



Understanding Emergent Leadership Across Cultural Levels: A Theoretical Framework

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Abstract

Emergent leadership literature emphasises identifying and nurturing leaders at all organisational levels to foster team harmony and align efforts toward shared goals. Since past studies focused largely on individual traits predicting leadership emergence, the interplay of different cultural levels, such as national culture, organisational culture and team culture in relation to individuals emerging as emergent leaders remains unexplored. This study extends beyond discussing the antecedents and outcomes of emergent leadership and provides an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon through different cultural levels. It introduces an overarching theoretical framework proposing that a) the unfolding of emergent leadership occurs at four levels, which are organic emergence, non-normative emergence, conditional emergence and non-emergence, based upon the type of interaction between cultural levels and potential emergent leaders, b) for emergent leadership to occur, potential emergent leaders must have or display some of the compatible antecedents, c) the approval of higher-level authority figures at the organisational or national level is a precondition for the occurrence of emergent leadership in stratified teams.

Keywords: emergent leadership; individual traits; national culture; organisational culture; team culture

1. Introduction

With the increasing need to respond to new challenges and opportunities and the continuously changing state of the world of work, organisations have been shifting towards informal and flat structures that promote the emergence of non-hierarchical and lateral leadership styles, such as emergent leadership (Kaplan et al., 2016; McClean et al., 2018). Early scholars broadly define this phenomenon as a type of horizontal leadership occurring in a flat team structure, where a team member gains an influence over other team members and is perceived as a leader by them, despite not having any formal authority or a role (Schneider & Goktepe, 1983). However, the literature presents a lack of unanimity in terms of what emergent leadership is and how this phenomenon unfolds (Wolfram Cox et al., 2022). The literature consists of various definitions of emergent leadership, with some researchers using the concepts of formal and informal leadership emergence synonymously (Judge et al., 2002, 2004). Conversely, some researchers strongly separated the

two concepts and referred to emergent leadership as an individual or individuals having a leaderlike influence in the team without holding a formal position in the organisation (Barling & Weatherhead, 2016; McClean et al., 2018; Tabassum et al., 2023). Recently developed frameworks attempted to address the issues around construct clarity in emergent leadership research (e.g., Hanna et al., 2021; Wolfram Cox et al., 2022), laying the foundation for future research that is complemented by interdisciplinary views and complex social dynamics.

Since the first research on the topic was conducted by Murphy (1941), emergent leadership has drawn researchers' attention (Figure 1). The key role of emergent leaders in improving team performance and organisational outcomes makes this phenomenon particularly attractive to researchers as well as businesses (Spisak et al., 2015). For instance, global corporations including Google and General Electric recognise the critical role of emergent leaders for future success and growth while promoting emergent leadership through organisational leadership initiatives

(Maloney, 2020). Likewise, considering the everchanging and competitive nature of the contemporary business world and the vast amount of resources organisations spend on leadership-related efforts and training programmes, it is crucial to further our understanding of the elements that impact the emergence of emergent leadership (Westfall, 2019).

Emergent leadership has been studied in connection to several research areas, including communication (J. Jiang et al., 2015; Rennie et al., 2023), team dispersion and colocation (Charlier et al., 2016), Big-Five personality traits (particularly extroversion) (Landis et al., 2022), team performance and self-managing teams (Doblinger, 2022), leadership effectiveness and virtual teams (Hoch & Dulebohn, 2017), as well as across different academic fields, such as education (Leeming, 2019), healthcare (Grimsley et al., 2021), management (Andersson & Tengblad, 2016; Hu et al., 2019), and psychology (Reichard et al., 2011; Schaumberg & Flynn, 2012). However, academic sources provide limited insight into the emergence of emergent leaders in cultural settings; particularly overlooking the influence of different cultural levels in which individuals are embedded in how such leadership unfolds (Hanna et al., 2021). Yet, it has been evident in cross-cultural studies that individuals' preferences towards leadership behaviours and perception of the ideal leader vary across different cultures (House et al., 2004; Javidan et al., 2006).

Likewise, the implicit leadership theories (ILTs; Lord and Maher, 1991; Lord et al., 1984) have been mentioned frequently in the emergent leadership literature; suggesting that culture and the differences in cultural norms influence how leadership is constructed (Javidan et al., 2006; Lord et al., 2020). Focusing on culture on a more individual level, Javidan et al.'s (2006) proposal of culturally endorsed ILTs argue that people's views about the features of successful or unsuccessful leadership are shaped by the culture in which they are embedded. This suggests that these culturally endorsed ILTs could play a pivotal role in how emergent leadership unfolds across different cultures.

Overall, the role of culture in how emergent leadership unfolds remained an unexplored area within the emergent leadership sphere. Since no previous studies have examined culture and emergent leadership jointly, the broad leadership literature determines the basis of the current understanding of how leadership may occur across cultures and borders. However, the majority of studies on leadership and national culture have been conducted in the United States (Figure 2). These studies are carried out in non-diverse settings; usually involving college students, and fail to provide sufficient insight into the genders or races of their participants. This is a critical issue, as in a world where most organisations are becoming increasingly diverse, the narrow perspective provided by previous meta-analyses may be inadequate (see En-sari et al., 2011). Extant leadership research also overlooks the multidimensional nature of culture, with no studies focusing on different cultural levels (i.e., national culture, organisational culture, team culture) collectively.

1.1. Research Purpose and Contribution

Understanding the role of different cultural levels in the way leadership emerges is crucial for most organisations, specifically for the ones that operate across different geographies and have culturally diverse work teams (Ely, 2004). Organisations with multicultural workforces often face challenges in terms of building team synergy within their diverse teams, which adversely affects the efficiency of day-to-day operations and business outcomes (Jehn & Bezrukova, 2004). Scholars suggest that business success lies within the identification and development of effective leaders across all organisational levels, as these leaders can positively influence the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of their diverse team and motivate them to work towards a common organisational purpose (Butler et al., 2012; Osland et al., 2009). Correspondingly, emergent leaders can utilise their influential role to build harmony, thereby contributing to the growth of the company and even encouraging other leaders to emerge in the organisation (Zander et al., 2012). Likewise, employee behaviour is shaped by multiple internal and external factors, such as national culture, organisational culture, team culture as well as individual values and personality (Lok & Crawford, 2004; Smithikrai, 2008). Thus, providing an in-depth insight into how leadership emerges in relation to different cultural levels in which individuals are embedded has both academic and practical importance.

This dissertation, therefore, proposes an overarching theoretical framework to understand how the different cultural levels in which emergent leaders are embedded influence the way emergent leadership unfolds. So far, emergent leadership has not been explored across different cultural levels. To arrive at conclusions, the topic of emergent leadership must be thoroughly examined; not only its antecedents and outcomes but how it unfolds. Hence, the contributions of this dissertation are to:

- a) review and present a comprehensive analysis of research findings on emergent leadership.
- b) theorise about the influence of different cultures in which emergent leaders are embedded on how emergent leadership unfolds by examining national culture, organisational culture, team culture as well as the traits of potential emergent leaders.
- c) generate implications for future research on emergent leadership across different cultural levels and provide practical suggestions for organisations.

The research question is as follows: How does the culture in which emergent leaders are embedded influence the manner in which emergent leadership unfolds?

1.2. Outline

To gain an in-depth understanding of emergent leadership, an integrative literature review is conducted, which is followed by a brief review of national culture in a leadership context with an emphasis on different cultural levels in which

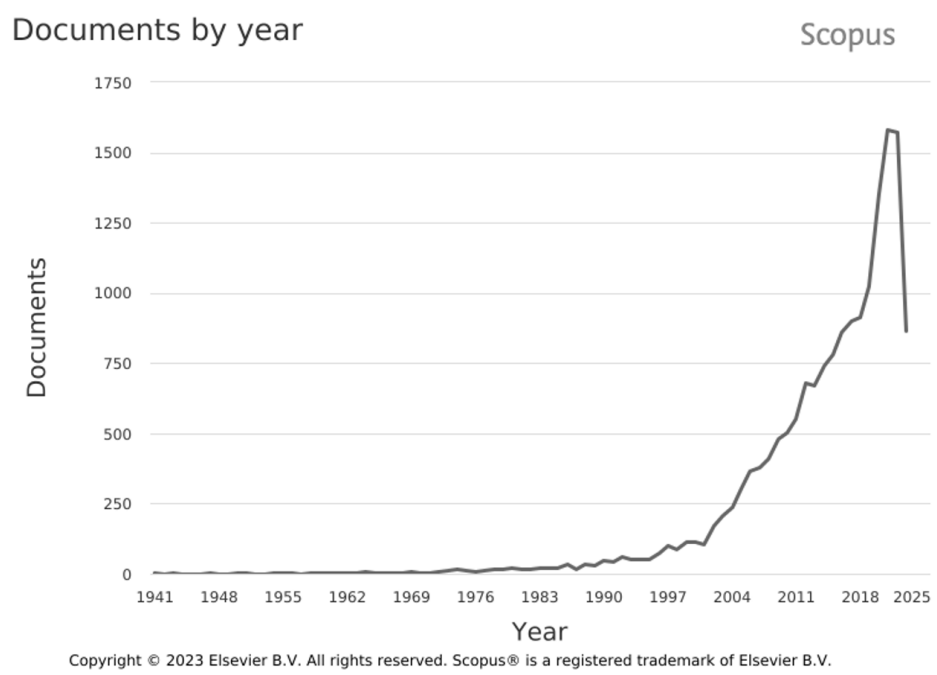


Figure 1: English language publications with article title, or abstract including “emergen*” AND “leader*”

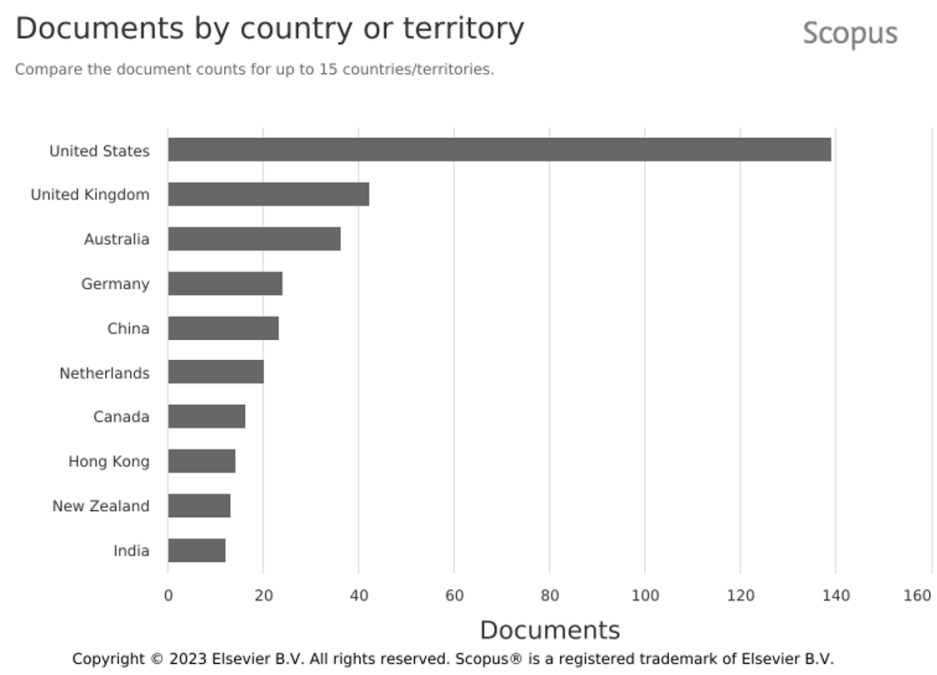


Figure 2: Publications with titles of "national culture" AND "leadership" published in the last 20 years in English language across countries.

individuals are embedded. To answer the research question, it is essential to explore the phenomenon of emergent leadership and how it occurs extensively. Since culture is a highly broad topic, it is explored briefly and the emphasis is placed on the areas that are relevant to answering the research question. Finally, the proposed framework is discussed in detail, followed by propositions and theoretical and practical implications.

2. Emergent Leadership

2.1. Operationalising Emergent Leadership

As outlined previously, the literature includes various definitions of emergent leadership since the term was first studied in 1941. Since then, the urgent need to operationalise emergent leadership has been pointed out by different scholars (Kickul & Neuman, 2000; Schneier & Goktepe, 1983) but the variations in definitions remained. While some studies

used broad and vague references such as “a leader emerging in a group” or “champions” (Lanaj & Hollenbeck, 2015; Loignon & Kodydek, 2022; Taylor, 2009), others studied it as situations in which no formal leader exists (Taggar et al., 1999), referred to it as being perceived as a leader (Kent & Moss, 1990, 1994) or used informal leader and emergent leader interchangeably (Landis et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2021).

Most contemporary scholars agree that emerging as an emergent leader differs from emerging as a formal leader through the characteristics of the individuals who are involved in the process (Ensari et al., 2011; Gerpott et al., 2019; Schlamp et al., 2021), arguing that while formal leadership tend to rely on the views and judgements of senior members, for emergent leaders their peers or themselves determine how the process unfolds (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Likewise, although both processes include different forms of social interactions such as granting and assuming leadership and creating influence over other members, emergent leaders do not have any formal positions in their organisations (Badura et al., 2022).

It can be argued that the lack of clarity and internal consistency around the definition of emergent leadership occurs because leadership emergence itself is seen as a mysterious magical process. For instance, Guastello and Bond Jr. (2007) state that leadership emergence studies often involve processes where “group participants might be measured on a number of traits that could be related to leadership behaviors. Members of the group then interact while carrying out a task. Then magic happens and a leader emerges from the group at the end of the discussion period” (p. 357).

So far, Hanna et al.’s (2021) review has been the most extensive attempt to conceptualise emergent leadership. Hence, to ensure conceptual clarity, for this review, Hanna et al.’s (2021) definition of emergent leadership, which is “the degree to which an individual with no formal status or authority is perceived by one or more team members as exhibiting leaderlike influence” (p. 82) is followed. With an aim to theorise about how different cultures in which emergent leaders are embedded influence how emergent leadership unfolds, this paper then builds onto Hanna et al.’s (2021) framework consisting of three key elements of emergent leadership, which are *lateral influence*, *unit of analysis* and *temporal duration*.

Lateral influence symbolises the emergent leader’s ability to cause considerable influence over their team, including a vast series of behaviours (e.g., taking responsibility, planning and organising tasks) as well as roles (e.g., manager, motivator and mediator) (Hanna et al., 2021). From early scholars to contemporary studies, lateral influence has been perceived as a fundamental aspect of emergent leadership, illustrating the importance of being perceived as leaderlike by others in conceptualising this phenomenon (Lanaj & Hollenbeck, 2015). Many researchers corroborated this element; however, it is important to note that this influence may be both momentary and long-term. This aspect is explained further under temporal duration, which is outlined below.

Unit of analysis demonstrates the individuality of emergent leadership, as more than one individual in a team may be viewed as an emergent leader, thereby teams can contain multiple emergent leaders. However, it is essential to emphasise that even when there are several different emergent leaders, the influence these leaders generate does not arise collectively, but rather emerges from each individual in the team. Correspondingly, research indicates that not only there could be multiple emergent leaders in a team, but also having more than one emergent leader could benefit the team by increasing team effectiveness (Ziek & Smulowitz, 2014).

Temporal duration symbolises the fluid span of emergent leadership, stressing that informal leaders can emerge temporarily, and their influence can change or fade over time. This is due to the fact that various elements could affect who and how long a person is perceived as a leader in the team. For instance, Landis et al. (2022) argue that extroverted emergent leaders’ influence over the group in which they operate may not always last long, as group members tend to stop perceiving them as leaders at some point and leave their leadership network over time. In their study with a sports team, Mertens et al. (2021) suggest that due to the competitiveness involved in these types of teams, leadership structures can change considerably throughout the season, thereby allowing players to engage in informal leadership roles at different times.

This review also identified another potential key element of emergent leadership: *knowledge dissemination*. Knowledge dissemination refers to the emergent leader’s role in contributing to or facilitating knowledge-building practices in the team. Comfort and Okada (2013) suggested that particularly in times of uncertainty, emergent leaders act as an enabler of a wide exchange of knowledge amongst the group. Another study argued that knowledge sharing acts as a key function for emergent leaders to be recognised and deferred by other members, leading the knowledge shared by the leader to become a property of a team and build a collective cognition over time (Murase et al., 2013). However, defining knowledge dissemination as a definitive element of this phenomenon may be erroneous, as the influence of emergent leaders may not always be in the form of imparting knowledge to others.

2.2. Other Leadership Constructs and Related Concepts

Before reviewing the topic of emergent leadership further, it is essential to highlight other leadership constructs, as emergent leadership has also been studied alongside other leadership concepts. Examples include assigned leadership, shared leadership, participative leadership, team leadership and self-leadership (Huang et al., 2010; Landis et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2021). These concepts overlap to some extent, however, have all demonstrated to be separate constructs, as illustrated in both theoretical (Hoch & Dulebohn, 2017) and empirical studies (Wickham & Walther, 2009).

Assigned leadership is a contrasting concept to emergent leadership which incorporates a more traditional and top-down organisational hierarchy (Paunova, 2015). Assigned

leaders are formally appointed by company management, receiving their leader status from top to bottom (Lucas, 2003). Summerfield (2014) suggests that the concept of emergent leadership encompasses the idea that leadership is not confined to only those holding titles like CEO, president, or chairperson, in other words, assigned leaders, thereby arguing that all individuals in the organisation can enact positive change.

Shared leadership on the other hand is similar to emergent leadership, as they are both informal leadership concepts, however, distinctively, shared leadership solely exists as a shared group level phenomenon (Pearce & Sims, 2000). D. Wang et al. (2014) define shared leadership as “an emergent team property of mutual influence and shared responsibility among team members, where they lead each other toward goal achievement” (p. 181). As per the definition, shared leadership differs from emergent leadership by emphasising the team generating a leaderlike influence collectively, as opposed to focusing on the individuals’ journey of emerging as a leader (D’Innocenzo et al., 2016). Yet, many researchers studied both leadership constructs together due to their complementary nature (Carte et al., 2006; Hoch & Dulebohn, 2017; Van Zyl & Hofmeyr, 2021).

Participative leadership refers to a type of democratic leadership style in which all team members are intentionally involved in organisational decision-making processes (Sashkin, 1976). Similar to emergent leadership participative leadership may induce the feeling of empowerment among team members (Ahearne et al., 2005), however, it has always been conceptualised as a team-level construct whereas emergent leadership posits that leadership occurs at an individual level and originates from the individual (i.e., unit of analysis, Hanna et al., 2021).

Team leadership is an umbrella term that refers to all leadership activities taking place in a team. Due to its broad definition, team leadership is analogous to emergent leadership and involves all lateral influences among individuals in a team (Hackman & Wageman, 2004). What differentiates the two concepts from each other is that, unlike emergent leadership, team leadership includes formal leadership processes and influences (van Knippenberg, 2017).

Self-leadership posits the notion that although human behaviour is often influenced by external forces such as a leader, actions are ultimately governed by intrinsic rather than extrinsic factors (Manz, 1986). The concept of internal regulation has been studied alongside self-leadership, as self-leadership is more concerned with how individuals influence and control their behaviours rather than examining their influence on other team members (Kanfer et al., 2008). This point is the greatest distinction between emergent leadership and self-leadership; because even though both constructs can unfold at the individual level, emergent leadership also has a collective level dimension, lateral influence (Hanna et al., 2021; Stewart et al., 2011).

2.3. Theoretical Frameworks and Conceptualisations

As outlined above, despite not being a new idea, emergent leadership has limited theoretical development and coherence, which causes difficulties in studying this concept. This paper identified several key publications that proposed comprehensive theoretical frameworks on emergent leadership. Although these papers shed some light on processes, antecedents and outcomes of emergent leadership, they either overlooked the role of macro-level complex mechanisms, such as culture, in how emergent leadership occurs or only provided suggestions for future research. However, it is critical to mention the key theories of emergent leadership that influence the framework of this paper, such as functional leadership theory (McGrath, 1962) and the relational models theory of group-level leadership emergence (Wellman, 2017).

Functional leadership theory (McGrath, 1962; Morgeson et al., 2010) posits that leadership can originate internally or externally and occur in formal or informal ways, thereby identifying emergent leadership as internally originated and informal. Scholars who studied this theory reported critical findings that provided further insight into the role of team dynamics in emergent leadership. For instance, teamwork behaviour was found to be a strong predictor of the emergence of emergent leadership (Luria & Berson, 2013), with Wolff et al. (2002) reinforcing this argument by suggesting that emergent leaders improve team task coordination by showing empathy towards team members. These findings underline the importance of team level considerations in emergent leadership which suggests that assessing team culture and its role in the unfolding of emergent leadership is pivotal.

The relational models theory of group-level leadership emergence (Wellman, 2017) suggests that there are two ways for leaders to emerge: In the first instance “groups converge on an authority ranking relational model, in which leadership influence is afforded to a small number of members who are perceived to possess the greatest individual leadership capabilities” (p. 597). In the second instance, “groups converge on a communal sharing relational model, in which leadership is viewed as a shared group responsibility” (p. 597). This theory is found particularly helpful for the current review, as it provides insight into different forms of emergent leadership as well as how and why these differences occur.

In terms of other relevant frameworks, in their analysis, Acton et al. (2019) focused on a narrow aspect of emergent leadership and exclusively studied the cognitive perceptions of leaders and followers. This framework followed a complexity perspective; however, it was entirely process-oriented and did not inform readers of the numerous contexts in which leaders can emerge. Moreover, they only reviewed psychology and management literature, thereby potentially missing relevant theory and research on emergent leadership in different disciplines.

Hanna et al.’s (2021) review added conceptual clarity to the construct’s disunited conceptualisations and developed a broad framework that helped elucidate the nomological

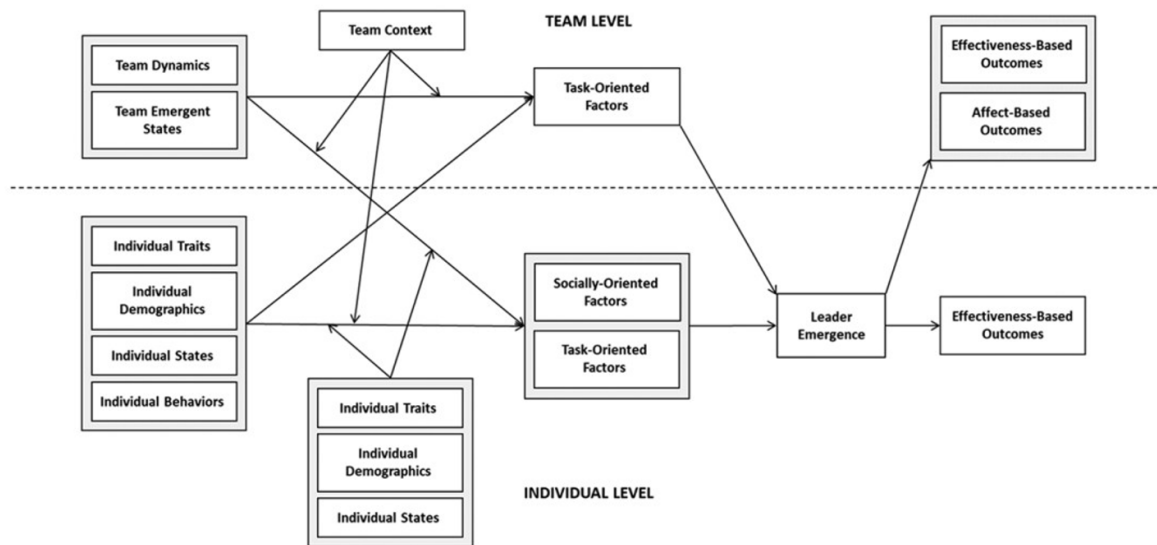


Figure 3: A High-Level Emergent Leadership Framework, Hanna et al. (2021).

network of this phenomenon by listing antecedents, consequences and mediators of emergent leadership (Figure 3). Differing from the previous papers, this review offered several diverse future research directions from methodological suggestions to theoretical questions, one of which has also provided the basis for this research. Another unique contribution of this review was that it pointed out the potential detrimental sides of emergent leadership, which is an idea that has not been mentioned in previous research. However, as suggested by the authors, Hanna et al.'s (2021) framework mainly plays an introductory role to further research and does not provide an in-depth insight into the occurrence of emergent leadership in relation to more complex social mechanisms, such as societies and cultures.

Addressing the previous calls, Tabassum et al. (2023) followed a social identity and implicit leadership perspective while offering a multi-level conceptualisation of emergent leadership (Figure 4). They adopted novel approaches by considering the dynamics beyond teams and looking into contextual attributes at organisational levels as well as examining the concepts of distributed leadership and empowering leadership. Nonetheless, their analysis of emergent leadership did not consider other macro-level actors and rather provided a detailed description of the relationship between emergent leadership and a range of factors including personal traits, skills, communication and self-perception.

As the latest review on the topic, Galvin et al. (2023) evaluated how leader emergence occurred in both formal and informal ways and studied individuals' potential as leaders and whether they would emerge as leaders (Figure 5). Their framework elaborated the notion of over-emergence which was introduced by Lanaj and Hollenbeck (2015); developed four types of leader emergence (over-emergence, congruent emergence, congruent non-emergence, and under-emergence); integrated leader emergence and effectiveness

and provided some contextual considerations by briefly touching upon cultural and organisational factors. Yet, in terms of broad cultural factors, they solely considered how a leader might be perceived by others in different cultures and only provided comparisons between leadership emergence in collectivistic and individualistic cultures. Although beneficial, this study provided limited insights into the complex nature of human behaviour by making generalisations based solely on one type of culture.

2.4. The Unfolding of Emergent Leadership

Emergent leadership has been studied alongside several concepts such as team effectiveness, self-managing team, self-organisation, followership, trait affective presence, degree-centrality, vocal delivery and knowledge sharing (Carte et al., 2006; X. Jiang et al., 2021; Yoo et al., 2022; Ziek & Smulowitz, 2014). A substantial body of research has offered insight into the antecedents, mediators or outcomes of emergent leadership, emphasising who tends to emerge as leaders (Badura et al., 2022; Judge et al., 2002; Kaiser et al., 2008). Surprisingly, it is less common for researchers to study how this phenomenon unfolds, with most studies in this context being on other leadership concepts (i.e., leadership development, Hart, 2016), or assessing the relationship between emergent leadership and certain personality traits, intrinsic factors, team environment or organisational practices separately (Cogliser et al., 2012; Johnson & Bechler, 1998; Reichard et al., 2011).

Although variations exist, there has been a mutual theme amongst most emergent leadership scholars, which is that the context for emergent leadership has critical importance and there is merit in evaluating team, organisational and individual level factors together. In particular, Wellman (2017) argues that leadership emergence research overlooks "the potential for group level dynamics in the leadership emergence process" (p. 597). Likewise, Kozlowski and Klein (2000)

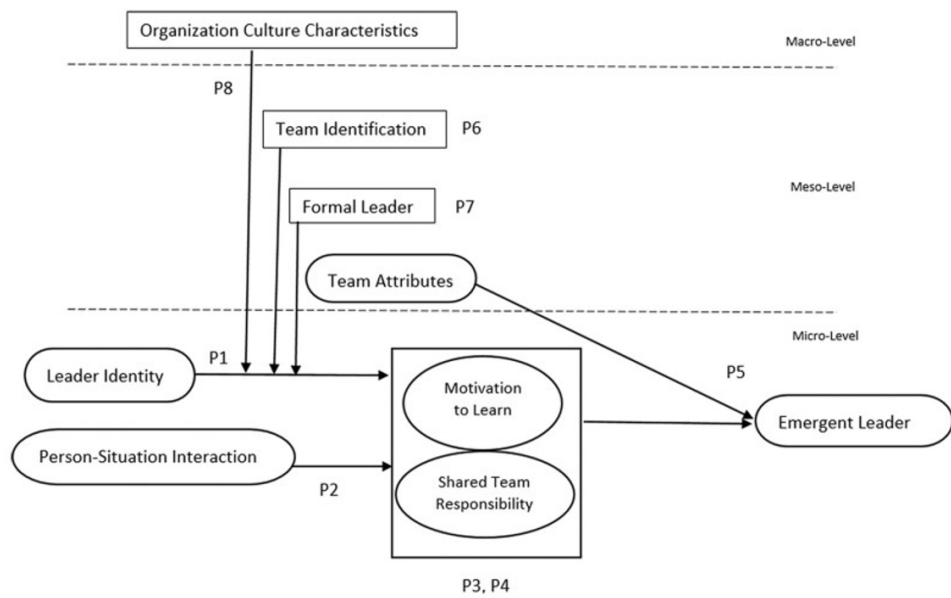


Figure 4: Emergent leadership: a multi-level overarching model, Tabassum et al. (2023).

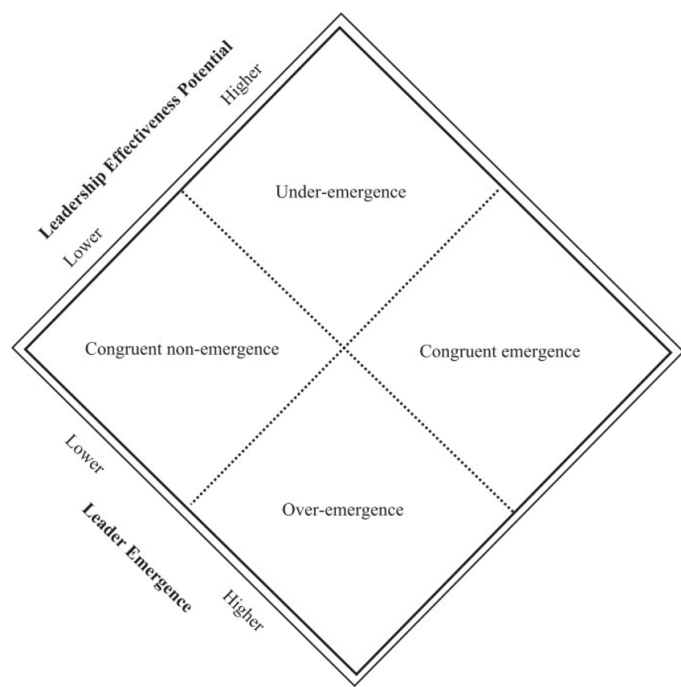


Figure 5: Typology of leader emergence, Galvin et al. (2023).

highlighted that “people in groups and subunits are exposed to common features, events, and processes. They interact, sharing interpretations, which over time may converge on consensual views of the group” (p. 10). Hence to address the research question and theorise about how emergent leadership unfolds, in other words, ‘the process’, the relevant articles and studies identified in the literature as well as the findings of current frameworks have been incorporated, summarised and categorised into three

main areas: organisational level, team level and individual level. 2.4.1. Organisational level Organisational level considerations are critical, as it is acknowledged in the literature that the leadership emergence process is not only situated within a broad context of individual and team level dynamics but also in formal organisational structures and practices. As Kozlowski et al. (2013) empha-

size “although it is not a core characteristic of emergence per se, contextual factors at the higher level shape and constrain the process dynamics of emergence” (p. 585).

In the organisational context, the concepts of *organisational sensemaking* and *organisational sense-giving* may help with understanding how emergent leadership unfolds (Weick et al., 2005). Organisational sensemaking refers to the process during which individuals perceive and eventually turn involved information into a clear narrative, with the narrative they form often mirroring their identity work (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). Organisational sense-giving refers to the process by which a formed meaning is passed onto others (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995). This indicates that the message organisations convey through their vision, strategy, environment and culture can directly affect individuals’ behaviour at work, including whether they emerge as leaders. Likewise, Tabassum et al. (2023) propose that “the characteristics of organization culture at a particular point in time moderates the relationship between leader identity and emergence of emergent leadership” (p. 11). They state that the overall positive impact of leader identity on the emergence of emergent leadership is higher when it is combined with an encouraging organisational culture; whereas the positive impact is weaker when organisations are not supportive of individuals to emerge as leaders (ibid). Hence, it can be argued that organisations’ ability to align around a vision, strategy, and culture as well as to build a supportive environment determines the emergence of emergent leaders. Likewise, organisational complexity has also been studied in this context and defined in three facets: (a) the degree of knowledge that is required to comprehend the organisational environment, (b) the degree of unforeseen upcoming changes in the environment, and (c) the degree of available resources in the environment (Sharfman and Dean, 1991). Eisenbeiß and Giessner (2012) argued that the complexity of an organisational environment is negatively correlated with the emergence of leaders, particularly the ones who adopt ethical approaches to leadership, within an organisation.

Practical suggestions for organisations include informing formal leaders, from junior managers to senior ones, on the importance of being in support of emergent leaders in the organisation (Virtaharju & Liiri, 2019). Erkić (2022) stated that organisations should focus on building a culture that demonstrates support towards innovation, open communication and diverse perspectives while encouraging a culture of learning and knowledge sharing. Knowledge dissemination is also mentioned by Yoo et al. (2022), who suggested that implementing knowledge-building practices across the organisation can encourage emergent leadership and ultimately lead to an improvement in organisational effectiveness. Similarly, drawing on Schneider’s (1975) seminal paper on organisational climate, Murase et al. (2013) argued that through wide-scale organisational practices and interactions between members, individuals’ viewpoints and knowledge emerge to become a property of the organisation. They also suggested that the shared viewpoints and knowledge result in a positive influence on individuals’ behaviours and al-

low members to function as a unified entity (ibid.). This is in line with Comfort & Okada’s (2013) postulations, stating that developing knowledge commons in the event of uncertainty allows a broad exchange of knowledge and skills and results in the emergence of leaders who will aid members in demonstrating an appropriate collective action against the crisis.

2.4.2. Team level

Team-level research focused on team dynamics, in particular, team emergent states, which are defined as “the properties that develop during team interactions and describe members’ attitudes and behaviour” (Fyhn et al., 2023, p. 1). Team-level exploration is particularly complex, due to the temporality of team phenomena, in other words, the fluid nature of these dynamics and properties. Nevertheless, many studies found team emergent states and team dynamics to affect leader emergence. For example, in their three-year ethnographic study, Smith et al. (2018) found that leadership emerged in line with the development of shared social identity and shared goals and evolved through interactions, processes and practices in a team. The impact of the team shared goals on leadership emergence is also reinforced by other scholars (Zhang et al., 2012). A supportive team environment in which members feel comfortable has also been reported to positively affect the possibility of the emergence of emergent leaders (DeRue et al., 2015; Mumford et al., 2008). Current evidence illustrates that not only do emergent leaders tend to emerge in teams with high levels of social support, but they can also promote a more supportive team environment and boost team performance (Crozier et al., 2017; Wellman et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2012).

When unconventional team structures are concerned, such as virtual or geographically dispersed teams, it is found that traditional leadership approaches have been less effective in improving team performance (Van Zyl & Hofmeyr, 2021). Likewise, Ziek and Smulowitz (2014) suggested that in virtual teams, emergent leaders who had sound communication skills and promoted creativity across the team lead to team members being more successful at completing tasks and projects. Accordingly, unconventional teams are reported as more hospitable for emergent leadership, as they tend to propose a self-organised, congruous team environment that has a high level of team connectedness and quality leader-member exchanges (Przybilla et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2012).

2.4.3. Individual level

The individual level or the self is consistently mentioned as a critical player in leadership emergence. In the context of individuals, Big Five personality traits are one of the most researched antecedents of emergent leadership. Extraversion, in particular, has been a highly frequently mentioned personality predictor of leadership (Serban et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2021). Although there is extensive literature indicating that extraversion can assist individuals in emerging as leaders

(Lee & Farh, 2019; Moutafi et al., 2007), especially in leaderless groups (Ensari et al., 2011), it should also be considered that the majority of these studies are conducted in the US or the UK, where ideal leaders are generally portrayed as extroverted individuals (Hofstede, 1980). Likewise, Mitchell et al. (2022) argue that one of the primary theoretical assumptions linking extroversion and leadership may be due to extroverts having high levels of communication skills. Other researchers suggested that extroverts have been theorised to emerge as leaders because they are also dominant, assertive and communicative (e.g., Hu et al., 2019; Judge et al., 2002), which allows them to influence and lead others (e.g., Nahrgang et al., 2009).

Agreeableness has also been found to aid individuals in emerging as leaders in leaderless groups (Cogliser et al., 2012; Walter et al., 2012). However, studies that claim otherwise also exist (McClean et al., 2018). This may be a good indicator of the importance of studying one's personality in the context of other external social dynamics, such as the dynamics of a team, organisation or country.

Further, emotional stability and conscientiousness are found to have positive or neutral effects on the emergence of formal and informal leaders (e.g., Cogliser et al., 2012; Colbert et al., 2012; Emery, 2012; Wolff et al., 2002). Other noticeable individual traits affecting emergent leadership include creativity (Guastello, 1995), self-efficacy (Kwok et al., 2018), cognitive intelligence (Judge et al., 2004; Li et al., 2012; Rubin et al., 2002) and openness (Emery et al., 2013).

Beyond personality traits, research suggests that individuals' ability to understand a situation and manage it appropriately, in other words, social intelligence, allows them to cater to the needs of the team members and exhibit leadership (Byrne & Bradley, 2007; Zaccaro et al., 1991). In terms of emergent leadership, the impact of social intelligence is less straightforward, as there is evidence indicating that being socially intelligent can be advantageous (Gruber et al., 2018) but may have no effect on being perceived as a leader by team members (Emery et al., 2011). Yet, it can still be concluded that a low level of social intelligence does not impede members from emerging as a leader, but a high level of social intelligence can increase the likelihood of leadership emergence.

Among the individual behaviours that play a role in the emergence of emergent leadership, consideration and task-oriented behaviours have been listed as important parts of emergent leadership (Cogliser et al., 2012). For instance, Mitchell and Bommer (2018) looked into prosocial motivation and impression management concerning emergent leadership and found that prosocial motivation was positively linked to leadership emergence, irrespective of the amount of task coordination behaviour exhibited, whereas impression management motives only predicted leadership emergence when accompanied with high levels of task coordination behaviour. Finally, high levels of attention given to members of a team were found related to emergent leadership (Gerpott et al., 2018).

3. Culture in which Individuals are Embedded

Culture is a long-studied area subject that has been defined in various ways. Schein (1992) defined culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems that have worked well enough to be considered valid and is passed on to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems". This definition was focused more on culture in an organisational context and led further definitions to be formed, such as Adler's (2023) definition which approaches culture from an individual values perspective and describes it as cultural values translating into norms, perspectives and ethics, and being reflected in the rules and actions of the society. In this review, the definition provided by Project GLOBE, in which culture was defined as "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectivities" is utilised to conceptualise national, organisational and team culture (House et al., 1999, p. 13).

There are ample studies analysing cultural differences in organisations on both conceptual and empirical levels, with most scholars approaching the topic of culture in the context of national culture. Before Nardon and Steers's (2009) review of national culture, there was a divergence in organisational research that failed to promote parsimony and generated difficulties in making comparisons between studies and samples. Nardon and Steers (2009) referred to this complexity as the *culture theory jungle* and converged six key cultural models that focused on different aspects of societal beliefs, values and norms (Hall, 1993; Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Schwartz, 1994; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2004). Since all models have significant elements to contribute to the understanding of culture in organisational leadership contexts, as opposed to advocating one model over another, the convergent model of core cultural dimensions (CCDs) is preferred to be used in this paper. CCDs consist of five common themes that are hierarchy vs. equality, individualism vs. collectivism, mastery vs. harmony, monochronism vs. polychronism, and universalism vs. particularism.

The first theme of hierarchy-equality attempts to explain how individuals within a society structure their power relationships, more specifically, analyses whether the power in that particular society is allocated hierarchically or in a more egalitarian manner. Hofstede's (1980) *power distance* defines it as what individuals believe in terms of appropriateness of either significant or negligible variations in authority and power between the members of a group or society. In such countries, individuals of these cultures believe that it is acceptable or normal for some members of a group or society to employ substantial control over others (i.e., managers having high levels of authority over their subordinates).

On the other hand, countries with *low power distance* promote a more egalitarian and participative view of leadership. Such a view supports democratic approaches, encouraging subordinates to actively take part in decision-making and cre-

ating a more suitable environment for emergent leadership to unfold. Schwartz (1994) reinforces Hofstede's (1980) postulations and classifies China, Turkey and Thailand as hierarchical cultures, and Denmark, Sweden and Norway as egalitarian cultures. The GLOBE research (House et al., 2004) evaluates power distribution in societies through the lens of gender and points out the handicaps of gender egalitarianism. As a related yet different view, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2004) studied how status and rewards are allocated in cultures, presenting "achievement" and "ascription" cultures. While achievement culture rewards individuals based on their attainment, ascription cultures emphasise seniority, class, age or gender in reward allocation. A recent cross-cultural study found that status was significantly effective in leadership emergence in both South Korean and American groups (Park, 2019). This indicates that how individuals receive their rewards, in this context, the reward being status, may differ, however status itself plays a critical role in emergent leadership in both ascription and achievement cultures.

In the context of emergent leadership, it can be assumed that in hierarchical countries with high power distance, there can be serious barriers to the emergence of emergent leadership in an organisation or work team. However, as Hanna et al. (2021) suggested, if individuals received approval from the authority figures in their workplace or team, there could be a chance for them to emerge as leaders. Accordingly, it is expected that the environment in egalitarian cultures would be more suitable for leadership emergence, with informal leadership attempts being acceptable and even favoured by society, organisations or team members. These assumptions are further analysed in the next section, where the overarching model proposed by the current review is introduced.

The second theme individualism-collectivism explores how different cultures carry out social organisation, with some being organised based on groups and others being organised based on individuals. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) introduced three types of cultures in this context: *individualistic* countries that regard individual interests and aims as more important than collective goals and interests; *collateral* cultures where individuals see themselves as a part of a macro-level group and *lineal* cultures that places equal emphasis on groups and individuals.

Although all five frameworks studied concepts related to individualism and collectivism, Hofstede (1980) played a pioneering role in the introduction of these concepts. Hofstede (1980) states that individualistic cultures and collectivistic cultures differ in terms of their teachings around the sense of responsibility, with individualistic cultures stressing independence, being responsible for oneself and not relying on family or organisations, whereas collectivistic cultures value group interests, being responsible for the greater good, societal harmony and family relationships.

In terms of emergent leadership, considering that it occurs at the individual level and originates from the individual (unit of analysis) and involves influencing team members (lateral influence), it can be argued that individualistic cultures are likely to be hospitable towards emergent leaders

by encouraging individuals to take initiative and lead others. As conformity is emphasised in collectivistic cultures, it is expected for such societies, organisations and teams to disapprove of informal and non-normative leadership approaches such as emergent leadership.

Mastery-harmony represents the differences across cultures in the degree to which individuals attempt to control their surroundings or choose to adapt to their environment. Cultures in high mastery believe that they should control, govern and change the environment around them, whereas cultures in high harmony believe that they should aspire to preserve harmony among the segments of the environment, including themselves (Dickson et al., 2012). Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) state that people in high-mastery cultures tend to be self-governed, assertive, competitive and achievement seekers. In contrast, people in high harmony cultures are likely to prioritise social ties and closeness over success and comfort to competitiveness. GLOBE (House et al., 2004) introduces the concepts of *humane orientation* (i.e., the extent to which society promotes being fair, caring and friendly towards others) and *assertiveness* (i.e., the degree to which people display assertive, dominant or aggressive behaviour in their social relationships in organisations or societies).

Assertiveness has been found linked to emergent leadership, as it requires taking initiative and being dominant at times to influence others (Hu et al., 2019; Judge et al., 2002). Hence, individuals who are in assertive cultures may effortlessly influence others through their dominant and assertive attitude, while also receiving support when they attempt to take on leadership in informal ways. Humane-oriented cultures, on the other hand, may reject emergent leadership, unless the leadership occurs in a way that is harmonious with the national or organisational culture (i.e., an emergent leader with a modest, altruistic attitude).

Monochronism vs. polychronism focuses on time orientation, with House et al. (2004) and Hofstede (2001) studying cultures' perceptions of time and the degree to which cultures are future-oriented and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2004) assessing individuals' perceptions of the flow of time. Another important aspect of this theme is its focus on long term, future-oriented behaviours and rewards across cultures, where delayed gratification is encouraged or discouraged by society (House et al., 2004). Hall (1993) approached time orientation with a perspective of work activities, providing instances that monochronic cultures are likely to take on one task at a time, while polychronic cultures encourage focusing on multiple tasks simultaneously. This view is perhaps the most useful for leadership and management studies, as it can be argued that individuals' perceptions of the future are essentially an indication of their needs for achievement and perspectives on assuming control (Nardon & Steers, 2009).

Monochronistic cultures may expect individuals to be highly committed to their job as well as the organisation while displaying a single-minded approach towards their tasks and projects and focusing solely on individual tasks. Thus, monochronistic cultures may not tolerate emergent

leadership given that it involves individuals taking on additional tasks and roles in their team in a non-normative manner. As emergent leadership requires individuals to adopt an interactive approach to tasks, projects and work-related planning, a polychronic country will provide a more suitable environment for individuals to naturally assume leadership.

Universalism-particularism is the last theme of Nardon and Steers' (2009) framework which is concerned with the rules as a method of minimising uncertainty in societies. In principle, in universalistic cultures, there is a tendency to adhere to and respect formal and societal rules, and regulations as well as the law and bureaucracy. This tendency mainly stems from uncertainty avoidance, which can be described as the desire to control unanticipated actions or behaviours in society. In the context of business, universalistic culture takes the form of keeping constant and thorough records of dealings and organisational practices, while carrying out all processes "by the book". By contrast, particularistic cultures tend to use influential individuals, as opposed to notional and impersonal rules and regulations, as a method of controlling society. This culture of social control can be observed in families, organisations even in friendships in the form of influential individuals governing less influential ones. The longevity of this type of influence is secured by not rules but by mutual trust between parties. Individuals believe that trust should have precedence over formal rules and that some level of flexibility is required in bureaucracy.

Individuals assuming leadership in universalistic cultures could meet with resistance or be disapproved, due to the uncertain and ambiguous nature of emergent leadership. If a member were to attempt to take on leadership roles informally, this was expected to be done by following a formal procedure (i.e., issuing a contract, and providing a clear job description).

However, such formal agreement may also grant the individual "a formal status or authority" which contradicts the definition of emergent leadership (Hanna et al., 2021). Particularistic countries are expected to welcome emergent leaders and promote emergent leadership, considering that the culture relies on influential individuals and supports informal approaches and dynamics.

4. Methodology

The problem outlined above is addressed by conducting an integrative review of the literature on emergent leadership and culture. Integrative literature reviews involve reviewing, critically assessing, and synthesising respective literature on a certain topic in an integrative manner to create new frameworks and approaches on the matter (Torraco, 2005; Webster & Watson, 2002). Scholars underline the particular suitability of this topic when extant research has not been systematically analysed and integrated and when the problem area is relatively novel and unexplored (Snyder, 2019). Since this paper's area of focus fits the abovementioned description, in this paper, the literature on emergent leadership and culture

is reviewed, assessed and synthesised into a framework that presents an overarching view of the topic.

This paper consists of one main body of literature, which is the literature on emergent leadership from an organisational, team-level and individual perspective. This is followed by a brief review of culture, in particular of national culture, which altogether provides a multifaceted understanding of emergent leaders who are embedded in the culture of their team, of their organisation and of the society in which they live. The decision to explore the topic of culture on both macro and micro level dimensions stemmed from the suggestions of scholars who indicated that leadership emergence should be studied as a socially constructed process involving complex social mechanisms and organisational actors (Virtaharju & Liiri, 2019; Wu et al., 2021). Likewise, ILTs suggest that people construct cognitive models of reality and employ these preexisting ideas to understand their environment and form their actions, which also extends to how they exhibit leadership behaviours (Den Hartog et al., 1999). Thus, as opposed to solely evaluating national culture and making macro-level generalisations, emergent leaders are analysed as individuals who are embedded in different cultural levels. All cultural levels are later evaluated across the main elements of emergent leadership that were outlined above to reach conclusions on the matter.

In terms of the process for selecting and reviewing the literature, Dwertmann & van Knippenberg's (2021) categorisation approach to integrative reviews was adopted. Subsequently, Elsbach and van Knippenberg's (2020) suggestions have guided the process of synthesising insights gained from the review to develop a new perspective on the literature. Since the ultimate aim of this dissertation is to theorise about the influence of different cultures in which individuals are embedded on how emergent leadership unfolds, emergent leadership literature has been reviewed thoroughly. Broad search terms ("emergen*" AND "leader*") utilised on SCOPUS, including all papers published before July 2023. It is believed that the broad search terms would capture publications focusing on relevant concepts (leadership emergence, teams without assigned leaders) more effectively than narrow search terms.

Additionally, the references of prior reviews on emergent leadership have been manually checked to ensure utmost comprehensiveness (Badura et al., 2022; Badura et al., 2018; Hanna et al., 2021; Wolfram Cox et al., 2022)

The database search resulted in a total of 16,767 items. After deletions of duplicates by utilising Zotero software, 16,660 items remained for title screening. The titles of all 16,660 papers were scanned and publications that were explicitly disparate from emergent leadership were removed. Following that, a total of 519 papers remained and underwent abstract screening. The author further screened each paper to ensure that they met two criteria. Firstly, publications that were directly associated with emergent leadership or leadership emergence research were included. For instance, if a publication used the keywords 'emergence' and 'leadership' in its abstract, but not related to each other, the

paper was omitted. Publications that focus on markedly different leadership concepts, such as assigned leadership, with no insight into emergent leadership were also removed. Secondly, any publications that were focused on nonhuman subjects were omitted (see Pugliese et al., 2015; Sueur, 2011; C. Wang et al., 2017).

The succeeding content analysis was conducted iteratively, and 134 records were coded using a coding criterion that has been developed to capture a comprehensive view across eight categories: the year of publication, country of publication, type of national culture dimensions, theories, research design, sample, measure(s) (if applicable) and conclusions (at individual, team and organisation level). While listing the country of publication and assessing the type of national culture dimensions to which publications belong, Nardon and Steers's (2009) core cultural dimensions (CCDs) of individualism-collectivism, hierarchy-equality, mastery-harmony, monochronism-polychronism and universalism-particularism is used as guidance.

5. Emergent Leadership across Cultural Levels: An Overarching Framework

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2004) suggest that culture consists of layers "like an onion" and that analysing different layers is necessary to understand it. Likewise, based on the literature review, this paper proposes a theoretical framework that is shaped by the analysis of different levels of culture (i.e., individual, team, organisational and national culture) and theorises about the manner in which emergent leadership unfolds in such settings.

The Emergent Leadership across Cultural Levels (ELCL) framework (Figure 5) draws on Wellman's (2017) relational models leadership theory and proposes a novel approach by incorporating all cultural levels in which individuals are embedded while attempting to understand the emergent leadership phenomenon by evaluating the interaction between potential emergent leaders and each cultural level. It is a socially oriented framework that addresses earlier calls (Hanna et al., 2021; Tabassum et al., 2023), elaborates on recent findings (Galvin et al., 2023) and contributes to the extant theory while presenting a unique perspective that emphasises the role of different cultural levels in how emergent leadership unfolds. It is also believed to provide valuable insights and directions for future research due to the pioneering role it plays in intercultural emergent leadership research. In particular, this framework:

- a) allows emergent leadership to be understood in complex social contexts involving different levels of cultural actors; the national culture in which potential emergent leaders live, the organisational culture in which potential emergent leaders operate, the team culture to which potential emergent leaders belong and the individual culture which consists of the attitudes and personality traits of potential emergent leaders.
- b) classifies the unfolding of emergent leadership at four levels: organic emergence, nonnormative emergence, conditional emergence and non-emergence based upon the kind of interaction between cultural levels and potential emergent leaders.
- c) presents practical implications for organisations regarding managing diverse workforces and ways of facilitating emergent leadership.

The ELCL framework categorises culture across three main cultural levels (i.e., national culture, organisational culture, team culture), discusses the role of individual features of potential emergent leaders (i.e., personality traits and attitudes) and proposes four different ways emergent leadership may unfold in relation to the interaction between cultures in which individuals are embedded. All components of this framework are explained, starting from an individual-level analysis of potential emergent leaders, followed by considerations of national, organisational and team culture and finally a detailed description of the four different ways that emergent leadership may unfold.

5.1. Potential Emergent Leaders

Following Trompenaars' (2004) onion analogy, the core of the onion is the individual culture which is an amalgam of the values, experiences, assumptions, knowledge, personality traits and many other factors that shape the individual as a person.

Wellman (2017) proposes that individuals emerge in a team based on either their leader prototypical qualities (i.e., intelligence, dedication, charisma, dominance) or group prototypical qualities (i.e., kindness, empathy, warmth, fairness). This first option generally occurs in more traditional and formal leadership arrangements, whereas the latter is more likely to occur in informal leadership styles, including emergent leadership. It is important to note that the literature has been more inclined to examine the positive aspects of emergent leaders, emphasising leaders who promote shared cognition, compassion, egalitarian values and participative decision-making (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Morgeson et al., 2010). This paper recognises that emergent leadership may not always lead to positive outcomes, however, since the current literature provided little insight into the negative sides of this phenomenon, the ELCL model also focuses on the individual antecedents that are positively correlated with emergent leadership.

Considering that one of the key elements of emergent leadership, unit of analysis, underlines that this phenomenon originates from an individual and occurs at an individual level (Kickul & Neuman, 2000), the ELCL framework recognises the pivotal role of individuals in how emergent leadership unfolds. Drawing upon Wellman's (2017) postulations and extant literature on emergent leadership, this framework lists individual-level antecedents that facilitate or have a positive relationship with emergent leadership under the umbrella term of compatible individual antecedents (Table 1).

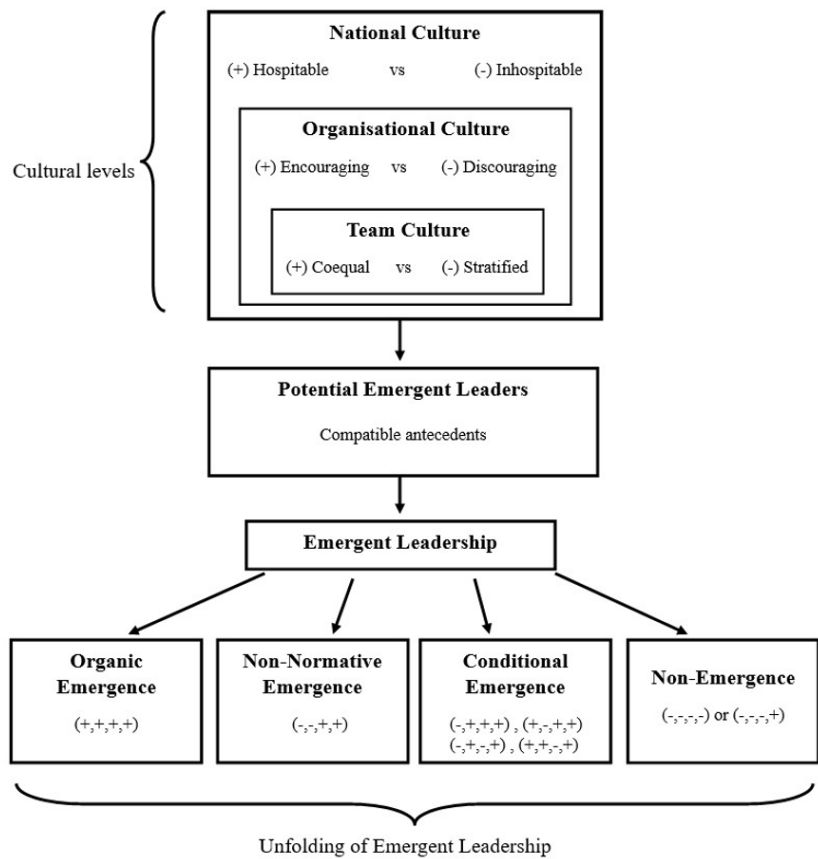


Figure 6: The Overarching Framework of Emergent Leadership across Cultural Levels.

Emergent leadership being an individual-level phenomenon also highlights that individuals assume a leadership role on their own account (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Given that emergent leaders do not have any formal responsibility over the team or task outcomes, it can be theorised that individual-level antecedents that are positively linked to leadership emergence determine whether an individual chooses to assume leadership as well as whether emergence leadership occurs.

From a motivational point of view, individuals informally stepping up as leaders and taking on additional responsibilities are a form of effort that arises from individuals themselves (DeRue et al., 2015), thereby requiring prosocial motivation (Mitchell & Bommer, 2018). Moreover, it is critical to highlight the predictor role of certain personality traits (i.e., assertiveness, extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability and conscientiousness) in the emergence of emergent leaders. Thus, the model proposes that:

Proposition 1. For emergent leadership to occur, potential emergent leaders must have or display some of the compatible antecedents.

It is essential to highlight that this proposition does not undermine the key role of extrinsic factors, in particular, team culture, organisational culture and national culture in which individuals are embedded in how emergent leadership un-

folds. It rather pinpoints that this phenomenon occurs at an individual level (Hanna et al., 2021), hence, unless individuals have some of the compatible antecedents, emergent leadership is unlikely to occur. Instances where individuals have compatible antecedents, however, external social barriers towards emergent leadership exist are discussed in the following sections.

5.2. National Culture

As the review on national culture and the latest, well-cited framework of core cultural dimensions (Nardon & Steers, 2009) illustrated, how societies structure power relationships, carry out social organisation, perceive time as well as the degree to which they attempt to control their surroundings and minimise uncertainty differ. While some countries have similar tendencies and preferences, some sit at opposite ends of the cultural spectrum. Likewise, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) state that national culture is distinctive, as it is formed based on unique combinations of the language, religion, values, perceptions and behaviour of the people of that nation.

In the context of this paper, it is believed that there is merit in reevaluating Nardon and Steers’ (2009) five dimensions through the lens of emergent leadership and categorising them as *hospitable* and *inhospitable* cultures for emergent leaders to emerge. Hospitable cultures refer to the cultures

Table 1: List of Compatible Individual Antecedents

Compatible Individual Antecedents	Key References
Extraversion	Judge et al., 2002
Agreeableness	Cogliser et al., 2012
Assertiveness	Hu et al., 2019; Judge et al., 2002
Conscientiousness	Cogliser et al., 2012; Lord et al., 1986
Creativity	Ensari et al., 2011
Social intelligence	Walter et al., 2012
Communication skills	Hu et al., 2019; Judge et al., 2002
Self-esteem	Andrews, 1984; Ellis et al., 1988
Emotional Stability	Judge et al., 2002
Openness	Emery et al., 2013
Self-efficacy	Kwok et al., 2018; Serban et al., 2015
Empathy	Wolff et al., 2002
Prosocial motivation	Mitchell and Bommer, 2018
Cognitive ability	Kickul and Neuman, 2000
Openness to experience	Kickul and Neuman, 2000
Self-monitoring	Dobbins et al., 1990
Positive body language	Sanchez-Cortes et al., 2010, 2012
Sense of achievement	Schlamp et al., 2021
Relation-oriented communication	Gerpott et al., 2019
Leadership Competency	Truninger et al., 2021
Warmth	DeRue et al., 2015
Leader-member exchange	Zhang et al., 2012

in which emergent leaders are likely to emerge and receive support. By contrast, inhospitable cultures refer to the cultures in which emergent leaders are unlikely to emerge and be supported. While hospitable cultures are located on the positive side of the spectrum, inhospitable cultures are located on the negative side of the spectrum. The full list of hospitable and inhospitable cultures is below (Table 2).

The ELCL framework acknowledges the dominant nature of national culture, proposing that national culture influences the culture of organisations that operate in that particular country (Lindholm, 2000). Research underpins that organisational cultures are usually a reflection of the values, beliefs and ideologies of the founders of the company, especially during the initial development stage (Robbins, 2003).

National culture not only affects the organisational culture but also the employees of those organisations (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2004). Given that individuals need to adapt to organisational culture to some extent, their behaviour is bound to be influenced accordingly (Thomas, 2008). When these individuals perform their jobs in a team, the team culture also gets affected by their behaviour (Jung & Hong, 2008), thereby linking national culture, organisational culture, team culture and the individual. It is based on this argument that the ELCL model theorises about the interaction between the cultural levels and individuals (in this case, potential emergent leaders).

Proposition 2. The manner in which emergent leadership unfolds is determined by the type of interaction between cultural levels and potential

emergent leaders who are embedded in those cultures.

Research corroborates that hospitable national culture may facilitate emergent leadership; however, it may not be sufficient to solely determine whether emergent leadership occurs or how it occurs (Steers et al., 2012). Although it is evident that national culture influences organisational and team cultures as well as individuals operating in them (Dickson et al., 2012), the social dynamics of the organisation and team, alongside individual characteristics should be entered into the equation when theorising about how emergent leadership unfolds.

5.3. Organisational Culture

Organisations convey messages through their vision, strategy, structure and reward systems, all of which can directly affect individuals' behaviour at work (Molina-Azorín et al., 2017; Turner et al., 2017), including whether they emerge as leaders (Meyer et al., 2005). These messages altogether form the organisational culture (Dickson et al., 2009), which can both encourage and discourage non-prototypical individuals from emerging as leaders. Correspondingly, some researchers advise organisations to recalibrate their structures and reward systems in a way that would facilitate emergent leadership in the organisation, in particular among the individuals who would not typically emerge as leaders (Wolfram Cox et al., 2022).

The ELCL model argues that a comprehensive approach involving an analysis of multiple cultural levels is warranted.

Table 2: List of hospitable and inhospitable cultures at a national level, Nardon and Steers (2009).

Hospitable	Inhospitable
Egalitarian	Hierarchical
Individualistic	Collectivistic
High in Mastery	Monochronic
High in Harmony	Universalistic
Polychronic	
Particularistic	

As the review on emergent leadership outlined, some scholars adopted a social constructionist perspective which states that leadership stems from contextual collective attempts in a sense-making process (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Drath et al., 2008). During these processes, members tend to link ideal leadership with several actions, individuals or practices in organisational settings. Certain scholars have highlighted that the ideal leadership behaviour does not have a unique or exceptional character but is instead composed of typical organisational activities and procedures (Crevani et al., 2010; Larsson & Lundholm, 2010), highlighting the significant role of mundane, day-to-day organisational actions.

The constructionist view places individuals in the centre (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010), however, it provides limited insight into the social contexts and external actors, in other words, the “situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behavior” (Johns, 2006, p. 386). On the other hand, researchers who investigated the role of organisational culture in leadership emergence argued that organisational contexts act as the primary source for the emergence of leaders, downplaying the influence of individuals’ own characteristics and other external social factors on leadership (Virtaharju & Liiri, 2019). The ELCL model recognises that merging previous perceptions and approaching the matter comprehensively is key while acknowledging that organisational contexts are beyond the situations and norms that solely impact leader effectiveness or that potential emergent leaders must conform (Luria et al., 2019; Tett & Guterman, 2000). Thus, based on prior research outcomes, the model introduces two categories of organisational culture which represent positive and negative organisational cultures that are either *encouraging* or *discouraging* towards emergent leadership respectively.

Encouraging organisational culture refers to the attitude and environment within an organisation that functions as a unified entity (Schneider, 1975), works towards building a shared vision and offers a supportive environment in which organisation-wide knowledge sharing, creativity and communication are promoted (Comfort & Okada, 2013; Erkcic, 2022). Conversely, in organisations with discouraging organisational culture traditional structures and complexity are observed, where there is a lack of knowledge-sharing, innovation and available sources for individuals to informally assume leadership (Eisenbeiß & Giessner, 2012; Sharfman & Dean, 1991). In line with Wellman’s (2017) arguments,

organisations with encouraging culture send important cues to members emphasising that they are similar, whereas organisations with discouraging culture stress the differences among individuals who operate in that organisation.

5.4. Team Culture

Relational models leadership theory (Wellman, 2017) suggests that when members decide how leadership should be performed in the team, they either adopt the authority ranking model, which refers to a hierarchical approach where individuals assess all members and defer to the ones whom they perceive to have the most leadership qualities. In this model, the responsibility is solely given to the leaders and others are expected to support the leader, such as the military and police departments. Alternatively, members adopt the communal sharing model, which refers to all members of the team being perceived as equally valuable with relevant insights that can contribute to the team. This model emphasises consensus as opposed to deferring to the authority figure. Teams with informal and flat structures (i.e., holacracy at Zappos), can be a good example of this model (Perschel, 2010). This theory highlights that decision-making is directly influenced by the pressures within the wider environment while explaining how leadership unfolds within teams. In the teams that adopt the authority ranking model, leaders emerge based on their distinctive qualities. In contrast, in teams with communal sharing model, leaders emerge based on the similarities between them and other team members (Wellman, 2017).

The review on emergent leadership highlighted two main points on a team level. Firstly, when teams have a shared social identity and vision, this generates a suitable environment for individuals to emerge as leaders (Smith et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2012). Secondly, a supportive team environment in which members feel comfortable facilitates the emergence of emergent leaders (DeRue et al., 2015; Mumford et al., 2008).

Building on Wellman’s (2017) postulations and prior findings in the literature, the ELCL model presents two categories in which teams can be explored in the context of the focus of this paper. The first category of team culture is specified as *coequal* culture, where team members are seen as equals, shared goals are communicated effectively, decision-making occurs democratically, and creativity and initiative-taking are encouraged. The second category is *stratified* culture, refer-

ring to teams adopting hierarchical structures where members are expected to show respect to the leader and tend to behave and work according to the leader's orders with little room for individuals to "step up" or behave outside the norms. Coequal team culture is located on the positive side of the spectrum, whereas stratified team culture is located on the negative side of the spectrum.

Proposition 3. For emergent leadership to occur in stratified teams, the approval of higher level authority figures at the organisational or national level are needed.

As described above, the culture in stratified teams is unlikely to organically provide ordinary team members with the opportunity to emerge as a leader. Moreover, it is expected such teams to show resistance towards a junior employee attempting to assume leadership roles, as this could be perceived as disrespecting the norms and senior members of the team and undermining the social dynamics of the team. However, the overarching perspective of the ELCL model recognises the possibility of certain cases where emergent leaders are approved by a high-level hierarchical figure and allowed to undertake informal leadership roles. This will be evaluated in the following sections when *conditional emergence* is discussed.

5.5. The Unfolding of Emergent Leadership

As noted previously, the literature on emergent leadership has predominantly identified antecedents that are associated with individuals emerging as leaders as well as team-level dynamics that affect emergent leadership (Galvin et al., 2023; Hanna et al., 2021). However, researchers have yet to reveal the influence of more macro-level elements, such as national culture and organisational culture, in the manner in which this phenomenon unfolds. Considering the evidence indicating that certain social dynamics may favour the emergence of specific types of leaders (Grint, 2005), it is expected to observe different leadership types emerge in different social contexts. Congruous with prior papers on emergent leadership (Badura et al., 2022) and the wider organisational literature (Johns, 2006), this framework suggests that based on the interactions between different cultural levels (i.e., national, organisational and team) and individual antecedents, how emergent leadership unfolds can be divided into four categories: *Organic emergence*, *non-normative emergence*, *conditional emergence* and *non-emergence*.

5.5.1. Organic Emergence

Organic emergence refers to the instances in which all cultural levels are on the positive side of the spectrum intertwining harmoniously, and the potential emergent leaders have compatible antecedents that will allow them to organically assume leadership responsibilities. To elaborate, when national culture is hospitable, organisational culture is encouraging, team culture is coequal and potential emergent leaders have compatible antecedents that are positively

linked to emergent leadership, emergent leadership is expected to occur organically. In this instance, from the macro-level dynamics to individuals, the environment and conditions are highly suitable for potential emergent leaders to assume leadership.

Proposition 4. When all cultural levels are on the positive side of the spectrum, and potential emergent leaders have compatible traits and consonant values, organic emergence occurs.

5.5.2. Non-normative Emergence

Non-normative emergence refers to situations where there are barriers to emergent leadership in national culture and organisational culture, yet the team culture is coequal, allowing potential emergent leaders with compatible antecedents to emerge as leaders. For instance, building on the example of Soluk and Kammerlander (2021), a socially intelligent, open, creative and extroverted individual with sound communication skills works in the technology team of a family-owned German firm located in Germany. The technology team has been formed recently as part of the company's digital transformation initiatives. Thus, the culture in this team is in contrast with the company's rule-oriented and rigid organisational culture (Nardon & Steers, 2009), as it has an agile and egalitarian culture that promotes initiative-taking. In this case, it is argued that the support of the team would enable the individual to assume informal leadership responsibilities, despite the barriers at the macro level. However, since the national culture and the company culture would strictly prefer individuals to carry out their work "by the book" (Hofstede, 1980), the individual can only emerge as an emergent leader with the support of their team and, more importantly, by going against the macro-level (national and organisational) norms.

Proposition 5. Even when national culture and organisational culture are on the negative end of the spectrum, if team culture is on the positive side and potential emergent leaders have compatible antecedents, non-normative emergence occurs.

5.5.3. Conditional Emergence

Compared to non-normative emergence, in conditional emergence potential emergent leaders have a greater level of support, which comes either from an organisational or national level or team level and organisational and national level. Hence, when the individual emerges as an emergent leader, they do not go against the norms per se. However, since all cultural levels are not in the position of empowering or enabling emergent leadership, in this instance, the emergent leader remains limited in where and how they operate, and their leadership emerges based on conditions. These conditions include their leadership being blessed by high-level influential leaders of the organisation or nation. The Fuyao Glass and GM affair in 2014, where a Chinese

glass manufacturer bought a former General Motors assembly plant in Ohio (Gawley & Dixon, 2020), can be a suitable example of how conditional emergence may occur. In this instance, adhering to rigid rules and formal procedures is a part of hierarchical and collectivistic Chinese culture, where all business operations must be approved and decided by the head of the organisation (Nardon & Steers, 2009). Conversely, American culture adopts egalitarian and individualistic approaches to business (Hofstede, 1980). When Fuyao bought the assembly plant, most of the workers were Americans who previously worked in an organisation that was influenced by American values. After this change, although workers were still located in the US, the organisational culture was bound to adapt to Fuyao's organisational culture (discouraging). In such settings, considering that the potential emergent leader's team has a coequal culture, the individual may only emerge as a leader on the condition of receiving approval from the high-level authority figures of the organisation.

Proposition 6. Conditional emergence may occur in three ways a) when national culture is positive, organisational culture is negative, team culture is positive and potential emergent leaders have compatible antecedents b) when national culture is negative, but organisational culture is positive, team culture is positive and potential emergent leaders have compatible antecedents c) when national and organisational culture are on the positive side of the spectrum (i.e., hospitable, encouraging respectively), potential emergent leaders have compatible antecedents but team culture is negative.

5.5.4. Non-Emergence

Non-emergence refers to the situations in which emergent leadership does not occur or is unlikely to occur. The literature indicates that emergent leadership originates from the individual, but also is affected by external social contexts (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Goktepe & Schneier, 1988). Given that one of the key elements of emergent leadership is being perceived as leaderlike by others (Hanna et al., 2021), without other members at the team level or organisational level viewing the individual as a leader, one of the main conditions of emergent leadership cannot be fulfilled. This proposition is also in line with Galvin et al.'s (2023) under-emergence, when well-equipped leaders who are not perceived as leaderlike fail to emerge as leaders. Hence, the model theorises that:

Proposition 7. When all cultural levels are on the negative side of the spectrum, creating a combination of inhospitable, discouraging and stratified cultures, irrespective of whether potential emergent leaders have compatible antecedents, non-emergence occurs.

6. Conclusion

This paper extended the emergent leadership literature and equipped researchers, employees and business leaders with the knowledge that will allow them to better understand the dynamics involved in the emergence of emergent leadership across different cultural levels. In particular, the ELCL model proposed that for emergent leadership to occur, potential emergent leaders must have or display some of the compatible antecedents and how emergent leadership unfolds is determined by the type of interaction between cultural levels and potential emergent leaders who are embedded in those cultures.

Acknowledging the limitations concerning the assumptions of the ELCL framework is crucial. Primarily, it is accepted that leader emergence can be conceptualised in a variety of ways and can take place over a spectrum. Secondly, culture is fluid and norms attributed to societies may change over time (see Alkan et al., 2023). Further, cultures could be categorised in numerous ways along a spectrum, thereby identifying a culture as positive or negative in the context of leadership emergence may not always be straightforward. However, by using the most comprehensive cultural framework consisting of influential cross-cultural leadership studies which examined the relationship of cultural practices and values at the level of society and organisations (Nardon & Steers, 2009), and basing the model on key findings of the relevant literature, these limitations were attempted to be minimised.

Practical implications for organisations include utilising the knowledge of what is valued in a leader across different cultures in forming organisational learning and development practices, thereby enhancing cultural fluency across the organisation and increasing retention (Dorfman et al., 2004). Employers and managers can be trained on the characteristics of the national culture, organisational culture, and team culture in which they operate, while also learning about compatible individual antecedents of emergent leadership. This may be even more crucial in virtual teams, considering that the lack of physical interaction may generate an additional barrier for members to understand and interpret each other's messages.

Additionally, diverse perspectives and critiques of this paper will provide a foundation for future research in emergent leadership. Since the ELCL model is developed based on secondary research, its propositions and conclusions must be tested through both qualitative and quantitative empirical research.

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