Does Current Popular Leadership Literature Show a Preference for Transformational Leadership?

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Over the past few years, numerous Leadership models, theories, and methodologies have emerged so that the question arises as to which of the models is most effective, or even which has prevailed. One approach to this question is to compare different models in terms of their overlaps or similarities. This study researches the topic with a reverse approach: can one derive a preference for a particular leadership style or even a leadership direction or leadership 'school' from the popular leadership literature? The guiding question is which leadership books sell the most and which leadership style or elements of leadership they represent. For this purpose, Amazon's bestseller lists in leadership and management in a specific period and local market are examined in a quantitative-qualitative study both to elicit the distribution of a model and to find common styles and elements of leadership among different authors. The result shows that current popular leadership literature primarily reflects transformational leadership models with elements of transactional management. A particular leadership mindset and special leadership activities such as goal orientation or inspirational motivation can be found in almost all of the most widespread models.

Key Words: transformational leadership, transactional model, leadership theory

JEL Classification: M0, M19

Introduction

The fact that leadership is critical to the success of organizations and plays a crucial role in the management of companies, in terms of customer relations, in the design of employee motivation, in the management of change, in the skill and competence development of employees and ultimately in the achievement of goals is undisputed (Miloloza 2018). With more than 1500 definitions of leadership (Kellerman 2012) and over 66 leadership theories (Mango 2018), the question arises whether, among

all definitions, there is one or some that are 'correct,' that is, most effective. Hence, the fundamental problem and question is whether and how leadership can be understood 'correctly' and whether or how a verifiable and, above all, demonstrably successful leadership model can be derived from the multitude of approaches from a scientific perspective. One could approach this problem – finding common principles and elements of the most effective leadership methods – purely deductively, by superimposing and comparing all models but still the question would remain, whether such a leadership model would find a significant widespread acceptance.

In this study, a different approach has been chosen: an empirical examination of mostly accepted or widespread leadership models in popular leadership books would provide the material to identify common leadership principles. These could be examined in terms of their commonalities and overarching models to finally form a universal model. Therefore, the basic assumption for this inductive study is that those models or principles of leadership that are most popular and eagerly imitated are also found in popular literature on leadership. Therefore, from the best-selling relevant books, one could infer the acceptance of a model or a particular leadership direction principle. This, in turn, can provide a valid input for further (theoretical) investigation of a (universal) leadership model.

Therefore, in a snapshot of bestseller lists of popular leadership literature, an overview can be created of which leadership topics, theories, and models are most popular – limited in time and locality limited: what are the best-selling and best-ranked leadership books on Amazon as one of the largest providers of the online book trade, which leadership models and theories do they reflect, are there common principles or even standard models and what conclusions, if any, can be drawn from them?

There is a multiple heuristic challenge with this question:

- With the rise of non-print media, such as on social platforms, via blogs, podcasts, and videos, it can be asked quite fundamentally whether other forms are not overtaking print media's information strength and penetration. That is a valid question worthy of investigation. Nevertheless, print media still play an essential role in the dissemination of models. Also, the question whether e-books have not long replaced print books can be answered in the negative, c.f. the comprehensive and fascinating study on bestsellers (Yucesoy et al. 2018). Therefore, this paper works with the basic assumption that

an influencing factor, or at least an indication of topics that were or are of interest in the respective time, can still be derived from the distribution of print media. Nevertheless, e-books are also taken into account, as they are partly counted in the bestseller lists.

- Leadership models are not necessarily disseminated via distinct leadership books. There may be books that are not declared as leadership books but strongly influence managers' leadership behaviour. An example is Martin Goleman, whose EQ concept is very influential (Goleman 2004), although it is not explicitly a leadership book. On the other hand, large corporations, for example, may promote a particular leadership model that can be traced back to a particular book so that the reach of this model is extensive without affecting the sales figures of the book. Corporations are highly cautious in publishing their leadership models and sources, so the data is not transparent.

- It is also questionable whether it is possible in principle and at all to determine which books on leadership are sold the most.

- In the last 15 years, about 500,000 new books have been produced annually in Europe alone, and more than 3 million books worldwide (Statista n.d.). The total number of leadership books in all local markets is impossible to determine, and it is also challenging to define the leadership books that have sold the most (bestsellers), as sales figures are not necessarily made public by publishers. Moreover, the few existing bestseller lists are more meaningful for regional markets and not globally. In the German-speaking market, for example, the Spiegel bestseller list is well known. Interestingly, however, there is not a single book on leadership in the Spiegel bestseller list in the non-fiction category that has made it to the top of the list (Wikipedia 2022).

- From the sales figures, it is not necessarily possible to assume the distribution of the model. In other words, a high sales figure does not necessarily mean that the book has been read, understood, and, above all, implemented. With 3,000 publishers in Germany alone, for example, it is not easy to find out from these publishers, let alone all the publishers in the world, whether and which leadership books they publish, especially since the sales figures are usually not publicly known.

- The period under consideration can lead to very different results.

Some books may currently top the bestseller list but not make an impact in the long run.

Taking these limitations into account, it is nevertheless possible to find out within a clearly defined research framework which leadership books top the bestseller lists, to reflect on the content of whether they follow a particular theory, and if so, which theory. Ultimately, the decisive factor for any leadership theory is whether it is received and accepted. Therefore, from its dissemination, the recognition, acceptance, and ultimately the validity of the theory can be inferred.

Methodology

An approach that considers the heuristic limitations mentioned above will be attempted utilizing the following methodology: using various bestseller lists from Amazon, all of which revolve around the topic of leadership, the best-selling or highest-rated business books in a local market (Germany), and in a specific period (May 10–20, 2021) are examined. There is initially a restriction to the top 20 to make the amount of data manageable. The books are surveyed for explicit or underlying leadership models to uncover clues as to which aspects of leadership generate a great deal of resonance.

Amazon Inc. already had over 50% of the German online book trade in 2017 (EHI Retail Insitute n.d.). Since Amazon has been measuring and publishing bestseller lists for several years, even if the criteria change from time to time and the logarithms are not publicly visible, there is at least investigable data available here. These data are usable with the following limitations: they do not represent a 'world bestseller list,' but reflect the national (German) sales figures of Amazon – not those of all retailers. Although Amazon's market share is substantial, the largest distribution channel for books in 2019 was brick-and-mortar bookstores (EHI Retail Insitute n.d.). Nevertheless, and primarily because of Amazon's significant influence on sales behaviour, bestseller lists from Amazon can indicate the influence of popular leadership books. Further limiting, it must be added that the bestseller list of Amazon is adjusted daily. Thus, the research results give insight into a particular point in time and are instead understood as a selective snapshot. On amazon.com, different categories, each with their lists, can be found under the umbrella term Leadership and Management, all of which have been examined. The categories are 'Leadership and Motivation,' 'Management and Leadership,' 'Leadership

and Human Resource Management,' 'Business Administration and Management,' 'Strategic Management,' and 'Management Science.' This survey reflects the date range of May 10–20, 2021. Subsequent sampling has shown that the ranking is constantly adjusting, new categories are being found, and new entrants, in particular, are quickly making it onto the bestseller list.

In order to keep the amount of data organizable, the top 20 books in each category are filtered out. Amazon creates different lists for different topics or categories that overlap, especially in leadership and management. Since they nevertheless show different results, all lists relating to leadership and management have been included in the study. Amazon distinguishes between books (bound and unbound) and e-books, and both genres are found indiscriminately in the bestseller lists and were integrated equally. The books are then examined for theories of Full Leadership or Elements of Leadership and Transactional or Transformational and multiple rankings. In order to make the amount of data more manageable, we have limited ourselves to the top 10.

The Criteriology of Evaluation

Each book was evaluated according to the following criteria:

- *Full Leadership Theory or Elements of Leadership.* This criteriology examines whether the book attempts to build a full leadership theory, or whether it contains only elements of a theory, or even has no elements of a leadership theory at all. Books with a full leadership theory will be discussed separately.

- *Transactional/Transformational.* With a confusing number of leadership theories and methodologies, the category Transactional/ Transformational can be applied to almost any theory. Even if Bernhard Bass in the Full Range Leadership Model describes transactional and transformational rather as poles of a continuum (Bass and Riggio 2005), the following elements of a criteriology can be selected for this study:
    1. Transactional leadership consists of management-by-exception, and contingent reward in external motivational control: (external) goals are set, and the achievement of the goals is rewarded for controlling desired behaviour. External goal setting and reward through goal achievement are the main qualities of this leadership style.

2. Transformational leadership, with the four areas of Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration, emphasizes the role-modelling of the leader and the visionary development of the employee, aiming at intrinsic motivation control. Visionary goal setting supported by role-modelling and intrinsic motivation is used in this study as the main qualities to describe this leadership style.

3. Since there is also a continuum in the Bass model, 'Transformational and Transactional' is set as a criterion here in addition to 'Transformational,' 'Transactional,' and a 'None' for non-existent models.

- *The number of Transactional/Transformational books.* First, how many books can be assigned to the transactional or transformational style is examined.

- *Average rating.* Then, an average rating of the categories ranking places 1 to 10 are taken.

- *Multiple rating.* Finally, the multiple ratings of places 1 to 10 are evaluated. *Qualitative deep-dive.* Since the multiple ranking, i.e. the frequency of placement in places 1–10, indicates widespread distribution, the books that make it to a place between 1 and 10 more than once are also examined more deeply in qualitative terms for the prevailing leadership model.

Discussion

In the six different Amazon categories (leadership and motivation; management and leadership; leadership and human resource management; business administration and management, strategic management, management science), a total of 57 books were examined that ranked between 1 and 20 in the respective category at least once.

In the perspective of the research question, which leadership topics, theories, and models are most prevalent in the best-selling books, the books containing only theory *elements* are first distinguished from those containing a *full* leadership theory. There are only three of these: Peter Drucker with *The Effective Executive* (1967), Jocko Willink with *Leadership Strategy and Tactics* (2020), which in turn goes back to the bestseller *Extreme Ownership* (Willink and Babin 2015), and Gino Wickman, who also presents a complete leadership model with *Traction* (2007).

Since only three books contain a complete leadership theory, these will be briefly presented below.

In summary, according to Drucker (1967), effective self-management is the foundation of all management and consists of precise steps and actions to follow – always to meet the best outcome for the organization: using time effectively, making the best contribution (why am I being paid?), using strengths productively and making effective decisions. Elements of transactional leadership (such as setting and achieving extrinsically imposed goals) and transformational leadership (such as a more robust 'we' emphasis or role-modelling) can be found in his work.

Willink (2020) also talks about self-management and self-organization, transactional and transformational leadership. In summary, according to Willink, leadership requires the development of a humility and responsibility mindset and the elements of spacing out, communicating effectively, decentralization, and empowerment.

Gino Wickman lands with his book *Traction,* again in transactional and transformational leadership realms (Wickman 2007). On the one hand, the book contains clear frameworks on how to set up and implement a business and, on the other hand, shows many elements regarding leadership that have to do with measurement, execution and empowerment, and delegation. He presents the eos Model (Entrepreneurial Operating System), which consists of the six areas of Vision, Data, Process, Traction, Issues, and People, and describes how a business can be managed and made successful.

Concerning the Full Leadership Theory, it can be stated that all three books have a vigorous implementation orientation as well as a strong people focus on self-management (knowing oneself and being able to lead; taking responsibility; humility), implementation orientation (focusing and prioritizing; implementing through clear goals and actions; gaining clarity from a distance); people orientation (decentralization and empowerment; effective communication; strength-based leadership). Even though they tend to be assigned to transformational leadership, they all contain transactional or implementation-oriented leadership elements motivated by external goals.

In a further step, we will examine how many books represent transactional, transformational, or both leadership approaches to refer to the respective elements and examine whether similarities appear in the elements.

Two of the 57 books examined listed in the top 20 in the various cate-

TABLE 1   Overview Transactional/Transformational Books

Transactional	2
Transformational	24
Transactional/Transformational	17
None	15

gories on Amazon can be assigned to transactional, twenty-four to trans-formational, and seventeen to both leadership styles. Sixteen books are not assigned to any leadership style, as they do not discuss the topic of leadership in the true sense.

The numerical analysis alone shows a strong tendency towards trans-formational or a combination of transformational/transactional leader-ship. Since some of the same books appear several times in the different categories, in a further research step, the average rating in the ranking is formed from the different Amazon management and leadership best-seller categories in which the respective book is ranked. In order to form a stronger concentration here, the average is calculated exclusively from places 1 to 10.

Of these 29 books, one can be classified as transactional leadership, eleven as transformational leadership, nine as a mixture of transactional and transformational leadership, and a further eight as having no lead-ership framework. Among the latter are works that deal with mindset topics in the broadest sense (Grant 2021; Hill and Bandini 1999; Morin 2017; Cardone 2011; Cialdini 2021; Silva and Miele 1991) or focus on in-dividual business topics (Voss and Raz 2017; Osterwalder and Pigneur 2013) without really talking about leadership. That these books are listed on Amazon in one of the categories belonging to leadership or manage-ment indicates that business-relevant topics and everything that has to do with mindset and psychological background in the broadest sense are essential for management or leadership.

Some of these 21 books dealing with leadership have a high ranking and have thus received a high place; however, they have not been ranked as often in the different categories. For example, *22 Talk Shifts* (Ungerböck 2020) is ranked once, in first place, but does not appear again in any of the other categories and is not ranked again. Therefore, in the next step, the ranking frequency of places 1–10 is evaluated. Since some books were published in different print and e-versions and ranked highly in several categories, they have a higher multiple rating. A wider distribution can

TABLE 2 Average Rating in Ranking Places 1–10

Author	Title	Ranking
Ungerböck (2020)	*22 Talk Shifts: Tools to Transform Leadership*	1
Greene (2013)	*The 48 Laws of Power*	1.3
Grant (2021)	*Think Again*	3
Rath (2017)	*StrengthsFinder 2.0*	3
Willink and Babin (2015)	*Extreme Ownership: How us Navy Seals Lead and Win*	3.3
Doerr (2018)	*Measure What Matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation Rock the World with okrs*	3.6
Voss and Raz (2017)	*Never Split the Difference: Negotiating as if Your Life Depended on It*	4
Covey (2013)	*7 Habits of Highly Effective People*	4
Collins (2001)	*Good to Great*	4
Cialdini (2021)	*Influence, New and Expanded: The Psychology of Persuasion*	4
Scott (2017)	*Radical Candor*	4
McChesney, Covey, and Huling (2015)	*The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals*	4
Silva and Miele (1991)	*The Silva Mind Control Method*	4
Brown (2018)	*Dare to Lead*	5
Lencioni (2002)	*The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*	5
Tzu (2007)	*Art of War*	5
Stone, Patton, and Heen (2010)	*Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*	5
Miller (2021)	*Business Made Simple: 60 Days to Master Leadership, Sales, Marketing Execution, Management, Personal Productivity, and More*	6

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be concluded from the rating frequency so the qualitative study will be based on that.

Among the eight books ranked 1–10 more than once, all six belong to the transformational style or a mixture of both – except for the book with no particular leadership content (Hill and Bandini 1999) and the transactional leadership book (Greene 2013).

It can be deduced from the above that Transformational Leadership meets with a more significant response than Transactional Leadership, whereby Transactional Leadership is described in particular with the

TABLE 2   *Continued from the previous page*

Author	Title	Ranking
Osterwalder and Pigneur (2013)	*Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers*	6
Hill and Bandini (1999)	*Think and Grow Rich*	6.3
McKeown (2014)	*Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*	7
Andrei (2020)	*How Highly Effective People Speak: How High Performers Use Psychology to Influence with Ease*	8
Sinek (2011)	*Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*	8.5
Morin (2017)	*13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do*	9
Gensler and Lindenmayer (2015)	*Art's Principles: 50 Years of Hard-Learned Lessons in Building a World-Class Professional Services Firm*	9
Sinek (2020)	*The Infinite Game*	9
Cardone (2011)	*The 10x Rule: The Only Difference between Success and Failure*	10
Harnish (2014)	*Scaling Up: How a Few Companies Make It . . . and Why the Rest Don't*	10

TABLE 3   Number of Transactional/Transformational with Average Ranking of 1–10

Transactional	1
Transformational	11
Transactional/Transformational	9
None	8

qualities of external goal setting and reward through goal achievement. In contrast, Transformational Leadership is described above all with the qualities of role-modelling, visionary goal setting, and intrinsic motivation.

In the following, the seven leadership books will be examined concerning these qualities. Brené Brown's *Dare to Lead* (2018) is a follow-up to *Daring Greatly* (2015) and aims to encourage leaders to show courage and to face their weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Along with the four main parts (vulnerability, values, trust, growth), she explains the primary skills of a (transformative) leader, how they can become successful, and how they can support and challenge their employees. In summary, Brown is primarily concerned with leaders learning to know and to show their weaknesses.

TABLE 4 Frequency of Rating in the Different Categories

Author	Title	# times placed on 1–10 in different categories
Covey (2013)	*7 Habits of Highly Effective People*	6
Willink and Babin (2015)	*Extreme Ownership: How US Navy Seals Lead and Win*	4
Scott (2017)	*Radical Candor*	4
Greene (2013)	*The 48 Laws of Power*	3
Brown (2018)	*Dare to Lead*	3
Hill and Bandini (1999)	*Think and Grow Rich*	3
Doerr (2018)	*Measure What Matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation Rock the World with OKRs*	3
Sinek (2011)	*Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*	2
Ungerböck (2020)	*22 Talk Shifts: Tools to Transform Leadership*	1
Grant (2021)	*Think Again*	1
Voss and Raz (2017)	*Never Split the Difference: Negotiating as if Your Life Depended on It*	1
Morin (2017)	*13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do*	1
Cardone (2011)	*The 10x Rule: The Only Difference between Success and Failure*	1
Rath (2017)	*StrengthsFinder 2.0*	1
Lencioni (2002)	*The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*	1
Wickman (2007)	*Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business*	1
Collins (2001)	*Good to Great*	1
Cialdini (2021)	*Influence, New and Expanded: The Psychology of Persuasion*	1
Miller (2021)	*Business Made Simple: 60 Days to Master Leadership, Sales, Marketing Execution, Management, Personal Productivity, and More*	1

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Stephen Covey has created an absolute bestseller with *The Seven Habits* (Covey 2013). Unlike other books that talk more about behaviour and skills, Covey is more concerned with character and the inner core of a person. The seven core behaviours can be summarized as taking responsibility, creating a vision, time and implementation management, successful interpersonal relationships, empathetic listening, balancing differences, and comprehensive recovery strategies (Covey 2013). In Covey's work, it is striking that, on the one hand, a strong people-orientation

TABLE 4   *Continued from the previous page*

Author	Title	# times placed on 1–10 in different categories
McChesney, Covey, and Huling (2015)	*The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals*	1
Tzu (2007)	*Art of War*	1
Osterwalder and Pigneur (2013)	*Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers*	1
McKeown (2014)	*Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*	1
Gensler and Lindenmayer (2015)	*Art's Principles: 50 Years of Hard-Learned Lessons in Building a World-Class Professional Services Firm*	1
Harnish (2014)	*Scaling Up: How a Few Companies Make It . . . and Why the Rest Don't*	1
Silva and Miele (1991)	*The Silva Mind Control Method*	1
Stone, Patton, and Heen (2010)	*Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*	1
Andrei (2020)	*How Highly Effective People Speak: How High Performers Use Psychology to Influence with Ease*	1
Sinek (2020)	*The Infinite Game*	1

TABLE 5   Classification Transactional/Transformational of Ratings >1 of Places 1–10

Transactional	1	Greene (2013)
Transformational	4	Brown (2018); Covey (2013); Sinek (2011); Scott (2017)
Transactional/Transformational	2	Willink and Babin (2015); Doerr (2018)
None	1	Hill and Bandini (1999)

with many elements from transformational leadership such as creating a vision, successful interpersonal relationships, empathy, and listening, to name but a few, can be observed. On the other hand, there is a vital fact/discipline/execution orientation with a firm decision orientation and discipline.

Sinek (2011) has not only become famous with his book *Start with Why*, but his Tedx talk about the so-called 'Golden Circle' is one of the most viewed with over 50 million clicks (Sinek 2014). The main message of his book is that the best and most successful leadership unfolds in inspiring people when starting with the 'why,' then talking about the 'how' and only then the 'what.' As can easily be seen, Sinek revolves around the 'inspirational motivation' theme of transformational leadership.

Scott (2017) describes her leadership model with a matrix of how much you directly challenge someone on the horizontal axis and how much you care about a person on the vertical axis. Both are important: caring for a person and achieving results. This results in the target quadrant 'Radical Candor,' which describes behaviour in which the supervisor empathically expresses their sympathy and understanding and acts in a highly challenging way to develop the employee. Results achievement, guidance, and teams are the main aspects of this type of successful leadership, which Scott developed and applied at Apple and Google.

The book *The 48 Laws of Power* by Robert Greene is assigned to transactional leadership and sometimes reads like a counter-draft to transformational leadership (Greene 2013). For example, the laws 'always say less than necessary' or 'let others work for you, but always take the credit' or even 'destroy your enemies completely' make Greene seem almost disturbing from a moral perspective. The book, which Greene calls the 'ultimate encyclopaedia of power' (Greene 2013), is influenced by many historical figures, including Niccolò Machiavelli. It would be interesting to reflect on why this book is so well received, even though its content fundamentally contradicts the transformational mainstream. At this point, it must suffice to say that the ranking on Amazon shows that the topic of 'power' has a particular resonance and plays a corresponding role in the leadership continuum.

Since Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich* (Hill and Bandini 1999) is one of the best-selling advice books of all time (Behling 2021), but not a book on leadership, it will not be discussed further.

Jocko Willink shares experiences from his time as a Navy Seal in *Extreme Ownership* (Willink 2020). As highlighted, the title of the book suggests that being a leader is about taking responsibility, especially for the mistakes and failures of a team, and then developing plans to overcome those mistakes. In addition to teamwork, simplicity, prioritization, and decision-making skills, this book's main keywords are decentralization and discipline, and is well worth reading.

In *Measure What Matters*, John Doerr (2018) describes the now widely known concept of Objective and Key Results (OKR). While the objectives rather describe the 'what,' the big goal to be achieved, the key results characterize the concrete and measurable 'how.' The aspect of 'inspirational motivation' from the transformational leadership model should be reflected in the inspirational objective. Other engaging moments, called superpowers, consist of priority setting, teamwork, transparent progress

measurement, and aspirational goals that are genuinely challenging and stretching to achieve.

Conclusion

Before discussing the individual findings, it can first be stated on a meta-level: there has not yet been a study that explores the relationship and connection between popular leadership literature and scholarly findings on leadership in general. The methodology of concluding leadership and its principles from a scientific perspective from the prevalence of leadership models in popular leadership literature bestseller lists is also new and generates new results. Furthermore, with more than 60 leadership theories, one can ask which one is the right one, respectively which one should be followed. As the result shows, certain leadership principles generate the most significant resonance; hence it is possible now to conclude the leadership principles that should flow into a universal model.

While few leadership books can be categorized as purely transactional, most are transformational or a mixture of both approaches. The main elements that can be found in almost all books are:

- *Effectiveness in implementation orientation:* vision, plan, prioritize, decide, implement.
- *Positive orientation:* opportunities instead of problems.
- *People orientation:* listening, we, strengths orientation; team-work (decentralization/empowerment); effective communication. *Self-management:* being able to lead oneself, taking responsibility, humility, emotional distancing.

That means it is possible to deduce from the available data which elements of leadership and how the construct of leadership, in general, can be understood to be both successful in the sense of business and accepted in the sense of organizations, institutions, and, ultimately, people. A comprehensive leadership model encompasses many aspects and will take a holistic approach rather than narrowing down to one model (which of the more than 60?). If one can infer its need and current acceptance from the prevalence of leadership concepts in popular print media, current leadership will be primarily transformational and contain transactional elements. Following this line of reasoning, there is a current need for leaders with personal qualities and outstanding self-management, but also with the ability to motivate in a visionary way, to communicate effectively, to empower employees in an opportunity-oriented manner, and at the same

time to set transactional (challenging) goals and reward their achievement. Converting these elements into a universal model is yet to be done.

Scientific Limitation and Further Research

As described earlier, this study of leadership books represents a limited sample: the slice of the market is limited, bestseller lists are hard to come by, and an assumption for the spread of the model cannot necessarily be made from sales figures. Put differently, a high sales figure does not necessarily mean that the book has been read, understood, and, above all, implemented. The period under consideration can lead to very different results. Some books may currently top the bestseller list but do not necessarily influence in the long run. Nevertheless, it became clear that the vast majority of books propagate a particular form of leadership. Further research should try to obtain similar bestseller lists from other markets. An Amazon long-term study could also provide essential insights into whether bestsellers persist over time. A new model could then be created from the core content of all leadership bestsellers, which would have the charm of combining the elements of leadership that seem to be most popular into a universal model.

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