a single style of leadership that is superior to all others. A general definition of leadership has been accepted as:

Leadership is an influence relationship between leaders and followers who intend changes or objectives that reflect shared (reciprocal) meanings, strategies, and purposes.

(Mills, 2007, p483)

This definition resonates as a view of positive leadership. Key words in this definition are influence, intend, and shared. These words, within the context of this definition, illicit a positive image of leadership and focus on the capacity of a leader to make a positive impact within her organizational environment and with her followers. ‘Influence’ denotes recognition that leadership involves more than directing members of the team to complete tasks or projects, it involves motivating and engaging members of the team to accomplish the goal. ‘Intend’ denotes that there is a goal, or goals, to be achieved, but using intend versus ‘enact’ or ‘drive’ provides for the opportunity for modification and recognizes that having a goal to pursue is sometimes enough. ‘Shared’ denotes a common purpose between the

leaders and followers, which is key to any success, and especially essential in leadership success.

Leadership scholars speak about leadership as a process, a power base, a social influence, and a change agent. Every scholar speaks about leadership theories with the intent of describing an effective leader. What, then, is the definition of ‘effective’? Like the definition of leadership, the interpretation of ‘effective’ can vary dependent on the individual, the organization and the organization’s established culture and people of that organization. Effective leadership has a dramatic influence on the success of a work group, department, division or organization, and what constitutes the best leadership model has been contemplated and studied by many fields of thought. The expectations of an individual employee on how his leader displays leadership can greatly differ from the way the organization expects a leader to act, and further, societal expectations of leadership can differ from an individual organization’s view. This can be expanded again when comparing cultural variations of expectations regarding how leaders lead across the globe.

Though there are many theories and models of leadership, literature and research has focussed on transformational leadership as the predominantly most effective form of leadership for achieving optimal performance from employees. The following section will review prevailing themes related to effective leaders.

## 2.2 Emerging Themes

- a) An effective leader is a transformational leader

Many leadership theories have been proposed, developed, and researched, however the most prevalent leadership theory – a theory which is the focus of many modern organizations - is that of transformational leadership. The theory of transformational leadership has evolved from theories which consider trait, behavioural, and contingency approaches to leadership. Trait approaches focus on specific attributes that effective leaders possess such as intelligence and determination; behavioural approaches focus on the actions or behaviours which define effective leadership, and contingency approaches focus on situations and interactions between leaders and followers which define effective leadership. Elements from each of these approaches can be found throughout the concept of transformational leadership. This section of the literature review will look specifically at three transformational leadership models: the Six-Factor Model, the Leadership Practices Model and the Hierarchy of Leadership Model.

The concept of transformational leadership was introduced by Burns in 1978, in his book *Leadership*. Burns described leadership as being either transactional or transformational, and considered these to be opposite leadership styles. Building on Burns' concepts, Bass (1988) developed a model containing four dimensions which defined transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Bass additionally considered transactional leadership not as an opposite of

transformational leadership, but as complementary, and often a necessary component of effective leadership. He, again, considered there to be four dimensions of transactional leadership: contingent reward, management by exception – active, management by exception – passive, and laissez-faire. Over time and through analysis, Bass’ model has evolved to the six-factor model of transformational and transactional leadership (Avolio et al., 1999, p.444) comprised of the following factors: (1) charisma/inspirational – leads with a energizing sense of purpose, articulates visions and demonstrates ethical conduct; (2) intellectual stimulation – encourages challenging the status quo and making improvements; (3) individualized consideration – understands the needs of the individual and develops them to their full potential; (4) contingent reward – sets expectations and communicates rewards for meeting performance expectations; (5) active management-by-exception – monitors task execution and corrects problems to maintain performance levels; and (6) passive-avoidant leadership – reacts after situations become serious or avoids decision-making. The first three factors are generally attributed to transformational leadership. Bass’ model is widely used as the basis for research on transformational leadership and models of leadership introduced since can be linked back to his original six-factor model.

Kouzes and Posner introduced a model of leadership in their book *The Leadership Challenge*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2002) which identifies “five practices of exemplary leadership” (p13). These practices: *model the way* – leaders behave as they expect others to behave; *inspire a shared vision* – leaders dialogue with their

followers and paint a picture of the future; *challenge the process* – leaders “search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve.” (p17); *enable others to act* – leaders continuously engage teamwork and collaboration; and, *encourage the heart* – leaders recognize and celebrate contributions of individuals and teams. Each of these practices can be linked to a factor in Bass’ leadership model. ‘Model the way’ and ‘inspire a shared vision’ share similarities to Factor 1 – Charisma/Inspirational; Factor 2 – Intellectual stimulation can be linked to ‘challenge the process’; and, exemplary practices ‘enable others to act’ and ‘encourage the heart’ speak most closely to Factor 3 – Individualized consideration. Written in a manner to reach and encourage all formal and informal leaders to become exemplary leaders, Kouzes and Posner’s model follows a pattern of defining effective leadership which has become commonly accepted in research.

The third and final model which is referenced extensively in discussions on transformational leadership is that of the Hierarchy of Leadership. Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great* (2001) studied the events and factors which transformed a good organization, that is, an organization doing well in their field of business, to one that excelled beyond its competitors within their field of business. Collins did not intend to investigate the impact of leadership; however, consistently the empirical data demonstrated that the transformational leaders in ‘great’ organizations differed from those of other organizations. Based on this, Collins developed a hierarchy of leadership model to describe the levels of leadership.

The of five levels outlined were (i) highly capable individual; (ii) contributing team member; (iii) competent manager; (iv) effective leader, and (v) executive). Levels four and five describe components of transformational leadership which recur frequently in the literature. An effective leader (Level 4) is defined as an individual who “catalyzes commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision, stimulating higher performance standards” (Collins, 2001, p20). The definition of ‘effective leader’ in this model is similar to the standard definition of a transformational leader established by other researchers, such as Burns and Bass. Collins, based on his research, takes the definition of transformational leader a little further by introducing his Level 5 Executive leadership, which is someone who “builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.” (Collins, 2001, p20) Collins believes that it is a level 5 leader who transforms an organization from good to great under their leadership and is able to sustain this transformation.

Each of these models speaks to the behaviours, actions and requirements for effective leadership within current society. Each builds and expands on the other with common elements and a focus on leaders having strong communication and visioning skill to build connections with followers.

b) An effective transformational leader is an extroverted leader.

A review of the literature on personality provides substantial material to consider, however when considering linkages to leadership, most studies focus on

traits within the Five-Factor Model of Personality. The factors within this model include extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional adjustment (neuroticism), and openness to experience. From numerous studies, the first three factors, extroversion (outgoing and assertive tendencies), agreeableness (tendencies to be kind, warm and trusting), and conscientiousness (tendencies to be dependable and achievement oriented) appear to be linked to transformational leadership (Derue et al., 2011; Rubin et al., 2005; Bono & Judge, 2004; Judge & Bono, 2000).

In their meta-analysis on the link between personality traits and transformational and transactional leadership, Bono & Judge (2004) found their “results linking personality with ratings of transformational and transactional leadership behaviours were weak” (2004, p906). Despite these results, they concluded extroversion was an important personality trait positively related to leadership behaviours and outcomes. Additionally, other research has found extroversion as a characteristic of followers also seems to be positively related to transformational leadership; “that is, extroverts are more likely to perceive transformational leadership” (Felfe & Schyns, 2006, p728), and be more accepting of this form of leadership. Rubin et al.’s (2005) study demonstrated that both agreeableness and extroversion have roles in transformational leadership behaviour. Specifically, this study demonstrated results consistent with Judge & Bono’s (2000) study which “showed that agreeableness, but not extroversion...was



the strongest predictor of transformational leadership behaviour” (Rubin et al., 2005, p853).

Throughout studies on transformational leadership, the single consistent personality trait which is the primary focus in defining effective leaders is that of extroversion. Extroversion is commonly viewed as a requirement for leadership and specifically, transformational leadership. Extroverted individuals are identified as attention seekers and inspiring to others. These are individuals who gain energy through interactions with others; they typically lead the conversation in social settings. Susan Cain’s *Quiet* (2012) indicates that generally society “see[s] talkers as leaders” (p51). In studies on group dynamics, talkers are perceived as more intelligent and more capable “even though...test scores reveal this perception to be inaccurate” (p51). There may not be an empirical difference between extroverts and introverts on intelligence scores, but there is a difference in how these individuals behave which can have an impact on business outcomes.

Recent literature and research has begun to question the focus on extroversion as a primary trait for effective transformational leadership. “Introverts think before they act, digest information thoroughly, stay on task longer, give up less easily, and work more accurately” (Cain, 2012, p168), which, in many business settings, is an attractive model for work ethic, especially from a leader. The research by Collins (2001), which was one of the first studies to identify a significant result attributed to introverted leaders as a factor in the long-

term performance success of organizations, found that the transformational leaders of the best performing organizations tended to be introverted leaders who acted “with quiet, calm determination [relying on] inspired standards, not inspiring charisma, to motivate” (p36) employees. These introverted leaders were a “catalyst in the transition” (p36) to transform a good organization to an enduring great organization. With some research and evidence that introverted leaders can elicit better performance results, a study published in 2011 by Adam Grant and colleagues considered extroverted and less extroverted (introverted) leaders and their impact on the performance of groups of employees. They concluded, generally, that the success of extroverted versus introverted leaders is influenced greatly by the group of followers they lead. Specifically, this study found that extroverted leaders who lead a group of proactive employees tend to achieve lower performance results than when this group is led by an introverted leader. These results bring empirical evidence “that extroverted leadership is not necessarily a requirement for group and organizational effectiveness” (Grant et al., 2011, p543), in fact, depending on the dynamic of the work group, the efforts of an extroverted leader may “undermine group performance” (Grant et al., 2011, p544). It was surmised that leaders low in extroversion are more open to the ideas, suggestions and empowerment of proactive employees, whereas leaders high in extroversion may view this as a challenge to their authority. Grant states that this study

“highlights a theoretically sound, empirically supported strategy whereby less extroverted individuals can facilitate group performance: actively encourage proactive behaviours on the part of employees. By being

receptive to employees' efforts to voice ideas, take charge to improve work methods, and exercise upward influence, less extroverted leaders can develop more efficient and effective practices that enhance group effectiveness.”

(Grant et al., 2011, p545)

This study casts some doubt and raises questions about the commonly held belief of extroversion as a defining element of effective and transformational leadership.

c) Effective leaders are emotionally intelligent.

Emotional intelligence is said to be a very important skill for the success of leaders in any organizational setting. Many studies have connected emotional intelligence with the behaviour exhibited by effective leadership and specifically, by transformational leadership. As indicated earlier in this paper, emotional intelligence has been defined as “an ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them” (Mayer et al., 1999, p267). Goleman, who first wrote about emotional intelligence in his book of the same name, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), later developed a model to be applied to business leadership. Specifically, this model applies the theory of emotional intelligence to how successful leaders are distinguishable from their less successful counterparts as a result of their capacity for emotional intelligence. Goleman's model is comprised of five components. The first is self-awareness. Individuals who are self-aware have an “understanding of ...[their]...

emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives....[These individuals] recognize how their feelings affect them, other people, and their job performance” (Goleman, 2004, p84). Self-regulation is the second component of emotional intelligence. This attribute allows individuals to control their emotions or feelings, which for a leader enables them to “to create an environment of trust and fairness” (Goleman, 2004, p86) which assists in leadership success. Motivation is the next component of emotional intelligence. Emotionally intelligent individuals are “driven to achieve beyond expectations. ... [They] are motivated ... to achieve for the sake of achievement” (Goleman, 2004, p88). Empathy is the fourth component and as the word implies, empathetic leaders “thoughtfully considering employees’ feelings – along with other factors – in the process of making intelligent decisions” (Goleman, 2004, p89). The final component is social skill and this speaks to what Goleman describes as “friendliness with a purpose” (Goleman, 2004, p90). Leaders with social skill are able to move followers towards the desired outcome in a manner which does not alienate anyone. Goleman sees this last component as one which links all the components together and allows leaders to successfully employ their emotional intelligence.

Though Goleman did not speak specifically to transformational leadership when linking emotional intelligence to effective leadership, many studies have researched this relationship. Rubin et al.’s (2005) study on the relationship between emotion recognition, personality and transformational leadership determined that “leader emotion recognition can interact with extroversion in a

way that significantly and positively influences leader performance of transformational leadership” (p854). Specifically, it concluded that emotion recognition abilities, when partnered with communicating vision and an expressive personality, can differentiate leaders who exhibit transformational leadership behaviour (p854). Walter et al.’s (2011) review of empirical data on emotional intelligence’s link to leadership demonstrated that published research shows promising results for linking emotional intelligence with leadership emergence, leadership behaviour and leadership effectiveness, however cautioned that emotional intelligence is one of many factors, such as personality, cognitive ability and functional skill, which influence leadership outcomes. Lopez-Zafra et al.’s (2012) study on the relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence demonstrated that “emotional intelligence (emotional clarity and emotional repair) [is] related to transformational leadership and predict[s] the extent to which an individual is transformational in his or her leadership style.”

- d) Effective leaders generate greater organizational commitment from their employees.

Organizational commitment considers how strongly an individual identifies with and becomes involved with the organization by which he or she is employed. Meyer and Allen (1991) describe organizational commitment as a three-component framework that is based on psychological states which are described as: affective commitment – employees have an emotional attachment or

involvement in the organization and therefore want to work there; continuance commitment – employees understand the cost of leaving the organization and therefore need to continue to work there; and normative commitment – employees feel an obligation to work for the organization and therefore feel they ought to continue their employment. Affective commitment, based on the above description, lends itself to be influenced by the behaviours of transformational leaders. In describing affective commitment further, Meyer and Allen state:

“Employees want to remain and are willing to exert effort on behalf of the organization because of the benefits they derive from the relationship. From an internalization perspective, employees become committed to organizations with which they share values. Moreover, they work towards the success of these organizations, because in doing so they are behaving in a manner consistent with their own values.”

(Meyer & Allen, 1991, p76)

Several studies indicate that leaders play a significant role in the affective commitment of their subordinates (Avolio et al, 2004; Loi et al., 2012; Walumbwa et al, 2005). Loi et al (2012) found that supervisors with strong affective commitment to an organization tend to positively guide subordinates on organizational values which, in turn, enhance employee commitment. Interestingly, Avolio et al. (2004, p962) found that senior leaders who demonstrated transformational leadership indirectly “had a more positive relationship with employees’ level of organizational commitment” when compared

to the influence of the transformational leadership behaviours of the employees' immediate supervisor. Researchers attributed this result to the sense of empowerment senior leaders created through transformational behaviours.

When considering the transformational leadership factors identified by Bass, studies have continually linked organizational commitment to these leadership behaviours. The ability of a leader to inspire, motivate and articulate vision, all components of the charisma/inspirational factor, has been supported in studies by deVries et al. (2002), Podsakoff et al. (1996), and Walumbwa & Lawlor (2003) as being positively related to increased levels of organizational commitment by followers. Leaders who demonstrate individualized consideration by providing employees with job challenge and empower employees also generate more commitment from employees (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Avolio et al., 2004; Walumbwa et al., 2005) than leaders not demonstrating these behaviours.

Dunn et al. (2012) conducted a study of transformational leadership utilizing the Leadership Practices model proposed by Kouzes & Posner discussed earlier in this review. This study determined that there is a “consistently positive relationship between all five transformational leadership practices and both affective and normative commitment” (p55). This finding supports the findings of Lee (2005) which indicated that “leaders who lead the team by setting themselves as role models (*model the way*) can deepen their followers' feelings of loyalty and contribution”(p657).

### **3.0 Results of Research**

#### **3.1 Research question one**

How has the concept of transformational leadership influenced the definition of what is an effective leader, and are introverted leaders able to be transformational leaders?

The results of this study found the theories and models of transformational leadership have had significant impact in defining an effective leader in current organizations. As the leading theory on effective leadership, transformational leadership theories and models place high emphasis on extroversion as a predictive trait of effective leaders. Little discussion or research study is allotted to how introverted, or as less extroverted, leaders can be transformational except to provide guidance on how these leaders can improve themselves and change their behaviour to fit the Extrovert Ideal.

The recent literature and studies which have investigated the effectiveness of introverted leaders indicate, depending on the proactive nature of the followers, introverted leaders are more effective in obtaining optimal performance from a team in comparison to an extroverted leader.

#### **3.2 Research question two**

What influence does emotional intelligence have on effective leadership?



The results of research reviewed in this study indicate there is a strong link between effective leaders and emotional recognition abilities. Specifically, in identifying transformational leadership behaviour, emotional intelligence in a leader can differentiate a leader who is transformational in their leadership behaviour.

### **3.3 Research question three**

Do effective leaders generate greater commitment to the organization?

The research results demonstrate commitment is greater amongst those employees who have leaders who demonstrate affective commitment to the organization: these leaders demonstrate and articulate involvement and value congruence with the organization and model commitment to organizational success. These are attributes of a transformational leader and an effective leader.

“Through role modeling attractive behaviour and exhibiting idealized influence, a transformational leader arouses perceptions among followers of value congruence with the leader. At the same time, while emphasizing a collective mission and organizational values, these same leaders encourage a sense of congruence with the organization to which he or she and the followers belong.”

(Hoffman et al, 2011, p782)

### **3.4 Research question four**

How does, or how should, the answers to the preceding questions influence organizations in preparing to select leaders to lead the organization for future success?

The results of this research study indicate having strong selection criteria and definition of the type of leader required for a role is critical, however, equally valuable is evaluating the value congruence of leaders to the current organization. “[I]t is crucial that organizations select, socialize, and retain managers who are ‘on the same page’ as their organizations” (Hoffman et al, 2011, p791), as the research “suggests that the impact of transformational leadership on work group performance is contingent upon a leader’s work group espousing organizational values, rather than trying to change them.” (Hoffman et al, 2011, p792)

Research on the effectiveness of extroverted versus introverted leaders demonstrates organizations need to reconsider the influence of introverted leaders, especially in relation to the personality dynamic of the team the individual will lead.

### **4.0 Discussion and recommendations**

Within the study of transformational leadership, there is acknowledgement that the traditional leadership functions of correcting behaviours and eliminating

problems are key components of leadership, however, transformational leadership “augments or builds on these transactional leadership behaviours” (Turner, Barling, p305) to influence and inspire subordinates to commit to the common goal. This theory recognizes that using different leadership behaviours are necessary to be effective as a leader in the workplace.

Through this research, it is apparent that the literature demonstrates the concept of transformational leadership has been considered and studied at great length and the results of these studies have greatly influenced the definition of what is currently considered to be an effective leader. Elements from the concept of transformational leadership are found in widely respected models of effective leadership and transformational leadership has been studied to demonstrate that effective leaders are emotionally intelligent and generate greater commitment to organizations. In researching extroversion and introversion, the literature exploring extroversion is vast in comparison to literature exploring introversion as a trait of transformational leaders. "Many people associate extraversion with action, assertiveness and dominance—characteristics that people believe to be necessary to be effective leaders. The features that define extraversion are commonly the features people associate with leadership." (Nobel, 2010) Research demonstrates that transformational leadership is an effective style of leadership, however newer research challenges whether only individuals with extroverted personalities are able to be effective transformational leaders.

Though research on the effectiveness of introverted leaders is in its infancy, the results do suggest it will be worthwhile to investigate this further. Cain reported “existing studies on personality and leadership [finds] the correlation between extroversion and leadership [is] modest...[and results are] often based on people’s perceptions...[which] are often a simple reflection of cultural bias.” (Cain, 2012, p56). It would appear then, introverted leaders are quite capable of being transformational in their leadership, especially with particular types of employees.

“[I]ntroverts are uniquely good at leading initiative-takers. Because of their inclination to listen to others and lack of interest in dominating social situations, introverts are more likely to hear and implement suggestions. Having benefited from the talents of their followers, they are then likely to motivate them to be even more proactive. Introverted leaders create a virtuous circle of proactivity.”

(Cain, 2012, p57)

Considering this information and referencing it to the characteristics of transformational leadership, the characterization above fits well within the categories of intellectual stimulation whereby leaders encourage challenging the status quo and making improvements, as well as individualized consideration in understanding the needs of the individuals to develop to their full potential,

demonstrating introversion should not be a barrier to transformational leadership behaviours.

Perhaps as interesting as the debate over extroverted versus introverted leader is the evidence that a leader must be emotionally intelligent to be effective. Research indicates that an emotionally intelligent leader is better able to understand the needs and wants of their employees, and therefore, can use their leadership skill to maximize the capabilities of their staff leading to better performance outcomes (Walter et al., 2011, p50). Building on the capacity for emotion recognition within a leader is also the ability of that leader to demonstrate or role model the expected behaviour and values of the organization. Ability to effectively and authentically communicate with staff builds commitment, generates greater performance and increases the likelihood of a leader being viewed as effective.

In considering what an effective leader is for an organization, it is necessary to consider what elements define the effective leadership. Many researchers focus on specific traits or performance outcomes of the individual to define and describe effective leadership, such as a personality type, a leadership style, or the meeting organization goals and objectives. For a leader, there are a multitude of factors which interact to create effective leadership. Each individual factor has a role in the development of the leader as a whole, and a change in one element will have a direct impact on others and ultimately the success of that

leader. Defining effective leadership is similar to defining an organization using systems thinking: it requires taking into consideration the interactions of all elements of an effective leader to describe the complexity of the role. Specifically, systems thinking advocates “understanding a system [by taking] into account an analysis of its individual constituents as well as their inter-linkages and relationship” (G. Schiuma et al, 2012, p8046). A system is described as a “combination of several elements where every element of the whole influences the behavior of the other elements, as well as the behavior of each element influences the behavior of the whole” (G. Schiuma et al., 2012, p8046). Applying systems thinking to defining effective leadership necessitates recognizing the interdependence and interaction of personality dynamics, leadership style, emotional intelligence, and value congruence to assess the potential effectiveness of an individual leader in a specific organization. An effective leader is shaped not only by the personal skills and attributes he or she possesses, but also by the influence of elements within the organization such as culture, resources, team dynamics and the individuals’ leader. All these elements work together to influence the ability of a leader to be effective and transformational.

Finally, assessing how this information impacts the preparation and selection of leaders, organizations need to be cognizant of considering, versus overlooking, effective leaders whom do not fit the standard definition of an extroverted transformational leader. Organizations do not generally hire leaders to maintain the status quo; they want leaders who will make positive changes, strive

to improve business practices and achieve the best results from their team. The question becomes, what type of leader will best achieve that within the organization or team? “By fostering a work environment where people feel free to speak up and be proactive, the organization is creating the right place for introverted leaders to be successful (Nobel, 2010). “It’s important for companies to groom listeners as well as talkers for leadership roles” (Cain, 2012, p58) in order to provide balance between the influences of extroverted, as well as introverted leaders. Each has the capacity to achieve best outcomes within situations or teams suited to their abilities. By understanding the strengths of dynamic leadership which is not focused on a singular ideal, the pool of talent for leadership positions will expand exponentially.

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