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Emergence of the connectivist leadership paradigm: a grounded theory study in the Asia region

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EMERGENCE OF THE CONNECTIVIST LEADERSHIP PARADIGM: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY IN THE ASIA REGION

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DEDICATION

When I was young, I was a very competitive child who wanted to be first in class. I believed the path to greatness was to study hard and leave others behind. In University, I had a list of theoretical words, concepts, and ideas that I would study relentlessly to be above the rest. Never did this list leave my sight or my computer, nor was it shared with anyone. This "A Star" tendency never really left me, and my children still tease me about it to this day. I remain very demanding of myself, driven by some unknown fear of failure and a slight paranoia of not being enough. What I have learned, though, is that the path to leadership is not a solitary one. As Bill George and Peter Sims recount in *True North*, leadership is a journey of self-development to know your authentic self and be ready to empower others to lead. The purpose of leadership is to grow yourself in order to grow others. Great leaders share everything they have: their story, feelings, fears, vulnerability, hopes, dreams, and even their secret word lists! I dedicate this work to all of those who are on their leadership journey and encourage them to discard the myth of the heroic leader (as this dissertation will demonstrate) and in the words of the famous basketball coach Phil Jackson, "surrender the me for the we." This is when leadership begins.

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A Ph.D. is a long, arduous journey of doubt and self-discovery. Many people put you on the path, keep you on it at different times, and eventually help you take off. I am immensely grateful to all of the Pepperdine faculty. I am indebted to Professor Elio Spinello, who encouraged me to publish my first literature review on Connectivism. His guidance and mentorship were instrumental in turning my paper into a proper manuscript and setting the path for this final dissertation. To my dissertation chair, Dr. Jago, thank you for making me fall in love with philosophy all over again. To my dissertation committee member, Dr. Sparks, thank you for your support of my research and encouragements. To my external committee member, Dr. George Siemens, thank you for inviting me to work by your side on your groundbreaking theory of Connectivism.

As learning is socially constructed, I would like to thank Weina, Juliana, Hyunok, and Micah for having been my learning partners and trusted team members on school projects. To Matt, thank you for your friendship and our collaborations, which guided my Ph.D. journey. Our Pepperdine research grant, conference presentations, and published papers were foundational to this dissertation.

It is difficult to fathom how I managed to complete this program while continuing to keep up with my very demanding full-time job at Visa, Inc. If I neglected anyone at any point, I sincerely apologize. In my second year of studies, I realized that the founder of Visa, Dee Hock, is one of the organizational geniuses of our time. His treatise on the Chaordic organization has guided the entire philosophy of the company. This helped me situate my chosen research topic into the context of where I work every day. No one has inspired me more on leadership than Al Kelly, the CEO of Visa. Al's focus on servant leadership, the Cs of leadership (courage,

compassion, consistency, confidence, composure), and his ability to connect emotionally with people instantly is truly admirable. To my managers, Lynne and Chris, thank you for helping me grow into the leader I am today. To my team, I am deeply grateful for your camaraderie and willingness to pilot Connectivist Leadership together in our own way. To my business coach, Cheryl, thank you for helping me discover "innership."

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VITA

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Honors and Awards

- Power List of Top Marketers in Asia Pacific, Campaign Asia — 2020 & 2018
- Asia's Most Influential CMO, Marketing & Branding, World Brand Congress — 2015
- Twitter Global Innovation Award, World Economic Forum — 2015
- 50 Most Talented CMO Award, World Marketing Summit — 2013
- Internationalist of the Year, Top 21 Marketers Globally — 2012
- Grand Prix Winner, WPP Atticus Award, Best Original Thinking — 2009
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative, grounded theory study focused on the exploration of leadership arising within the Asia region. While enduring leadership qualities like strength, humility, resolve, and trust have been foundational in leadership practice globally, scholars have demonstrated that leadership does not exist in absolute terms; it is shaped by the values of local culture, which set expectations for leadership behaviors. This study explored the conceptualization of a more collective and connected form of leadership in the context of a region leading the world with highly networked digital social practices. The question the study explored was, if, and to what extent, leaders and teams in the Asia region are shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships. The literature review provided the opportunity to go beyond the mere transferability of heroic Western-centric leadership theories and investigated emerging leadership models in Asia, learning theories in the digital age, and the evolution of leadership theory and organization design. Data collection comprised of forty-two interviews: twenty-nine one-on-one in-depth interviews with research participants based in the Asia region and thirteen global leading experts in networked learning, leadership, and Asian studies. The findings were harnessed in support of the development of a grounded theory, which shifts the heroic leadership paradigm in favor of the discovery of a new leadership model called "Connectivist Leadership."

Keywords: Leadership, collective leadership, connectivism, digital connectivity, cross-cultural, Asia

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter Overview

This first chapter introduces the research study territory situating it within the broader context of global change and explains the importance and relevance of the topic. It establishes the reasoning for the inquiry, the aims of the thesis, and the methodological foundation. The author aims to generate a new leadership theory, which will be grounded in data, systematically collected, and analyzed. A qualitative approach involving the construction of grounded theory helped develop an understanding of new forms of leadership emerging from the Asia region, seeking to shift the heroic Western-centric leadership paradigm. The chapter is structured to include Background of the Study, Problem Statement, Purpose Statement, Significance of the Study, Definitions of Terms, Theoretical Framework, Research Questions, Limitations, Delimitations, Assumptions, Positionality, Organization of the Study, and a Chapter Summary.

Background of the Study

Critical thinking on world dynamics has dramatically shifted in the last decade. In the early 2000s, globalization was regarded as a galvanizing force, fostering the interaction and integration of people, companies, economies, and governments worldwide at an unprecedented scale. Leadership challenges arose from a globalist ideology with world citizens living in civic globalism, thinking and leading globally against the backdrop of international trade, and the growing flow of ideas, people, and culture uniting all of humankind (Goldsmith et al., 2003). However, in the last decade, a strong anti-globalization movement has emerged, denouncing the downsides of globalization. Economically, theorists of globalization who once described a single global economy to manage the flow of people, capital, and commerce based on U.S. capitalism, have been overtaken by the rejecters of a dominant empire and consensus structure (Cox, 2018).

According to Ghemawat (2018), globalization started its retreat with the global financial crisis of 2008 and further declined from 2015 onwards with negative news stories questioning the benefits of global trade. Since then, the world has further regionalized and localized. Regional governance has become a new counterforce with regions acquiring more autonomy, authority, and influence on the world stage (Herz, 2018), creating cooperation at an economic and social level with independent states. Inter-regional trade, capital investment, and culture have resulted in the creation of regional identities, such as "pan-Arabism" and "pan-Africanism" (Herz, 2018, p. 251). According to Cooper and Thakur (2018), regional blocs have become a symbol of new world order in flux. Furthermore, the U.K. election of December 2019, "has produced possibly one of the strongest impacts in European history since World War II and delivered a major blow to the ideal of Europe, to the promotion of a more open and integrated society and to the heart of globalization as we have come to know it" (Dieck Assad, 2016, para. 1). The globalization backlash has created a deep-seated skepticism toward the economic theory of global cooperation and the ideological consciousness of the world as a singular entity. It also signals the departure from the idea of the American-led world order. The cultural and political awakening of developing economies is encouraging the rise of plural identities (Berggruen & Gardels, 2013). Some predict that "the law of semiglobalization" will reshape the world with more domestic and regional transactions than international ones, and that the "the law of distance" will strengthen local culture, geography, and economic factors (Ghemawat, 2018, p. 38). Most recently, the global COVID-19 pandemic has forced all countries around the world to close their borders and operate in an isolationist mode. Entire populations have been confined to national borders, neighborhoods, and shelter in place with technology surveillance to monitor their every move. As this dissertation unfolds, the future remains uncertain on the long-term impact of the

coronavirus as a critical test of citizenship, personal freedom, and global cooperation. What is at stake are fundamental choices between nationalist isolation and global solidarity, which will weigh heavily on the future of humankind and leadership as we know it (Harari, 2020).

This shifting global context is creating a new geography of leadership that is critical to acknowledge. In a post-U.S. hegemonic, multipolar (and more recently border-controlled) world, it is paramount to consider new leadership models that can account for the complexity and variety of methods of influence and management. Never has the idea of a "global leader" been further from today's reality. The scene is set for the focus of leadership scholarship to "move beyond the overtly dominant and ethnocentric Western leadership literature and to explore Asia leadership based on differing cultural foundations" (Rowley & Ulrich, 2012, p. 451). With the global center of gravity shifting toward Asia, more leaders need to operate in an "Asianized world" (Woetzel & Jeogmin, 2019). According to Mc. Kinsey & Company (2015), the world economy is going through a significant disruption based on four fundamental forces: (a) a shift of the world's economic activity to the East, (b) the acceleration of technological change, (c) an aging population, and (d) a concentration of the flows of capital, people, data and communication in Asia. Asia's centrality is evidenced through its rapid and massive demographic, economic, and technological growth. According to the United Nations, the size of the world's population is now 7.63 billion, with Asia accounting for half of it (United Nations, 2019). The world's largest population resides in China, with 1.42 billion, followed by India, with 1.35 billion people (United Nations, 2019). Asia also claims one-third of all global trade, 40% of the global airline passenger traffic, and 21 of the world's largest cities (Woetzel & Jeogmin, 2019). Economically, Asia is an economic powerhouse, with over half of the world's fastest-growing companies, with market capitalizations that increased ten times in the last ten years

(Ihara & Cho, 2019). The rise of China's economy and its modern Mandarinate (Berggruen & Gardels, 2013) has challenged the U.S. materially and recalibrated the global perspective on viable economic, political, and leadership systems. Since the 1978 reforms by Deng Xiaoping and dramatic acceleration of the 1990s, China has been touted as an economic miracle (Ray, 2002). Presently, China ranks as the world's largest economy by purchasing power parity, and signs of its growing power are undeniable: sustained economic growth and high GDP; resilient consumption with steady employment and income growth; rising annual disposable incomes (N. Smith, 2017); the most substantial global military personnel (Global Fire Power, 2018); domestically grown technology ecosystem expanding overseas; and a focus on leadership in science, innovation, and technology (Wenderoth, 2018). China has risen to the number two position in Artificial Intelligence and has stated its ambition to lead by 2030, backed by aggressive government funding and research centers in Beijing and Tianjin (Fabian, 2018). In 2019, more Chinese companies made it on the Fortune Global 500 list than the U.S., which saw its number of companies decline from 126 to 121 (Yangpeng, 2019). Asia is also the locus of technological change and innovation. According to Tencent CEO, the Chinese leading messaging application WeChat has reached 1 billion monthly active users worldwide, which represents more than the entire adult population of the European Union and the United States combined (Hollander, 2018). Asia has fostered the proliferation of new business models backed by technology, such as the online retail platform T-Mall Alibaba and technology transport company Grab, which acquired Uber's Southeast Asia operations in 2018. Digital technology, networked cities, offices, and people offer the promise of economic progress and a profound leadership transformation in emerging economies that have leapfrogged directly to always-on connectivity from their mobile phones, with new ways to live, work, and play. Henceforth, Asia must be an

area of research on leadership (Rowley & Ulrich, 2012) as it becomes not only a net exporter of goods and services but also a leadership sandbox for the future.

The dramatic advances in technology in recent decades, particularly associated with high-speed information and data networks, have restructured time and space and the boundaries of ideas, production, and human exchange (Kirsch, 1995). The popular concept of a "shrinking world" is a byproduct of innovations in telecommunications, information, and transportation. Importantly, the role technology has played in the transformation of time-space compression is not limited to the physical aspect, but also to how social relations and leadership are spatialized at a new scale of experience. With the rapid advances in technology and communications, leaders can condense time and location, operating at a new meta-level that allows them to be both connected, disaggregated, and virtual. Leaders become "boundary spanners, bridge makers and blenders of culture" (Zander et al., 2012, p. 592), needing to leverage greater diversity than ever. In political leadership, Sell (2018) notes the growing importance of transnational networks that are displacing traditional state-centric modes of governance, allowing for indirect modes of influence and advocacy, both challenging and correcting institutional authority. The operation of networks beyond national lines and at all levels of power has created new power circuits (Edwards, 2016) with amorphous leadership systems and flows of illicit activity in the form of transnational organized crime and terrorist organizations. Within the business organizational construct, traditional command and control approaches carried out by authority figures do not work anymore (Marquet, 2015). Adam Canwell from Ernst and Young proposes a new leadership proxy called the "Connectivity Quota" (Canwell, 2019, para. 4), which hinges good leadership on leaders' ability to create conditions where connectivity can thrive. Network theory is now becoming increasingly relevant to the diffusion of authority globally (Madsen, 2018). The use of

networks indicates a new distribution of global leadership with a plurality of relations, self-organized influence systems, resilient, and agile relationships. Decentralized power and leaderless systems (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006) are providing a new framework for leadership understanding. Johansen (2017) describes the next ten years as a pivotal moment in time as digital connectivity amplifies, everything becomes "distributed" (p. ix) with every person connected to pervasive internet access and the ability to have an experience of a blended reality part physical, part virtual. The question of how to define leadership and what it will look like in the future is under examination as organizations explore new business models to prepare their leaders for new realities. In these conditions, expecting the same of leadership, and using the same leadership theories to prepare leaders, is a fallacy. In the future, leadership will be less hierarchical, less centralized, more distributed, collective, and connected than ever before as a reflection of our networked societies (Johansen, 2017; Kelly, 2019; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008).

In summary, this study examined the significant challenges that leaders face, given the context of global change marked by rapid disruption with anti-globalization, the rise of Asia, and increasingly networked, collective, and distributed leadership approaches. With more cultural heterogeneity, the cartography of leadership will be redrawn. Samuel Huntington stresses the importance of cultural identities as the single most crucial factor in the balance of power across the world, which has become multicivilizational (Huntington, 2011). He argues that an emerging civilization-based world order will become more important than ideologies, political, and economic zones, and provide groupings of leadership based on cultural kinship (Huntington, 2011).

Problem Statement

To date, a sizeable body of research has established the complexity and intricacies of cross-cultural dynamics when studying leadership. Scholars have demonstrated that leadership is subject to differences in cultural perceptions (Hall, 1976; Inkeles & Levinson, 1997; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961), depends on the relationship between national culture and the leadership expectations of societies (Dorfman et al., 2012), and is heavily influenced by cross-cultural communications and cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Hofstede et al., 2010; Inglehart et al., 2014; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997). Leadership is culturally constructed, acting as a "software of the mind" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 5). While intercultural studies have enhanced the understanding of leadership and provided less ethnocentric perspectives (J. M. Bennett & Bennett, 2004), leadership remains confined to a singular journey. Current contemporary definitions, practices, and training programs on leadership primarily focus on enhancing individual aptitudes, experiences, and competencies. Nevertheless, the rise of Asia, cross-cultural exchanges, and advanced networking technologies provide a new global setting where leadership has the potential to become more distributed, follower-driven, crowd-based, networked, automated, and even one day, artificially generated. Specifically, it is crucial to acknowledge alternative leadership approaches based on Asian philosophical traditions and the Confucian inheritance (Warner, 2010). These practices call on more collectivist leadership behaviors, emphasizing the goals and needs of the collective over the desires of the individual, the primacy of relationships in groups, member interconnectedness, and a search for harmony as the basis of social exchange. The evidence for understanding leadership as a participatory and digitally-connected process is particularly compelling given the rapid evolution of technology, allowing collaborative learning, new forms of knowledge, engagement, and management.

Therefore, this study challenged the universality of Western-based leadership theories and empirical case studies. It aimed to identify new leadership literacies based on the exploration of Asian leadership practices for the construction of new leadership theory.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory study was to explore a new form of leadership emerging in Asia by examining the lived experiences of individuals and groups who lead and are led in this region. "Leadership is no longer simply described as an individual characteristic or difference, but rather is depicted in various models as dyadic, shared, relational, strategic, global, and a complex social dynamic" (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 423). Hence, this study analyzed the emergence, drivers, and characteristics of leadership in Asia. The central research question for inquiry was, "if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?" The narrative that directed this study was based on the systematic procedures of Corbin and Strauss (1990) and was centered on exploring (a) the causal conditions underlying the phenomenon, (b) the resulting phenomenon, (c) the environment that influences strategy development, (d) the intervening conditions, (e) the coping strategies, and (f) the consequences of those strategies. It aimed to create a theoretical framework that can advance the understanding of leadership and foster higher leadership capacity in the future in a more collective and connected context. Data collection used formal semi-structured interviews, systematically collected, organized, analyzed, and interpreted to form a new leadership theory.

Significance of the Study

As new technologies bring us closer together and the internationalization of capital, trade, and people create greater interdependence and competition (World Trade Organization, 2018), it has become essential for organizations to attract and grow leaders who can skillfully respond to the opportunities and challenges of both a more interconnected and hyper-localized world. According to the *Global Leadership Forecast 2018* (International Development Dimensions et al., 2018) which surveyed more than 1,000 C-level executives worldwide on their biggest global concerns, leadership and talent were the top-rated items by 64% of respondents. Leadership is CEOs' biggest concern to execute their strategy successfully ahead of 28 other foremost challenges, such as political instability, global recession, terrorism, and climate change. Furthermore, of the 2,500 human resources professionals surveyed in the same study, 65% reported that their leaders lacked high-quality, effective development plans (International Development Dimensions et al., 2018). Dr. Evan Sinar, who led the global research study, noted that expectations were rising and that leaders needed to work increasingly collaboratively and demonstrate an understanding of digital technology. He indicated that today's leaders "need to be highly adaptable, hyper-collaborative, and able to leverage data to make better decisions" (Caprino, 2018, para. 3). Research not only shows the primacy of leadership in executing strategy but also the urgency of the topic as significant gaps in leadership training remain and the profile of leaders also needs to evolve. Fully 38% of respondents in a global human capital survey rated building leadership as an urgent business issue that has to be accelerated (Stephan et al., 2014). Furthermore, "companies see the need for leadership at all levels, in all geographies, and across all functional areas" (Stephan et al., 2014, p. 7).

The study findings will aid in building workforce capabilities to broaden, deepen, and accelerate leadership development. New knowledge is required to prepare the next generation of leaders in an increasingly data-led and networked world and provide alternative leadership approaches. A new leadership theory resulting from this environmental context will present significant value for business practitioners by:

1. Providing actionable intelligence to address one of the most pressing business issues of our times—fostering leadership capacity;
2. Helping organizations position themselves for future success and gain a competitive edge with a set of theoretical principles on which their leadership practices can be based;
3. Addressing the significant readiness gap of organizations on how to grow and develop leaders, especially those in Asia, or planning to work there; and
4. Offering alternative ways to distribute leadership through more collective and digitally connected approaches.

The field of global leadership development has burgeoned with scholars (Mendenhall et al., 2012; Mendenhall, Osland, et al., 2017; Mendenhall, Weber, et al., 2017; Reiche et al., 2017) responding to the need for frameworks and approaches guiding global talent management and addressing practitioners' growing interest in leadership programs across cultures. However, to date, scholarship has focused on the global aspect of leadership (one size fits all), anchored heavily in Western leadership paradigms. This study aims to develop a leadership theory to advance scholarly research by engaging researchers and academia in the following:

1. Enhancing the understanding of leadership from a non-Western perspective based on leadership approaches in Asia, a part of the world where the leadership literature is sparse;
2. Connecting the advancements of learning with technology with leading digitally;
3. Conceptualizing leadership beyond the heroic leadership paradigm with the possibilities of distributed, collective and connected leadership; and
4. Developing a theoretical framework that explains a new leadership phenomenon challenging traditional views of influence and power for future research in leadership studies, educational learning theory, intercultural studies, and international relations.

Definition of Terms

In this study, the following terms are used and defined as follows:

- *Leadership*: Is "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (Rost, 1991, p. 102). This study anchors its approach of leadership on this definition, which recognizes leadership through collective influence, multidirectional relationships, and common purpose building aimed at creating positive change;
- *Culture:* Is a complex social phenomenon described as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 6);
- *Connectivism:* Is a learning theory (Downes, 2007; Siemens, 2005a) that provides a theoretical framework for understanding learning in a digital age. It asserts that internet technologies (e.g., the world wide web, wikis, search engines, social networks, online discussion forums, and artificial intelligence) have radically

transformed learning and knowledge into a network forming process, resulting in new ways of learning and teaching, and a knowledge ecology where learning is organized within a network;

- *Connectivist Leadership:* Describes a new kind of leadership based on the learning theory of connectivism to redefine leadership. "Connectivist Leadership redefines the leadership paradigm for the 21st century by recognizing that leadership is a dynamic, connected, and collective influence process, based on the principles of digital knowledge and interpersonal neural networks" (Corbett & Spinello, 2020, p. 8);
- *Heroic leadership*: Is the expression of a traditional leader-centric paradigm where leadership is enacted by a single focal leader who influences others by resorting to authority, power, and or coercion. Effective performance is predicated on a single heroic individual with the right skills to motivate others through unidirectional influence (Calder, 1977; Meindl et al., 1985);
- *Postheroic leadership:* Is an alternative paradigm to heroic leadership, which shifts leadership from an individualistic-focused role to inclusive collective practice. As noted by Yukl (1999), "the leadership actions of any individual leader are much less important than the collective leadership provided by members of the organization" (p. 292).
- *Distributed leadership*: Is a postheroic leadership perspective that recognizes the influence of teams and shared influence to enact leadership through various approaches such as collective and shared leadership (Gronn, 2002); and
- *Western-centric leadership*: Is the recognition that dominant theories of leadership have been developed by Western thinkers, primarily from North America, introducing

underlying cultural biases and assumptions (House & Javidan, 2004; Suze Wilson, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a process and a product that can provide a practical guide to formulating the researcher's argument. It guides the researcher in their journey from the conception of ideas to the data collection and findings dissemination (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). A conceptual framework is inductively derived (M. Miles et al., 2020), presenting the key factors of a phenomenon, its descriptive or causal variables, and theoretical concepts. According to Eisenhart (2001), "A conceptual framework is more of a justification, and assures that anticipated relationships will be appropriate and useful, given the research problem under investigation" (p. 209).

The conceptual framework developed for this study visualizes the key concepts and relationships that pertain to the central research question aimed at exploring "if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams in the Asia region shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of collective and digitally connected relationships?" The study offers a graphical construct that considers the complexity of the interrelationships involved and reflects the multifaceted nature of the human experience and influences involved in affecting leadership. Henceforth, the conceptual framework for this study is constructed on three main models as a foundation:

1. Learning models, reviewing the various theories that inform the understanding of learning from behaviorist/connectionist theories, cognitive/gestalt theories, to more recent ones such as connectivism where knowledge is a network-forming process and its implications on more modern conceptualizations of leadership;

2. Organizational models, analyzing the evolution of corporate structures guiding how activities, tasks, and supervision are directed and how they affect leadership from leader-centric to distributed networked practices; and
3. Cultural models, investigating the connections that exist between culture and leadership, exploring dimensions of culture, intercultural studies, the current state of Western-centric leadership, and recent leadership literature in Asia.

Theoretical Framework

The area of inquiry for this study is understanding a new leadership phenomenon emerging in the Asia region. The theoretical framework is anchored in the field of social sciences and the personal beliefs that individuals hold toward their reality and actions (G. H. Mead, 1934). It is not based on a scientific method that follows logic, with cause and effect, and an absolute positive truth (Comte, 2009). The study assumes that meaning is constructed from a wide range of factors that have their roots in historical, social, and cultural viewpoints, often unconscious and unspoken, and with multiple meanings. Therefore, the researcher undertook their study with some pre-existing assumptions that influenced how the research was conceptualized from the outset (Slife & Williams, 1995). The study was based on the philosophical traditions of social constructivism. This worldview has been developed by notable social constructivist theorists who include thinkers such as Dewey (1916), Bruner (1961), Piaget (1977), and Vygotsky (1962). The social constructivist movement underscores collaborative learning and recognizes the primacy of culture and social dynamics for learning. Knowledge is not assimilated but integrated, enabling learners to form a community of knowledge, where learning and social context are inseparable (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). “Constructivism is the recognition that reality is a product of human intelligence interacting with experience in the real

world. As soon as you include human mental activity in the process of knowing reality, you have accepted constructivism" (Elkind, 2005, p. 334). A social constructivist philosophical worldview situates this study and grounds the research paradigm the researcher espouses, with an interpretive qualitative research method to capture the lived experiences of participants. The analytic process was be based on grounded theory. This methodology relies on inductive reasoning from symbolic interactionism, as opposed to scientific deductive methods. It requires the systematic collection and analysis of data from social behavior to develop theory. This study used the Strauss and Corbin (1990) grounded theory model of qualitative data analysis (QDA).

Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to explore the integral social relationships and group behaviors of leaders and followers in the Asia region, where little exploration of leadership has been documented. The central research question for inquiry was, "if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?"

Three sub-questions guided the inquiry:

- RQ1—What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?
- RQ2—What leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders and teams use?
- RQ3—How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context?

Scope of the Study

This qualitative grounded study aimed to describe the emergence of a new leadership paradigm called Connectivist Leadership (Corbett et al., 2018; Corbett & Spinello, 2020) in Asia.

The Asia region regroups many countries and requires proper delineation. The study was executed within a subset of the APAC region, which includes a collection of 47 countries throughout North and South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania (World Population Review, 2020). The scope of the research included a combination of the largest markets in the region such as China, India, and Indonesia (World Population Review, 2020) and the smallest, most technologically-advanced, such as Singapore (Singapore Government Economic Development Board, 2018). A previous quantitative study exploring the topic of "Connectivist Leadership" (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020, p. 1) helped inform the scope of this grounded theory study and identified the critical themes to investigate further through the breadth and depth of qualitative research. This previous quantitative study was conducted among the adult population of the United States and Asia (India, Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia). It demonstrated that leadership orientations were evolving from the traditional view of power, authority, control, and hierarchy to a system of shared relationships grounded in connecting people and information sources to create collective influence. Based on the data set presented in this past research, it was possible to classify leadership orientations into three groups: (a) traditional, (b) status-quo, and (c) emerging. Moreover, the study indicated six main areas of Connectivist Leadership dimensions comprised of personal values, emotional intelligence, technology use, leadership orientations, leadership principles, and views on the future of leadership. The relationship of all these factors was further investigated in this current study to develop a new leadership theory based on an emergent phenomenon grounded in the qualitative data.

Limitations

The research was a qualitative grounded theory study with data gathered via semi-structured interviews, creating some inherent limitations, including:

- Methodology: Although grounded theory is "one of the most sophisticated and developed approaches to rigorous qualitative (non-numerical) research" (Simon & Goes, 2013, p. 104), it does not provide quantitative data to precisely measure or quantify the phenomenon described. Similar to other qualitative studies, this inquiry had limitations associated with validity and reliability;
    - Sampling: A sample of convenience was used rather than a random sample, and thus, the study results are not be applicable to the general population;
    - Geographic scope: The data were collected among participants based on a large, and culturally diverse region, which led to some variations across markets and required the researcher to use conjecture until patterns emerged;
    - Language: The interviews were conducted in English due to IRB limitations. Cormier (2018) notes that the languages spoken by the participants can have repercussions on the data quality. Thus, it was the researcher's responsibility to see to the data quality and mind the accuracy of the intent of the ideas expressed, and data interpretation;
    - Researcher bias: The researcher's cultural background (non-Asian) and professional experience (C-suite leader having worked in Asia for the last decade) may have posed an inadvertent bias to the data collection and interpretation. This limitation was addressed by specific methods further explained in chapter three.

Delimitations

The research had the following delimitations:

- Researcher's study choice: This included the area of inquiry though the chosen problem, purpose statement, research paradigm, and research questions;

- Location of interviews: The data were collected only within a few Asian markets (China, India, Indonesia, and Singapore) as the entire region was too large to cover within the scope of this study;
- Researcher's selection of participants in the sample population;
- Timing of the interviews; and
- The nature of the grounded theory study placed the researcher at the heart of the qualitative inquiry process.

Assumptions

The researcher made a few assumptions in conducting the study, including:

- Participation: Study participants were expected to take part in the study by answering the interview questions openly and truthfully, without preconceived bias;
- Researcher bias: Efforts were undertaken to alleviate the researcher's bias, recognizing the role of the researcher within the qualitative inquiry process;
- Participant bias: Initiatives were taken to avoid any possible bias toward the researcher who is from a non-Asian cultural background; and
- Conceptual framework bias: The researcher used key themes from a previously conducted quantitative study as a foundation to inform the qualitative questions to be asked to participants.

Positionality

This study followed the paradigm of qualitative research, which is "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2018, p. 4). According to Kouritzin, Piquemal, and Norman (2008), qualitative researchers must describe their positionality towards the research by disclosing where

they are personally, relationally, intellectually, and politically vis-a-vis their research. Divulging this upfront and being reflexive helps situate the research and establish a level of trust and quality for the study (Reyes, 2005). In designing, directing, and analyzing the research, the researcher becomes a part of the data and needs to place their experience (Richards & Morse, 2013). Therefore, this research study wishes to outline various aspects of positionality:

- Worldview and affinity: The researcher possessed a social constructivist worldview and an affinity for the learning theory of connectivism;
- Relationship to participants: While not knowing the participants directly, the researcher used their professional relationships to develop the sample of convenience;
- Experience: The researcher was a senior-level executive with over a decade-long experience leading teams in 17 countries within the Asia region. This professional background provided considerable knowledge on the cultural dynamics of the geographic markets studied and leadership practices in this part of the world, but may have also introduced unconscious biases;
- Linguistics: The researcher was a Third Culture Kid (Pollock & Van Reken, 2017), bilingual fluent in English and French, and thus had a heightened sensitivity to language and cross-cultural dynamics, and appreciated the importance linguistic positionality.

Organization of the Study

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to explore the emergence, drivers, and characteristics of a new form of leadership referred to as Connectivist Leadership in the Asia region. The central research question for inquiry was, “if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an

individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?" The study was organized in the following sections.

Chapter 1

This opening chapter situates the study, providing the contextual environment of the inquiry with the problem statement, the purpose of the study, its significance, the key definitions, relevant conceptual and theoretical frameworks, research questions, scope of the study, its limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and the positionality of the researcher.

Chapter 2

This second chapter introduces the study's conceptual framework and provides a review of relevant literature to situate the historical and current leadership knowledge. It aims to outline new directions for leadership drawing on emerging themes that conceptualize leadership beyond the leader-centric paradigm and challenge Western-centric leadership theory. The organization of the literature review is structured around three main themes: (1) the evolution of educational theories of learning and their implications on leadership; (2) a review of organizational models and how they affect leadership paradigms from leader-centric to emerging leadership theories; and (3) leadership and culture, exploring the current state of cultural studies, the field of intercultural studies on leadership, and leadership models from Asia.

Chapter 3

This third chapter presents the rationale and research methodology guiding the study. It encompasses an examination of the theoretical framework that articulates the broader context in which the study took place, including the researchers' philosophical worldview, the research methodology, design, setting, sample population, human subject considerations, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data management protocol, and the data analysis process of the study.

Chapter 4

This chapter presents the key study findings with an analysis of the narrative demonstrating the conceptual and theoretical framework presented.

Chapter 5

This chapter presents the theory grounded in data, which emerged from the developing patterns and themes at each stage of the data analysis. Data were interpreted to form a new leadership theory explaining the phenomenon under study, and the researcher offers a discussion of the results, their implications, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Summary

This first chapter established the starting point for the development of the research study, putting the study into perspective, establishing its need, and relevance. Most of what we know about leadership today is anchored in legacy leader-centric leadership paradigms, which evolved from the turn of the century primarily from Western literature. Today, paradigm-shifting forces such as new digital communications technologies, advances in artificial intelligence, the growth of the factional economy, and globalization are driving significant change (Moses et al., 2018). Recognizing that leadership is a social construct in line with the zeitgeist and the dominant values of our time (Mendenhall, Osland, et al., 2017), this study aimed to open up perspectives on new forms of leadership from an understudied part of the world in the Asia region. According to Militello and Benham (2010), “what remains conspicuously absent from the leadership evaluation literature is a more inclusive diversity of voices that empowers multiple groups (not just individuals) to make meaning of leadership (beliefs) and to engage in collaborative leadership activities (action)” (p. 620).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory research was to explore the integral social relationships and group behaviors of leaders and followers in the Asia region, where little exploration of leadership has been documented. The central research question for inquiry was, "if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?"

Three secondary questions guided the inquiry:

- RQ1—What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?
- RQ2—What leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders and teams use?
- RQ3—How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context?

In this chapter, the study's conceptual framework is fully developed and explained as the basis of the study. This section also provides a review of relevant literature to situate the historical and current knowledge of leadership. It aims to outline new directions for leadership, drawing on emerging themes that conceptualize leadership beyond the leader-centric paradigm and challenge Western leadership theory. The organization of the literature review is structured around three main themes: (1) exploring leadership within new learning and knowledge paradigms, (2) understanding emerging postheroic leadership within new organizational paradigms, and (3) analyzing leadership beyond Western-centric cultural paradigms.

Context

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory study was to explore a new form of leadership emerging within Asia by examining the lived experiences of individuals and groups who lead and are led in this region. The central research question for inquiry was, "if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?"

Conceptual Framework

Three core elements served as the scaffolding of this study (Hannafin, Land, & Oliver, 1999). The conceptual framework (see Figure 1) is articulated on a triad consisting of (1) learning models, (2) organizational models, and (3) cultural models. The information draws on published literature that illuminates the current state of the leadership field both in theory and practice intended to provide a foundational grounding from which a new theory of leadership was developed with data collection. The conceptual framework brings together perspectives on the evolution of learning and knowledge, the advancement of leadership through changing organization design, and an investigation of how culture impacts leadership. This examination of how leadership is evolving highlights the current state of research and practice of each particular area of inquiry and draws a framework of parallel development between:

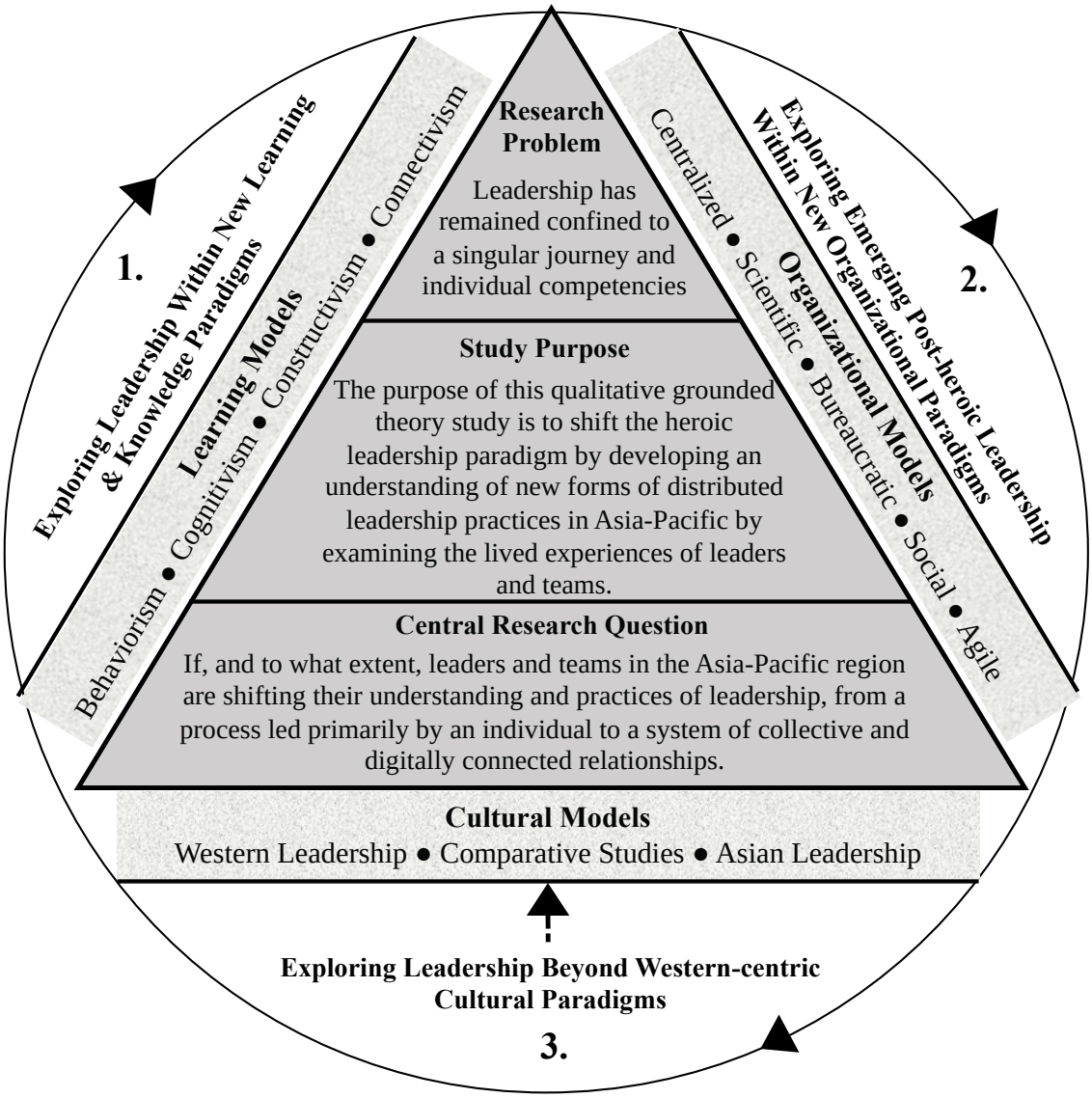
- Learning and leadership, exploring leadership within new learning and knowledge paradigms;
- Organization design and leadership, exploring emerging postheroic leadership approaches within new organizational paradigms;

- Culture and leadership, exploring leadership beyond Western-centric cultural paradigms.

This analysis was leveraged to assess the nature of leadership to date, determine what future directions for leadership are apparent from the literature review, and to identify the remaining gaps this grounded theory study could address.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



This literature review builds out a logical sequence to conceptualize and enrich the research problem, locating it in the tradition of theory and peer-reviewed research. The review aims to fulfill four main functions:

1. Demonstrate the research paradigm and underlying assumptions behind the research;
2. Summarize the intellectual traditions that contextualize and ground the study;
3. Enrich the research questions with preexisting scholarly work; and
4. Identify the remaining gaps in the literature the current study can fill (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

The review of literature starts with an analysis of how knowledge and meaning are acquired through theories of learning, tracing their systematic development alongside the advancement of leadership theory (see Figure 1, step 1). Situating the evolution of leadership within that of contemporary educational thought provides a vehicle for understanding how the dominant values of their time mutually influenced educational and leadership theories. This part of the review provides the background for the foundational premise of the research problem, which proposes to attach a modern learning theory—Connectivism—to leadership, and explore if, and to what extent, it can describe a new leadership phenomenon known as Connectivist Leadership (Corbett & Spinello, 2020). By exploring leadership within new learning and knowledge paradigms, this section of the literature review explains the framework for the research and articulates the area of leadership that the study aims to expand. Learning models presented in the conceptual framework include:

- Traditional learning theories (H. Mann, 1853; Swett, 1876);
- Behaviorism (Pavlov, 1927; Skinner, 1938; Thorndike, 1913; Tolman, 1932; Watson, 1930);

- Cognitivism (Bruner, 1961; Köhler & Winter, 1925; Piaget, 1952);
- Constructivism (Bruner, 1961; Dewey, 1922; Knowles et al., 2005a; Piaget, 1977; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978);
- Humanism (Bandura, 1977; Barth, 1988; Maslow, 1943); and
- Connectivism (Downes, 2007, 2008; Siemens, 2005b, 2006).

The evolution of educational theories of learning is conducted in correspondence with leadership theories presenting how new ideas about learning exerted influence on new ideas about leading. Shifting roles for learners and teachers also open up new avenues for conceptualizing evolved roles for leaders and followers into the future.

The second portion of the literature review (see Figure 1, step 2) refines the research problem and study purpose by relating the advancement of leadership through a review of changing organizational structures. This examination demonstrates how leadership evolved alongside organization design, leading to emerging postheroic leadership approaches within new organizational paradigms. Organizational models presented in the conceptual framework include:

- Mechanistic organizational systems and legacy leader-centric leadership with a review of centralized organizations (A. Smith, 2008), scientific organizations (Fayol, 1916; Taylor, 1911), and bureaucratic organizations (Drucker, 2006; Locke, 1968; Weber, 1979); and
- Organic systems and emerging postheroic leadership with a review of social organizations (Barnard, 1968; Davis & Lawrence, 1977; Galbraith, 2016; Trist, 1981), and agile organizations (De Smet et al., 2019; Hock, 2000; Kreitzer et al., 2015; Laloux, 2014; Mintzberg, 1979; Robertson, 2015; Snow, 2015; Ulieru et al., 2002).

The final portion of the review (see Figure 1, step 3) examines culture and leadership, exploring leadership beyond Western-centric cultural paradigms. It builds significance for the central research question and the choice of directing the inquiry within the broader empirical cultural context of Asia, which remains understudied (step 3). Cultural models presented in the conceptual framework include:

- Western-centric leadership (Blunt & Jones, 1997; Brewster & Bournois, 1991; Hofstede, 1980; House & Javidan, 2004; Rost, 1991; S. Wilson, 2013);
- Comparative cultural and leadership studies (Dorfman et al., 2012; Hofstede, 1980; House & Javidan, 2004; Inglehart et al., 2014); and
- Asian Leadership (Fang & Ling, 2003; Fu et al., 2008; McDonald, 2012; Rowley & Ulrich, 2012).

Learning and Leadership

Learning theories have greatly contributed to our understanding of learning and the acquisition of knowledge. Theories of learning serve as an essential guide for the instructional endeavor (Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2009) and the creation of positive learning environments. Furthermore, learning theories structure learning and performance outcomes to maximize the success of instructional experiences (Driscoll, 1994). Different schools of thought on how individuals learn and attribute meaning provide various perspectives on the nature of humanity, ontology, and epistemology (Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2009) Likewise, the significance of learning in regards to leadership has been established. Kouzes and Posner (1995) contend that “effective leaders are constantly learning. They see all experiences as learning experiences” (p. 323). Furthermore, Brown and Posner (2001) conducted research that shows learning and leadership have a mutual influence. The more engaged the learners, the more they exhibit leadership

behaviors. Therefore, building significance for new leadership phenomena through the learning literature is highly relevant.

Overall, learning theories fall into five overarching paradigms: traditional, behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and connectivism. Each of these corresponds to a school of thought that represents a worldview or metaphysical system (Knowles et al., 2005b) with differing views of the world, modes of thinking, and models of humankind. Five significant milestones have also marked the evolution of leadership theory (Yukl, 2013): (a) the trait approach from 1900 to 1940s; (b) the behavioral approach in the 1950s; (c) the situational approach from 1960s to 1970s; (d) the power-influence approach from 1980s to 1990s; and (e) the integrative approach with contemporaries. Reviewing learning and leadership in a framework of parallel development reveals a close correspondence between the evolution of contemporary educational thought and that of leadership and the major values they espouse. "It is important to remember that no theme or movement in learning and leading exists alone, but rather is connected to previous, concurrent, and countervailing movements" (Lambert, 2002, p. 19). Accordingly, providing an integrative view of how learning and leadership have evolved presents a conceptual approach to understanding both past and future scholarly endeavors and new visions for the study of leadership (see Figure 2):

- A focus on being—Traditional learning theories and Great Man/Trait Leadership Theories, which assume that leadership is based on power and domination;
- A focus on doing—Behaviorism and Transactional Leadership Theories, which operate on the principle of "stimulus-response" and directive patterns of behavior;
- A focus on thinking—Cognitivism and Contingency/Situational Leadership Theories, which leverage mental activity to determine the right circumstances for action;

Figure 2

Learning and Leadership: Framework of Parallel Development

Learning and Leadership: Framework of Parallel Development

Learning		Leadership		
Theories	**Theorists**	**Theories**	**Theorists**	
		Being		
Traditional - Learning through memorization - Knowledge is true and unchanging - Teacher is the source of knowledge and students as recipients - Emphasis on obedience and authority; non-democratic learning	H. Mann (1853) Swett (1876)	**Great Man Theory** - "In born" leadership **Trait Theory** - Good leaders are great men, heroes, and unique individuals who have natural attributes such as superior intellect, and heroic courage	Carlyle (1841) Kohs & Irle, (1920) Bernard (1926) R.D. Mann (1959)	**Dominating Leadership**
		Doing		
Behaviorism - Learning is conditioned by environmental and external factors - A posteriori knowledge through sensory experience - Direct teaching strategies through cause and effect - Aim of learning is to calibrate behavior - Human mind as black box	Thorndike (1913) Pavlov (1927) Watson (1925) Tolman (1932) Skinner (1938)	**Skill-based Leadership** - Leadership as a set of supervisory administrative skills **Style-based Leadership** - Leadership behavior is based on structure (production orientation) and consideration (employee orientation) **The Leadership Grid** - Leadership behavior is based on concern for production and people	Katz (1955) The Ohio Studies (1957) The Michigan Studies (1966) Blake & Mouton (1964) Bass (1985)	**Directive Leadership**
		Thinking		
Cognitivism - Learning involves the acquisition and reorganization of cognitive structures - Students are categorized in different groups by ability - Teaching aims at moving students to higher level cognitive groups - Variations in teaching strategies	Köhler & Winter (1925) Piaget (1952) Bruner (1961)	**Situational Leadership** - Leadership through the categorization of styles and situations **Contingency Leadership** - Leadership is contingent on the people and context **Path-Goal Theory** - Leadership through follower satisfaction and motivation and setting	Hersey & Blanchard (1969) Stogdill (1948) Fiedler (1964) Evans (1970) House (1971)	**Situational Leadership**
		Feeling		
Constructivism/Humanism - Learning is a social subjective process - Knowledge and beliefs exists within the learner - Learners imbue learning and experiences with meaning - School functions as a community for the growth of members - Students construct meaning from personal values, beliefs and experiences - Teacher role goes from presenter to facilitator of knowledge - Reflection and metacognition - Self-directed learning, andragogy - Importance of emotional, affective state in educational success	Dewey (1922) Vygotsky (1925) Maslow (1943) Bruner (1961) Piaget (1977) Bandura (1977) Barth (1988) Tennant (2006) Kaplowitz (2008)	**Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)** - Leadership is based on the interactions between leaders and followers **Transformational Leadership** - Leadership aims to satisfy follower needs by inspiring and engaging them **Servant Leadership** - Leadership consists in serving and driving positive change for others **Authentic Leadership** - Leadership gains a moral high ground and is concerned with trust, honesty and good **Ethical Leadership** - Promotion of an internalized moral perspective **Spiritual Leadership** - Leadership through a calling via vision and values	Dansereau, et al. (1975) Downton (1973) Burns (1978) Bass (1985) Greenleaf (1970) Avolio (1999) Eagly (2005) Brown et al. (2005) Fry (2003) P. Palmer (2004)	**Relational Leadership**
		Connecting		
Connectivism - Learning is a process of connecting to information sources - Knowledge is a process of network connections - Knowledge is not just a mental individual process but is enabled by collective distributed networks and outside appliances (databases, AI) - Connections enhance the state of knowing - Teacher as network coordinator vs. central knowledge holder	Siemens (2005) Downes (2007)	**Shared/Distributed/Team Leadership** - Team-centric leadership based on leader-team interactions **Complexity leadership** - Focuses on enabling the learning, creative, and adaptive capacity of knowledge-producing organizations **e-leadership** - Distributed leadership that is mediated by and expressed through technology **Swarm Leadership** - Leadership through networks with distributed knowledge, agency, and decision-making	Pearce & Conger (2003) Day et al. (2004) Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) Zigurs (2003) Zaccaro & Bader (2003) Gloor (2017) Kelly (2019)	**Networked Leadership**

- A focus on feeling—Constructivism/humanism and relational leadership theories (path-goal, servant, transformational, and ethical) focused on relationships and emotional affect;
- A focus on connecting—Connectivism and networked leadership theories (team leadership, connective leadership, shared leadership, distributed leadership) embracing a view of a hyperconnected world with systems thinking, and sense-making.

Traditional Approaches to Learning and Dominating Leadership

Traditional learning. Traditional learning theories capture conventional thinking on learning as externally motivated and determined. They view knowledge as real and unchanging and as a process of pure memorization. Knowledge is centralized in the teacher, while students are mere recipients in a relationship defined by authority and obedience. Learning is not democratic but based on the teacher-student power dynamic, hierarchy, and fostering compliance to set standards. Theorists of traditional approaches included last century school advocates such as Horace Mann, reformed and promoted public education with a focus on discipline (H. Mann, 1853) and John Swett who was the founder of California's public's school system and known for his autocratic style (Swett, 1876). At the time, schools were marked by the dominance of administrator authority and did not promote any kind of shared leadership with teachers. Traditional learning required respect, loyalty, and acceptance from both students and parents to an all-knowing teacher (Lambert, 2002). This learning theory sits within an "Elemental Model," which sees the universe as a machine with humanity reacting and adapting to a stimulus (Knowles et al., 2005b, p. 22).

Leadership implications. Traditional learning educational thought finds correspondence in leadership theories promoting charismatic leadership (see Figure 2). Prior to the industrial revolution, much of what was known about leadership was passed down from classics such as the Bible and various military strategy manuals (Pardo, 2017; Strachan & Herberg-Rothe, 2008; Worthy & Quinn, 2017, as cited in Safferstone, 2005). Leadership was conceived in relation to conflict and primarily described as the ability to exert power and domination over others. At the turn of the century, the study of leadership formalized with the great man theory (Carlyle, 1841), based on the assumption that leaders were born, not made, and that leadership traits were genetic and predisposed. Carlyle (1841) continued the set of beliefs promoted by Aristotle who believed that birth predicated one's position and ability to command or be subjugated. This leadership approach was also known as trait theory (Bernard, 1926; Kohs & Irle, 1920; R. D. Mann, 1959) and highlighted inherited traits, such as intellectual acumen, decisiveness, and personality (Judge & Bono, 2000). Aligned against a similar paradigm of authority, as seen in the traditional educational theory, leaders were treated as special people with positional power and considered imbued with superior qualities. Followers were expected to demonstrate their complete obedience to leaders and cooperation. Numerous research studies were conducted over time to validate in-born and trait leadership theories, but none were conclusive. The study of the great man theory was largely abandoned from the 1950s primarily due to lack of supporting evidence, but also because it did not match the evolved social construct of greater participation and collaboration in society at large.

Behavioral Approaches to Learning and Directive Leadership

Behaviorism. In the late 1800s, the field of educational learning embraced more scientific aspirations and the behaviorist theoretical school developed with the study of behavior

in both humans and animals. The work of Pavlov (1927) on the salivation reflex of dogs was instrumental in driving the behaviorist movement, which focused on behavior caused by external stimuli. Pavlov's work was expanded to humans by Watson (1930), who demonstrated that emotions could become conditioned responses through passive reaction to environmental stimuli rather than the internal, mental state. Other major theorists of behaviorism included Thorndike (1913), who identified the concept of readiness to learn and repetition, Tolman (1932), who introduced the importance of reinforcement and reward in learning outcomes, and Skinner (1938) who proposed the principles of active learning and feedback.

Behaviorism explains behavior through reflexes based on a stimulus-response and postulates that learning is conditioned by environmental and external factors. It uses rewards and punishment as the means to encourage learning and modify behavior. Behaviorism prioritizes conditioning and responses to environmental stimuli and does not consider the individual's internal mental state or consciousness as meaningful factors for learning. "The behaviourists have a common conviction that a science of psychology must be based on a study of that which is overtly observable" (Knowles et al., 2005b, p. 25), relying on reflexes and conditioned response. As a result, behaviorists believe that direct teaching strategies operate through cause and effect, and the learner is viewed as a passive, empty organism (Thorndike, 1913) responding to environmental stimuli. Behaviorists conjecture that learning is achieved through continuous reinforcement and repetition to reach the desired behavior. Instruction is carefully programmed and planned in sequence with learner tasks resulting in positive or negative feedback to induce behavior modification. As an Elemental Model (Knowles et al., 2005b), behaviorism sees learning as needing to be broken down into discrete pieces with students in a reactive and adaptive approach.

Leadership implications. The behaviorist paradigm promotes a view of leadership that is directive (see Figure 2). The role of the leader is to exert a set of skills to be an effective administrator, as per R. Katz's (1955) skill-based model of leadership. The goal is to shape others to match organizational goals by performing behavior checks, and guide the hands-on practice of followers, conditioned for immediate feedback and response. As a result, leaders and followers find themselves in a transactional dynamic. As noted by Lambert (2002), "behaviorism had a dramatic impact on developing leaders. It promoted the idea that leadership was not an innate quality, but a behavioral transaction between leader and follower" (p. 5). In the 1950s, behaviorist research guided leadership development by applying behavioral compliance and programmatic conditioning to leadership training, particularly in the US military. This led to a shift toward competency-based behavioral training, focused on transactional approaches of conditioning. Leadership was akin to a learning treatment that could be administered and measured with a set of behavioral objectives. Two landmark research studies known as the Ohio and Michigan studies (D. G. Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Hemphill & Coons, 1957) supported the transactional leadership theory by isolating the impact of default leadership styles on behavioral outcomes. Theses leadership studies determined that effective leadership behaviors were based on two dimensions: task-oriented behaviors and human-oriented behaviors linked to group activity (Bass, 1990). In response to the Ohio State University Study, Stogdill (1974) determined two dimensions around the structure of behaviors and relationships with others. Meanwhile, Michigan studies isolated "employee orientation" and "production orientation" as two main leadership behaviors (Northouse, 2013, p. 77). Understanding the configuration of these two variables opened up the field of leadership studies, which started to examine leadership beyond the inner boundaries of the individual (i.e., trait theory) and consider the broader external

environment in which leadership was enacted. Transactional leadership (Bass, 1985), in contrast to transformational leadership (J. M. Burns, 1978), studies how leaders and followers interact in a structured and rules-based performance environment with a focus on supervision and tasks.

Cognitivist Approaches to Learning and Situational/Contingency/Path-Goal Leadership

Cognitivism. The cognitive model marks a complete break with behaviorist theories, which were viewed as too simplistic and mechanistic. German gestalt theories rejected the stimuli response approach and proposed a holistic worldview, where the world was represented as a unitary system with humankind playing an active and adaptive role (Knowles et al., 2005b). This view emphasized the role of experience in facilitating learning rather than behavior reinforcement through direct cause and effect (Reese & Overton, 1970). In his study of apes, German psychologist Wolfgang Köhler demonstrated the importance of cognition in the learning process, which he called insight learning (Köhler & Winter, 1925). Learning became understood as an inner mental function, with the learner viewed as an information processor of external conditions. Cognitivism focuses primarily on thinking and deciphering the human mind. Its concern is studying how the brain works and understanding the internal connections that occur during learning. Contrary to behaviorism, which assumes that learning is an acquired reflex that can be programmed, cognitivism asserts that individuals are rational beings capable of managing information creatively to problem-solve and anticipate consequences (Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2009). In his study of child psychology, Jean Piaget (1952) conceptualized that learning occurred through evolutionary stages. This informed the notion that learning involved the acquisition and reorganization of cognitive structures at different times. Therefore, students were categorized in different groups by ability, and schools introduced variations in teaching strategies based on student potential, aiming to move students to higher-level cognitive groups based on the concept

of intellectual growth (Bruner, 1961). The idea of differentiated ability also applied to teacher development. Supervisors aimed at advancing teachers' performance by varying their training approaches based on directed and non-directed approaches and teachers' capacity for development (Glickman, 1990).

Leadership implications. The learning theory of cognitivism bridges the divide between purely directive leadership theories based on a mechanical input-output approach, and situational leadership approaches, where mental awareness of context-specific situations was determined to impact leadership choices and results (see Figure 2). Prior research from Stogdill (1948) had challenged trait-leadership theory by theorizing that leader behavior could be context-dependent. Situational leadership theory, introduced initially in 1969 and updated in 1977, focuses on isolating the impact of situations on leadership outcomes (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). This theory assumes that there is no absolute best leadership style. Instead, leaders are encouraged to adjust how they behave and support followers based on the assessment of two variables: task behavior and relationship behavior. Effective leaders must adapt their leadership—telling, selling, anticipating, or delegating—according to the complexity of the task and the readiness of the follower.

While situational leadership looks at leadership as a function of the situation, contingency theory introduces the importance of recognizing the interaction between people and their context (leadership as determined both by the leader and the situation). A prominent theory in this movement is Fiedler's contingency (1964) theory, which introduces three mediating aspects regarding how a leader can take control of a situation: (a) the way followers feel toward their leader, (b) followers' understanding of their tasks, and (c) the degree of power the leader has toward their followers. According to this theory, leadership is a dynamic model where the leader

must match the current situation the group faces to a distinct leadership style for effectiveness (Fiedler, 1964). Central to this strategy is the leader's need to find the situational favorability to match their leadership style to the context. Another contingency model is the Vroom-Yetton-Jago Decision-making Model of Leadership, which proposes a systematic decision-making method in the form of a decision tree adapted to different situational circumstances (Vroom & Yetton, 1973). The model allows leaders to choose among five leadership styles (from high to low degrees of participation) based on various situational elements such as the commitment of group members, decision quality, and time constraints.

New research challenges leadership as a skill and examines it as an activity on a spectrum ranging from employee-centered to production-centered (D. Katz et al., 1987). This approach is the Path-Goal theory of leader effectiveness from the works of M. G. Evans (1970, 1996) and House (1971). The major components of the Path-Goal Theory include four leader behaviors: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. These should be chosen based on subordinate and task characteristics and together contribute to motivation and goal productivity. The Path-Goal theory goes beyond situational and contingency leadership theories, which only highlighted the adaptation of leaders to subordinates and situational variables (Northouse, 2013), as it introduces the importance of how followers feel toward their work environment.

As a leading learning pedagogy in the 1950s, cognitivism had a profound impact on the importance of inner rationalization and broadening the understanding of leadership through the positionality of the individual relative to situations and to each other. Situational, contingency and path-goal leadership theories offer more structure and "predictive power" (Northouse, 2013, p. 127) on leadership effectiveness. Cognitive frameworks have continued to be popularized well

into the 1980s and 1990s (Argyris, 1990; McChesney et al., 2012; Senge, 2006) as leadership construction has taken on a more introspective and relational dimension over time.

Constructivist/Humanist Approaches to Learning and Relational Leadership

Constructivism. Informed by cognitive development theory (Piaget, 1952), the constructivist learning theory concentrates on "the idea that learners actively build, create, or construct new mental models as a result of their interactions and experiences" (Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2009, p. 31). Constructivist principles include knowledge construction, personal meaning, and discovery learning (Freilberg & Driscoll, 2005). The leading theorists of constructivism are of two branches: those who are from the cognitive constructivist tradition who believe that knowledge is internally constructed (Bruner, 1961; Piaget, 1977), and those from the social constructivist movement (Dewey, 1922; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) who see reality as socially constructed. Constructivism recognizes the more complex nature of knowledge assimilation and the belief that students construct meaning from values, viewpoints, and experiences (Driscoll, 1994). Learning for constructivists is a subjective process dependent upon learner experiences. As a result, theorists argue that constructivism has a subjective and relativist ontology, emphasizing learning as a socially constructed product (Darke et al., 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). While knowledge exists within the learner, the constructivist learning model depends on social interactions, which sees learners construct knowledge within a group.

Humanism. The humanist model develops in the 1960s, exploring learning through emotions and the influence of feelings on educational outcomes. Building on constructivism, which claims that learning is dependent upon learner experiences and the social construction of knowledge, humanism focuses on the psychological aspects of what motivates people to learn. Humanists introduce the idea that "feelings of love, belonging, and esteem can affect learning"

(Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2009, p. 37). The humanist model builds a strong emphasis on the affective side of learning based on Abraham Maslow's human motivation and hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). With constructivism and humanism, "the school as a factory, emphasizing assembly-line production, compliance, and uniformity" (Lambert, 2002, p. 21) transforms, and the school becomes a community center oriented on the growth and the well-being of its members. The educational environment becomes an ecology that can provide social cohesion and support intellectual growth (Bateson, 1972; C. A. Bowers & Flinders, 1990; E. Eisner, 1988). As a result, the role of the teacher goes from a unidirectional transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator, who helps learners make ideas, rather than merely receive them (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Barth (1988) introduces the concept of a community of leaders, where teachers and learners are connected in an interactive shared leadership process no longer dominated by hierarchy but by a shared responsibility of goals. Humanists advance that how learners feel about their learning experience reflects on their ability to learn, the meaning they assign to knowledge, and their ability to share it with others (Bandura, 1977). Knowles' andragogy adult learning theory introduces self-directed learning as a key learning principle (Knowles et al., 2005b).

Leadership implications. The constructionist learning movement brings new ideas to leadership. First, it informs leadership through the interactive and co-constructed nature of relationships. Second, with humanism, leadership starts to consider the importance of emotions in the leadership process. Thus, the contemporary study of leadership evolves beyond trait, behavioral, situational, contingency, and path-goal theory to address the broader social aspects of leadership (see Figure 2). "Constructivists influenced leadership by placing greater emphasis on social context and interaction that highlighted the importance of followership and produced a generation of relational leaders" (Kelly, 2019, p. 9). From the second world war into the 1960s,

much of the leadership literature emphasizes the leader-follower relationship with a concern for sharing power and influence. The relational leadership scholars propose a more balanced and equal view of leadership between leaders and followers, which considers leadership as a dynamic interaction system (Bolden et al., 2008). From there, the study of leadership becomes more complex, recognizing the multifaceted interactions between leaders and followers and the need to empower followers through rewards and recognition. The Leader-Member exchange leadership theory (LMX) "conceptualizes leadership as a process that is centered on the interactions between leaders and followers" (Northouse, 2013, p. 161). This theory recognizes that the relationships between leaders and followers are constantly changing. This is a fundamentally different view from leadership theories developed based on traits, styles, or behaviors. LMX theory argues that "the quality of the relationship that develops between a leader and a follower is predictive of outcomes at the individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis" (Gerstner & Day, 1997, p. 827). Early studies of LMX theory from Dansereau et al. (1975) explored the nature of linkages across leaders and followers based on their dyadic relationship, vertical dyads with subordinates, and in-group and out-group relationships. Subsequent LMX studies demonstrate that organizational performance and effectiveness are proportionally related to the nature of the exchange between leaders and members (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Today, scholarly interest in LMX research remains high as a theory that directs attention to the relational aspect of leadership and the quality of the leader and follower exchange (Anand et al., 2011), indicating its positive contribution and continued relevance to the field of leadership.

The contemporary leadership literature has continued to investigate the affective elements of leadership and the critical role that followers play in the leadership exchange. This area of

inquiry has occurred in parallel development to the learning literature, which has also developed learning theories based on the affective side of learning. As constructivism stressed "the role of affect or feelings as well as cognition in their principles" (Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2009, p. 33), the humanist learning model, developed in the 1960s, theorized that feelings impacted educational outcomes. Humanists stress that training materials hold a personal meaning to learners, which affects their motivation to learn (Dembo, 1988; Tennant, 2006). The work of Bandura (1977) examines the importance of learner self-efficacy and beliefs in generating one's success. It is in this context that leadership theory continues to evolve into a new paradigm, giving more attention to the intrinsic motivation of followers. The original idea of transformational leadership (Downton, 1973) is expanded by James Macgregor Burns, who describes leaders as "people who tap the motives of followers in order to better reach the goals of leaders and followers" (J. M. Burns, 1978, p. 18). J. M. Burns (1978) contrasts transactional leadership from transformational leadership aimed at creating a deep connection between the leader and follower, resulting in increased motivation and mutual empowerment. According to Bass (1985), the latter is highly dependent on the context where the interaction between leaders and followers occurs. Transformational leadership "is more likely to reflect social values and to emerge in times of distress and change while transactional leadership is more likely to be observed in a well-ordered society" (Bass, 1985, p. 154). Overall, only leadership that "is a process that changes and transforms people" can truly be called transformational (Northouse, 2013, p. 185). It leverages emotions, values, and followers' motives to help them achieve their fullest potential (Avolio, 1999). Leaders seek to empower and nurture followers through strong ideals and visions. To distinguish leaders who are transformative but have exploitive intentions from those who are genuine and selfless, Bass (1998) creates a category of leaders called pseudo

transformational. Power-oriented leaders with low morality are contrasted from those who practice authentic transformational leadership concerned with the common good. This distinction helps introduce an ethical dimension to leadership, later expanded with other forthcoming leadership theories. Meta-analyses of the transformational leadership literature (DeGroot et al., 2000; Lowe et al., 1996; Patterson et al., 1995) demonstrate the benefits of transformational leadership on organizational outcomes. With a large body of evidence and research, transformational leadership has garnered a large appeal and is regarded among scholars as one of the most effective contemporary leadership approaches of our times (Antonakis, 2012; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Lowe & Gardner, 2001).

New leadership theories have continued to build on generating the trust, engagement, motivation, and empowerment of followers. A theory offering a unique perspective in this regard is servant leadership by Greenleaf (1970). Contrary to most leadership theories, which are overly concerned with the leader, this theory primarily focuses on followers with a concern for their well-being, needs, and capacity development. According to Greenleaf (1970), servant leadership "begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" (p. 15). By reversing the leadership focus, this theory brings leadership into new areas previously unexplored by other theories, requiring leaders to place the needs of followers first, shift power and authority to subordinates, provide follower development, act with moral behavior, demonstrate social responsibility within the community at large, and seek to address injustices (Greenleaf, 1970). The ten characteristics of servant leadership are summarized by Spears (2002) as follows: (a) listening, (b) empathy, (c) healing, (d) awareness, (e) persuasion, (f) conceptualization, (g) foresight, (h) stewardship, (i) commitment to the growth of people, and (j) building community. As evidenced by these

normative principles, servant leadership is as much a guiding philosophy as a leadership theory. It calls on leaders to be humanistic, altruistic, and somewhat idealistic. As such, servant leadership offers a unique perspective, challenging traditionally-held beliefs of leadership built on power, control, and dominance and introduces an ethical and societal dimension to leadership and organizations. The seminal work of Greenleaf (1970) offers a moralistic philosophical framework, which has become the basis for much of the recent leadership literature.

One significant legacy from the work of Greenleaf is the possibility to groom a new generation of leaders who can be "healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous and more likely to become servants themselves" (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006, p. 321). From the 1990s onwards, leadership scholars turn to the development of moral grounding in leaders. The literature integrates the issues of trust, honesty, and ethics within the conceptualization of leadership. Authentic leadership explores how leadership is morally uplifting to followers, as also identified in transformational leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Zhu et al., 2011). Avolio et al. (2009) note that authentic leadership is "a pattern of transparent and ethical leader behavior that encourages openness in sharing information needed to make decisions while accepting followers' inputs" (p. 423). Scholars analyze authentic leadership through different perspectives studying (a) the leader's intrapersonal abilities (Cashman, 1998; Collins, 2001; Shamir & Eilam, 2005); (b) the relational authenticity between leader and followers (Eagly, 2005); (c) the developmental experiences of a leader (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; George et al., 2007, 2015; George & Sims, 2007; Walumba et al., 2008), or (d) an inquiry-based authentic practice approach (Terry, 1993).

One of the factors isolated as a component of authentic leadership is the leader's introspection, ability to self-regulate, reflect on choices and behaviors, and sense of morality. This criterion opens up another form of leadership considered ethical (M. E. Brown et al., 2005),

described as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers” (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 424). Avolio’s research (1999) showed that ethical leadership is significantly related to organizational performance in the areas of employee fulfillment, commitment, performance, and citizenship behavior. Scholars also explore spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003; P. Palmer, 2004), defined as “awareness within individuals of a sense of connectedness that exists with their inner selves and the world” (Jamaludin et al., 2011, p. 78). Spiritual leadership aims to create a calling in one’s self and others through vision and values to foster higher levels of commitment through a sense of membership. Spiritual leaders extend the practice of transformational leadership with altruistic values such as love and wholeness (Fernando et al., 2009). While some scholars have argued that spiritual leadership should constitute a new leadership paradigm (Dent et al., 2005), it is empirically difficult to train for and measure this approach, which is highly subjective and personal. While leadership constructs based on morality, spirituality, ethics, and well-being continue to be relevant in the contemporary literature, new forms of leadership based on more participative and networked models have emerged coinciding with new forms of learning and knowledge development in the digital age.

The Connectivist Approach to Learning and Networked Leadership

Connectivism. On December 12, 2004, Siemens (2005a) wrote a seminal article introducing connectivism as an alternative learning theory answering the pervasive technology paradigm of our times. The theory is contextually anchored on the rise of networking technology and its transformative impact on knowledge and instructional environments. At its heart, connectivism is a theory of learning and knowledge in social and distributed networks. “The concept of connectivism describes the nexus between human learning and the ubiquitous access

to knowledge enabled by the current technological environment" (Corbett & Spinello, 2020, p. 1). In his article, Siemens denounces the boundaries of previous learning theories noting that they were developed before the advent of social networking technologies, which have rendered many of their ideas obsolete. None of the traditional learning theories—behaviorism, cognitivism, humanism, or constructivism—address how learning and knowledge occur differently with networking technologies. According to Boitshwarelo (2011), connectivism is "a fresh way of conceptualizing learning in the digital age" (p. 161). Downes (2007) has also added to the thinking on connectivism declaring that "at its heart, connectivism is the thesis that knowledge is distributed across a network of connections, and therefore that learning consists of the ability to construct and traverse those networks" (para. 1).

Principles. Siemens (2005a) describes the basic principles of connectivism as follows:

- Learning and knowledge rest in diversity of opinions.
- Learning is a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources.
- Learning may reside in non-human appliances.
- The capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known.
- Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning.
- The ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill.
- Currency (accurate, up-to-date knowledge) is the intent of all connectivist learning activities.
- Decision making is itself a learning process. Choosing what to learn and the meaning of incoming information is seen through the lens of a shifting reality. While there is a right answer now, it may be wrong tomorrow due to alterations in the information climate affecting the decision (p. 4).

These founding beliefs offer a new perspective on not only what comprises knowledge and learning but also where and how they occur. Henceforth, connectivism presents some key characteristics in terms of pedagogical features that are worth highlighting as they offer fundamental differences compared to other theories in the learning ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology (see Table 1). Traditional approaches to learning foster adherence to a particular view of the world and obedience to authority. "A central purpose of the first schools was to ensure continuance of our democracy" (Lambert, 2002, p. 16). Behavioral approaches to learning believe in calibrating human behavior through an input/output model. Cognitivism aims to achieve higher cognition, while constructivism and humanism seek to construct meaning based on personal growth. In contrast, the main reason for being of connectivism is to create connections. Siemens (2005b) explains that the process of forming connections is based on personal motivation, the role of emotions within the networks, the exposure of ideas within networks, patterning, logic, and experience. According to Natt och Dag (2017), "whereas adult learning principles focus on the individual learner, connectivism focuses on the aspect of connectivity, and how the learner himself or herself connects the nodes" (p. 302). The principles behind each of the various learning theories are vastly different and reveal unique perspectives on the nature of human existence and its aims (see Table 1).

Knowledge. Knowledge is conceived very differently in connectivism versus other learning theories. In his original article, Siemens (2005a) observes that the lifespan of knowledge has dramatically changed in the last decade with the acceleration of technology, enabling faster discovery and information sharing. As a result, the duration of knowledge is much shorter, forcing learners to be on an always-on learning mode to reskill and retrain themselves. Knowledge is not true and unchanging as traditional learning approaches affirmed, and

importantly, in connectivism, knowledge can reside both within, and outside of the learner, as a "physical presence—i.e., brain-based" and "stored and manipulated by technology" (Siemens, 2005a, p. 2). This idea is radical versus other learning theories and their interpretations of knowledge, as a binary view, either externally or internally-driven (see Table 1). In their review of connectivism, Duke et al. (2013) remark that social networks, digital cities, and connected workplaces have created a new path for knowledge. As a network phenomenon, knowledge is no longer a linear progression of consumed ideas but a collectively stitched creation.

Learning. Connectivism views learning as a process of creating networks and the human activity within these networks (Siemens, 2005a). In Siemens's view (2005b), "the shortcomings of behaviorist, cognitivist, and constructivist ideologies of learning are answered in light of learning as a connection-forming (network-creation) process" (p. 3). Learning is informal and occurs through the many ways individuals naturally socialize in communities of practice and personal networks. With the rapid obsolescence of knowledge, learning becomes a continuous life-long activity versus a point in time or an academic milestone. Connectivism states that learning is based on four principles: connectedness, diversity, autonomy, and openness. Siemens argues that in connectivism, learners are responsible for their learning and choose their own connections and relevant information for a self-directed instructional process. "Learning is the act of encoding and organizing nodes to facilitate data, information, and knowledge flow" (Siemens, 2005b, p. 6). Connectivism emphasizes the collective and connected aspect of learning. It argues that "the idea that learning takes place across networked learning communities and information technologies is central to connectivism" (Dunaway, 2011, p. 675). Contrary to other theories primarily concerned with learning within the school environment, connectivism discusses the importance of learning networks within corporate organizations. Siemens (2005b)

remarks on the importance of corporations becoming more aware of their learning networks as "when an individual works for an organization, they bring their network with them, combining as part of the larger network of the corporation" (p. 21).

Learner. Connectivism establishes that the learner belongs to a community, which enriches the group with intelligence and new data (Siemens, 2005b, 2005a). Growing connections and nodes enable continuous dialogue and meaning-making. This process results in learners being open to diverse opinions with creativity and meaning increasing as networks grow. Therefore, the learner in connectivism fulfills the role of a networker. In contrast, traditional learning theories present the learner as a passive recipient of the information or reacting to a stimulus (see Table 1).

Teacher. Connectivism fundamentally changes the role of the teacher from an authority figure and disciplinarian as seen in traditional approaches to learning to an equal collaborator. Teachers contribute to the learning network and function as connected peers facilitating interactions and idea-sharing like other participants. "Instead of controlling a classroom, a teacher now influences or shapes a network" (Dunaway, 2011, p. 682). The teacher is a cultivator, consultant, and team leader, encouraging learner cooperation, fostering collegiality, and integrating remote-access students (Senior, 2010). Henceforth, the teacher remains essential in helping to foster new learning communities (Garcia et al., 2015).

Teaching practices. Like constructivism, connectivism recognizes the importance of metacognition, peer review, reflection, and the role of community learning (see Table 1). In connectivism, educators use blogs, databases, video lectures, and a range of online tools (live and asynchronistic) to facilitate learning and the formation of connections. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) can provide open access to content to anyone around the world connected to

the network. These digital learning approaches have been referred to as a "flipped-classroom model" (Lange, 2015, p. 101) as students can review the content at any time to grow their knowledge.

Table 1

Comparison of Learning Theories

Comparison of Learning Theories

	Traditional	**Behaviorism**	**Cognitivism**	**Constructivism/Humanism**	**Connectivism**
Principle	• Obedience to authority	• Calibrate behavior	• Achieve higher cognition	• Construct meaning	• Create connections
Knowledge	• True and unchanging • External	• A posteriori through sensory experience • External	• Based on personal experience • Internal	• Subjective, based on social interactions and feelings • Internal	• Physical (brain-based) and data-led • Internal and external
Learning	• Memorization • Acceptance	• Stimulus-response • Immediate feedback • Repetition	• Reorganize inner mental functions	• Mediated by emotional, affective state • Self-directed	• Connecting to nodes in technology networks
Learner	• Recipient	• Stimulus reactor	• Discoverer	• Meaning-maker	• Networker
Teacher	• Authority • Source of knowledge • Discipline	• Operant conditioning administrator • Task supervisor	• Group mediator	• Presenter, facilitator • Community manager	• Connector • Collaborator
Teaching Practices	• Pass down knowledge • Foster compliance • Enforce discipline • Test-based	• Direct teaching through cause and effect • Reward and punishment • Tasks and units • Drills	• Variations in teaching strategies based on student ability • Flash cards, essays	• Metacognition • Community of learning • Peer review, reflection	• Search • MOOCs

Leadership implications. Siemens argues that the learning theory of connectivism has far-reaching implications for "all aspects of life" beyond instructional environments. Applications may include management and leadership with a particular focus on networked-based leadership, which promotes a diversity of viewpoints and knowledge creation from distributed sources (Siemens, 2005a). Natt och Dag (2017) remarked that connectivism could be a useful model to apply to leadership development in the information era. Several emergent leadership theories propose new ways of conceptualizing leadership inspired by the connectivist model of knowledge creation, examining leadership as a responsive and networked influence

model through shared connections and leadership (see bottom of Figure 2). In content analysis, Corbett et al. (2018) established that the leadership literature experienced a significant change in 2015, with a marked decline from its steady increase since the start of the century. In contrast, search terms for collective leadership grew, with network theory characteristics, including transparency, collaboration, teamwork, and distributed decision-making (Corbett et al., 2018). These theories advance more complex views of leadership, challenging the underlying assumptions of the previously reviewed literature, which underline much of what is taught and practiced in the field of leadership studies to date. In these newer leadership paradigms, leadership is no longer defined based on the leader's idealized influence (i.e., dominating, directive, charismatic), or as of the result of an exchange between the leader and follower (i.e., situational, relational), but as an outcome in terms of knowledge creation through a dynamic and collective effort, and ultimately a shared collective state of connectivity. Goldie (2016) notes that in the field of learning: "there is unlikely to be a single theory that will explain learning in technological enabled networks" (p. 1064).

Different leadership theories have explored shared forms of leadership, where leadership is team-centric based on leader-team interactions (Zaccaro et al., 2009). Leadership genres alternative between "team leadership" (D. V. Day et al., 2004; Kogler Hill, 2013), "shared leadership" (Pearce et al., 2009; Pearce & Conger, 2003), and "distributed leadership." These models present similar ideals on how leaders and followers work together in teams. However, the review of research shows that team leadership is sometimes described within the traditional views of the leader as a decision-maker directing team decisions, whereas some models are more progressive in their views of leadership as a network effect, outcome, and group knowledge creation.

The Hill Model of team leadership (Kogler Hill, 2013) describes team leadership based on a functional process, which includes leadership decisions, actions, and markers of team effectiveness. This approach remains traditional in its perspective of leadership as the leader retains all the vital decisions of the team, setting team goals and direction, being responsible for the functioning of the team, and selecting the appropriate behaviors for team effectiveness. While the work occurs within a team, leadership interventions remain up to the leader, versus a fully distributed leadership approach. There is no network effect in this particular way of leading in teams.

Pearce and Conger (2003) define shared leadership as "a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both" (p. 1). It sees leadership as a process of reciprocal influence (Carson et al., 2007). Shared leadership recasts leadership into the collective with distributed individuals collectively leading each other. According to Carson et al. (2007), certain conditions are predictors of shared leadership, including having a shared purpose, giving a voice to all team members, providing external coaching, and extending emotional and psychological support to each other. In their exploration of team leadership, Day et al. (2004) go a step further by characterizing team leadership not just as a process, but as a work product from teamwork and learning, which generates an emergent team property or state. This perspective seeks to conceptualize team leadership beyond a mere process or outcome but rather into a unique property of the collective.

Complexity leadership theory argues that leadership is more than a production activity and encompasses learning, knowledge, creativity, and innovation (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008). The theory emphasizes the conditions in which change occurs to facilitate collaborative

knowledge. As a leadership theory, it proposes "a leadership paradigm that focuses on enabling the learning, creative, and adaptive capacity of complex adaptive systems (CAS) within a context of knowledge-producing organizations" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 298). Complexity theory sees leadership as a collective process, which dynamically brings together random agents in networks to produce knowledge. As a result, "leadership an emergent phenomenon within complex systems" (Hazy et al., 2007, p. 2).

As more businesses operate internationally and teams interact far away from each other, virtual leadership, or e-leadership, proposes to examine leadership that is mediated by, and expressed through, technology. Zigurs (2003) argues that leadership in the electronic age is fundamentally different from traditional leadership, which uses face-to-face interactions. With virtual teams who experience high levels of autonomy and little direct control due to their geographic, temporal, cultural, and organization dispersion, leadership must be conceived as "a total system" (Zigurs, 2003). Leadership is no longer enacted by a single individual leader but distributed across the team as a collective product with leadership roles rotating as needed. A distinct quality of e-leadership is how technology is used to enable collective activities with features that enable online brainstorming, document sharing, commenting, voting, and ranking, allowing the distribution of leadership across the entire team and the company. As a result, "leadership in virtual teams is expressed *through* technology" (Zigurs, 2003, p. 347) rather than merely using it as a tool. Comparing virtual teams to others, Zaccaro and Bader (2003) argue that e-teams have a more significant potential for generating social capital. They benefit from the broader relationships and networks they operate in and the diversity of talents they can recruit.

Another new direction for leadership has been to study the patterns of nature and the biological functions of basic organisms, such as insects who operate in swarms. As human

activity increasingly occurs in social networks, scholars have been keen to construct new leadership models on the metaphor of living species (e.g., bees) to understand the influence of groups, participatory information sharing, cooperative relationships, knowledge sharing, and creation. As humans adjust to learning, working, and playing on social networks, leadership needs to become a unified living system that facilitates generative human behaviors based on the power of collaboration (Haywood Rolling, 2013). Extracting decision-making characteristics from swarm behavior, Haywood Rolling (2013) has defined principles of swarm intelligence that he argues can shape future leadership practices including:

- Self-organization;
- Dispersed control;
- Decentralized problem-solving;
- Multiplicity of connections across agents;
- Diversity of knowledge (p. 59).

Building on the same swarm leadership concept, MIT researcher Peter Gloor (2017) affirms that "the future of business is swarm business" (p. 2) and that leadership is about creating a working swarm. To create a swarm, team members need to follow a five-layer model of collaboration including (a) the physical layer (teamwork), (b) the network layer (technology tools), (c) the signal layer (goal setting), (d) the ethical layer (moral and ethical standards), and (e) the collaboration layer, which includes transparency, fairness, honesty, forgiveness, and listening (Gloor, 2017, p. 11). With this in mind, in the collaborative, connected future, leadership is a swarm with built-in group responsibility. Using the emerging field of quantum social sciences, Gloor (2017) redefines leadership as a phenomenon that is far deeper than just peer influence or collaboration; he asserts that a higher consciousness inherently connects

humans and that together they can achieve shared knowledge, behaviors, and wisdom in total synchronicity. Gloor (2017) outlines four principles that must be followed to build a collective consciousness: empathy, entanglement, reflection, and refocus. Together, these operating principles provide the framework for building Collaborative Innovation Networks (COINs), where self-organizing groups can cooperate over the internet as creators and connectors. In this model, the business structure, traditionally known as a physical company, becomes a network or COIN instead, with new laws of ethics and collaborative practices. This perspective opens up radically new approaches to understanding human interactions and the possibility of a collective intelligence over distance and time.

Bohm (2002) discussed the concept of collective knowing and human inter-connectedness as part of his exploration of holism, the collective phenomena, and interest in quantum physics. He introduced the concept of the "implicate order" to describe an inner language across humans, an imperceptible level of reality that enfolds humankind into universal consciousness and essential interdependence (Bohm, 2002, p. 1). Bohm's Dialogue model, where he explores the group mind (Bohm, 2004), greatly informed Senge (2006) and his leadership works on collective thinking and work teams as a fundamental unit of the learning organization. The work of Bohm has also been influential in the leadership thinking of Jaworski (2012), who opined that "leaders have to develop a new cognitive capability—the capacity to sense and actualize emerging futures. This capacity constitutes a new form of knowledge creation" (p. 24).

Beyond these emerging leadership theories, further applying the principles of connectivism to the study of leadership can open up substantive and progressive opportunities to redefine the field conceptually and empirically (Corbett & Spinello, 2020). The situated, technological, and sociocultural conception of learning developed by connectivism builds a

different ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology of learning, which can be harnessed for building new leadership theory using different assumptions than previous learning theories. Conceptualizing leadership as Connectivist Leadership can help to redefine leadership "by recognizing that leadership is a dynamic, connected, and collective influence process, based on the principles of digital knowledge and interpersonal neural networks" (Corbett & Spinello, 2020, p. 8). Scholars are definitive about the need to change our understanding of leadership in the emerging digital paradigm, and Kelly (2019) has affirmed that swarm leadership and collaborative networks are fundamentally based on the theory of connectivism. According to Jonassen and Land (2012), "we have entered a new age in learning theory" (p. viii) with three significant areas of transformation in thinking: (a) learning as a social and affective practice, (b) learning as meaning-making, and (c) learning as collective social dialog. These shifts provide new avenues for research on leadership not only as a process (as per most definitions), but also as an outcome, and an emerging collective and connective state.

In summary, this brief historical examination of leadership within the entire spectrum of the development of learning theory helps demonstrate the symbiotic relationship that learning and leadership have shared and their mutual correspondences. It is striking to see that leadership evolved toward a more constructed, humanistic, and altruist approach focused on building influence through the reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers as schools also became more collaborative and the teacher-student relationship more equal and networked. Henceforth, this portion of the scholarly review serves as the theoretical backbone to understand leadership in a context where learning and knowledge are re-imagined. It highlights the merits of the proposed grounded theory study and its research subject. Understanding the emergence of a new leadership phenomenon is a significant area of inquiry to determine how leadership is

evolving from a process of influence (dominating, directive, situational, or shared) toward a more comprehensive system that involves knowledge creation, sharing, and collective sense-making.

Organization Design and Leadership

Many scholars (T. Burns & Stalker, 1961; Galbraith, 1973; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Mintzberg, 1979) have noted the significance of organization design and how it relates to environmental conditions and leadership. According to John Gardner (1990), "leaders cannot be thought of apart from the historical context in which they arise, the setting in which they function…and the system over which they preside" (p. 1). Henceforth, studying organization design provides invaluable insights for understanding the organizational environment in which leadership emerges and operates. According to Pascale et al. (2000), "design is the invisible hand that brings organizations to life and life to organizations" (p. 97). The structure of an organization helps to reveal the configuration of relationships between people and their roles and expose the nature of leadership that is practiced (Mullins, 1993).

Organization design is defined as "the deliberate process of configuring structures, processes, reward systems, and people practices and policies to create an effective organization capable of achieving the business strategy" (Galbraith et al., 2002, p. 2). How corporations organize themselves to be effective, responsive, and competitive in the current business environment of "discontinuous change, disruptive technologies and age of revolution" (Beer et al., 2005, p. 446) is of primordial importance. Henceforth, organization design is a "core leadership competency" (Anderson, 2019, p. 17) as it is a crucial lever alongside strategy and talent that leaders can harness to drive performance. As organizations have changed, so has the leadership to mirror changing structures and production aims and ideals toward workers.

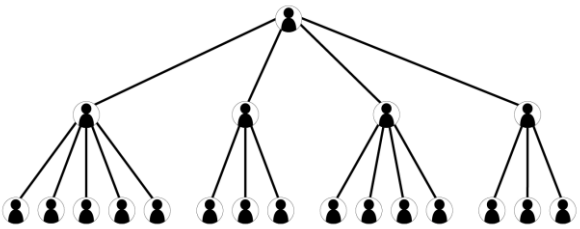
This part of the literature review gives a high-level analysis of various organization designs to understand how leadership evolved from traditional structures favoring legacy leader-centric paradigms to emerging postheroic leadership approaches (see Figure 4). While there is no direct historical correlation between the history of organization design and leadership theories per se, putting in context the prevailing organizational conditions helps to examine the transformation of leadership. Undeniably, "it is the broader intellectual preferences of our age which profoundly shape what we today see and accept as constituting an accurate account of 'what is leadership'" (Suze Wilson, 2016, p. 10). Theories of organization design provide an excellent lens to understand why leadership models of the past need reinvention to fit the changing epistemology (as examined in the learning and leadership section previously), the knowledge-oriented economy, and fast-growing digital society.

Mechanistic Organizational Systems and Legacy Leader-centric Leadership

During most of the early parts of the nineteenth century, traditional hierarchical organizational models dominated with the characteristics of mechanistic systems (T. Burns & Stalker, 1961). Centralized factory-based, scientific, and bureaucratic organizations promoted organizational structures that were predictable, highly engineered, and based on power and order (see Figure 3), as first identified in the research of T. Burns and Stalker (1961) and outlined in their organization design theory. Tasks were highly specialized, and the interactions between leaders and subordinates vertically delineated. Companies were managed like integrated machines with predetermined structure, governance, and processes, and highly regulated sets of norms across workers and superiors.

Figure 3

Characteristics of the Mechanistic Organizational System

The Mechanistic System	
• Specialized differentiation of functional tasks	
• A hierarchical structure of control, authority, and communication	
• A tendency for interaction between members to be vertical (i.e., between superior and subordinate)	
• A tendency for operations and working behavior to be governed by instructions and decisions issued by superiors	
• Negotiation of tasks done by immediate superiors	
• Authority dictated by hierarchical position	

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Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey (2007) note that most leadership models are designed to match their organizational structures and "to the degree that organizations are hierarchical, so too are leadership models" (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 430). In mechanistic systems, leadership is dictated by institutionalized authority based on hierarchical position with the use of dominance and coercion, exclusively at the direction of the heroic leader to fit the needs of the organization. Many influential leadership theories based on traits, personality, skills, and style, collectively explore the heroic aspect of leadership, within these fixed hierarchical power-based characteristics. "Historically, leadership has been conceived around a single individual—the leader—and how that person inspires, entices, commands, cajoles, and controls followers. This has been the dominant paradigm of leadership for many, many decades" (Pearce et al., 2009, p. 234). As a result, Avolio et al. (2009), note that the unit of analysis in traditional leadership

approaches is that of the leader who takes center stage in the leadership process (see the top of Figure 4).

Figure 4

Organization Design and Leadership

Organization Design and Leadership: A Contextual Analysis

	Organizational Theories	Leadership Theories	
	Mechanistic Organizational Systems and Legacy Leader-centric Leadership		
Functional	Centralized Organizations • **The Division of Labor Theory** (Smith, 1776)	Dominating Leadership • **Great Man Theory (**Carlyle, 1841) • **Trait Theory** (Mann, 1959) • **Psychodynamic Approach** (Freud, 1938)	Trait
Functional	Scientific Organizations • **Scientific Management Theory** (Taylor, 1911) • **Administrative Management Theory** (Fayol, 1916)	Directive Leadership • **Skill-based leadership** (Katz, 1955) • **Leadership and Power** (French and Raven,1959)	Personality
Divisional	Bureaucratic Organizations • **Bureaucracy Theory** (Weber, 1922) • **Human Relations Theory** (Mayo, 1932) • **Management By Objective** (Drucker, 1954) • **Participatory Goal Setting Theory** (Locke, 1968)	Contextual Leadership • **Transactional Leadership** (Ohio Studies 1957) • **The Leadership Grid** (Blake & Mouton, 1964) • **Situational Leadership (**Hersey & Blanchard, 1969) • **Contingency Leadership (**Fiedler, 1964) • **Path-Goal Theory** (Evans, 1970; House, 1971)	Skills Style
	Organic Organizational Systems and Emerging Post-heroic Leadership		
Matrix	Social Organizations • **Social Systems Theory** (Bernard, 1968; Trist, 1951) • **The Star Model** (Galbraith, 1973) • **The Matrix Organization** (Davis & Laurence, 1977) • **Typology of Organization Theory** (Scott, 2003)	Reciprocal Leadership • **Leader-Member Exchange (**Dansereau et al., 1975) • **Servant Leadership** (Greenleaf, 1970) • **Transformational Leadership** (Downton, 1973) • **Postindustrial Leadership** (Rost, 1991) • **Followership** (Kellerman, 2008) • **The Social Character** (Maccoby, 2007)	Relational
Network	Agile Organizations • **The Innovative Organization** (Mintzberg, 1979) • **The Chaordic Organization** (Dee Hock, 1999) • **The Helix Organization** (De Smet et al., 2019) • **Holacracy** (Robertson, 2015) • **The Buurtzorg Model** (Kreitzer et al., 2015) • **Dynamic Network Organization** (Snow, 2015) • **The Holonic Enterprise** (Ulieru et al., 2002) • **Teal Organizations** (Laloux, 2014)	Networked Leadership • **Shared/Distributed/Team Leadership** (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Day, Gronn, & Salas (2004) • **Complexity leadership** (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008) • **Leadership for organizational adaptability** (Uhl-Bien & Arenab, 2018) • **e-leadership** (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003; Zigurs, 2003) • **Swarm Leadership** (Gloor, 2017; Kelly, 2019)	Responsive

Centralized organizations and dominating leadership. In 1776, economist and moral philosopher Adam Smith published a seminal book on the wealth of nations. The treatise aimed to reform economic theory, which had traditionally been based on the mercantilist and physiocratic models with a more progressive industrial approach based on the division of labor (A. Smith, 2008). Smith argued that this new way of organizing work was better suited for industrial progress and would result in a substantial increase in productivity (A. Smith, 2008).

The division of labor model divides up the production process so that each worker becomes a specialist assigned to a dedicated chore on the assembly line. Large jobs are broken down into tiny components to increase worker concentration and skill. The first industrial revolution (1760 to 1840) accelerated the transition of small family-owned businesses to new large factory-based manufacturing organizations. Mass production firms practicing work specialization facilitated the use of unskilled labor migrating from rural townships into the factories and able to complete repetitive menial tasks. Factory-based organizations had traditional hierarchical organizational structures, which consisted of highly concentrated centralized management (e.g., factory owner and directors), and low-level workers in a functional form (see Table 2). The division of labor was achieved by inputs, with hierarchical supervision, plans and procedures, and highly centralized decision-making. This approach treats all aspects of the organization as rational and almost mechanical, including workers, objectives, processes, and performance.

In this business context of mechanization, centralized factories, and low waged workers, leadership was the privilege of the natural disciplinary leader, who had full power, domination, and control over subordinates (Kelly, 2019). Leadership was anchored on traditional trait and personality theories with captains of industry (Carlyle, 1849) who were either born into old aristocratic money or made thanks to their heroic qualities. Leaders were often exploitative, using patriarchal frameworks of the medieval ages. Aside from the trait approach, another leadership construct called the psychodynamic approach was introduced by Sigmund Freud (1938) and proposed to examine leadership based on personality. This approach emphasizes the various tendencies found in different personality types and explains them through psychology based on early childhood experiences and one's relationship with parents and siblings. This view

of leadership assumes that the personality type of the leader is predetermined as an antecedent; thus, the leader cannot change to fit the situation or the needs of followers.

Scientific organizations and directive leadership. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the academically-oriented theoretical study of organizational management began with Frederick Winslow Taylor (1911) and Henri Fayol (1916), who laid the foundation for management based on engineering and scientific principles. The second industrial revolution (from 1870 to 1914) brought in rapid technological advancements with standardization and industrialization. In response, management aimed to establish standardized procedures to optimize efficiency and orchestrate workers for maximum yield. Taylor applied his mechanical engineering background to analyze workflows in factories and sought to minimize waste time on the production line. Labor productivity was a cornerstone pillar of improved efficiency by optimizing the time each worker took to complete a task and incentivizing employee performance through rehearsed practices. Taylorism asserted that work in factory organizations should be planned, coordinated, and controlled under the continuous direction of an expert to become efficient and scientific alike the components of a machine (Taylor, 1911). In 1916, Fayol established the first administrative management theory, which synthesized 14 principles of management to help production factories achieve peak performance. Fayol was persuaded that there was one best way of management and organizational design. A company was to comprise of divisional functions managed separately for engineering, manufacturing, selling, finance, and personnel, with a top chief executive at the helm. Aside from the division of work, Fayol's principles emphasized the importance of discipline, central command, focused coordination of activities, the subordination of individual interest to those of the company, centralized authority and decision-making, and hierarchy (Fayol, 1916). Scientific organizational design structures

tend to be relatively flat, with a centralized authority at the top and a low degree of departmentalization.

Scientific management dehumanized followers, who were the mere instruments of mass production for the needs of the assembly line. This era promoted theories of behaviorism, which encouraged organizations to apply classic conditioning to their workforce using bells, whistles, and alarms to direct and control workers. In this directive and autocratic style of leadership, the manager role sits above the team with formal and external authority in vertical leadership (Pearce & Sims, 2002). Leadership is conceived as a defined organizational role and is "assigned leadership" (Northouse, 2013, p. 8). In these traditional theoretical models, leadership and power are interlinked. French and Raven (1959) identify five bases of social power:

1. Referent power, based on how followers relate to and identify with, their leader;
2. Expert power, resulting from the perceived competence of the leader;
3. Legitimate power, based on the formal job authority or status of the leader;
4. Reward power, based on influencing others through rewards and incentives;
5. Coercive power, based on influencing others through punishment.

In organizations with traditional hierarchical models, the bases of social power tend to be based on legitimate power, with leaders using reward and coercive power to influence their followers. This type of power based on the position is closely related to rank in the organizational system (Kotter, 1990). At the time when organizations were under the scientific production model, leadership by leader direction and supervision became the norm. Leadership theories shifted to understanding leadership through skills and abilities (R. Katz, 1955) to enable effective organizational management and administration.

Bureaucratic organizations and contextual leadership. After the first world war, large companies started to diversify from single product lines to several product areas and evolve from a single workforce model with the division of labor to a more functional and divisional structure (Anderson, 2019). The bureaucratic theory of Max Weber, published in 1922, proposed an alternative ideal model for management, which differed from traditional centralized structures. The bureaucratic organization was structuralist, divisional, and treated everyone equally (Weber, 1979). The basic principles of bureaucracy emphasized hierarchy, rules, and impersonal relationship with six characteristics:

1. Task specialization;
2. Hierarchical layers of authority;
3. Formal selection;
4. Rules and requirements;
5. Impersonality and personal indifference;
6. Career orientation (Weber, 1979).

Bureaucratic organizational design structures tend to have pyramid shapes, with senior leadership at the top of the corporate structure (i.e., the board of directors and CEO) and a structured divisional set of roles underneath the chain of command. The division of labor is achieved by outputs, with a separation of strategy and implementation (see Table 2). In the bureaucratic theory, unity, hierarchy, and authority are central to standardizing operations and regulating leadership behaviors. “The bureaucratic organization seems to be the product of a conscious decision by leadership to organize human and material resources for a carefully defined goal” (J. M. Burns, 1998, p. 55). To better understand worker productivity, organizational theorist Elton Mayo researched working practices in an Illinois electric factory.

The Hawthorn Studies conducted from 1924 to 1932 became one of the most well-known industrial experiments on workgroups. The research identified that physical working conditions (e.g., lighting) were far less critical than social conditions, such as meeting workers' needs and desires to belong to a group and be recognized by their manager (Carey, 1967). The findings from this research informed the development of the human relations theory, centered on employee welfare, growth, and fulfillment. In 1954, Peter Drucker developed the concept of Management by objectives (MBO), also referred to as management by results (Drucker, 2006). The central idea is that employees are more committed if they agree to clearly defined objectives they need to meet, rather than merely completing work assigned to them. Similarly, Participatory Goal Setting Theory (Locke, 1968) identifies that participative goal setting increases motivation through acceptance and commitment.

In this context, understanding the actions of leaders and how to motivate employees within the organizational setting became a central concern for leadership studies. The study of leadership through styles and situational approaches provided new answers. Researchers started to explore a range of contexts in which organizations could reach their purposes based on an exploration of factors that could motivate employees (e.g., working conditions, salary structures, company culture, and social relationships). The Ohio State and Michigan Studies (D. G. Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Hemphill & Coons, 1957) discovered the impact of particular default leadership styles on behavioral outcomes. The leadership Managerial Grid model developed in 1964 aimed to segment different management approaches based on various styles of leadership to cater to the needs of people and a concern for organizational results (Blake & Mouton, 2015). Situational leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969) and contingency leadership (Fiedler, 1964) theories brought the idea that leadership behavior needed to match the needs of followers, and

path-goal theory (Evans, 1970; House, 1971) overlaid the structure of tasks in the context of follower characteristics. While these theories presented a model of leadership that was more flexible in its approach than traits or personality leadership theories, they remained somewhat formulaic and reduced leaders and followers to a limited number of interactions within set organizational boundaries and predetermined situations.

As a result of leader-centered theories, which have dominated the leadership literature, many organizations have retained leadership understanding, practices, and training programs anchored on the idealized influence of the hero leader, with little attention pay to followers. Hence, these legacy leadership theories have shaped our accustomed understanding of leadership until today (Suze Wilson, 2016), despite rapidly changing organization design toward more team-based, agile structures. It is worth noting that while research has shown the limitations of leader-centric leadership approaches with no evidence of universal leader characteristics, there has been a resurgence of leader-centric approaches at different times. In the 1980s and 1990s, theories of leadership focused on charismatic leadership (Antonakis, 2012; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; DeGroot et al., 2000; House, 1976), transformational leadership (Bass, 1998; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Judge & Bono, 2000; Zhu et al., 2011), visionary leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Westley, 1989), and Level 5 leadership (Collins, 2001). Together, these theories are referred to as "The New Leadership Theories" (Bryman, 1992) with an emphasis on the symbolic identity of the heroic leader. Sinclair (2007, p. 28) attributes this growth to the sublimation of business leaders in a context where "capitalism and the managerial agenda have installed many assumptions into leadership, focussing it especially on the heroic performance of the individual."

In the last decade, the study of leadership has centered on the holistic and ethical development of leaders with theories such as authentic leadership (George & Sims, 2007),

spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003; P. Palmer, 2004), ethical leadership (M. E. Brown et al., 2005), and the mindfulness movement. These approaches can be understood as developments in reaction to a loss of confidence in leaders in society in general. Not of all these ideas are leadership theories per se but rather a commentary on how leadership is addressing the pressing issues of our time. For instance, scholars are exposing behaviors and characteristics that are evidenced in leaders who have moral groundings such as emotional intelligence empathy, and humility (George et al., 2007; Goleman, 1998a; Goleman et al., 2013). Emerging from these works is the need to explore leadership in the context of others, shifting the emphasis from just individualized attention to the relationship-building and collective sense-making essence of leadership.

Organic Organizational Systems and Emerging Postheroic Leadership

Post-World War II, the world emerged out of mass production with closed, hierarchical, and rational organizational models. With rapid global growth, leaders embraced more flexible structures that manifested the characteristics of organic systems (see Figure 5), in contrast to mechanistic systems (T. Burns & Stalker, 1961). While Burns and Stalker (1961) do not suggest than any of these two organizational designs are superior, they do observe that organic systems function best in fast-changing environments that are unpredictable, with less patterned activities. “The issue is that traditional mechanistic approaches to setting up and running organizations have tended to slow and restrain the creativity, innovation, and self-organization that social and technological developments could unleash” (Mc. Kinsey & Company, 2016, p. 11). As a result, organizations migrated from predictable engineering structures to approaches that allowed them to respond more quickly to rapidly changing technological, economic, and competitive environments. Instead of specialized and delineated tasks, individual jobs became more loosely

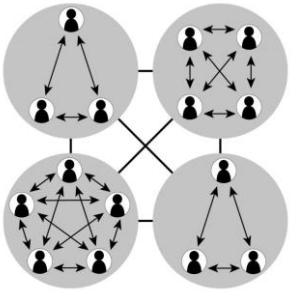
defined with more informal structures. As a result, Allen et al. (1998) note that “the old organizational pyramids of the nineteenth century are crumbling, being replaced by upside-down pyramids and circles and connections” (p. 575; see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Characteristics of the Organic Organizational System

The Organic System

- Individual job broadly defined, not self-contained
- A network structure of control, authority, and communication
- A lateral rather than vertical direction of communication through the organization, communication between people of different rank, resembling consultation rather than command
- Content of communication consists of information and advice rather than instructions and decisions
- Adjustment and continual redefinition of individual tasks through interaction with others
- Authority decided by whomever is most informed and capable



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The organic organizational system promotes a new organizational paradigm rejecting the idea of one best approach to organization design. It emphasizes flexibility and the opportunity for organizations to be adaptable, flexible, and reshapeable (Galbraith, 1973) to suit different environmental conditions. Companies seek to achieve high-performing configurations to maximize the best alignment, congruence and fit between internal and external conditions (Snow et al., 2006).

Implications of organic organizational systems are far-reaching on promoting emerging postheroic leadership approaches. As Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) remark, “leadership models of the last century have been products of top-down, bureaucratic paradigms” (p. 298). With organic systems, leadership shifts from a direct command approach to consultation and collaboration. A

network structure of communication replaces the hierarchical structure of control and authority from the mechanistic system. The interaction between members of the organization moves from vertical to lateral as communication in all directions, and all levels are enabled, and a more consultative, collaborative stream of information (see Figure 5). Emerging leadership theories propose newer approaches based on the relational process between leaders and followers and more team-based leadership, signaling future trends away from the leader-centric, and authoritative, dominating paradigm, in favor of postheroic centric leadership based on shared influence, networking and knowledge distribution (see the lower part of Figure 4).

Social organizations and reciprocal leadership. In response to the expansion of the information age, deregulation, and increased competition from international markets, companies transition from product-led organizations focused on efficiency and highly conditioned cultures to market-led and employee-centered organizations with transformational approaches (Anderson, 2019). Further expanding on the central theme of the human relations theory, the organization's social systems theory relates individual beliefs to the whole of the organization. In this organizational construct, the organization is a social system, with structural and human variables becoming critical (Gautam & Batra, 2007). Trist's scholarly work on workgroups in 1951 contributes to advancing socio-technical systems and team theory (Trist, 1981). Barnard (1968) introduces the cooperative system stressing that organizations enable conscious, deliberate, and purposeful cooperation of individual participants. In the 1960s, Jay Galbraith develops the Star Model that identifies five connected areas that support a company's business model: strategy, structure, processes, rewards, and people. He notes that "in a fast-changing business environment, and in matrix organizations, structure is becoming less important, while processes, rewards, and people are becoming more important" (Galbraith, 2016, p. 4). Henceforth, social

organizations provide a new distinctive perspective on organization theory based on their view of reciprocal organizational interactions and relational leadership. In this typology of organization theory, Scott (2003) distinguishes between three unique systems: rational, natural, and open systems. Each approach holds assumptions about the interactional relationships among workers. The rational system of mechanistic organizations focuses on formal structures and the pursuit of specific goals with theorists (Fayol, 1916; Taylor, 1911; Weber, 1964) who portray organizations as tools to accomplish pre-set goals agnostic of their environment. The natural system posits that interpersonal structures are most important, while open systems advance that organizations are interconnected with their environments (Scott, 2003). Compared to the rational systems, natural systems, are "based on the central idea of the human being as the base of an organization. Organizations are a collective of individuals who share a common interest in the system's survival and who naturally perform structured collective activities" (Carus, 2008, p. 2). Natural systems theorists argue the importance of informal structures, the nature of interpersonal relationships, and personal characteristics (Őnday, 2018).

The matrix organization becomes a prevalent configurational approach (Snow et al., 2006) as it allows companies a dual focus on both functions and products, and the ability to respond to uncertainty and change by sharing resources across the company to mitigate economic pressure (Davis & Lawrence, 1977). By being innovative and versatile, matrix organizations foster communication with the division of labor achieved by both inputs and outputs, and dual hierarchical relationships (see Table 2). In this structure, decision-making can be shared, and the source of authority evolves from positional to an ability for negotiating resources. As a result, in the 1970s, "virtually all large multinational corporations employ some form of matrix organizing" (Snow, 2015, p. 437) to foster greater cooperation and collaboration.

With a social paradigm at the heart of organization design, which emphasizes informal relationships, lateral communication, and collaborative workflows, the leadership theory emphasis changes from controlling employees to working with them. Between the 1960s and 1990s, leadership study shifted to the reciprocal nature leadership (see Figure 4). Theories include the Leader-Member exchange (Dansereau et al., 1975) concerned with the leader and follower relationship, servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970) that puts followers first, and transformational leadership (J. M. Burns, 1978; Downton, 1973; Kouzes & Posner, 2017), which seeks to "create a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leaders and the follower" (Northouse, 2013, p. 186). During this period, the organizational psychology field expands, exposing leaders to tools that promote follower engagement, empathy, and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998b). Goleman coined the term Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and applied his theory to organizational leadership, argues it is essential to acquire "the capacity for recognizing our feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Goleman, 1998b, p. 375). Goleman criticizes existing leadership training programs and advocates a new learning model based on an emotional competence framework composed of inner-directed skills (being self-aware, managing one's emotions and motivation) and outer-directed ones (empathy and social skills). He presents evidence that EQ is central to leadership and organizational performance, ahead of traditional intelligence. Researchers also find that Social Intelligence (SI) is a differentiator in the general intelligence field, noting this form of intelligence corresponds to "the ability to understand and manage men and women…to act wisely in human relations" (Thorndike, 1920, p. 228).

In contrast to classic management theory (the division of labor, scientific management, administrative management, bureaucracy), which centers on execution and maximizing

production through heroic leadership approaches, organizations as social entities promote the study of leadership through group dynamics, with the introduction of team leadership approaches and shared influence. While Mary Parker Follett (1924) introduced shared leadership in the 1920s, her work was ahead of its time and seemed contradictory to scientific management. According to Carson et al. (2007), several trends in organizational design account for the growth in team leadership at this later time:

1. The impossibility for a single leader to possess all the information for making the best decision given the increased complexity of today's business reality,
2. The nature of knowledge-based workers who are capable and eager to play leadership roles within their teams.

Gronn (2002) remarks that leadership can be conceived on a spectrum with focused individual leadership on one end, and distributed team leadership on the other. Zaccaro et al. (2009) observe that traditional leadership theory focuses on leader-subordinate interactions that are leader-centric, whereas newer leadership models are team-centric with leader-team interactions at their core. Pearce et al. (2009) note that while traditional leadership leverages downward and centralized influence with the leader supervising subordinates, shared leadership introduces a distribution of power and decentralized decision making. Compared to traditional forms, team leadership operates on formal hierarchy's absence, is based on personal knowledge rather than positional power, and assigns leadership based on an individual's ability to influence.

Rost (1991) introduces the concept of a postindustrial leadership paradigm, arguing that leadership needs to radically separate itself from management's ideas. In a critical analysis of leadership theories, Rost (1991) laments that scholars have misrepresented leadership based on the ideas of the industrial paradigm era:

1. Structural-functionalist;
2. Management-oriented;
3. Personalistic in focusing on the leader;
4. Goal-achievement-dominated;
5. Self-interested and individualist in outlook;
6. Male-orientated;
7. Utilitarian and materialistic in ethnical perspective;
8. Rationalistic, technocratic, linear, quantitative, and scientific in language and methodology (p. 27).

Rost emphasizes the need to focus leadership on its fundamental role—the dynamic relationship that is established between the leader and follower. Furthermore, Rost (1993) argues that leadership will be different in the new millennium, noting that followers will be known instead as collaborators as leadership becomes shared amongst workers to create positive change. Henceforth, Rost (1993) outlines five key recommendations to guide scholars, trainers, and developers in changing leadership development programs:

1. Shift the attention of the leadership process away from the leader;
2. Review leadership in the context of time-bound projects;
3. Center leadership development on mutual influence;
4. Train teams to interact within positive environments;
5. Focus leadership on creating change (p. 106).

With the postindustrial leadership paradigm (Rost, 1991), relational leadership theories gain momentum (Bolden et al., 2008) alongside the social construction of leadership (Fairhusrt & Grant, 2010; Grint & Jackson, 2010). In his work at the Organizational Learning Center at

MIT, Peter Senge recognizes the importance of teams over individuals in enabling learning organizations. “The discipline of team learning starts with ‘dialogue,’ the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine thinking together” (Senge, 2006, p. 10). In his essay on dialogue and thought, Bohm (2004) explains that dialogue is an entire collective thought process that produces “flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new understanding” (p. 7). Bohm (2004) points out the difference between information communicated in an authoritarian manner, which renders others passive, versus information generated from a team, which helps create a shared work product resulting in a fellowship. Zaccaro and Klimoski (2012) talk about the leadership interface that teams and individuals enable, noting that they affect one another so much they can be “inextricably integrated such that the boundaries of each set of processes become fairly indistinct” (p. 6).

Reciprocal leadership and the rise of followership. In recent years, scholars have noted the growing interest in shared leadership as a means to respond faster to today’s complex business challenges noting that “leadership in organizational work teams has become one of the most popular and rapidly growing areas of leadership theory and research” (Kogler Hill, 2013, p. 287). A central issue raised by shared leadership is the recognition that “leadership is more than just a role; it is a social process” (Pearce et al., 2009, p. 234) that requires a review of both followership and a new role for the leader, who becomes more commonly thought of, and leveraged, as a peer. Henceforth, emerging postheroic leadership approaches emphasize the critical role of followership in leadership. Avolio et al. (2009) remark that “one of the most interesting omissions in theory and research on leadership is the absence of discussions of followership and its impact on leadership. Leadership researchers treat follower attributes as outcomes of the leadership process as opposed to inputs” (p. 434). Typically, followers are

regarded as subordinates who seek compliance and delegate decision-making. Followers lack influence, power, and agency. However, there has been a renewed focus on followers in recent years, recognizing that followers hold greater power now that information has become more participatory and distributed. Kellerman (2008) notes that followers are no longer passive observers but actively creating change and challenging their leaders. Followers have become critical in facilitating upward information flows and questioning policies, fostering a climate of courageous followership (Chaleff, 2009). A new genre of leadership literature focused on follower-centric approaches has burgeoned under the "romance of leadership" category (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 434). In their social constructionist theory, Meindl et al. (1985) argue that followers significantly impact leadership and its effectiveness because they create the perceptions of the leader's abilities and personality, which in turn become a shared reality. Similarly, Shamir (2007) notes that followers are not passive in the leadership process as they contribute to its creation and manifestation. Maccoby (2007) provides a social-historical analysis of the shift in leadership perspective toward followership. He argues that the evolution from the industrial age to a knowledge-based economy has changed how the human character has evolved and the expectations that individuals have of each other, of society, and the nature of work. Maccoby (2007) notes that traditional hierarchical organizations shaped a bureaucratic social character, which promoted the ideals of "stability, hierarchy, and autonomy, organizational loyalty, and striving for excellence" (p. 329) and paternalistic authority. In contrast, modern global organizations that operate in the information age are shaping the interactive social character, with large information flows, feedback loops, and an expectation for more distributed leadership practices. The age of the interactive social character promotes networking, a focus on innovation, and experimental approaches. An important outcome of this societal transformation

is the desire for everyone to be a leader, with followers recast as equal contributors (Maccoby, 2007). As a result, leadership in the future requires a fundamental rethinking through collective action and followership to achieve social justice, and equity among all people as "followership is a new means to decolonizing leadership" (Schockman et al., 2019, p. xxiv).

Agile organizations and networked leadership. Recently, organization design focused on companies as responsive, agile systems. In the 1990s, organizations increasingly adopted flatter organizational configurations relying on teamwork and networking technology to increase their agility in response to a more globalized business environment (Porter & Beyerlein, 2000). According to Denning (2015), the Agile Organization concept "reflects a recognition that hierarchical bureaucracy is too slow and clumsy for a marketplace in which fickle but powerful customers are in charge" (p. 10). Zeffane (1992) noted companies are undergoing massive organizational restructuring, akin to "structural Darwinism" (p. 23), embracing decentralization with fluid, lean, and flexible structures, and team-based approaches with flatter management.

Management theorist Mintzberg summarized organizational configurations into five possible structures (Mintzberg, 1979):

1. The entrepreneurial organization, based on a simple flat structure with the owner acting as the top decision-maker and multiple subordinates;
2. The machine organization, based on bureaucracy, with centralized decision-making standardized work routines, and each department responsible for its tasks;
3. The professional organization, also based on bureaucracy but with decentralized decision-making as each professional controls their specialized work;
4. The divisional (diversified) organization, with a divisional structure and decentralized decision making both by division and functions;

5. The innovative organization, based on adhocracy, with no formal structure, decentralized decision-making, and knowledge worker capable of managing complex tasks and dealing with change.

The innovative organization has been the focus of much research as organization design theorists have moved away from linear, centralized, top-down approaches, toward more organic, collaborative, and networked systems. New organizational models have developed with the goal of disaggregating hierarchy using many different models and philosophies. These models have been described by Mabey et al. (2001) as "de-structured forms" (p. 164), which aim to propose alternative models to traditional hierarchal and rigid forms.

In 1999, Dee Hock, the founder and former CEO of VISA, Inc., shared his vision for an innovative organizational system that blends the features of chaos and order called the "Chaordic Organization" (Hock, 2000, p. 327). This organization was designed to challenge traditional management practices with the following characteristics:

- Be self-organizing and self-governing in whole and part;
- Exist primarily to enable their constituent parts;
- Be powered from the periphery, and unified from the core;
- Be durable in purpose and principle, but malleable in form and function;
- Equitably distribute power, rights, responsibility, and rewards;
- Harmoniously combine cooperation and competition;
- Learn, adapt and innovate in ever-expanding cycles;
- Be compatible with the human spirit and the biosphere;
- Liberate and amplify ingenuity, initiative, and judgment;
- Be compatible with and foster diversity, complexity, and change;

- Constructively utilize and harmonize conflict and paradox;
- Restrain and appropriately embed command and control methods (Hock, 2000).

With VISA as its archetype, the chaordic organization has been proven to be a successful alternative approach to creating a global corporate success. However, this organizational model has remained relatively conceptual and not widely used by other companies.

In witnessing the limits of matrix structures, De Smet et al. (2019) developed a new organizational model called the Helix Organization, which has become popular in professional-service firms and agile enterprises. This model separates work into two distinct areas: one team is responsible for how work gets done through capabilities management, while the other focuses on what work gets done and the customer experience. This organizational design is distinctive and shaped like a DNA double-stranded helix, showing how people and customer issues are interwoven as part of a whole company, but managed separately (De Smet et al., 2019).

The Holacracy Organization created in 2007 presents a decentralized organizational model where authority and decision-making are distributed throughout the enterprise (Robertson, 2015). Holacracies eradicate heroic leaders by “moving from a leader-driven autocracy to a leader-less collective” and operate with self-organizing teams and no management (Robertson, 2015, p. 193). According to Holacracyone, the company stewarding the holacracy movement and its practice, holacracies “provides a concrete framework for encoding autonomy, agility, and purpose-alignment into your organization’s DNA” (Holacracy.org, 2020, para. 1). This alternative organizational structure has found many converts, such as the online shoe and clothing retailer Zappos and Airbnb. Eminent names in Silicon Valley, such as Twitter co-founder Ev Williams, and the David Allen Company, productivity consultants have also commended halocracy’s merits. Holacracy companies present the following characteristics:

- They are purpose-driven but not from the top down; the organization's purpose, team purpose, and individual purpose are all explicitly articulated and aligned;
- They are responsive: everyone is considered an empowered "sensor" in the organization able to make changes to a changing environment;
- They suppress power dynamics by replacing the management hierarchy with a circular structure. Circles, which represent team structures and are the way people sit in meetings, each have a clear purpose and accountability to other circles;
- They have no corporate titles or job descriptions, as people move roles depending on their knowledge and the company's needs (Holacracy.org, 2020).

The Buurtzorg ("Neighborhood Care") organizational model offers a disruptive collaborative model of home-based care with self-steering teams who can provide healthcare without the typically required intervening layers between doctors and nurses (Kreitzer et al., 2015). Started in Holland in 2007 with just one team and four nurses, the model now delivers community care with over 10,000 nurses in one thousand self-organizing teams for 80,000 patients a year, generating 400 million euros in revenue (Buurrtzorg, 2018). Based on the principle of "humanity over bureaucracy," the Buurtzorg approach introduces social innovation that can be applied beyond the healthcare sector toward advancing the way organizations design for community wellbeing. The seven success factors of the Buurtzorg model include:

1. Nurse decision-making;
2. Local neighborhood focus;
3. Patient-centricity;
4. Leveraging informal care networks;
5. Lean management: self-steering teams and no hierarchy;

6. Smart information web-based technology;
7. Standardization of tools (Buurrtzorg, 2018).

Some organizational models have taken collaboration to a new level with network design organizational practices. The Dynamic Network Organization or Multifirm Network Organization (R. E. Miles & Snow, 1986; Snow, 2015) is a new organizational design where companies use the power of the network to outsource parts of their activities or functions to specialist partners. Mankin et al. (1996) describe such models as "team-based technology-enabled" (p. 217). According to Snow (2015), dynamic network organizations differ from traditional models in four aspects:

1. They specialize and outsource their activities to a collective network, which comprises the whole business;
2. Firms will have to abide by market dynamics and prove themselves worthy of the network through speed and reliability;
3. All network participants will be expected to fulfill their obligations and help the network grow and improve;
4. The network can change direction and size to meet market conditions (p. 438).

Overall, network organizations present the following characteristics: vertical disaggregation, hub-and-spoke model, use of network brokers, and open information systems (R. E. Miles & Snow, 1986, p. 65). The network organizational form promotes an entirely different kind of division of labor, not by input or outputs, but by knowledge (Carus, 2008; see Table 2). Coordination is achieved through trans-functional teams that are highly decentralized with little formal structures. The bases of authority no longer reside in position, functional competencies, or ability, but in knowledge.

Table 2

Overview of Organization Forms

Overview of Organization Forms				
	Functional	**Divisional**	**Matrix**	**Network**
Division of Work	By "inputs"	By "outputs"	By "inputs and outputs"	By knowledge
Coordination Mechanisms	Hierarchical Supervision, plans and procedures	General Director of Division and "Head Office Staff"	Dual-Hierarchical Relationships	Transfunctional Teams
Decision-Making Rights	Highly Centralized	Separation of Strategy and Implementation	Shared	Highly Decentralized
Importance of Informal Structure	Low	Moderate	Considerable	High
Policy	Interfunctional	Central-division and interdivisional	Throughout all dimensions of the matrix	Changeable Coalitions
Authority Bases	Position and Functional Competences	Responsibilities and General Management resources	Ability and Negotiation resources	Knowledge and Resources
Most indicative strategy	Focused on Strategies of low cost	Diversification Strategies	Market Adaptation Strategy	Innovative Strategy
Resource Efficiency	Excellent	Scarce	Moderate	Excellent
Response Capacity	Scarce	Moderate	Good	Excellent
Adaptability	Scarce	Good	Moderate	Excellent
Responsibility	Good	Excellent	Scare	Moderate
Most indicative Environment	Stable	Heterogenous	Complex with multiple demands	Volatile Environment

Note. From "Organization Design," by M. Carus, 2008, *IE Business School*, p. 20 (https://resources.saylor.org/wwwresources/archived/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/BUS209-6.2.1-OrganizationalDesign.pdf). Copyright 2008 IE Business Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

The Holonic Enterprise is an “organizational paradigm inspired by the self-organizing properties of natural systems” and “driven towards a common purpose by collaborative rules” (Ulieru et al., 2002, p. 542). This organizational form presents a supply chain and workflow management model global manufacturing companies that run on Internet-based protocols. In this model, companies exhibit both autonomy and cooperation and consist of clusters of global inter-enterprises who collaborate to support their production needs. This business model is based on emerging technologies supporting e-markets and e-factories to build web-centric ecosystems, where each enterprise is responsible for part of the workflow for the collaborative cluster (Ulieru et al., 2002). This organizational design creates a collaborative information ecosystem managed by a dynamic mediator who acts as a facilitator across the various collaborative entities.

New organizational designs continue to develop, pushing the boundaries of what an enterprise has traditionally represented. Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, used the term “Boundaryless Organization” when describing his ideal company, stating that companies should remove vertical and horizontal management structures and eliminate boundaries between customers and suppliers (Ashkenas, 2015). Johansen (2017) speaks of “Shape-shifting Organizations” and “Liquid Organizations” that are distributed and seek mutual-benefit partnerships in multiple ecosystems. Such virtual organizations offer complete flexibility to environmental conditions representing an even more significant step toward the dematerialization of operations and total reliance on technology and knowledge-based input and outputs. In virtual organizations, employees work from home or without any office, on flex-time, as independent contractors, telecommuters, and vendors. The company is not a physical entity, but the grouping of the individuals into a network, often supported by a technology platform. This type of entity allows workers to contract into any function or task at a moment’s notice. The

digitalization of the economy, access to always-on smartphones with on-demand applications delivering products and services via real-time platforms has prompted a scholarly discussion on the nature of work and a new classification of employment as “The Gig Economy.” As Vallas and Schor (2020) note, “platforms represent a distinct type of governance mechanism, different from markets, hierarchies, or networks, and therefore pose a unique set of problems for regulators, workers, and their competitors in the conventional economy” (p. 161).

In describing new and evolving organizational forms, Child and McGrath (2001) identify four core issues that new organizations need to manage: interdependence, disembodiment, velocity, and power. With more advanced and pervasive information technologies, companies benefit from creating interdependent and networked operations to be more cost-effective and combine forces against regulatory pressure. New organizations need not link their performance to physical production and can dissociate their output from the ownership and control of assets. With technology, companies can compress the time, space, and location required for production activities, making them more agile. Furthermore, companies need to address “new power asymmetries” (Child & McGrath, 2001, p. 1140) between companies and local communities and the greater sense of accountability that consumers are demanding from organizations.

Finally, this review wishes to highlight Teal Organizations (Laloux, 2014), which integrate all of the aspects of previously studied agile and network organizations—organic, collaborative, inclusive, systemic, and self-managing teams—but with an added philosophical element. Teal organizations go beyond proposing a new organizational paradigm; they also help instigate a new ontology in humankind’s relationship to work. Laloux (2014) presents evidence that links the development stages of organizations to distinct paradigms and guiding metaphors, segmenting organizations into five major categories, presented in historical timeline order:

1. The oldest form of organizations (labeled red), guided by the wolf pack metaphor, practicing the division of labor and leading with command authority;
2. Amber organizations, guided by the army metaphor, based on hierarchy, and leading in a top-down command and control approach;
3. Orange organizations, guided by the machine metaphor, based on management by objective, and leading through accountability;
4. Green organizations, guided by the family metaphor, based on a stakeholder model, and leading via employee motivation;
5. Teal organizations, guided by self-transcendence (wholeness with others), based on self-management, and leading soulful workplaces (p. 36).

According to Laloux (2014), reinventing organizations is about creating the next stage of human consciousness. Teal organizations aim to make workplaces soulful, with human beings capable of bringing new forms of intelligence to their work (cognitive, emotional, moral, kinesthetic, and spiritual), to operate on a different—"integral"—level of consciousness (Laloux, 2014, p. xiii).

How is leadership in agile organizations different? Leadership becomes inherently networked (see Figure 4) and performs an integrative function (Shamir, 1999). Scholars have argued that the underlying assumptions underlining extant leadership beliefs, practices, and current development training programs are out of date and not well suited to contemporary organizational models (Drucker, 1998, para. 1). Levi (2011) reports that teams who are confronted with traditional authority cultures that do not support distributed decision-making and collaborative work fail. Manville and Ober (2003) note that "we're in a knowledge economy, but our managerial and governance systems are stuck in the Industrial Era. It's time for a whole new

model" (p. 48). Bryman (1992) explains that there has been a "considerable disillusionment with leadership theory and research in the early 1980s" (p. 21) due to the inability to account for leadership outcomes and effectiveness. According to Uhl-Bien et al. (2007), "much of leadership thinking has failed to recognize that leadership is not merely the influential act of an individual or individuals but rather is embedded in a complex interplay of numerous interacting forces" (p. 302). Furthermore Pearce (2004) remarked that heroic models of leadership were no longer sustainable with the shift to knowledge-based work, which is increasingly team-based.

While traditional organizational designs and their leadership models focused on the leader and the leader and follower as their primary unit of analysis, emerging postheroic centric leadership theories shift their attention to a more comprehensive set of elements and adaptive systems (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). In recent years, leadership has been studied in a broader context, as an enabler of change. Senge (2006) proposes a new kind of leadership based on systems thinking with the development of learning organizations concerned with increasing people's ability to learn. Drucker (2000) provides a futuristic perspective on the new information revolution and the need for leaders to be change agents. Kotter (2012) offers an eight-step change model to lead organizational change responding to the dramatic acceleration of business cycles and the need for leaders to manage in the age of disruption. Lichtenstein et al. (2007) observe that the leadership models of the past have come under increased pressure from new organizational dynamics born from today's knowledge-driven economy. Indeed, previous models were "effective for an economy premised on physical production but are not well-suited for a more knowledge-oriented economy" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007, p. 298).

The 2017 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends report (Deloitte, 2017), which polls more than 10,000 leaders across the world, reflects seismic changes in leadership. It stresses

agility's importance in helping organizations replace structural hierarchies with intercultural teams working in networks around the world. Above all, the report underscores the need to rewrite the rules of leadership for the digital age, stating that:

> Organizations are clamoring for more agile, diverse, and younger leaders, as well as new leadership models that capture the "digital way" to run businesses. While the leadership development industry continues to struggle, companies are pushing the boundaries of their traditional leadership hierarchies, empowering a new breed of leaders who can thrive in a rapidly changing network. (Deloitte, 2017, p. 7)

Cullen-Lester and Yammarino (2016) summarize the state of research in the burgeoning area of collective and network approaches to leadership. Their assessment is that "a paradigm shift has occurred within the field—many scholars now view leadership as a property of the collective, not the individual" (Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016, p. 173). Multiple collective leadership theories have emerged, looking at leadership as collective behavior resulting from the interactions of people creating a network of relationships. These approaches recognize that leadership activity is enacted through collective social behaviors that change over time. Two major themes stand out from Cullen-Lester and Yammarino's meta-analysis (2016, p. 174):

1. The rise of collective and shared leadership theories (shared leadership, collective leadership, flock leadership, the social construction of leadership, social exchange and entrainment, and complexity theory);
2. The leader's role in collectivistic forms of leadership (collective leadership theory and sensemaking).

Networked leadership and the changing role of the leader. Emerging leadership theories fundamentally change the role of the leader and point to the increasing importance of

leadership not as a position of power and control over others, but as a means to generate power and knowledge with others. As a result, new thinking and language have started to evolve the leader's role in leadership. The leader has been re-thought as a host rather than a hero (M. Wheatley & Frieze, 2011). Having a "hero" requires the leader to have all the necessary skills, knowledge, behaviors, and capacity to fix any issue that may surface for the group. This hero needs to be brilliant in all aspects, charismatic with a limitless capacity, which is unreasonable. In contrast, a host is more akin to a moderator harnessing others' strengths and unique skills to achieve collective goals.

The leader role focuses on coordinating and synchronizing individual actions that share responsibility for team effectiveness and flow. According to Zigurs (2003), leadership in virtual teams (e-leadership) fundamentally changes the behavior of the leader, who needs to alternate between task roles (e.g., recorder, explainer, opinion giver) and team-building roles (e.g., mediator, facilitator, coach) depending on the context. In virtual teams, rotating leaders become a source of team structure, alongside the technology. Zigurs (2003) remarks that with e-leadership, the leadership role should over-index on the relational development to compensate for the physical context and cues that are missing in virtual teams. Henceforth, Mak (2010) states that "leadership is no longer a one-person leading the way, but a process, a human approach which allows everyone to take up the leadership role, in the networks, to lead and support each other in achieving the individual's goals" (para. 4). In examining the leadership responsibilities in virtual teams, Zaccaro and Bader (2003) identify three critical roles: (a) team direction setter, (b) team liaison, and (c) team operational coordinator.

Furthermore, leadership must develop social and human capital. Uhl-Bien and Arenab (2018) claim that leadership for organizational adaptability is about helping leaders "unleash the

potential of systems and people to adjust and adapt in ways that successfully address the needs of a shifting environment" (p. 89). Leadership for organizational adaptability distinguishes the role of leaders based on the stages that networks play in the innovation cycle. In the early innovation phase of idea generation and brainstorming, leadership should facilitate an emotional closeness, feedback, and encouragement to create trust and network cohesion. At the championing idea phase, leadership should open up the network to distribute ideas as widely as possible. In this framework, leadership consists of managing a network architecture, enabling the transfer of knowledge through the creation of informal and formal network structures that help create and disseminate knowledge, and learning (Uhl-Bien & Arenab, 2018).

Goleman (2006) updated the definition of Social Intelligence expanding its meaning to the biological context, noting that "now social neuroscience challenges intelligence theorists to find a definition for our interpersonal abilities that encompasses the talents of the low road—including capacities for getting in synch, for attuned listening, and empathetic concern" (p. 101). Zaccaro and Klimoski (2012) describe how leaders in distributed leadership models fulfill four crucial roles: cognitive, affective, motivational, and coordination. The leader facilitates information gathering and processing, the development of team shared mental models, sensemaking, and collective reflection, which can lead to group "metacognition" (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2012, p. 7). "Team leaders need to act as 'sense-makers'' and as 'sense-givers'' in working with their team members" (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003, p. 381). Describing sensemaking, Gioia (1986) says it is the process whereby individuals "construct meaningful explanations for situations and their experiences within those situations" (p. 61). Thus, leaders give meaning to unfolding events and change in organizations, providing a narrative subtext that can unify teams through coherence and unity.

The changing logic of organizations and leadership. Őnday (2018) stated organization design's evolution is symptomatic of a broader change in organizations' logic: "The initial organizational logic was based on the closed, rational perspective…most recently, a new logic has occurred that assumes an agile, environment-oriented, network system" (p. 258; see Table 3).

Table 3

The Changing Logic of Organizations

The Changing Logic of Organizations		
Logic I	**Logic II**	**Logic III**
• Bureaucratic Control	• Engagement	• Networking and Collaboration
• Internal Orientation	• External Awareness and Adaptation	• External Positioning Orientation
• Internally Oriented • Hierarchical Relationships & Processes	• Internally Oriented Lateral • Relationship and Processes	• Externally Oriented • Relationships, Partnerships, and Alliances
• Generic Organizational Design	• Contingent Organizational Design	• Flexible & Fluid Network Design
• Organization Designed around Internal Functions	• Organization Designed around Externally Oriented Products and Customers	• Organization Designed to Effect Positioning in External Environment
• Primary Value-Added is Management	• Value-Added of All Employees	• Value-Added of Partnerships & Alliances
• Management Focus	• Leadership Focus	• Facilitation Focus

Note. From "Relationship Between Concepts of Rational, Natural and Open Systems: Managing Organizations Today," by Ő. Őnday, 2018, *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*, *10*(1), p. 245–258 (http://www.ijmsbr.com/Volume 5 Issue 4 Paper 5.pdf). Copyright 2018 ijmsbr. Reprinted with permission.

As companies shifted their orientation from internally-focused to externally-facing, the logic of organizations evolved from bureaucratic control (logic I) to engagement (logic II) and then networking, and collaboration (logic III). The logic of leadership followed a similar path evolving from a focus on hierarchical relationships and process, to lateral relationships, and subsequently attention to relationships, partnerships, and alliances. This leadership transition has been suitably described as a transition "from Egosystems to Ecosystems" (Kelly, 2019, p. 69). In

a similar analysis, Child and McGrath (2001) contrast conventional and emerging perspectives on the organizational form (see Table 4). While conventional organizational design aims to organize production efficiently with reliability and predictability to support the creation of material things within the firm, emerging approaches seek to operate horizontally within an ecosystem of partners in semi-independent team-based units. The resulting logic of leadership pivots from controlling subordinates through centralized power and formal authority (rule-based) to guiding teamwork through distributed power and shared influence (relationship-based).

Table 4

Conventional and Emerging Perspectives on Organizational Form

Conventional and Emerging Perspectives on Organizational Form

Organizational Activity	Conventional Perspective	Emerging Perspective
Setting goals: Identifying and disseminating collective aims, making decisions, exercising power	Top-down goal setting Concentrated power Preference for larger units Leaders control, monitor, and set specific and concrete objectives through the use of formal authority Vision dictated Hierarchy	Decentralized goal setting Distributed power Preference for smaller units Leaders provide guidance, manage conflict and provide general guidance Vision emergent Teams and work groups
Maintaining integrity: Regulating the flow of resources into and out of the organization and establishing boundaries	Firm as unit of analysis Boundaries clearly specified and durable Reliability and replicability Vertical Rule-based Assets linked to organizational units	Production system or network as primary unit of analysis Boundaries permeable and fuzzy Flexibility Horizontal Relationship-based Structure independent of assets
Differentiating rights and duties: Differentiation of functions and roles, establishment of duties and rights, including governance	Specialized roles Clear role definitions Uncertainty absorption Relative permanence Efficiency oriented	General roles Fuzzy role definitions Adaptation Impermanence Innovation oriented

Note. From "Organizations Unfettered: Organizational Form in an Information-intensive Economy," by J. Child and R. McGrath, 2001, *The Academy of Management Journal, 44*(6), p. 1135–1148 (https://doi.org/10.5465/3069393). Copyright 2017 Academy of Management Journal. Reprinted with permission.

The changing logic of organizations and leadership is crucial for understanding the role of leadership and the development of leadership theory in the future. The increasingly complex

role that leadership needs to play in organizations cannot be understated. Organization design offers different perspectives into the rationality of firms, the nature of organizational interactions, the structure of individual and workgroups, and leadership behaviors. Plowman et al. (2007) note that traditional organizations saw leaders as “controllers” seeking order and stability through the codification of operations. In this view, “leaders try to control the future by acting now to reduce complexity and uncertainty and directing followers towards highly prescribed future states” (Plowman et al., 2007, p. 343). In contrast, innovative organizations ask their leaders to be “enablers” and provide the necessary conditions for change rather than control or direct the future. In complex systems, leaders even introduce uncertainty as they “destabilize rather than stabilize the organization” (Plowman et al., 2007, p. 354) by asking questions, encouraging disruption, and self-organization.

As organizations shift from a mechanistic to an organic logic, their collective goals, the flow of resources, governance, decision-making, and leadership approaches fundamentally change from efficiency-oriented to innovation orientated. In this context of organizational transformation, Shamir (1999) argues that “leadership, far from becoming disposable, is becoming indispensable because it has to compensate for the weakening of traditional integration and coordination mechanisms” (p. 50) that used to be supported by the organization. With boundaryless organizations that become virtual networks of connections and employees who work remotely using computer-mediated technologies, leadership becomes an essential center of gravity for managing the web of relationships and provide a mental framework for collective action (Shamir, 1999). Along with mental framing, leadership can serve the role of giving meaning and purpose to the group, helping to instill shared values across the network, such as belonging, trust, participation, and commitment.

This literature review section presented research demonstrating the profound impact of organizational design on leadership and follower behaviors. Organizational and leadership theories can be mapped into a framework that traces their mutual influences for an elementary, albeit helpful, analysis. This literature review section helped present evidence that leadership is mediated through organization design. Traditional hierarchical organizational models, which burgeoned at the turn of the 19th century, favored legacy leader-centric leadership paradigms, where leadership was primarily defined through the proxy of the leader and their traits, skills, style, and characteristics. As organizations grew into social entities and, more recently, into responsive, agile systems, the emerging postheroic leadership paradigm proposes new leadership models based on reciprocal relationships, shared influence, and knowledge and meaning-making.

There is no denying that the role of leaders and followers, is dramatically changing and that many leadership approaches, which comprise the baseline of leadership studies, are out of date. The study of leadership across organization design and leadership theories adds richness and context to this study's research question and indicates a clear direction for conceptualizing leadership away from power and domination toward more participative, hyper-connected, agile, responsive, and sense-making approaches in line with the evolution of organizational conditions.

Culture and Leadership

This final section of the literature aims to identify and understand the cultural contextual variables that mediate and moderate leadership. It examines the state of leadership theory intending to go beyond Western-centric cultural paradigms. The review of scholarly work enhances the understanding of leadership from a non-Western perspective based on leadership approaches emerging in Asia, a part of the world where the leadership literature is sparse. Henceforth, the research builds significance for the central research question and the choice of

directing this study's inquiry within the broader empirical cultural context of Asia, which remains understudied with sparse leadership literature from Asian scholars and local research.

Culture

Definition. Culture's study spans many disciplines, including history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and religion, resulting in many definitions. Culture has its origin in French from the Latin "*colere*," which means to tend to the earth and to foster growth actively. When associated with human civilization, culture designates social behaviors, interactions, and ways of thinking that are learned by socialization and can be observed through religion, food, the arts, language, and other shared characteristics of groups. Henceforth, culture is an interpretive framework that helps understand and give meaning to human thoughts and actions. Culture describes how groups of people organize and interact with each other.

Culture has some key characteristics. First, culture is inescapable. Hofstede et al. (2010) note that no group can escape its culture. They compare culture to a software program that accompanies a person through life. Culture is "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede et al., p. 6). Second, culture is shared. Northouse (2013) notes culture is "the learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions that are common to a group of people" (p. 384). Third, culture reproduces itself. It includes "the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, communicated from one generation to the next" (Matsumoto et al., 1997, p. 5).

Humanity's relationship to time and its ability to adapt and change is an essential aspect of culture. Culture is "the accumulated shared learning of that group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration" (Schein, 2017, p. 6). This definition is purposeful and oriented toward adaptability as it points to the importance of culture always changing to

meet the group's needs. Schein (2017) further notes that "the most useful way to arrive at a definition of something as abstract as culture is to think in dynamic evolutionary terms, to think of culture as what the group has learned in its efforts to survive" (p. 14). Cristina De Rossi, an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London, commented on the increased velocity at which culture is now changing, thanks to social networks and technology, allowing different groups of various ethnicities and religions to share their daily lives (Zimmermann, 2017).

The structure of culture. It is useful to refer to the cultural analysis proposed by Schein (2017) to discern culture's various elements and levels of depth. The levels of culture include:

1. Artifacts (visible displays of culture);
2. Espoused beliefs and values (ideals, goals, and values aspirations);
3. Basic underlying assumptions (unconscious beliefs).

Analyzing culture is a difficult task, as some aspects are easily observable, such as behaviors and materials objects, while others are invisible, unspoken, and unconscious. As a result, culture is frequently depicted as an iceberg, with a small visible part, and a larger, mostly submerged mass. In his writings on the unconscious, Freud (1915) compared the conscious mind to the visible part of the iceberg and the unconscious mind to the hidden section. Similarly, Hall (1976) describes behaviors and practices that can easily be observed (i.e., dress, food, and language) and contrasts them to unspoken, invisible culturally-influenced behaviors, such as eye contact, gestures, and stance. Ideals of what comprises good and evil, the concepts of past and future, and the elderly's views are all examples of deeply held cultural values driven by unconscious assumptions, which are extremely difficult to decipher. For his part, Schein (2017) uses the metaphor of a lily pond to visualize the various levels of culture. The visible flowers and blossoms on the surface of the pond represent accepted beliefs and values (espoused values),

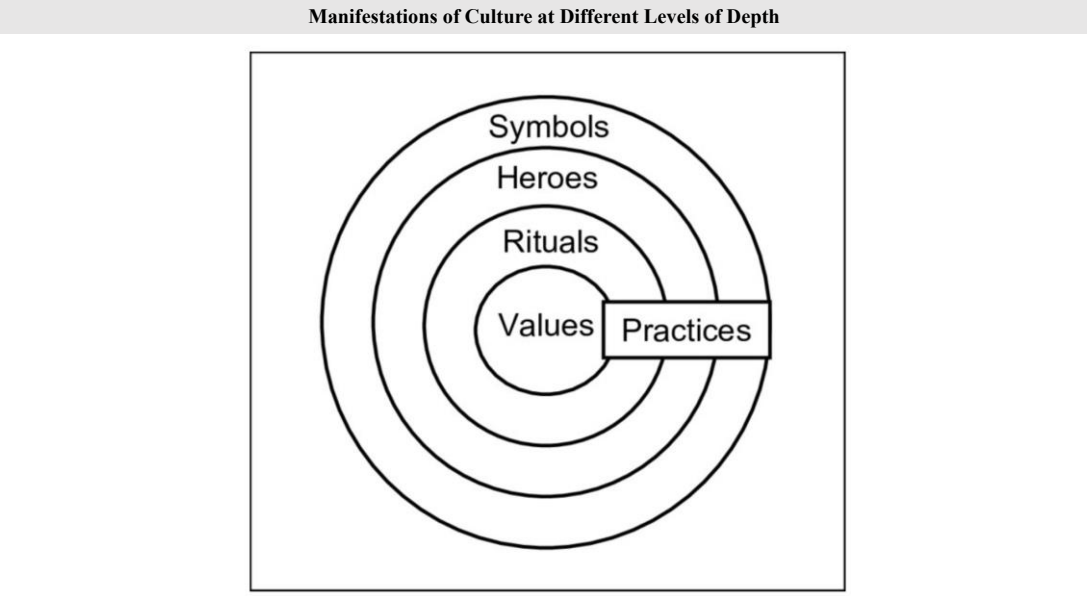
which are the direct outcome of what is inside the pond, such as the water (cultural artifacts). Seeds and the root system remain deep underwater and comprise the tacit cultural assumptions.

Another way to understand culture's structure is to analyze it by layers. Hofstede et al. (2010) propose dissecting culture along four layers using an onion metaphor (see Figure 6):

1. Symbols (words, gestures, pictures, and objects), on the most outer layer;
2. Heroes (who serve as models for behavior), on the third inner layer;
3. Rituals (collective activities), on the second inner layer;
4. Values (broad group tendencies), at the core of the onion, which represent the most hidden manifestation of culture (p. 8).

Figure 6

The "Onion": Manifestations of Culture



Note. From *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind, Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival,* by Hofstede et al., 2010, McGraw Hill. Copyright 2010 by Geert Hofstede BV. Reprinted with permission.

Symbols, heroes, and rituals group under the concept of practices. These are easily observable behaviors, but not readily interpreted as they require the understanding of the core of

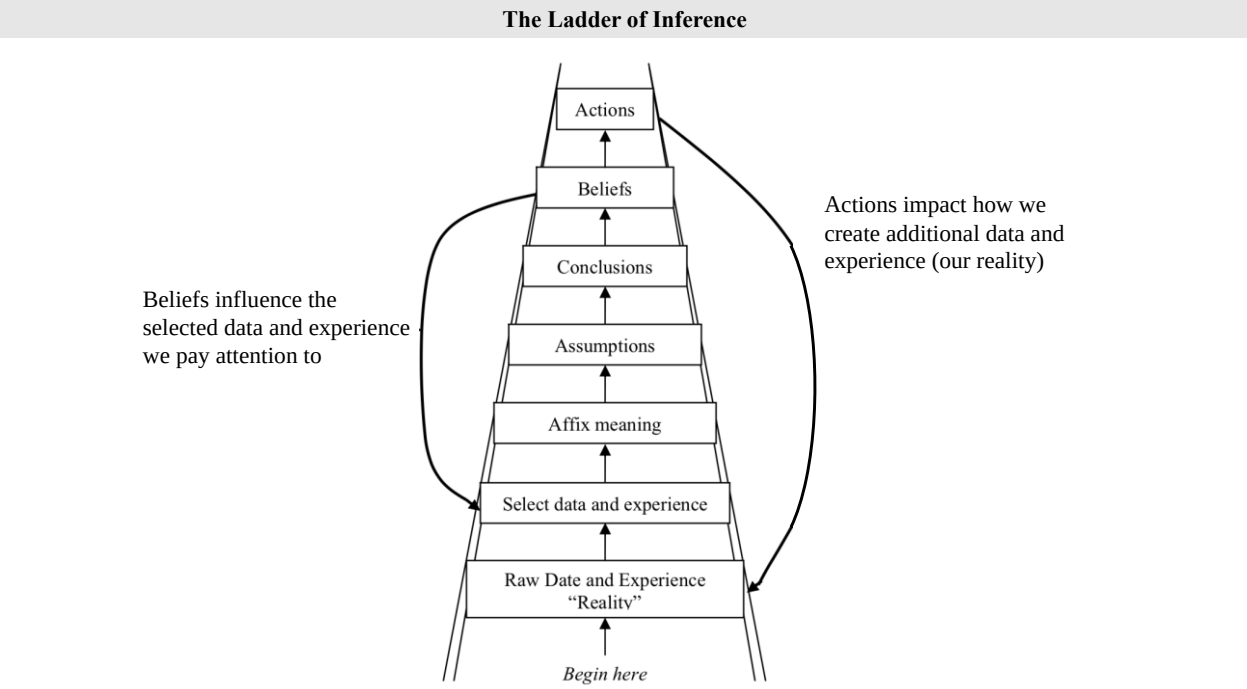
culture, which is at the center of the onion, and derived from values (Hofstede et al., 2010). Values are formed at an early age within a family unit (newborn stage to age 10), then in school (from primary to university), and later at work (from the early 20s onward). This timeline is particularly important as most leadership training is conducted within organizations when individuals have already reached their mid-30s or 40s. By then, the "receptive period" for the deepest parts of culture has ended, and learning focuses primarily on practices, without addressing the unconscious assumptions and values that guide behavior. Culture's manifestations help emphasize that leadership is culturally constructed through many life experiences.

Within-group cultures, the ladder of inference (see Figure 7) is a theoretical framework that visualizes how beliefs are formed, and action is taken (Ross, 1994). The ladder metaphor offers an opinion-forming model, where each step represents the stages an individual naturally goes through, from their perceived reality to their final actions. This diagram highlights various levels of decision making, from the most observable and neutral (raw data), to what individuals affix meaning to, the assumptions they use to funnel their conclusions, beliefs, and behaviors. Individuals metaphorically travel up and down the ladder with beliefs influencing the selection of data and experience from the outset (what is chosen to be seen), establishing an internal reinforcing loop that short circuits reality. "The tendency is to select data to pay attention to, which supports our beliefs, and as our Beliefs become more and more rigid" (Tompkins & Rhodes, 2012, p. 85).

This framework helps to demonstrate how cultures can easily lead to groupthink with similar ladder-based decision-making behaviors.

Figure 7

The Ladder of Inference



Note. From "Groupthink and the Ladder of Inference: Increasing Effective Decision Making," by T. C. Tompkins and K. Rhodes, 2012, *The Journal of Human Resource and Adult Learning, 8*(2), p. 84–90 (http://www.hraljournal.com/Page/11%20Tompkins%20Rhodes-2.pdf). Copyright 2012 by The Journal of Human Resource and Adult Learning. Reprinted with permission.

Culture consists of objective and subjective elements (Triandis, 2009). Objective culture encompasses culture's physical aspects, such as the products of culture made by humankind (i.e., architecture, the arts, and music), and entities created for the functioning of society (i.e., political and economic systems). Subjective culture consists of experiences constructed from social reality rooted in social norms and a group's worldview (J. M. Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 150).

Different cultures exist within various group sizes and types, at a macro-cultural level like nations, and micro-cultural contexts, in clubs and associations, for instance (Schein, 2017). National cultures are different from organizational cultures. Individuals acquire their national culture during their early formative years with their family and at school: "the sources of one's

mental programs lie within the social environment in which one grew up and collected one's life experiences. The programming starts with the family; it continues within the neighborhood, at school" (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 5). In contrast, an organizational culture develops with adults who already bring their own established values and experiences. As a result, organizational cultures tend to be more superficial than national cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010).

While national culture is often used synonymously for the nation, it does not have the same meaning as nations contain multiple subcultures (Sadri & Flammia, 2011). Nevertheless, nations tend to have sharply demarcated cultures unique to their history, language, physical, and social reality that help develop their particular social order (Schein, 2017). Henceforth, it is possible to ascribe specific collective characteristics to nations based on a standard set of national identities, values, and institutions (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Cultural distinctions. Each culture has a concept of self, which distinguishes it from others; social scientists use the terms "in-group" and "out-group" to define these boundaries (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 16). Research on cultural distinctions provides different dimensions that differentiate one culture from another, at a national level. Cultural similarities and differences help categorize nations based on the various levels and layers of culture, attempting to investigate the deeper values and assumptions that define each society.

Early scholars' work first established the notion of cultural relativism and the importance of ethno-relativism in studying different cultures (M. J. Bennett, 1986). M. Mead (1928), who studied native rituals in Samoa, first observed that cultures shared distinct patterns of behavior. The American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1951) identified five orientations across cultures:

1. Universalism versus particularism;
2. Individualism versus communitarianism;

3. Neutral versus emotional;
4. Specific versus diffuse;
5. Achievement versus ascription.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) developed a value-orientation theory comprised of types of problems that different cultures resolve based on five value orientations:

1. What is the relationship of the individual to others? (relational orientation);
2. What is the temporal focus of human life? (time orientation);
3. What is the modality of human activity? (activity orientation);
4. What is a human being's relation to nature? (man's orientation to nature).

Exploring cultural differences in business and management, Trompenaars (1994) identified seven universal cultural dimensions, of which five are different types of social orientations toward people, one explains individuals' relationship to time, and another describes how human beings relate to their environment:

1. Universalism versus Particularism;
2. Individualism versus Communitarianism;
3. Neutral versus Emotional;
4. Specific versus Diffuse;
5. Achieved versus Ascription;
6. Sequential versus Synchronic;
7. Internal versus External control.

Examining cultural commonalities across groups, Inkeles and Levinson (1997) note that cultures share four standard features:

1. Relation to authority;

2. The concept of self, with individuals and society;
3. Concepts of masculinity and femininity;
4. Ways of dealing with conflicts.

Building on the previous areas identified by Inkeles and Levinson (1997), Geert Hofstede (1980, 1991, 1997) and Hofstede et al. (2010) developed the most authoritative research reference on the dimensions of culture. Surveying 100,000 respondents from the same large multinational company, IBM, in more than 50 countries between 1967 and 1973, Hofstede (1980) discovered four categories of cultural difference:

1. Power distance, defining the way cultures manage their relationship with authority;
2. Individualism-collectivism, defining the way cultures build relationships between people;
3. Masculinity-femininity, defining the way cultures deal with having a boy or a girl;
4. Uncertainty avoidance, defining the way cultures deal with uncertainty and ambiguity.

Extending the IBM survey findings with additional respondents in the 1980s, Hofstede created a new questionnaire called the Chinese Value Survey. Developed in partnership with colleagues from the Asia-Pacific region, it aimed to avoid Western bias and check the validity of the original IBM dimensions. The survey, administered in 23 countries around the world, yielded a new fifth cultural dimension labeled “long-term versus short-term orientation,” defining the orientation of cultures toward the past and present. In 2010, a sixth dimension was added, including indulgence versus self-restraint.

The Hofstede final six-dimensions model enables an international comparison between cultures through national scores, which range on an index from 1 (lowest score) to 100 (highest

score). Reviewing the findings from the Hofstede studies, cultural differences vary significantly from country to country on each of the dimensions. Hofstde (1997) calculated that culture accounts for 50% of the differences in attitudes across his sample. Therefore, understanding the cultural distinctions of the Asia region is of high relevance to inform this qualitative study. Among the nationalities of respondents selected to take part in this grounded qualitative research (see Chapter 3), specific patterns emerge on cultural dimensions (see Figure 8):

1. Power Distance Index (PDI): Asian countries tend to have a high PDI, indicating a strong dependence on the relationship between superiors and subordinates. Malaysia ranks at the top in the entire study with the highest PDI score (104). In contrast, the United States has a medium-low PDI (40), indicating a significant amount of independence between leaders and subordinates (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp. 57–59);
2. Individualism Index (IDV): countries in the Asia region tend to have a low IDV, which shows they are collectivist. They value group harmony with a strong dependence on the relationship between bosses and subordinates who are like a family. Employees are members of in-groups who act in the interest of their teams versus their individual needs. On the opposite end, the United States has the highest IDV (91) score, placing it at the top of the survey as the most individualistic culture. In individualist societies, individuals look after themselves and their nuclear family rather than groups. In the workplace, there is a significant amount of independence between leaders and subordinates (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp. 95–97);
3. Masculinity Index (MAS): countries in the Asia region have a scattered MAS. Japan ranks second in the survey with a high MAS (95), followed by China (66). The United States is close to China (62), while Thailand ranks as one of the lowest (34)

MAS. Societies that are more inclined toward the masculine pole and score high on MAS attach importance to earning power, recognition, advancement, and challenging work. Societies on the feminine side favor the working relationship with their direct superior, cooperation, and employment security (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp. 141–143);

4. Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAV): Asian countries are scattered on UAV. Japan has a relatively high UAV (92), while Singapore has the lowest UAV score (8) of Asian countries. The United States sits in the middle range (46). Societies with substantial uncertainty avoidance are very laws-driven as these fulfill a need for security and structure. In the work setting, high UAV societies prefer fewer changes to their employer. In contrast, weak UAV cultures are more open to shorter employment as they have a higher tolerance for ambiguity and chaos with intrapreneurs, motivated by invention and achievement (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp. 192–194);
5. Long-term Orientation Index (LTO): countries in the Asia region tend to have a high LTO, which is a search for virtue. This dimension is closely related to Confucius's teachings and having virtuous behavior in life and work. Chinese scholars developed this dimension as part of the China Values Survey as Western researchers had not detected the importance of this value in the original questionnaire. South Korea ranks at the top of the survey with the highest LTO score (100), followed by several other Asian countries, which also score relatively high, such as China (87), Singapore (72), and Indonesia (62). These scores reflect work values based on learning, honesty, adaptiveness, and self-discipline oriented toward the long term. In LTO societies, work is a lifelong investment with a focus on developing relationships. In contrast,

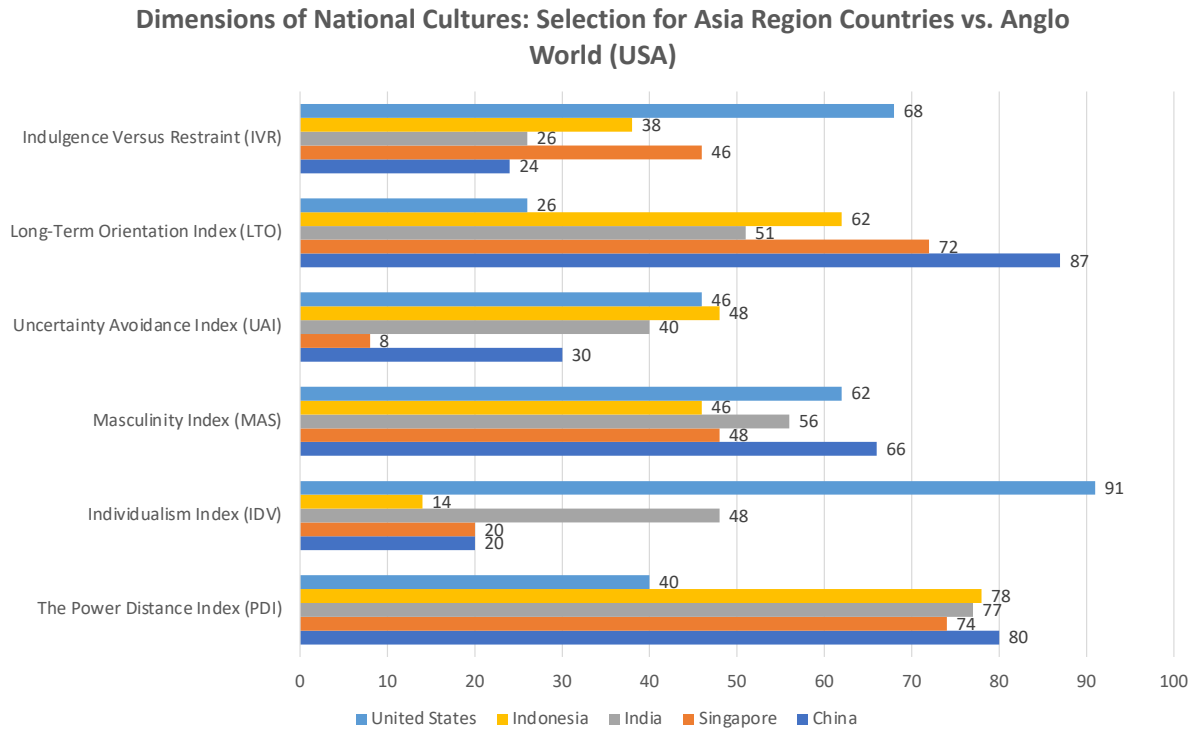
the United States scores low on the LTO (26), reflecting the central work values of freedom, rights, and individual thinking (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp. 255–257);

6. Indulgence vs. restraint Index (IVR): countries in the Asia region tend to have a low IVR, which indicates that citizens are bound by strict social norms and cannot freely fulfill their human desires. This aspect of life is particularly true in China (24) and India (26), which are societies that control individual gratification. In comparison, Singapore is a more easy-going nation (46), which is more oriented toward indulgence and (Hofstede et al., 2010, pp. 282–285).

Figure 8

Dimensions of National Culture

Dimensions of National Cultures: Selection for Asia Region Countries vs. Anglo World (USA)



Note. Adapted from *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind, Intercultural Cooperation and its Importance for Survival*, by Hofstede et al., 2010, McGraw Hill. Copyright 2010 by Geert Hofstede BV. Reprinted with permission.

Another classification of national cultures is the World Values Surveys started in the 1980s in Europe and then extended globally. The study measures a comprehensive set of dimensions across most aspects of human life, from family concerns to workplace issues, religion, education, politics, and the environment. The survey reaches 100 countries with data collection conducted every 10 years. One of the survey's significant findings is cultural values across societies can be grouped according to clearly delineated cultural zones. Based on data from the World Values Surveys, political scientists Inglehart and Welzel (2010) developed a chart grouping countries closely linked by common cultural values. Two cultural dimensions account for the primary cultural variations among societies around the world (Inglehart & Welzel, 2010):

1. Traditional values versus Secular-rational values (plotted on the vertical y-axis);
2. Survival values versus Self-expression values (on the horizontal x-axis).

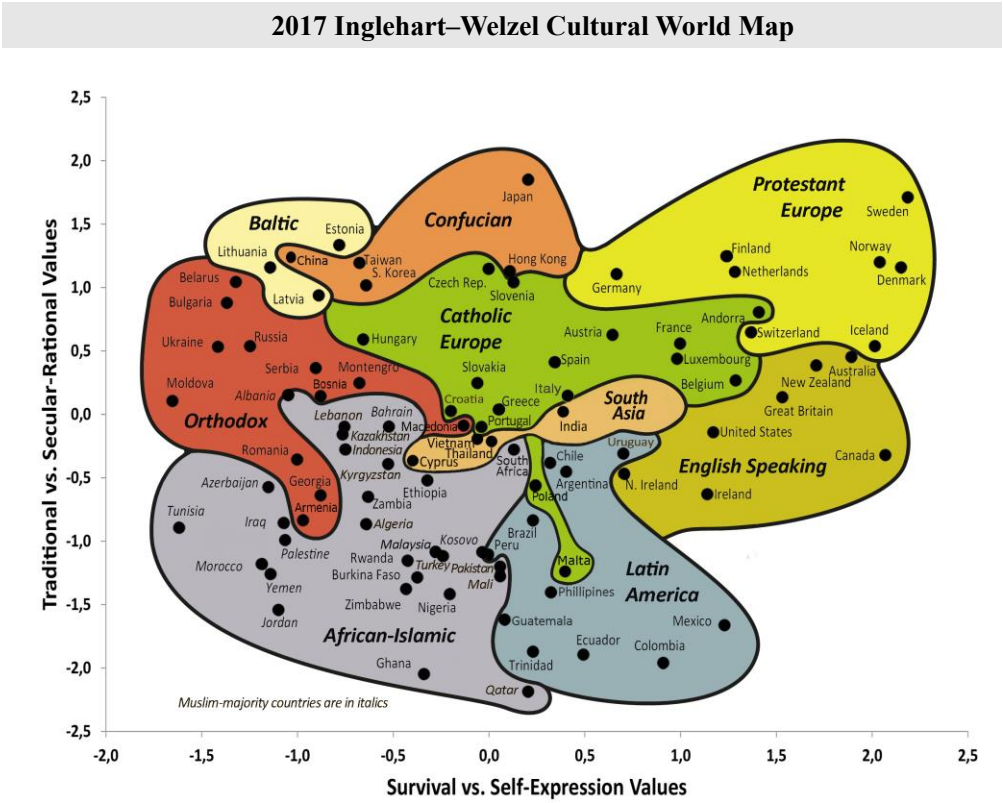
In the first dimension, societies demonstrating traditional values place high importance on religion, traditional family values, parent-child ties, and deference to authority. They tend to have a nationalistic outlook and a relatively ethnocentric outlook. They are against divorce, suicide, abortion, and euthanasia. Societies that prefer secular-rational values embrace the opposite of traditional values and reject authority. On the second dimension, societies that have survival values prioritize security over freedom. They are distrustful of outsiders and abstain from political participation. In contrast, societies that value self-expression accept new ideas, with higher tolerance to foreigners and minority groups. They value participation in political and economic life (Inglehart & Welzel, 2010).

The Inglehart–Welzel cultural map of the world (Inglehart & Welzel, 2010) offers some noteworthy results that pertain to Asian countries and can provide a contextual, cultural background to this grounded theory study. The 2017 version of the map (Inglehart et al., 2014)

divides countries into nine cultural clusters: Confucian, South Asian, Baltic, Orthodox, African-Islamic, Latin America, English-speaking, Catholic Europe, and Protestant Europe. Asian countries split into two culture zones, Confucian and South Asian, based on their philosophical, political, and religious ideas (see Figure 9). Confucian countries include China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, S. Korea, and Japan. South Asian countries comprise India, Vietnam, and Thailand (Inglehart & Welzel, 2010). Across both groups, Asian societies rank higher on the secular-rational values end of the traditional/secular dimension with Confucian societies at the top, and South Asian placed in the middle of the map. On the survival/self-expression dimension, Asian societies are unevenly distributed with China, Taiwan, and S. Korea closer to survival values, while India scores higher on self-expression (Inglehart et al., 2014).

Figure 9

The 2017 Inglehart–Welzel Cultural World Map



Note. From *World Values Survey: Wave 6,* by World Values Survey, 2010-2014, http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/images/Culture_Map_2017_conclusive.png. Copyright 2020 World Values Survey Association. Reprinted with permission.

Culture and Leadership

The relationship between culture and leadership is intricate. According to House and Javidan (2004), "leadership is culturally contingent" (p. 5) and cannot be understood outside of the environment in which it functions. Conversely, leadership significantly impacts culture; culture formation happens through leadership as followers seek guidance on how to solve problems, survive, and thrive. As such, "leadership is involved in the creation of the culture" (Schein, 2017, p. 15).

Leadership literature: Western centricity. In a study on the critical history of the formation of leadership studies, Suzan Wilson (2013) exposes how "leadership has been discursively produced and constructed in different 'epistemes'" (p. 4) highlighting how historical beliefs and opinions have comprised the foundation of many biases toward leadership. Undeniably, "something like a world-view... a certain structure of thought" (Foucault, 1972, p. 191) has prevailed at any given point in time in the study of leadership shaping what has been considered acceptable, thinkable relevant, and say-able about this topic. Prevailing theories of leadership have primarily been from Western traditions. "Almost all prevailing theories of leadership and most empirical evidence is North American in character, that is individualistic rather than collectivistic, emphasizing U.S. assumptions of rationality" (House & Javidan, 2004, p. 56). Brewster and Bournois (1991) note that the Western human resource management has exerted a cultural hegemony in most parts of the world with underlying ethnocentricity on the issues and types of organizations leveraged as the base of knowledge. Similarly, the U.S. management and leadership theory "has become a cultural and ideological imperative" (Blunt &

Jones, 1997, p. 8), manifesting functionalist Western rhetoric. Western assumptions about organizations, and people, and leadership include (Blunt & Jones, 1997; House & Javidan, 2004):

- High individualism versus collectivist approaches;
- Rationality and prescriptive accounts of leadership;
- Predictability of employee responses;
- Performance orientation;
- Leader-centricity and a focus on great men;
- Individual outcomes rather than group;
- Follower responsibilities rather than rights;
- Hedonistic rather than altruistic motivation;
- The centrality of work;
- A democratic value orientation.

It is critical to recognize that the leadership literature has been ideologically driven and reflects the implicit assumptions of its Western authors. Most of the contributors to this literature have come from philosophers with strong moral backgrounds or disciplinary political thought, from historians concerned with leadership traits, and social scientists with a quantitative, positivist orientation. Leadership is a concept as old as humanity itself with early mentions of the English word leader, dating back to the year 1300 (Bass, 1990). Since the turn of the nineteenth century, leadership studies have proliferated, and yet the nature of the knowledge produced remains limited (see Table 5). The study of leadership has been focused on a set of culturally informed ideas, which favored the heroic leader-centric paradigm and promulgated visionary and charismatic heroes.

Table 5

Overview of the Western Literature on Leadership

Overview of the Western Literature on Leadership

Disciplinary base	*Nature of knowledge produced*	*Key limitations*
Philosophy	"should do" "how to"	Non-empirical
Historiography	Biographies/histories Focus on monarchs, political leaders, & military leaders	A-theoretical
Practitioner	"how to" Auto-/biographies "secrets"	Anecdotal Hagiographic Idiosyncratic
Social science	Formal theories and models Tools and applications Empirical studies	Overwhelmingly positivist; little critical attention

Note. From *Thinking Differently About Leadership: A Critical History of the Form and Formation of Leadership Studies*, by S. Wilson, 2013, Massey University (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265208344_Thinking_differently_about_leadership_A_critical_history_of_the_form_and_formation_of_leadership_studies). Copyright 2013 by Suze Wilson. Reprinted with permission.

Western leadership is heavily dominated by two central issues: power and morality. In the first half of the twentieth century, definitions and theories of leadership emphasized power, domination, and control. French and Raven (1959) identified the bases of social power, describing the influence process leading to different forms of perceived authority. For his part, J. M. Burns (1978) conceptualized power within the leader-follower relationship to achieve common goals. Social identity theory (Hogg, 2001) linked leadership's emergence to the leader's fit with the group's identity. The New Leadership Theories stressed the symbolic identity of the heroic leader in wielding influence and power over followers through charismatic leadership (Antonakis, 2012; Bryman, 1992; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; DeGroot et al., 2000; House, 1976),

visionary leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Westley, 1989), and transformational leadership (Bass, 1998; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Judge & Bono, 2000; Zhu et al., 2011). Following the second world war, much of the Western leadership literature turned to the study of coercive leaders and sought to recast leadership within a new moral framework. Bass (1998) distinguished transformational leaders from power-oriented leaders. Leadership theories explored the moral grounding of leaders through authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Cashman, 1998; Collins, 2001; Eagly, 2005; George & Sims, 2007; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Terry, 1993; Walumba et al., 2008), ethical leadership (M. E. Brown et al., 2005), and spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003; P. Palmer, 2004).

Rost (1991) explains that part of the appeal of leadership as a field of study is its "mythological significance" (p. 7) throughout history. He argues that leadership is a symbolic story in America to reconcile people with their harsh living conditions. At the start of the United States, leadership gave meaning to immigrants' search for survival through heroes they could look up to and leadership secrets they could learn. As America became economically challenged by other world economies in the 1980s, leadership turned to the search for excellence. The emphasis of leadership was placed on power and prestige as a vehicle to reestablish America's global dominance (Rost, 1991). Hofstede et al. (2010) remark that some "societies romanticize the construct of leadership as is in the case of the US where leaders are given exceptional privileges, accorded high status and are held in great esteem" (p. 508).

Understanding the underlying assumptions embedded in the current Western-centric leadership literature is essential. Leadership is more than an academic discipline; it contains the manifestations of culture. This grounded theory study will aim to challenge these paradigms and

the established scholarly consensus by seeking to tap into different cultural assumptions and mythological stories of Asian culture to develop a new leadership theory.

Comparative leadership studies. The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) project remains one of the most extensive research efforts to apply the classification of national cultures to leadership. Its original aim was to test and validate Hofstede's landmark findings by applying similar cultural dimensions to the practice of leadership and determine "the complex relationship between societal culture and organizational behavior" (Dorfman et al., 2012, p. 504). Conceptualized by Robert J. House in 1991 and conducted throughout 1994 to 1997, the study involved over two hundred researchers globally, three distinct phases, collecting data from over a thousand local firms in sixty-two countries around the world. The objective of the first and second phase of research was to develop a leadership questionnaire based on societal cultures to identify leadership attributes that were considered critical for outstanding leadership in each society. The third phase of research aimed to understand the influence of national culture on executive leadership behaviors and legitimacy. It included interviews with a thousand CEOs and 5000 of their direct reports.

In exploring the cultural drivers of the leadership process and organizational effectiveness, GLOBE expanded the six dimensions of culture from Hofstede to nine relevant societal culture dimensions (Dorfman et al., 2012):

1. Performance orientation (new dimension), describing how societies encourage and reward group performance;
2. Humane orientation (new dimension), describing how societies encourage and reward altruistic behaviors;

3. Uncertainty avoidance (same as in the Hofstede study), describing how societies manage unpredictable future events;
4. In-group collectivism (split from collectivism in the Hofstede study), describing how societies manage group cohesion;
5. Institutional collectivism (split from collectivism in the Hofstede study), describing how societies encourage and reward collective action;
6. Power distance (same as in the Hofstede study), describing how societies distribute power;
7. Gender egalitarianism (previously defined as masculinity-femininity in the Hofstede study), describing how societies manage gender inequality;
8. Future orientation (previously defined as long term orientation in the Hofstede study), describing how societies display future-oriented behaviors;
9. Assertiveness (previously defined as masculinity-femininity in the Hofstede study), describing the degree of confrontation societies exhibit in their relationships with others.

One of the significant findings from the first two phases of the GLOBE research is that leadership does not exist in absolute terms; it is colored by the values of national culture, which researchers referred to as the "culturally endorsed theory of leadership (CLT)" (Dorfman et al., 2012, p. 505). The CLT is based on six culturally-endorsed leadership attributes discovered around the world:

1. Charismatic/value-based leadership, designed to measure the inspiration and motivation that leaders have on their teams. This measure is derived from six primary

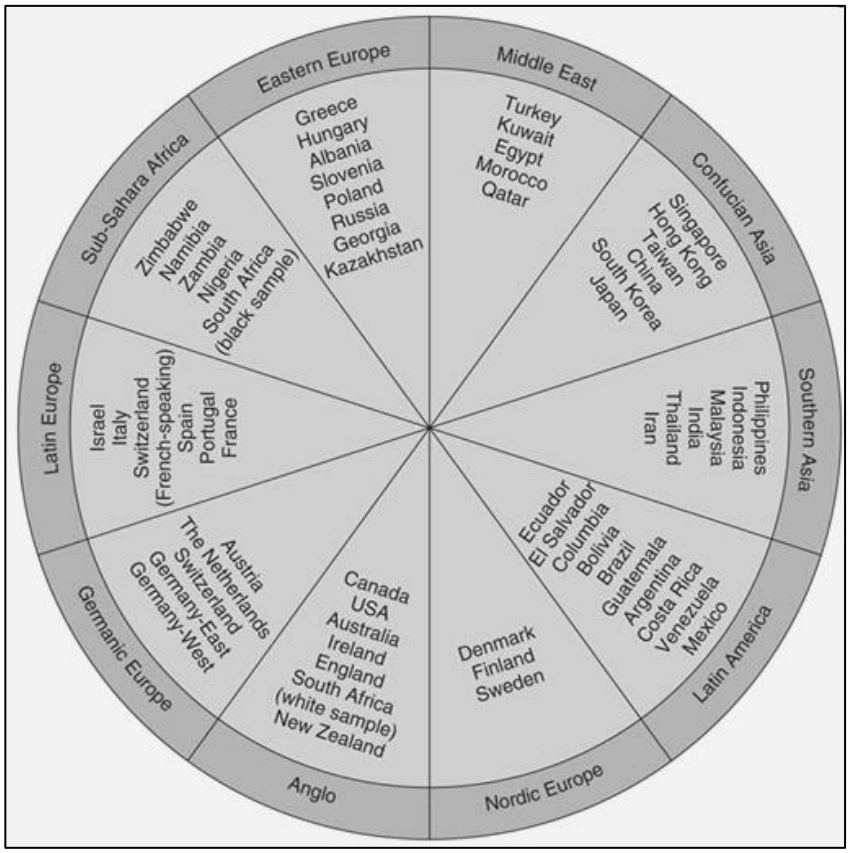
leadership dimensions: (a) visionary, (b) inspirational, (c) self-sacrifice, (d) integrity, (e) decisive and (f) performance-oriented;

2. Team-oriented leadership, which measures teamwork. This measure is based on five primary leadership dimensions: (a) collaborative team orientation, (b) team integrator, (c) diplomatic, (d) malevolent (reverse scored), and (e) administratively competent;
3. Participative leadership, examining the collaborative aspect of decision-making. This measure is comprised of two primary leadership dimensions: (a) nonparticipative and (b) autocratic (both reverse-scored);
4. Humane-oriented leadership, which gauges the compassionate aspect of leadership. This measure consolidates two primary leadership dimensions: (a) modesty and (b) humane orientation;
5. Autonomous leadership, which reflects leadership independence based on a single primary leadership dimension labeled autonomous leadership;
6. Self-protective leadership, which captures the feeling of safety individuals experience in the leadership process. This measure is composed of five primary leadership dimensions: (a) self-centered, (b) status-conscious, (c) conflict inducer, (d) face-saver, and (e) bureaucratic.

Based on GLOBE's new classification of cultures and culturally endorsed leadership theory, ten country clusters of world cultures are proposed (House et al., 2004). These groupings are foundational for understanding different leadership behaviors around the world. The Confucian Asia and Southern Asia country clusters representing the Asia region are of high relevance interest to this qualitative research are (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

GLOBE Country Clusters



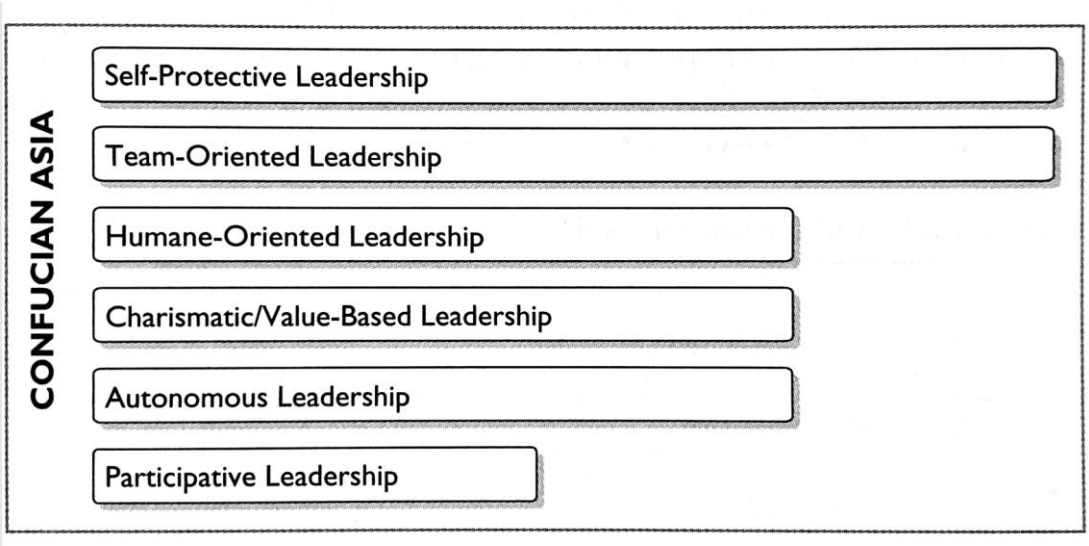
Note. From *Leadership Theory and Practice* (p. 390), by P. Northouse, 2013, Sage Publishing. Copyright 2013 by Sage. Reprinted with permission.

The Confucian Asia cluster includes the following countries: Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, South Korea, and Japan. The Southern Asia cluster comprises the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Thailand, and Iran. While cultural values are unique to each country and influence their leadership expectations, GLOBE found that some cultural dimensions and leadership qualities are widely shared across countries. Thus, it is possible to draw common cultural and leadership characteristics across the countries within each of the defined clusters (House et al., 2004).

The Confucian Asia cluster scores highest on the cultural dimensions of performance orientation, and collectivism (institutional and in-group). This rating reflects a concern for being results-oriented and a focus on collective action (in the workplace and with family). From a leadership perspective, the Confucian Asia cluster demonstrates a preference for self-protective, team-oriented, and human-oriented leadership (see Figure 11). The self-protective leadership dimension aims to capture the feelings of safety and security generated during the leadership process. The measure combines a desire for status and saving face, which is highly regarded in Asian cultures. Conversely, this leadership behavior is not seen as desirable among the Anglo cultural cluster, where it scores the lowest. Team-oriented leadership is highly rated in line with the overall emphasis on collective behaviors in society at large. Human-oriented leadership reflects a preference for supportive leadership that is compassionate and generous (House et al., 2004).

Figure 11

GLOBE Confucian Asia Culture Cluster: Desired Leadership Behaviors

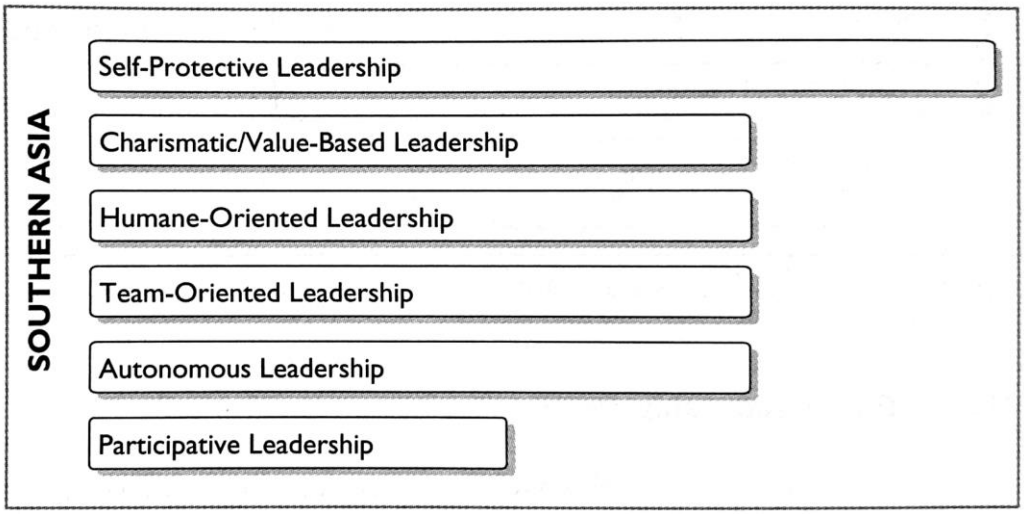


Note. From *Leadership Theory and Practice* (p. 399), by P. Northouse, 2013, Sage Publishing. Copyright 2013 by Sage. Reprinted with permission.

The Southern Asia cluster scores highest on the cultural dimensions of self-protective leadership, charismatic/value-based leadership, and humane-oriented leadership (see Figure 12). Two of the three dimensions are ranked the same as in the Confucian Asia cluster. Both clusters rank self-protective leadership as their most desired leadership behavior, reflecting a strong need for care and reassurance. Similarly, both clusters rank human-oriented leadership as their top third most desired leadership behavior, emphasizing the importance of generosity and compassion. The point of difference between the Confucian Asia cluster and Southern Asia is charismatic/value-based leadership. This dimension reflects some critical attributes of the leader, such as their ability to be visionary and inspirational, demonstrate integrity and decisiveness, and generally be focused on performance. Within the Southern Asia cluster, India is one of the top countries scoring the highest on this dimension. It also ranks third in the total country scores behind the United States (in the first position), and Brazil (House et al., 2004).

Figure 12

GLOBE Southern Asia Culture Cluster: Desired Leadership Behaviors



Note. From *Leadership Theory and Practice* (p. 401), by P. Northouse, 2013, Sage Publishing. Copyright 2013 by Sage. Reprinted with permission.

As seen in the above data, the GLOBE study identifies differences in leadership across cultures unique to countries and regional clusters. These attributes are referred to as "culturally contingent" as they are "desirable in some cultures and undesirable in others" (Dorfman et al., 2012, p. 508). Of the original 112 leadership attributes, 35 are considered culturally contingent. When the attributes group into higher-level primary leadership dimensions, it is possible to isolate seven culturally contingent areas of difference (Javidan et al., 2010):

1. Status conscious, for societies that value social position and privileges;
2. Bureaucratic, for societies focused on norms rules, policies, procedures, and routines;
3. Face saving, for societies who seek composure under pressure;
4. Humane, for societies who value empathy and concern for others;
5. Self-sacrificial/risk-taking, for societies who are not driven by self-interest;
6. Autonomous, for societies who value work independence;
7. Internally competitive, for societies that encourage group competition.

Interestingly, both the Confucian Asia and Southern Asia clusters score highly on many of these culturally contingent areas relating to self-protective leadership (1–3) and humane-oriented leadership (4), pointing out the uniqueness of Asian culture in general and the culturally dependent aspect of their ideal leadership aspirations.

The third phase of the GLOBE research provides unique insights into the leadership of top-level executives. Findings reveal that CEO leadership behaviors are constructed based on what is expected of them in their culture. Top management executives' ability to enact what is expected of them based on national culture values directly impacts their leadership effectiveness. CEOs who fall short of societal leadership expectations under-perform, while those who exceed them over-achieve. Henceforth, "national culture does not predict leadership behaviors"

(Dorfman et al., 2012, p. 510), but instead informs and influences the leadership expectations that stakeholders have of CEO leadership behavior.

In summary, the GLOBE project constitutes a foundational research study that validates that there is no unified theory of leadership. This finding is critically important, especially in the context of overly Western-centric literature, and even despite GLOBE's results that point to some universally desirable leadership attributes (i.e., honesty, intelligence, and trustworthiness).

> GLOBE studies highlight the need for each of us to expand our ethnocentric tendencies to view leadership from only our own perspective, and instead to "open our window" to the diverse ways in which leadership is viewed by people from different regions around the world. (Northouse, 2013, p. 405)

Asian leadership studies. The assumptions and implicit theories from Western leadership theory are legacies of the nineteenth century imperialist age that carry political ideologies (Blunt & Jones, 1997). Performance, leader-centricity, and followers' utilitarian nature represent an ideal of leadership that does not apply to leadership in the Asia region. A review of Asian leadership studies presents scholarly evidence that leadership needs to be re-conceptualized based on a new set of criteria: morality (values), harmony (EQ), and the collective (networking).

Morality. Chen and Kao (2009) argue that Chinese leadership is fundamentally distinct from models of the West. Chinese leadership theory recognizes the importance of moral character as a critical factor in the Chinese cultural context of leader behavior. The Chinese CPM Leadership Behavioral Model (Ling et al., 1987) advances that three factors contribute to measuring leadership behavior in China:

1. Character (the "C" factor);

2. Performance (the “P” factor);
3. Maintenance (the “M” factor).

Contrary to Western leadership theories, which firmly focus on the leader’s abilities, Chinese scholarship emphasizes the leaders’ moral standing as a critical leadership competency. Chinese researchers established the reliability and validity of the CPM Scale based on several quantitative studies conducted in China with over 8,000 leaders and followers. The “C” factor is related to Chinese cultural and ethical traditions, which account for the central role that morality integrity plays in society and organizations (Ling et al., 1987). While Western models are primarily concerned with leader competence, Chinese leadership integrates morality with ability, combining benevolence (*ren*), righteousness/virtue (*yi*), etiquette (*li*), and wisdom (*zhi*) (Fu et al., 2008, Chapter 24).

The Chinese Implicit Leadership Theory investigates and exposes implicit assumptions of what leadership should be (Ling, 1989). Based on a word sorting exercise of leadership characteristics (generated and ranked) and a quantitative validation phase, Chinese researchers identified four dimensions of Chinese leadership:

1. Personal Morality (ranked first);
2. Goal Efficiency;
3. Interpersonal Competency;
4. Versatility (Fang & Ling, 2003).

Similar to CPM’s theory that recognizes moral character as a critical attribute for Chinese leadership, the Chinese Implicit Leadership Theory highlights personal morality as a fundamental expectation from leadership. Chinese demand that their leaders be public servants and meet high standards: be self-disciplined, trustworthy, incorruptible, and serve as role models

to others through benevolence (*ren).* Of those, virtue (*yi*) is seen as an essential leadership feature (Fang & Ling, 2003, Chapter 197). In exploring leadership in East Asia, Blunt and Jones (1997) explain that historically Korea and China functioned as "virtuocracies" where leaders used their knowledge of Confucian classics to demonstrate their wisdom *(zhi)*, higher moral character, and worth to their subjects. Therefore, the roots of Asian leadership and its reliance on morality are embedded in the Confucian ideology, which promotes "five constant virtues: benevolence (*ren*), righteousness/virtue (*yi*), propriety *(li*), wisdom (*zhi*), and fidelity (*xin*)" (Fu et al., 2008, p. 879).

Morality is closely connected to the humane-oriented leadership dimension in GLOBE (House et al., 2004), which refers to displaying concern for others through generosity, compassion, and empathy. While morality has not been at the center of Western leadership theory, the importance of ethics has become more of a concern in the recent literature. Authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Cashman, 1998; Collins, 2001; Eagly, 2005; George & Sims, 2007; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Terry, 1993; Walumba et al., 2008), ethical leadership (M. E. Brown et al., 2005), and spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003; P. Palmer, 2004) have represented new areas of leadership inquiry (Northouse, 2013). However, Chinese morality is defined in the context of others, and in service of them, rather than Western leadership theories, which explore it as an individual quality. As a result, Asian employees are not loyal to a company but to their leaders, whom they hold in the highest regard, not just work colleagues but also as family friends, mentors, and role models (Ulrich & Sutton, 2011).

Harmony. Aside from morality, the archetype Confucian business leader needs to display benevolent leadership (*jun zi*), whose ultimate goal is to build a harmonious world (McDonald, 2012). In the Chinese CPM Leadership Behavioral Model, the "M" factor stresses "maintenance" functions (Ling et al., 1987). This leadership behavior arises from the nature of group

interactions in Chinese leadership and the need to keep interpersonal relationships in balance and harmony. Consistently, the Chinese Implicit Leadership Theory isolates interpersonal competency as a critical factor of leadership as the Chinese expect their leaders to be "socially skilled" and "psychologically knowledgeable" (an attribute of the versatility leadership dimension) to foster good social relations (Ling, 1989). According to Blunt and Jones (1997, p. 14), "a major responsibility of the East Asia leader is the maintenance of harmony," which has deep philosophical roots in not only Confucianism, but also Taoism, and Buddhism.

The maintenance of harmony is achieved through social control and kindness for others (*renquig*)—or what the West calls "emotional intelligence" (Goleman et al., 2013)—which is taught from a young age and deemed a crucial feature of a stable community. Contrary to Western practices, leaders in East Asia are expected to embody non-utilitarian qualities, primarily through the protection of relationships in society and organizations versus sheer performance.

The importance of harmony is closely related to GLOBE's self-protective leadership dimension (House et al., 2004). The need to promote safety and security in the leadership process ranks as the most critical leadership dimension across both Confucian Asia and Southern Asia clusters. According to Cheung and Chan (2008), one of the main areas of difference between Chinese and Western leadership is creating employee security. Hence, harmony also relates to the specific Asian concept of "saving face," which is the maintenance of personal dignity (*mianzi*) when confronted with challenges.

The collective. Collectivism has been a well-documented cultural foundation for Asian cultures when contrasting them to other more individualistic societies (Dorfman et al., 2012; Fu et al., 2008; Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997). In the

workplace, the collective becomes a way of working (through teamwork) and a value that drives how work is done based on consensus and group benefits.

Contrary to Western leadership theories that oppose tasks and people in transactional leadership theory (Bass, 1985), Asian leadership values the group connectedness as a means of achievement. The "P" factor (Performance) in the CPM Leadership Behavioral Model (Ling et al., 1987) is entirely seen as a group function, combining the fulfillment of objectives and the maintenance of group cohesion. As a result, leadership can be expressed as an effect resulting from the equation: E (Leadership Effect) = C (morality) x P (performance) x M (maintenance) (Ling et al., 1987, p. 190). Performance in the Asian context is not the same as in Western culture. In the Western functionalist paradigm, performance is the result of autonomy, self-assertion, and competition among individuals and teams. In contrast, in Asian societies, group-centeredness is the foundation for success. "In short, Asian leadership is concerned with relationships that exist between persons in a social situation" (Rowley & Ulrich, 2012, p. 455). Cheung and Chan (2008) explain that a factor of organizational success in China is primarily related to creating trust among followers and ensuring their growing abilities, sustained engagement, and commitment.

As a result of the collectivist societal orientation, in-group collectivism (i.e., family and close friends) and institutional collectivism (i.e., the community, the organizations) are the highest-ranking dimensions in the GLOBE study among the Asian cultural clusters (House & Javidan, 2004). Northouse (2013) stresses the importance of formative stories that societies share about themselves and explains that while Americans understand their reality through market forces, China anchors its ideals on the family (Hofstede et al., 2010), which extends to business relationships. In its third phase of research on CEOs, GLOBE demonstrated that top management

executives' behaviors adjust to societal leadership expectations (Dorfman et al., 2012). Similarly, Tsang (2007) found that successful Chinese leaders align their leadership and management approaches to China's Confucian core cultural value of collectivism.

Asian leadership and Chinese leadership, in particular, operate on *guanxi's* cultural concept, which mediates all group dynamics in society (Li et al., 1999). "Chinese society is structured around webs of social relationships" and "Chinese people all live in an invisible network of *Guanxi* (relationships or ties)" (Fu et al., 2008, p. 884). The word *guanxi* is composed of two parts: *guan,* designating a gate or passage, and, *xi*, which means belongingness, relationships, ties, and kinship. According to Zhou, Kim, and Ru (2019), significant development is occurring with the evolution of Chinese organizations. Traditionally, Chinese business leaders worked for the government or state enterprises and used their *guanxi* (relationships) to advance their business success, mostly based on collective paternalism. Today's modern Chinese entrepreneurs espouse evolved values and have a high use of networking technology. As a result, their use of *guanxi* is more dependent on networking. Jack Ma, the co-founder and former executive chairman of Alibaba Group, one of the most successful Chinese technology conglomerates, is an example of a new form of entrepreneurial leadership where *guanxi* enables networked relationships that foster creativity and innovation. Henceforth, the concept of *guanxi* might progressively evolve from traditional collectivism to relationalism, and networking with distributed online relationships and knowledge networks.

In summary, the pillars of Asian leadership arising from this final literature review section—morality, harmony, and the collective—provide a new leadership framework that merits further theoretical and empirical development. Table 6 presents a final summary of cultural and

leadership concepts that summarize the most significant differences between Western-centric and Asian-centric approaches.

Table 6

Culture and Leadership: Contrasting Western-Centric and Asian-Centric Approaches

Culture and Leadership		
	Western-Centric	**Asian-Centric**
Culture	• Individualistic • Rational • Self-oriented • Democratic • Freedom • Outward-driven/self-expression • Low to medium power distance • Opportunistic • Indulgence • Present • Laws-driven • Low power distance • Extreme • Hedonistic • Luck • Opportunistic	• Collectivistic • Non rational (aesthetics, rituals, ceremonies) • Family-oriented • Harmony • Security • Inward-driven/reserved • High Power Distance • Loyalty • Restraint • Long Term • People-driven • High power distance • Moderation • Benevolence (*ren*) • Righteousness/virtue (*yi*) • Etiquette (*li*) • Wisdom (*zhi*) • Fidelity (*xin*) • Kindness for others/EQ (*renquig*)
Leadership	• Prescriptive • Leader-centric • Follower responsibilities • “Great men” (monarchs, military, politicians) • Transformational • Power • Charismatic leadership • Achievement • Opportunistic • Chance • Individualism • High performers • Autonomous leadership • Personal attainment • Success/reputation • Independence	• Pragmatic • Follower centric • Follower rights • Great teams • Results-driven • Self-discipline • Self-protective leadership • Restraint • Safety • Security • Collaboration • Team integration • Team-oriented leadership • Relationships/Network (*guanxi*) • Esteem/Personal dignity (*mianzi*) • Obedience

The Asian leadership literature offers fertile ground for exploring a new leadership phenomenon called Connectivist Leadership (Corbett et al., 2018; Corbett & Spinello, 2020). A

quantitative pilot study among Asian respondents (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020) has identified the importance of personal values (collaboration, connectedness, and diversity), emotional intelligence (understanding and connecting to others' feelings), and working in, and as, a network as the critical dimensions of the Connectivist Leadership phenomenon. The proposed qualitative grounded theory study aims to explore these initial findings further and fulfill the hope to "move beyond the overtly dominant and ethnocentric Western leadership literature and explore Asian leadership on the basis of differing cultural foundations" (Rowley & Ulrich, 2012, p. 451). Given its philosophical foundations and advanced social networking practices, Asia has the opportunity to expand the leadership scholarship through more collective and connected practices and present a leadership model as a network effect. New research can advance the field of leadership studies into the digital networked future so theory and practice can align on the definite evidence of emergent new paradigms for leadership presented in this review from:

- New learning and knowledge models;
- Postheroic organizational approaches;
- Non-Western-centric cultural interpretations.

Gaps and Inconsistencies in the Literature

This review of literature consolidated some of the significant transformations that have occurred in learning, organization design, and leadership theories, providing a body of evidence in support of the central research question: if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships? Key trendlines uncovered in this review validate the emergence of a new leadership paradigm and highlight:

- A change in the way knowledge is constructed and mediated through a web of social interactions and online information networks;
- A change in the unit of analysis for leadership: evolving from the individual to the collective, away from legacy leader-centric views to more collective and connected approaches, and a holistic understanding of the leadership system;
- A change in the role of followers, who are no longer seen as subservient to the leader but become an integral part of the leadership dynamic, and can take turns becoming leaders themselves based on changing environmental conditions;
- A change in how organizations are structuring themselves to adapt for change through organic and agile systems, using technology and team-based approaches, with virtual e-leadership becoming commonplace in organizations;
- A change in the focus of leadership studies delineated primarily by Western-centric theories and global models to embracing alternative understandings of leadership informed by more complex local, societal, and cultural values.

The literature review has established that leadership needs to be re-visited in light of more recent understandings offered by learning, organizational, and cultural models. These show that legacy leader-centric models of leadership are no longer appropriate for today's knowledge creation, economy, and cultural diversity. The evolution of learning theories has demonstrated a progression from knowledge acquisition as a stimulus-response mechanism, to knowledge as network creation and connections. Organizations have evolved from traditional, hierarchical, and bureaucratic models to adhocracy. Cross-cultural models are calling for more emic ways to understand leadership beyond Western functionalist paradigms. The changing logic of

knowledge, organizations, and leadership is definitive and offers a clear path for researchers to examine new directions for leadership and further its next stage of development.

As the field of leadership research advances, enfolding established and emerging models, inconsistencies abound. There is a growing divergence among scholars on the nature of leadership and its ontological, epistemological, and axiological stance. According to Rost (1991, p. 9), “no one has presented and articulated a school of leadership that integrates our understanding of leadership into a holistic framework.” Furthermore, “leadership is a complex phenomenon that operates across multiple levels of analysis” (Dinh et al., 2014, p. 37), which are contradictory:

- Leadership as a person: although many scholars now see leadership as a collective action (Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016), leadership studies have continued to focus on individual traits, style, early experiences, antecedents, vision, and charisma to account for the emergence and effectiveness of leadership (Bryman, 1992);
- Leadership as a process: much of the contemporary literature agrees that leadership is a process of influence (Northouse, 2013). Some scholars argue that this process is driven by an individual (the leader) to influence others (followers) and constitutes a defined a role, whereas others describe leadership as a group process that is shared and inherently social (Pearce et al., 2009);
- Leadership as an outcome: few scholars can agree on what the outcome of leadership truly is. Some argue leadership is for the achievement of organizational goals; some focus on individual attainment, others on the realization of common outcomes. Transformational leadership goes beyond the functional motivation of workers to address the moral uplifting of both leaders and followers (J. M. Burns, 1978);

- Leadership as a state: some scholars describe leadership as an emerging collective and connected state, which stems from teamwork (D. V. Day et al., 2004). In this view, leadership is more than a process; it is a team property achieved from togetherness;
- Leadership as a new societal age: in the most progressive views of leadership, the concept transcends its functional purpose (directing organizational activity). It represents the nature of social networking activity, the distribution of leadership (Maccoby, 2007), and the capacity for learning, knowledge, creativity, and innovation (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008). In these views, leadership is a phenomenon that is, and does more than, create influence or mere collaboration; it describes a human connection where people operate in synchronicity through shared knowledge and emotions, and together reach a higher consciousness (Gloor, 2017; Laloux, 2014).

These inconsistencies demonstrate there are still gaps in the literature and validate the need for a more diverse and inclusive leadership research agenda that can leverage insights from unexplored and emerging parts of the world, such as Asia. In exploring the shift in the understanding and practices of leadership, this grounded theory study aims to raise questions related to:

- Why has the practice of leadership not yet caught up with new models of learning and advanced organizational designs?
- What will it take to move leadership into the digital age, by exploring the "broader structural conditions" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) of the phenomenon in the Asia region?
- What effect will the global COVID-19 pandemic have on networked leadership practices? Might it represent a historic shift in leadership?

- What can we learn from Asia, where scholars have taken a less cognitive and rational approach to understanding leadership-follower relationships? “We need to understand more about the incorporation of emotions into the cross-cultural leadership process” (Dorfman et al., 2012, p. 514).

In reviewing how leadership is evolving from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships, this study aims to question:

- What are the new roles that leaders can play?
- How does rotating leadership get enacted?
- What happens in a leader-less collective?
- Without the intervention of a central controller and decentralized tools, how do organizations achieve their goals?
- How does networked leadership provide psychological safety when dealing with open and transparent network systems?
- What is the role of different forms of intelligence—IQ, EQ (Goleman, 1998b), SI Goleman (2006), CQ (Earley et al., 2006; Earley & Ang, 2003), swarm intelligence (Haywood Rolling, 2013)—when shifting leadership from the individual to the network collective?
- What is sense-making? How does leadership provide meaning, coherence, unity, and help others make sense of what is happening?
- What is the new cognitive capability that leadership can enable when connected and collective?
- What is collective consciousness?

Finally, emerging leadership theories lack substantive research and need to prove their theoretical value beyond empirical merits. This proposed study aimed to fill this gap. Avolio et al. (2009) note that much of the cross-cultural research has been survey-based, and they recommend using alternative research designs, such as qualitative approaches, to investigate respondents' point of view, within their cultural paradigms. This qualitative research provided an inquiry into the lived experiences of study participants from the Asia region, to generate theory from their unheard voices. The study aimed to tap into different cultural assumptions and the mythological stories of Asian culture to set the scene for a new chapter in leadership understanding and theory based on the phenomenon of Connectivist Leadership.

Chapter Summary

Today's business environment is very different from when leadership theory first emerged. The study of leadership requires embracing new paradigms that challenge long-standing beliefs and assumptions with fast-changing learning, organizational designs, culturally diverse, and socially networked landscapes. This chapter provided a foundational knowledge through scholarly published research to inform the proposed research study. The review aimed to go beyond referencing the relevant literature to create a new integrated understanding of the research problem through three original leadership models:

1. Learning and leadership: a framework of parallel development (Figure 2);
2. Organization design and leadership: a contextual analysis (Figure 4);
3. Culture and leadership: contrasting Western-centric and Asian-centric approaches (Table 6).

These models developed for the literature review help delineate the research problem, provide new lines of inquiry, inform the study's methodological choices, and identify fertile areas for further research (Gall et al., 1996).

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter Overview

This third chapter presents the rationale and research methodology guiding the study. It starts with an examination of the theoretical framework that articulates the broader context in which the study took place. This section encompasses the philosophical worldview that has guided the researcher in their choice of methodology. It acknowledges the paradigmatic frame, which sets the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions for the study. This part investigates the qualitative research design decisions that influenced the components of the research and the methodological purposiveness and congruence of the project (Richards & Morse, 2013). The chapter is structured to include the Chapter Overview, Context, Theoretical Framework, Research Design, Setting and Sample, Human Subject Considerations, Instrumentation, Design Validity and Reliability, Data Collection, Data Management, Data Analysis, Theory Development, and a Chapter Summary.

Context

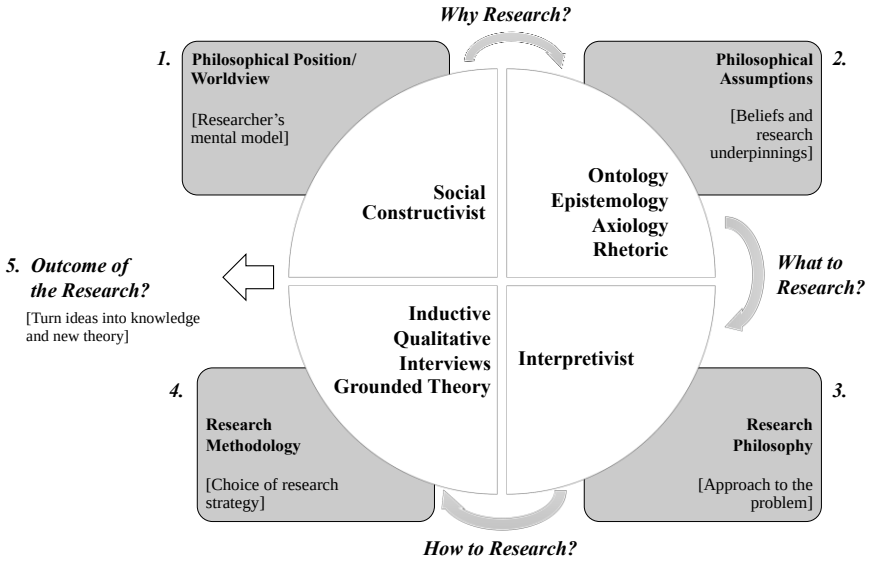
The dawning of the 21st century calls for new leadership models that are more local and culturally informed. In the context of a region leading the world with highly networked digital social practices, this study investigated the conceptualization of a more collective and connected form of leadership, defined as Connectivist Leadership (Corbett & Spinello, 2020). The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory study was to explore a new form of leadership emerging within Asia by examining the lived experiences of individuals and groups who lead and are led in this region. The central research question was, if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?

Theoretical Framework

Researchers must situate their investigations within a theoretical framework that articulates the full context they bring to their studies. They must disclose their philosophical worldview and the research paradigm they espouse (Creswell, 2007). A theoretical framework is necessary before starting research (Blumer, 1969) as it informs the entire research approach and design by painting "an imaginary picture of the empirical world of the participants" (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2018, p. 250). According to Žukauskas et al. (2018), "scientific research philosophy is a system of the researcher's thought, following which new, reliable knowledge about the research object is obtained" (p. 121). The theoretical framework indicates the study's value and where it fits within the research universe by disclosing the investigator's views in framing the research problem and handling the data collection, management, analysis, and resulting findings from the inquiry. The entire process juxtaposes the philosophical and research solutions giving the research purpose through meaningful and deliberate choices (see Figure 13).

Figure 13

Research Path of this Study



Three fundamental questions guide the entire research journey: (a) Why conduct research? (b) What to research? and (c) How to conduct research? (Holden & Lynch, 2004; Remenyi et al., 1998). At the start of the process, the first question "Why research?" is answered based on the researcher's philosophical position encompassing the individual's mental model, perceptions, beliefs, experience, and personal values. According to Hiebert (2008), the notion of worldview is a relatively new, albeit an essential concept in philosophy. The idea was first introduced in the late nineteenth century by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (Kant & In Vorländer, 1919) under the German word *Weltanschauung,* which conveys "a way of looking at the cosmos from a particular vantage point which cannot transcend its own historicity" (Wolters, 1989, p. 18). In his historical analysis of the worldview concept, Albert Wolters (1989) notes that the idea gained traction with German idealism and romanticism and philosophers from Fichte to Schelling, Schleiermacher, Schlegel, Hegel, and Goethe. In contrast to philosophy, which translates from the Greek as the love of wisdom and aims to extract universal learnings from the study of knowledge and life's meaning, a worldview is a more personal and relative point of view bound by time and subjectivity (Wolters, 1989). Worldviews, also known as paradigms (Lincoln & Guba, 2000), are defined as "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (p. 17). A worldview is an orientation encompassing aspects of reality that ground and influence perception, knowledge, and actions. It can include a mindset, outlook on life, ideology, normative postulates, values, emotions, ethics, faith, and cultural linguistics (G. B. Palmer, 1996). A worldview consists of "fundamental cognitive, affective, and evaluative presuppositions a group of people make about the nature of things, and which they use to order their lives" (Hiebert, 2008, p. 15). Accordingly, the researcher must make explicit their philosophical assumptions in advance of the research to inform what may have shaped its genesis and

subsequent approach and design. While Slife and Williams (1995) argue that philosophical assumptions remain in the background and are mostly concealed, they note their importance in influencing the research approach. Worldviews provide a set of assumptions that direct how researchers undertake their research, even if unconsciously.

The underlying worldview guiding this dissertation (see Figure 1, step 1) was rooted in social constructivism, which acknowledges that participants embrace different meanings of reality. “Constructivism is the recognition that reality is a product of human intelligence interacting with experience in the real world. As soon as you include human mental activity in the process of knowing reality, you have accepted constructivism” (Elkind, 2005, p. 334). The social constructivist worldview focuses on the specific contexts where meaning is constructed from a complex and diverse mix of social, historical, and cultural beliefs, with multiple participant meanings. Constructivism has its roots in the Socratic method, which uses dialogue and questioning as a method of dialectic inquiry and engages students by challenging their assumptions and mental models (Boghossian, 2002). The foremost theorists among the cognitive constructivist movement include Dewey (1916), Piaget (1952, 1977), and Bruner (1961). Vygotsky (1978) is a leading theorist among social constructivists. Constructivism and social constructivism share many common underlying assumptions on the nature of learning and knowledge. Both theories describe learning as an active process, where knowledge is constructed versus acquired. Knowledge is conceptualized as a human product that is culturally constructed from personal past experiences with different interpretations and meanings. Social constructivism more specifically emphasizes the collaborative aspects of learning and recognizes the importance of the cultural and social context for learning. Knowledge is not assimilated but

rather integrated as a process by which learners become part of a knowledge community, where learning and social context are inseparable (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978).

Researchers' philosophical worldviews create research choices and assumptions (see Figure 1, step 2) based on their views of the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology), the role of values (axiology), and the nature of language (rhetoric). In the Doctorate of Global Leadership and Change, one's approach to globalization is also of high relevance. Aligned with social constructivist philosophy, the ontological stance of this study is based on a subjective view of the world. It sought an understanding of reality from multiple viewpoints based on the different cultural experiences of leaders and teams Asia. The study examined the development of constructed understandings of the world, and subsequent leadership approaches from subjective and multiple assumptions about reality. The approach to the research was to question what is defined by participants as their reality.

Seated within the social constructivist worldview, the epistemology that informed and guided this study was a social and historical construction of knowledge. It is based on the belief that people actively create their subjective representations of the world with active learning as a constructive process. This philosophical approach is in direct contrast to positivism, which sees positive knowledge developed in a scientific method through a single methodology derived from reason and logic based on scientific evidence, experiments, and statistics, to reveal the truth (Mill, 1968). Social constructivism maintains knowledge is constructed through individual's subjective perspectives as they reflect on their personal experiences and derive meaning and new knowledge from what they encounter, resulting in constructed realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The axiological assumption that characterized this research study was the importance of ethics, and collecting data for validity and accuracy given its analysis is directly linked to the

construction of knowledge by participants. The data quality and how it was analyzed were a prerequisite as they determined the nature of the reality reported and interpreted. The researcher captured and made sense of the meanings that participants shared and expressed about the world and their subsequent ways of practicing leadership and followership. The researcher recognized that the human subjects' multicultural backgrounds and experiences in the Asia region shaped the interpretation of the data from personal, cultural, professional, and historical experience.

The overall rhetorical assumption of this study was that aspects of discourse such as the spoken language (i.e., words and sayings) and body language (i.e., gestures and facial expressions) are symbolic artifacts of communications used to report what reality is through the eyes of research participants rather than the truth. In this study, the language played a pivotal role as participants were be from different cultural backgrounds in Asia, constructing meanings from non-English-based languages and sharing them back to the researcher in English. As an interpretive framework, social constructivism allows research participants to fully and freely describe their own experiences, thoughts, and emotion through language, emphasizing the role of culture in cognitive development (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). This research was grounded in the Social Constructivism of Language and Meaning theory (SCLM), which sees language as a social phenomenon aimed at establishing collective intentions. SCLM focuses on "the triadic relation among language, humans (a linguistic community) and the world" (Bo, 2015, p. 88).

Finally, this study, rooted in the social constructivist worldview, embraced a view of globalization that is pluralist in nature, versus unified. It built on the three critical assumptions from Crotty (1998) which state that, (a) "Human beings construct meanings as they engage with the world they are interpreting," (b) "Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives," and (c) "The basic generation of meaning is

always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community" (p. 42-43). This view led the researcher to examine participants' relationships with each other and the world as they interpreted it subjectively. Above all, this study deliberately steered away from applying a universal leadership model or assume that a global leadership approach informed by Western theory was fit to understand the constructed realities of Asian participants. Therefore, the study took an emic approach and sought to establish a leadership theory from the cultural norms specific to participants within the Asia region, as opposed to leveraging existing Western leadership theory as a global ethnocentric construct.

In alignment with the philosophical assumptions aforementioned, this study embraced an interpretivist research philosophy (see Figure 1, step 3). Interpretive research dates back to the early 19th century idealist movement with notable influences from the fields of social science, psychology, linguistics, and semiotics and works from leading thinker Max Weber (1964). Weber's fundamental premise was the acceptance of the subjective point of view, using sociology as an interpretive science to garner an understanding of social action. According to an analysis of social theory by Burrell and Morgan (1979), there are four mutually exclusive views of the social world from which scholars derive distinct intellectual traditions. The interpretive paradigm focuses on social understanding and stands in contrast to the other three paradigms including (a) humanism, which critiques the social status quo, (b) structuralism, which highlights social dysfunction, and (c) functionalism, which is interested in social structures that shape society (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The interpretive paradigm acknowledges that reality is negotiated through interactions with others, leading the researcher to investigate the complexity and plurality of views expressed and focusing on the understanding of their subjective meanings. Researchers who work in the interpretive tradition view reality as being embedded within a

social setting that they interpret, thereby applying a sense-making analysis to the phenomenon under consideration.

This study will be value-laden and acknowledge that the researcher's background introduced inherent biases, not only in the original choice of the study topic but also in the study's approach and the reciprocal interactions created between participants and the researcher. The interpretive analysis from this study was holistic and contextual, rather than reductionist and isolationist. It aimed to identify patterns from language and signs and develop theory from meanings attributed by the perspective of the participants involved in the social phenomenon.

Research Design

According to Holden and Lynch (2004), research should not be methodologically led, but rather be an outcome of the researcher's philosophical position and the nature of the studied phenomenon. Based on the researcher's social constructivist worldview, which answered the first question ("why conduct research?"), the philosophical assumptions and the interpretivist research philosophy, which satisfied the second question ("what to research?"), it was possible to determine that the nature of this study lent itself to a qualitative research methodology, answering the third and final question "how to conduct the research?" (see Figure 1, step 4).

The conceptual framework that guided the logic of this study was concerned with investigating a new leadership phenomenon, which is constructed not in the natural world based on a scientific method with a logical cause and effect or absolute positive truth (Comte, 2009), but on the social realm and how people's beliefs define their reality and actions (G. H. Mead, 1934). It focused on the specific contexts where meaning emerges from a complex and diverse mix of social, historical, and cultural beliefs, with multiple participant meanings. Therefore, based on the nature of this study and the set of assumptions that directed how the researcher

undertook their research (Slife & Williams, 1995), this inquiry was best suited to a qualitative methodology. Choosing a qualitative research paradigm supports a study that holistically sees the world, with meaning derived from the lived experiences of participants, their personal reflections, and multiple views of reality. A qualitative approach stands in direct contrast to a quantitative design, which seeks objectivity through a formal and systematic process leveraging numerical data (N. Burns & Grove, 1993) and aims to discover one version of the truth. Qualitative research tends to be subjective and inductive to generate theory.

Qualitative research presents many strengths. First, it aims at describing real life as it occurs in the natural setting of participants and focuses on their lived experiences. Second, qualitative data have "local groundedness" (M. Miles et al., 2020, p. 8) because they are situation-specific, helping to bound the studied phenomenon within a particular environment that can explain its characteristics and conditions for occurring. Third, qualitative data were imbued with meaning and complexity, offering thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of the social reality as perceived by participants. Fourth, qualitative data are longitudinal, allowing the observation of a process over time and understanding its causation. For these reasons, qualitative research is best suited for the discovery, exploration of new ideas, and hypotheses development. Rigor in qualitative research is established through a different set of criteria than quantitative studies. These include consistency in the observance of a philosophical point of view, openness in the data collection process, thoroughness in the data management and analysis, and rigor in the development of a theory (M. Miles et al., 2020).

Qualitative methodologies abound; according to Saldaña (2011), over 20 different qualitative approaches exist. This study used grounded theory, which is sometimes referred to as analytic induction, and considered "one of the most sophisticated and developed approaches to

rigorous qualitative (non-numerical) research" (Simon & Goes, 2013, p. 104). Grounded theory has its philosophical tradition in the pragmatism and symbolic interactionism movements (Blumer, 1969; G. H. Mead, 1934), which frame research inquiries within the broader context of social sciences. Pragmatism claims that ideology is true based on the practical consequences of accepting it. Symbolic interactionism focuses on understanding social behavior with the making of meaning through language and symbols. A distinctive quality of grounded theory as articulated in the original treatise, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory,* is "the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2). As a qualitative method, grounded theory is well suited to study areas with little previous research to provide insights into new or previously unexplained phenomena. Such is the case for this research study investigating the topic of emerging leadership practices in Asia.

Several forms of grounded theory models have been developed since the Glaser and Strauss approach in 1967. There are generally four accepted types of grounded theory models: Classic Grounded Theory (CGT) by Glaser (1978), the Strauss and Corbin (1998) qualitative data analysis (QDA), the constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), and the feminist grounded theory (Wuest, 1995). These different forms of grounded theories have commonalities, including unstructured interviews, ways to categorize data, and a focus on interactions and processes (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). However, different grounded theory approaches diverge on their strategies for data analysis despite their commonalities in the methodological framework. As a result, while grounded theories have a shared ontology, they present significant epistemological differences. This studys' purpose was to review a new kind of leadership emerging in Asia and to deduct a new leadership theory that can support it. Henceforth, the research followed the Straussian grounded theory model, based on the following considerations:

- The Straussian grounded theory begins with a review of the literature to provide a general context for theory development and the generation of hypotheses (Heath, H. & Cowley, 2004), which is the researcher's approach for this study. Conversely, CGT believes in delaying the literature review in order to challenge it with a new theory;
- CGT is an inductive-deductive mix (Glaser, 1978, 1992), allowing the use all kinds of data to go from generalization to theory. The Straussian approach emphasizes deduction and verification with the ability to leverage prior research and knowledge. This method was preferred for this study as it leveraged a prior IRB-approved quantitative study (see Appendix A), which provided findings used to develop the interview guide and hypotheses for the generation of new leadership theory;
- The Straussian theory supports bringing the idea of the phenomenon to be studied, which is how this dissertation's topic was developed (by bringing the idea of Connectivist Leadership upfront to be researched as a new leadership theory from prior research);
- Strauss and Corbin (1998) propose a more rigid, structured coding approach with eleven procedures to follow and a three-stage coding methodology comprised of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, which this study followed;
- The Straussian coding process has its root in the philosophical use of induction, deduction, and verification (Heath, H. & Cowley, 2004), which is more thorough than the induction focus of CGT and constructivist grounded theory;
- The Straussian approach seeks to bring in broader structural conditions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) into the data analysis, which was well suited to understanding the context of the phenomenon in the Asia region;

- Strauss and Corbin (1998) use a helpful coding paradigm that this study followed comprising of: (a) the causal conditions, (b) the phenomenon resulting from those causal conditions, (c) the context that influences strategy development, (d) the intervening conditions, (e) the coping strategies, and (f) the consequences of those strategies.

Creswell (2005) distinguishes between three designs in grounded theory: (a) the systematic design (Strauss & Corbin, 1998); (b) the emerging design (Glaser, 1992); and (c) the constructivist design (Charmaz, 2014). As this study followed the Strauss and Corbin (1998) qualitative data analysis, it was systematic in its design and leveraged the specific data analysis steps in line with this particular grounded theory approach.

Setting and Sample

Miles et al. (2020) stress the importance of sampling decisions in qualitative research as they help to delineate the boundaries of a study not only via the respondents' choice but also through their social interactions and the contextual environment. There are many sampling strategies available, and choices should result from the study's nature as they heavily influence the data analysis and study findings (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). According to Richards and Morse (2013), the sample scope and setting need to adhere to two principles: (a) be purposively selected, and (b) be extended through theoretical sampling.

For this qualitative study, the sample used a purposive design rather than random sampling. The selective sample fit the specific characteristics of the population of interest and reflected the perceptions of participants related to the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; M. Miles et al., 2020; Richards & Morse, 2013). According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), researchers can conceptualize sampling along four dimensions: setting, events, actors, and

artifacts. This study's scope included a delineated setting, which was the geographic perimeter commonly defined as the APAC region. This area includes a collection of 47 countries throughout East and South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania (World Population Review, 2020). Consequently, the study utilized a within-case sampling strategy where the sample was nested within the Asia region. To scope for diversity, the study included participants from markets that were the largest in the region, including China, India, and Indonesia (World Population Review, 2020) and the smallest, such as the city-state of Singapore. This sampling approach also enabled an equal balance within Asian country clusters. Respondents were chosen from two countries within Confucian Asia (China and Singapore), and two within Southern Asia (India and Indonesia), as per the country clustering from the GLOBE study (House & Javidan, 2004). This within-case sampling approach was driven by the study's central question, which centers on exploring leadership as a phenomenon within the Asia region, without a concern for global representativeness (see Appendix D).

The sample was developed through a theoretical sampling strategy, using the emerging analysis to guide the selection of participants upfront. This approach is consistent with interpretive research, which tends to employ theoretical sampling to guide the choice of respondents and setting based on their fit with the phenomenon and its characteristics (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Sampling that is theoretically driven is also most appropriate for grounded theory research (M. Miles et al., 2020), which is not driven by a concern for representativeness but rather by the central research question and the conceptual framework that supports it. The sampling design was conducted in a multistage procedure to identify clusters of organizations, and individuals within them, that met the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The sample was opportunistic and leveraged a snowball sampling approach, allowing salient

participants to recommend people whom they saw as taking part in the phenomenon within a leader-follower collaborative team relationship. They also recommended other participants who they thought demonstrated a similar leadership phenomenon in other workplaces.

The population of interest included companies that presented three fundamental characteristics aligned with the study's conceptual framework. First, companies were culturally located in the Asia region, allowing an investigation of the relationship between leadership and culture. Second, companies selected facilitated technologically-based knowledge creation, which helped the study evaluate the importance of network-forming processes in leadership enactment. Finally, participating companies practiced collective and connected leadership approaches (see Appendix D). Based on the review of the literature in chapter two, Chinese firms needed to meet the criteria of modern Chinese leadership (Zhou et al., 2019) to participate in the study. Only private companies that were not government-owned were selected. These firms exhibit very different leadership approaches than those of Chinese state enterprises, which practice traditional forms of leadership anchored in Confucian values, communist ideology, and hierarchy (McDonald, 2012; Rowley & Ulrich, 2012; Zhou et al., 2019). In contrast, this grounded theory study was interested in the study of an emerging leadership phenomenon, where people are shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual based on power, authority, control, and hierarchy to a system of shared relationships based on connecting people and information sources to create collective influence.

This grounded theory study screened respondents based on their leadership orientations based on a previously validated questionnaire used to establish the Connectivist Leadership phenomenon (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020). To qualify, participants needed to self-select items that fit within the status-quo or emerging leadership orientation categories. Participants who chose

statements within the traditional leadership orientation were terminated (see Appendix D). Participants also needed to meet a few additional inclusion criteria to take part in the research:

- Be aged 18 years or older;
- Reside full time in a country within the Asia region;
- Be currently employed (full or part-time);
- Be employed by a private company (non-state enterprise);
- Work for a company that has offices in the Asia region that encourages the use of networking technologies in the practice of daily work (such as the internet, intranet, social tools, IM platforms), and promotes collective ways of working (e.g., agile, teamwork, scrum teams);
- Be a mix of leaders of teams from various sizes (under ten people, 10 to 49, 50 to 100 people, and more than 100 people), and people with no direct reports;
- Fit within the status-quo or emerging leadership orientation category;
- Have offered consent to participate in the study and meet all the screening criteria.

Exclusion criteria consisted of anyone who did not meet the screening criteria, failed or refused to sign the informed consent form, and those unable to participate in the interview during the data collection period. The sample was developed from two sources: (a) identified respondents from an earlier research study (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020) who provided their contact information and expressed the desire to be contacted for future research, and (b) new participants from convenience sampling based on reputational case selection who met the screening criteria.

The sample size of this study included a total of 29 individuals, above the threshold of 20, which is the number typically recommended to develop a well-saturated theory for grounded

theory (Creswell, 2007). In grounded theory, data saturation is known as theoretical saturation and refers to the point where the main concepts required for the formulation of the theory have been discovered and articulated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Accordingly, sampling is considered theoretical sampling based on emerging theory from the data collection (Bryman, 2001). Through comparative data analysis, the researcher determined when saturation was achieved and additional participants were sampled in search of theoretical density (Morse, 2004) until the sample reached the optimal level of 29 participants. As well as reaching saturation subjectively, the researcher also demonstrated data saturation objectively (Morse, 2015) by following these criteria: (a) clear articulation of the purpose of the study, (b) identifying the study population, and (c) ensuring coding stability (Hennink et al., 2016). Aside from thematic saturation, this study also used a refined definition of saturation for qualitative research proposed by Weller et al. (2018). Authors argue that salience is a more satisfactory concept for determining sample size than thematic saturation alone (Weller et al., 2018). They advocate for in-depth interview probing and prompting to find the point of saturation through items' occurrence and cultural importance. Collecting the respondents' most important themes and ideas was essential to reaching saturation through salience rather than complete saturation through information volume.

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic and enforced social distancing restrictions, interviews took place via video conference call rather than in person, for one month, in August of 2020. This format presented some limitations as the researcher could not observe participants in their natural working environment nor witness the interactions across teams in situ. However, this also afforded some advantages: respondents were more readily available and amenable to participate in the interviews thanks to the convenience and ease of use provided by the video experience. Furthermore, the researcher could probe on and integrate the various technology

platforms (i.e., Skype, Webex, MS Teams, Zoom, Bluejeans) that supported the participants' virtual leadership approaches, placing the researcher at the heart of the phenomenon with an opportunity to directly query and witness the role of technology in leadership distribution. Each interview lasted 60 minutes in length and was audio and video recorded. Finally, in addition to the core study sample of 29 participants, a selection of key global experts in the field was consulted. The researcher chose these specialists based on a reputational case selection and the literature review. Thirteen experts, scholars and practitioners, weighed in on the phenomenon studied based on their expertise aligned to the conceptual framework of the study. They included (a) experts in digital learning and new knowledge creation, (b) theorists of collective leadership approaches and new organizational models, and (c) authorities in intercultural studies and Asian leadership. Grounded theory supports data coming from multiple sources and encourages rich *data corpus* to strengthen analytic findings (M. Miles et al., 2020). These expert interviews were also conducted via 60-minute semi-structured interviews over video calls. The discussions focused on exploring the issues related to the phenomenon (see interview guide in Appendix G).

Human Subject Considerations

"Qualitative research is conducted through intensive and/or prolonged contact with participants in a naturalistic setting to investigate the everyday and/or exceptional lives of individuals, groups, organizations, cultures, and/or societies" (M. Miles et al., 2020, p. 21). As a result, the protection of human subjects is of the utmost importance. This study abided by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Pepperdine University, which serves "to protect the welfare and dignity of human subjects" (Pepperdine University, 2020, para. 4). The research was conducted in line with accepted ethical, federal, and professional standards for research. The study was guided by the ethical principles stated in the *Belmont Report* (U.S. Department of

Health & Human Services, 2020), which was written by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research as a result of the National Research Act of 1974. The *Belmont Report* identifies three basic principles guiding research with human subjects: (a) the respect of persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2020). Accordingly, this study was conducted to adhere to these ethical principles. Applying these general principles involved the use of a Social-Behavioral Adult Participant informed consent form (see Appendix B), which was sent to participants prior to the interview. Only participants who had signed the informed consent form were allowed to participate in the study. As indicated in the recruitment email (see Appendix C), and in the informed consent form (see Appendix B), participation in the study was voluntary. Participants' refusal to participate did not result into any penalty, and they could withdraw their consent at any time and discontinue participation. Participants did not waive any legal claims, rights, or remedies by participation in this research study. Their relationship with their employer was not be affected whether they participated or not in this study. The research was performed in accordance with the "U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, DHHS (CFR), Title 45 Part 46 (45 CFR 46), entitled Protection of Human Research Subjects, and Parts 160 and 164, entitled Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information and the California Protection of Human Subjects in Medical Experimentation Act" (Pepperdine University, 2020, para. 2).

A research protocol proposing the use of human subjects was submitted to the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board (protocol IRB # 20-02-1286), outlining the purpose of the study and all its details and was approved on July 27, 2020. The research involved the use of an exempt procedure defined by the Federal Regulations for Protection of Human Research Subjects (45 CFR 46). This study qualified for review at the exempt level as the research did not

present greater than minimal risk and fell into the Exempt Category 2 of survey procedures, interviews, educational tests, and public observations. This study was designed to be conducted via 60-minute interviews, which were recorded by various computer video conference call software (i.e., Skype, Webex, MS Teams, Zoom, Bluejeans). The confidentiality of participants was maintained at all times through the following procedures: use of participant pseudonyms, no identifying information linked to participants to be reported, data collected (i.e., video recordings, transcripts, notes, and memos) was strictly accessed only by the principal investigator, and all information was password-protected and encrypted on the principal investigator's computer locked at their personal residence. All file backups will be destroyed within five years of the study's completion.

The overall goal of the study was to better understand how leadership is practiced in Asia and the importance of collective and connected practices. There were no associated risks with this study, other than unlikely respondent fatigue or boredom from the interview process. To this minimize this, the interview protocol was managed so participants could elect to opt-out of the interview at any time. Participants also had the opportunity to review the interview questions before the start of the study and they were be given ample time to respond to questions at their own pace. There were no direct benefits for participants in taking part in this study, and they were not be compensated for taking part in the research. Possible future benefits to others may include helping the scholarly community and business practitioners gain a better understanding of leadership approaches, and help others create influence for positive collective outcomes.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation for this study was based on a previous quantitative study that isolated the criteria underpinning the Connectivist Leadership theory under investigation. An

initial phase of research on the topic of Connectivist Leadership was conceived and developed in early 2018. The project was awarded a grant from the Pepperdine Graduate School of Education and Psychology University in the Spring. In the Summer of 2019, research approved through the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board (protocol IRB # 18-04-790) was conducted. A quantitative descriptive and correlational study, including a total sample of 317 individuals was carried out in the United States and the Asia region (India, Malaysia, Singapore, and Australia). The research was based on a 26-question survey (see Appendix A) comprised of demographic characteristics and an exploration of personal values (Q19), emotional intelligence (Q20), attitudes toward work (Q21, 22), technology orientations (Q23), leadership orientations (Q24), leadership principles (Q25), and views on the future of leadership (Q26). The study explored the extent to which leadership orientations were changing from the classically held assumptions of authority, power, control and hierarchy toward more collective and connected approaches, thanks to, and with technology and network connectivity.

The study also explored differences in leadership and technology orientations between respondents residing in the United States and those in the Asia region. Initial results from the main study were presented at The Asian Conference on the Social Sciences (ACSS2020) in May 2020 (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020). The researchers focused on analyzing just one independent variable from the main study—geographic location—and one dependent variable—leadership orientations (Q24)—to isolate the areas of significance related to a new collective and connected leadership paradigm. Findings demonstrated that leadership orientations were evolving from the traditional views of power, authority, control, and hierarchy to a system of shared relationships grounded in connecting people, technology, and information sources to create collective influence. One of the significant hypotheses the study validated was that leadership orientations

varied by geographic location. Findings isolated the areas of significance related to a new collective and connected leadership paradigm, through the prism of leadership orientations based on respondents' preferences toward different models of leadership anchored in theory. Respondents from the Asia region displayed statistically significant results than those in the United States, on having much stronger leadership orientations toward more connected and collective forms of leadership. Based on the data set presented in the research (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020), it was possible to classify the leadership orientations expressed by respondents into three groups: (a) traditional, (b) status-quo, and (c) emerging. Traditional leadership orientations were derived from respondents' agreement to leadership orientations anchored on power (leadership as defined through authority, power, control, and hierarchy), on traits (leadership as defined by special personal traits), and on skills (leadership as defined by the right skillset). Status-quo leadership orientations were derived from respondents' agreement to leadership defined through common goals (leadership as the common purposes of leaders and followers) and the quality of the relationship between leaders and followers (leadership as the relationship between the leader-follower; leadership as the quality of the networking relationship of all those involved). Emerging leadership orientations were derived from respondents' agreement to leadership defined through the distribution of influence (leaders and followers share the leadership process; followers can influence the leadership process as much as leaders), connectivity (leadership is a process of connecting people and information sources to create collective influence), and inclusivity (leaders need to empower multiple groups, not just individuals to allow for an inclusive diversity of voices).

This previous quantitative study established validity for the Connectivist Leadership phenomenon at multiple levels: content validity (measuring the key aspects of Connectivist

Leadership through leadership orientations as one dimension), concurrent validity (correlating the results of respondents in the United States versus those in Asia), and construct validity (establishing different views of leadership based on certain criteria). This instrument also presented strong reliability. Cronbach Alpha measured 0.761 with all ten leadership orientations grouped together regardless of primary components. When the data were split between Asia and the United States respondents, Cronbach Alpha measured 0.737 and 0.757 respectfully, showing excellent internal consistency on the instrument.

For this grounded theory study, participants were screened based on a set of standard eligibility criteria (e.g., aged 18 or more), and screening for leadership orientations leveraged the existing questionnaire of the study referenced above (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020). The variable used a Likert 5-point scale with a combination of 10 items based on Q24 of the original research questionnaire (see Appendix A). Items were based on querying respondents about their impressions of leadership. Only individuals who met the inclusion criteria for this study were invited to participate (see screener in Appendix B).

A qualitative instrument was developed to collect data in support of the development of grounded theory. It used elements of the aforementioned quantitative study, allowing the structuring of the instrumentation to be developed ahead of time. A lot of instrumentation is recommended when a study meets the following decision-criteria: concepts have been defined ahead by the researcher, the study is confirmatory and theory-driven, and comparability is important (M. Miles et al., 2020). Data for this study were collected using individual in-depth interviews with a semi-structured interview guide. The data sought to draw on stories recounted by participants with an emphasis on the rich tapestry of their life experiences, their leadership practices, and their associated learning through positive and adverse events. The interview guide

was designed to address the research's purpose, which explored leaders' and followers' integral social relationships and group behaviors in the Asia region, where little exploration of leadership has been documented. The interview questions aligned with the central research question: if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams in the Asia region shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of collective and digitally connected relationships? Three sub-questions guided the inquiry:

- RQ1—What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?
- RQ2—What leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders and teams use?
- RQ3—How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context?

The semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix E) was based on the research questions stated above. It followed the systematic procedures from Strauss and Corbin (1990) to explore: (a) the causal conditions underlying the phenomenon, (b) the phenomenon resulting from those causal conditions, (c) the context that influences strategy development, (d) the intervening conditions, (e) the coping strategies, and (f) the consequences of those strategies.

Design Validity and Reliability

While systematic, qualitative research has been criticized for its lack of scientific discipline. Some scholars have asserted that there is a crisis of legitimization (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) pertaining to the methodology. Therefore, it is essential to address how to develop validity standards and data reliability with qualitative endeavors. Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001) propose a useful synthesis of contemporary viewpoints through an analysis of primary and secondary validity criteria in qualitative research. They identify four primary criteria for

qualitative validity: credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity (Whittemore et al., 2001). Furthermore, secondary validity criteria include explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity. Importantly, examining the extant issues related to qualitative research, much of the contemporary dialogue has shifted to the importance of the researcher's reflexivity and ability to question one's understanding of the topic and interpretation of the ideas discovered during the research. Creswell (2007) summarizes his take on validity as a process of seeking accuracy of the findings, thick descriptions of the data, and closeness of the researcher to participants to "add to the value or accuracy of a study" (p. 207). According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), "grounded theory is generalizable insofar as it specifies conditions that are linked through action/interaction with definite consequences" (p. 15).

In line with this study's philosophical, social constructivist worldview, assumptions, and research interpretivist design, validation and reliability were defined employing an interpretivist perspective, not a quantitative equivalent. This study relied on the naturalistic research approach from Lincoln and Guba (1985), which establishes validity and reliability through the concepts of credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Rather than reliability, which is defined in quantitative research as the ability to replicate a study's research results, this study relied on a more naturalistic axiom such as the dependability of the data, its accuracy, and credibility (E. W. Eisner, 1991). In line with the interpretive research, this study took the position that validity is "a judgment of the trustworthiness or goodness of a piece of research" (Angen, 2000, p. 387). Henceforth, to establish this study's trustworthiness and address the design validity and reliability, the following steps were taken:

- Alignment of the question, data, and method chosen (Richards & Morse, 2013);

- Disclosure of the researcher's experiences and positionality from the start of the study to clarify any biases or prejudices that could affect the study design or the data interpretation (Merriam, 1988);
- Proper documentation of each step of the qualitative analysis (Richards & Morse, 2013), substantive validation (Angen, 2000) and accounting for outcomes (Maxwell, 1992);
- Triangulation of information among different sources (Creswell, 2007) and structural corroboration (E. W. Eisner, 1991);
- Peer review to provide an external check on the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985);
- Member checking to receive feedback from participants on the information collected and correct any misrepresentation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985);
- Theoretical saturation through thematic saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and salience saturation (Weller et al., 2018);
- Ethical validation through the equitable treatment of diverse participant voices (Angen, 2000).

In grounded theory, the standards of validation and evaluation have been further determined according to criteria related to the grounding of the research study and the research process itself (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A grounded theory study must meet six criteria for the empirical grounding of the study:

- Criterion 1: Are the concepts generated?
- Criterion 2: Are the concepts systematically related?

- Criterion 3: Are there many conceptual linkages, and are the categories well developed? Do Categories have conceptual density?
- Criterion 4: Is variation built into the theory?
- Criterion 5: Are the conditions under which variation can be found built into the study and explained?
- Criterion 6: Has the process been taken into account? (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp. 270–271).

Seven evaluative criteria are applicable for researchers to demonstrate the quality of their research process in grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998):

- Criterion 1: How was the original sample selected? On what grounds?
- Criterion 2: What major categories emerged?
- Criterion 3: What were some of the events, incidents, or actions (indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?
- Criterion 4: On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? That is, how did theoretical formulations guide some of the data collection? After the theoretical sampling was done, how representative of the data did the categories prove to be?
- Criterion 5: What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (i.e., among categories), and on what grounds were they formulated and validated?
- Criterion 6: Were there instances in which hypotheses did not explain what was happening in the data? How were these discrepancies account for? Were hypotheses modified?

- Criterion 7: How and why was the core category selected? Was this collection sudden or gradual, and was it difficult or easy? On what grounds were the final analytic decisions made? (pp. 268–269).

In summary, this study addressed validity and reliability issues within the paradigm of qualitative research, with strategies that emphasized the interpretative nature of the study and the use of perspectives from a range of scholars with a postmodern sensibility. It considered validation through a range of lenses, taking into consideration the quality, trustworthiness, ethical, and substantive aspects of the grounded theory process as intended by Strauss and Corbin (1998).

Data Collection

In grounded theory, data collection is guided by the development of emerging theory. For this study, data were collected using formal semi-structured interviews and systematically collected, organized, analyzed, and interpreted to form a new leadership theory. As an active participant in the setting of the research, the researcher took note of the following aspects of positionality: the researcher's social constructivist worldview and affinity for connectivism learning theory; the researcher's use of their professional network for developing the sample of convenience; and the need to reflect on linguistic positionality in the context of this study with Asian participants. The study aimed to create a theoretical framework that can advance the understanding of leadership and foster new leadership capacity in a more collective and connected context in an understudied part of the world.

One of the key characteristics of qualitative data is that it is made rather than collected per se (Richards & Morse, 2013). Therefore, this study built into its research design a variety of data sources to explore the phenomenon from different angles. Data collection commenced upon

successful defense of the principal investigator's research proposal and Pepperdine's IRB approval (July 27, 2020). Data were gathered through in-person semi-structured interviews, conducted with both 29 participants and with 13 experts. The 60-minute interviews were conducted in person by video call and were video recorded. Discussions occurred in English due to IRB restrictions and all participants were screened to have a proficient level of English. All participant and expert identification was anonymized using numbered pseudonyms (i.e., P1 for the first participant and E1 for the first expert).

Participants and experts were contacted either via the professional Linkedin network or directly via a recruitment email (see Appendix C and F respectively), advising that their participation was entirely voluntary and non-paid. The principal investigator placed a follow-up call to confirm the interest of participants and experts in the study and establish the video call interview schedule. Upon their approval to participate in the study, participants and experts were provided a copy of the interview questions and asked to review and sign the informed consent form (see Appendix B). Those who did not sign the consent form prior to the interview were asked to sign it just before the start of the interview. Shortly after the interview completion, participants and experts received a thank you email (see Appendix H) expressing appreciation for their participation. Those who expressed interest were sent their interview transcript allowing them to provide member checking on the information collected and ensure that there was no misrepresentation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data Management

Managing data is a vital part of the research to ensure the data are easily accessible, documented, and complete (M. Miles et al., 2020). The Strauss and Corbin (1998) grounded theory method requires anticipating data management upfront with rigid procedures to follow.

For the raw data collection, this study used field notes and digital video recordings. For the partially processed data, the researcher generated transcripts from each interview. Each discrete data set was labeled indicating the date, source, and participant pseudonym (i.e., P1, or E1) to allow record-keeping into a single master document per Saldaña's recommended qualitative storage approach (M. Miles et al., 2020). Information will be held in a password-protected encrypted laptop computer and stored in a locked desk at the principal investigator's residence. A backup copy of all the files and folders will be stored in the cloud on Pepperdine's password-protected server for five years, after which they will be deleted. Non-electronic notes made on paper or worksheets were systematically scanned and stored electronically, and will be physically destroyed right after the study concludes.

For coding the data, the researcher maintained an electronic indexing system with coding labels using In Vivo Coding, Process Coding, Causation Coding, theoretical memos, and a codebook for generating high-level abstract categories and subcategories, and category resorting and integration. For the analysis, the researcher generated data diagrams to interrelate the categories, test out the relationships across the hypotheses, and determine the best way to visualize the emergence of theory through the integration of the various elements. Finally, the conceptual model (see Figure 1) was translated into the study's theoretical framework (see Figure 15) outlining all the conditions of the phenomenon studied (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Data Analysis

Within qualitative research, grounded theory uses a distinct methodological approach for data analysis. In their account of grounded theory procedures and canons, Corbin and Strauss (1990) detail 11 principles that guide the transformation of data through the analytic process:

1. “Data collection and analysis are interrelated processes.” Data analysis starts as soon as the data is collected;
2. “Concepts are the basic units of analysis.” The researcher conceptualizes raw data into conceptual labels for theory development;
3. “Categories must be developed and related.” Concepts are grouped into high-level abstract categories;
4. “Sampling in grounded theory proceeds on theoretical grounds.” Participants are representative of the studied phenomenon;
5. “Analysis makes use of constant comparisons.” Concepts are labeled, compared, and grouped;
6. “Patterns and variations must be accounted for.” Data are sorted by patterns looking for commonalities and irregularities;
7. “Process must be built into the theory.” The studied phenomenon can be broken down into various steps, stages, or phases of action or interaction;
8. “Writing theoretical memos is an integral part of doing grounded theory.” Memos constitute an analytical tool to manage concepts and high-level categories throughout the research;
9. “Hypotheses about relationships among categories should be developed and verified as much as possible during the research process.” The researcher goes through a constant hypotheses review process until they are representative of the data corpus;
10. “A grounded theorist need not work alone.” Researchers are encouraged to share their concepts with others to test them through constructive criticism and collaborative analysis (Strauss, 1987);

11. “Broader structural conditions must be analysed.” The researcher must uncover the far-reaching conditions impacting the phenomenon not just as contextual background but as a determining factor and integrate them into the theory (pp. 6–11).

The Strauss and Corbin (1998) grounded theory method proposes a structured data analysis approach with a three-stage coding methodology comprised of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The first phase of coding consists of open coding, which is the first level of conceptual analysis (Shank, 2006). It consists of identifying themes from the qualitative material and breaking down the raw data into conceptual labels. This phase functions as an indexing system of concepts (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004) and enables the researcher to group occurrences and relationships into categories and subcategories. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), this stage of the analysis requires a microanalysis approach, with a line-by-line review of the data to generate the initial categories. To facilitate this step, the researcher used In Vivo Coding to “prioritize and honor the participant’s voice” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 65) and aimed to keep concepts in the participant’s original words and thoughts. During the open coding phase, the researcher also made use of theoretical memos to keep track of the researcher’s comments, deliberations, and instincts in the process of conceptual development. Grounded theory uses “a series of cumulative coding cycles and reflective analytic memoing to develop a core category for theory generation” (M. Miles et al., 2020, p. 21).

The second phase of coding is axial coding, where the concepts of open coding are grouped into high-level abstract categories and subcategories, and related to each other. Particular attention is paid to the logic of the categories to determine causality, conditions, context, action, interaction, and consequences. For this step, the researcher used Process Coding as it “extracts participant action/interaction and consequences” (Miles et al., 2020, p. 66).

Causation Coding was also leveraged as this method "extracts attributions or causal beliefs from participant data about not just how but why particular outcomes came about" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 70). The relationships among categories were verified during the research process through a comparative review process leading to category resorting and integration.

The third phase of coding is selective coding, which is "the process by which all categories are unified around a 'core' category, and categories that need further explication are filled-in with descriptive detail" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 14). At this later stage of the research, the core category presents the central phenomenon of the study. The hypotheses that interrelate the categories allow the emergence of theory through the integration of the elements within a broader sociological construct.

In the final phase of selective coding, the researcher developed a theoretical framework (see Figure 15) outlining all the conditions of the phenomenon studied, which is an "analytic device to stimulate analysts thinking about the relationships between macro and micro conditions/consequences both to each other and to the process" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 181). The purpose of this tool is for researchers to map the various influences and impacts of conditions, actions, interactions, and consequences of a phenomenon. The matrix visualizes through inner and outer rings, the individual, group, organizational, community, national, regional, international, and global patterns that should be woven into the analytic story.

Theory Development

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), a theory is developed through conjecture generated from data, through a systematic process of data comparison and verification checks that support the emergence of patterns. "Philosophically speaking, theory cannot simply 'emerge' from data, because interpretation and analysis are always conducted within some pre-existing

conceptual framework brought to the task by the analyst" (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004, p. 628). Henceforth, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) argue that grounded theorists should recognize that the analysis of raw data is somewhat problematic and cannot go uncontested as it involves the researcher's subjectivity. The researcher should use the data to guide the interpretive research process and combine systematic rigor with creativity not to limit theorizing (Layder, 1993). For this reason, some scholars prefer to talk of the generation of theory, rather than discovery per se (Bulmer, 1979; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). This approach more accurately describes both the practical and epistemological realities of the grounded theory, which requires "a constant two-way dialectical process" (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004, p. 629) between the researcher's conceptualization and their data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) contend developing theory is complicated, and they use theorizing to describe the process of "conceiving" and "intuiting ideas" (p. 21).

Strauss lists three core elements essential to the development of theory through grounded theory: (a) theoretical sensitive coding, (b) theoretical sampling, and (c) comparisons between phenomenon and context. Building on this foundation, Pidgeon and Henwood (2004) provide a comprehensive list of seven analytic strategies for the generation of theory:

1. Open-coding schemes;
2. Theoretical sampling;
3. Constant comparison of data sets;
4. Theoretical memoranda;
5. Saturation;
6. Focused coding;
7. Building conceptual models.

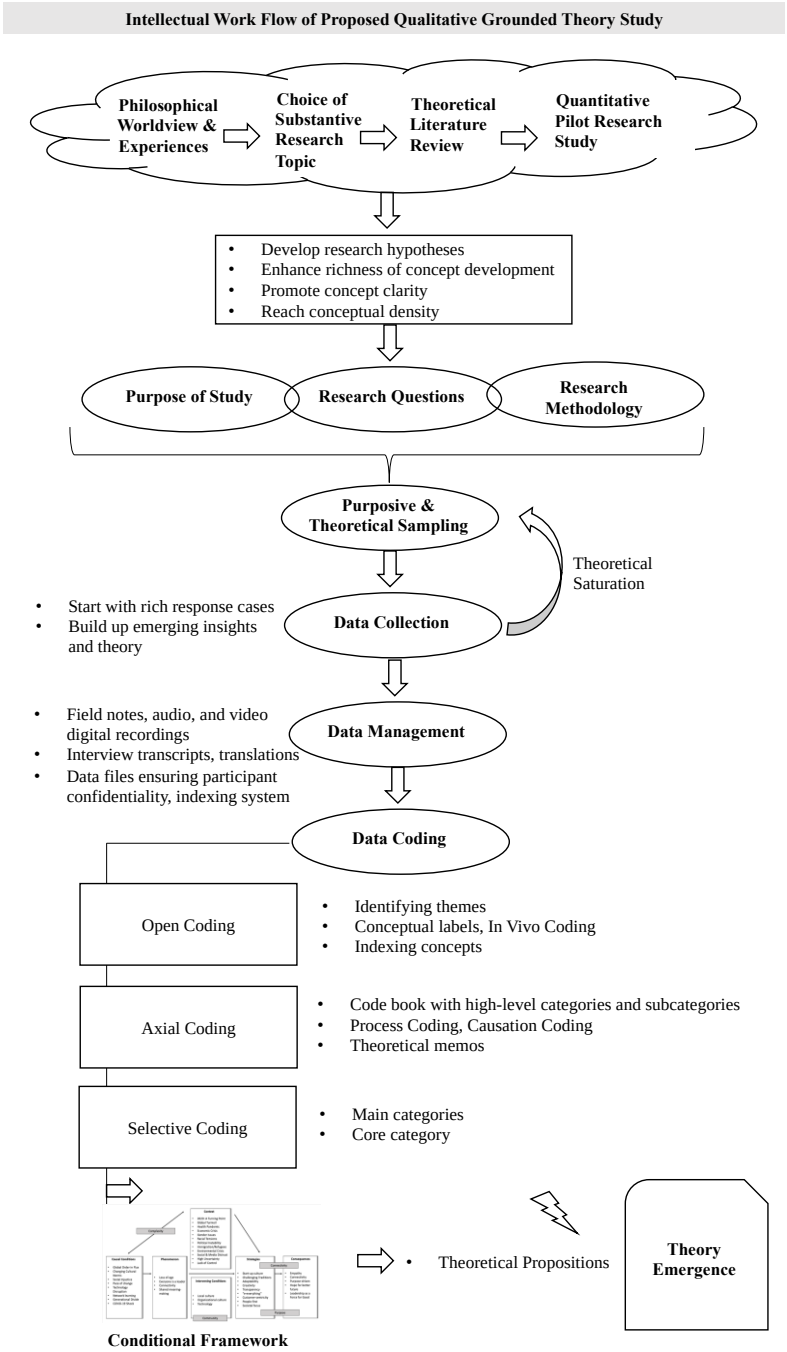
The flow of work in grounded theory allows the researcher to harness their subjective interest in the human experience and turn it into a generalizable theory that will give others "a way of thinking about and studying social reality" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 3). The process of abstraction matures over the entire course of the research from the development of the research questions to the purposive and theoretical sampling, the data collection, management, and coding, all the way through the theoretical propositions and the final theory emergence.

Chapter Summary

This chapter articulated the broader context in which the research study took place, from its social constructivist philosophical underpinnings to the qualitative interpretive research design. Guided by a theoretical framework, this section outlined the inquiry path from the research conceptualization to desired outcomes, acknowledging the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions for the study. The researcher established the methodological purposiveness and congruence of the project by linking the research questions to purposive and theoretical sampling, and by aligning the purpose of the study to a grounded theory approach. This section elucidated how the study addressed validity and reliability issues within the paradigm of qualitative research, with strategies that emphasize the quality, trustworthiness, ethical, and substantive aspects of the grounded theory process as intended by Strauss and Corbin (1998). The entire intellectual journey proposed for this study with the analytical procedures are summarized in a flow chart (see Figure 14).

Figure 14

Flow of Intellectual Work for the Proposed Study



Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides the key findings of this qualitative grounded theory study. It presents the data in the most truthful and unbiased manner possible without judgment, evaluation, or interpretation. The research findings demonstrate the systematic and careful application of the research method selected. The analytic picture aims to clearly and representatively share participants' voices, making visible the connections between the interview questions and the descriptions and interrelating themes provided by the individual responses. Headings for this chapter include Chapter Overview, Context, Study Participants, Presentation of Key Findings, and Chapter Summary.

Context

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory study was to explore a new form of leadership emerging within the Asia region by examining the lived experiences of individuals who lead and are led in this region. The central research question for this inquiry was, "if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?" Three sub-questions guided the inquiry:

- RQ1—What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?
- RQ2—What leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders and teams use?
- RQ3—How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context?

Based on these three sub-questions, fifteen semi-structured interview questions were developed to guide the discussion with participants. These interview questions (IQ1 through IQ15) included four sub-questions pertaining to Research Question 1 ("What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?)":

- IQ1: What leadership challenges are keeping leaders and their teams up at night?
- IQ2: What are the main reasons for these challenges?
- IQ3: What impact, if any, has the global pandemic had on leadership?
- IQ4: How would you describe leadership today globally versus ten years ago?

Four sub-questions related to Research Question 2 ("What leadership approaches and paradigms do leaders and teams use?"):

- IQ5: How would you describe how teams work together nowadays?
- IQ6: How would you characterize relationships among team members?
- IQ7: What are the main reasons explaining the way leadership operates in your team?
- IQ8: What are the implications of these team relationships?

Four sub-questions supported Research Question 3 ("How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia-Pacific context?"):

- IQ9: How would you contrast leadership approaches in Asia versus other parts of the world?
- IQ10: What role does culture at large play in regard to leadership?
- IQ11: What role does organizational culture play in regard to leadership?
- IQ12: What role does technology play in regard to leadership?

Three sub-questions helped to close the discussion and provide a moment of reflection for participants:

- IQ13: What is your outlook on leadership in the future?
- IQ14: How would you describe leadership in ten years from now?
- IQ15: As you reflect on what's ahead, what does leadership in Asia mean to you?

Experts were guided through the same questions, asking them to comment on how they viewed these issues from the lens of leaders and followers. An additional ice-breaking question was asked at the beginning of the discussion to situate the experts' domain of expertise and place their answers within their specific knowledge area.

Study Participants

The study sample consisted of 42 individuals, 29 participants, and 13 experts. All participants fit the below screening criteria:

- Aged 18 years or older;
- Resided full time in a country within the Asia region;
- Were currently employed (full or part-time);
- Were employed by a private company (non-state enterprise);
- Worked for a company that had offices in the Asia region that encouraged the use of networking technologies in the practice of daily work (such as the internet, intranet, social tools, IM platforms), and promoted collective ways of working (e.g., agile, teamwork, scrum teams);
- Were leaders of teams from various sizes (under ten to more than 100 people) or people with no direct reports;
- Fit within the status-quo or emerging leadership orientation category; and
- Had offered their consent to participate in the study and met all the screening criteria.

For participants, the study utilized a within-case sampling strategy where the sample was nested in the Asia region against two major cultural clusters, Confucian Asia and Southern Asia, as defined by the GLOBE study (House & Javidan, 2004). A total of 15 participants fit within the Confucian Asia cluster, five from China and ten from Singapore. Within Southern Asia, a total of ten participants were recruited, six from India and four from Indonesia. Finally, a total of four non-Asian respondents (expatriates) based in Asia were recruited, one from China and Indonesia, and two from Singapore respectively. The sample was evenly balanced to avoid bias with an almost equal number of females (15) and males (14) and a good representation of ages with an equal balance of participants aged 40-49 years old and 50-59 (twelve individuals respectively), some younger participants aged 25-39 (four), and one person over the age of 60. The sample included an extensive list of various types of organizations and a wide range of industries providing a great diversity of voices from participants in categories ranging from aerospace to advertising, technology, management consulting, computer software, finance, agriculture, media, apparel, design, wellness, personal care, executive recruiting, and real estate.

Table 7 provides an overview of each participant detailing their key demographics (age, race/ethnicity, nationality, and gender), location within the Asia region, employment position, and industry. Each participant was classified under a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality, with a number representing their interview order. This study's instrumentation was based on a previous quantitative descriptive correlational study that isolated the criteria underpinning the Connectivist Leadership theory under investigation (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020).

Table 7

Overview of Participants by Geographic Area

Overview of Participants by Geographic Area							
ID	**Industry/Category**	**Position**	**Location**	**Gender**	**Nationality**	**Race / Ethnicity**	**Age**
Singapore-based Asian Participants (10)							
#4	Aerospace and Defence	Government Affairs, SEA, Pacific & S. Korea	Singapore	Female	Korean	Korean	25-39
#5	Advertising	CEO	Singapore	Female	Filipino	Filipino	40-49
#6	Technology Strategy	Partner, Asia Pacific	Singapore	Female	Singaporean	Singaporean	40-49
#8	Global Management Consulting	Expert Principal, APAC Head of Digital	Singapore	Male	Australian	Chinese	25-39
#10	Management Consulting	Founder & CEO	Singapore	Female	Singaporean	Singaporean	50-59
#14	Marketing Consultancy	Principal	Singapore	Female	Singaporean	Chinese	50-59
#15	Computer Software	General Manager, SEA	Singapore	Female	Malaysian	Chinese	40-49
#19	Global Investment Fund	Director, Public Affairs, Sustainability & Stewardship	Singapore	Female	Singaporean	Chinese	40-49
#22	Agricultural Chemicals	Head of Government Affairs and Sustainability, Asia Pacific	Singapore	Female	Filipino	Filipino	50-59
#27	Trade Association	Assistant Director-General	Singapore	Male	Singaporean	Chinese	40-59
China-based Asian Participants (5)							
#2	Media	Managing Partner, APAC	Shanghai	Female	Taiwan	Chinese	50-59
#11	Apparel	Marketing Leader, APAC	Beijing	Female	Chinese	Chinese	50-59
#16	Technology Services	Chief Digital Officer	Hong Kong	Female	Chinese	Chinese	40-49
#20	Technology Platform	Chief Marketing Officer	Shanghai	Male	Canadian	Chinese	50-59
#26	Private Foundation	Head	Shanghai	Female	British	Chinese	40-49
India-based Asian Participants (6)							
#3	Venture Capital	Advisor/Investor	Mumbai	Male	American	Indian	40-49
#7	Advertising	CEO	Mumbai	Male	Indian	Indian	50-59
#9	Creative Consulting	Consultant	Mumbai	Male	Indian	Indian	50-59
#17	Design Agency	Managing Director	Mumbai	Female	Indian	Indian	40-49
#23	Wellness	Vice President of Marketing	Gurgaon	Female	Indian	Indian	40-49
#24	Advertising	Managing Director	Mumbai	Male	Indian	Indian	50-59
Indonesia-based Asian Participants (4)							
#12	Content Production	CEO	Jakarta	Male	Indonesian	Chinese	40-49
#18	Technology Platform	Country Marketing Head	Jakarta	Male	Dutch	Eurasian	25-39
#28	Personal Care	Chief Growth and Digital Transformation Officer	Jakarta	Female	Indonesian	Indonesian	50-59
#29	Technology Platform	Group Marketing Officer	Jakarta	Male	Indonesian	Indonesian	50-59
Asian-based Non-Asian Participants (4)							
#1	Consulting Practice	Vice Chairman & Chief Strategist	China	Male	British	Caucasian	50-59
#13	Talent Recruiting	CEO	Singapore	Male	British	Caucasian	40-49
#21	Technology Platform	Co-founder & Chief Growth Officer	Jakarta	Male	Polish	Caucasian	25-39
#25	Real Estate Group	Senior Vice President	Singapore	Male	American	African-American	60+

For this grounded theory study, participants were screened based on a set of standard eligibility criteria (e.g., aged 18 and above), and for status-quo and emerging leadership orientations determined in the previous study (see screener in Appendix D). Respondents who exhibited traditional leadership orientations were screened out and excluded from the study. Status-quo leadership orientations were derived from respondents' agreement to leadership defined through common goals (leadership as the common purposes of leaders and followers) and the quality of the relationship between leaders and followers (leadership as the relationship between the leader-follower; leadership as the quality of the networking relationship of all those involved). Emerging leadership orientations were derived from respondents' agreement to leadership defined through the distribution of influence (leaders and followers share the leadership process; followers can influence the leadership process as much as leaders), connectivity (leadership is a process of connecting people and information sources to create collective influence), and inclusivity (leaders need to empower multiple groups, not just individuals to allow for an inclusive diversity of voices).

Table 8 provides an overview of these leadership orientations classified by each geographic cultural cluster. Mean scores were calculated based on the screening question SQ11 (see Appendix D), deriving means from the Likert 5-point scale for each participant cohort against each leadership orientation. Participants from the Confucian Asia cluster all identified more strongly with emerging leadership orientations. Both Singapore-based and China-based participants agreed that "leadership is a process of connecting people and information sources to create collective influence" with means of 4.6 and 4.8, respectively.

Table 8

Mean Scores on Leadership Orientations by Geographic Cultural Cluster

Mean Scores on Leadership Orientations by Geographic Cultural Cluster

	Confucian Asia		Southern Asia		
Leadership Orientation	**Singapore-based Asian Participants**	**China-based Asian Participants**	**India-based Asian Participants**	**Indonesia-based Asian Participants**	**Asian-based Non-Asian Participants**
Status Quo Leadership Orientations					
Leadership is about the common purposes of leaders and followers	4.2	4.6	4.0	3.7	3.5
The key to successful leadership is the relationship between the leader-follower	3.2	4.2	4.0	4.7	
The key to successful leadership is the quality of the networking relationships of all those involved	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.0	
Emerging Leadership Orientations					
Followers can influence the leadership process as much as leaders	4.4	4.2	3.8	4.2	4.2
Leaders and followers share in the leadership process	4.1	4.2	**4.5**	3.7	
Leadership is a process of connecting people and information sources to create collective influence	**4.6**	**4.8**	4.3	4.0	3.7
Leaders need to empower multiple groups, not just individuals, to allow for an inclusive diversity of voices	4.5	4.6	4.2	4.5	**4.5**

Participants from the Southern Asia cluster were mixed; India-based participants agreed more strongly with emerging leadership orientations, specifically that "leaders and followers share in the leadership process" with a mean of 4.5. Indonesia-based participants were more aligned with status-quo leadership orientations indicating that they believed "the key to successful leadership is the relationship between the leader-follower" with a mean of 4.7. Non-Asian participants were aligned with emerging leadership orientations stating that "leaders need to empower multiple groups, not just individuals, to allow for an inclusive diversity of voices" with a mean of 4.5.

The initial phase of research on the topic of Connectivist Leadership (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020) also identified specific personal values and characteristics of emotional intelligence associated with more collective and connected leadership approaches; thus, this qualitative study collected participant information on these two aspects in the screening process for record-keeping. Table 9 summarizes the personal values self-reported by participants by each geographic cultural cluster. Mean scores were calculated based on the screening question SQ9 (see Appendix D), deriving means from the Likert 5-point scale for each participant cohort against each personal value. Against the twelve values participants were asked to rate based on their importance level in their value set, clear patterns emerged. All participants consistently rated the value of "power" the lowest. All respondents also rated three other values particularly highly: (a) collaboration, which was rated as a very important value by Singapore, China, and Indonesia-based respondents; (b) connectedness, rated as a very important value by Singapore and Indonesia-based respondents; and (c) openness, rated very important by India and Indonesia-based respondents. While non-Asian expatriate participants also rated these values highly, their top-ranked value was "diversity."

It was striking to see how participants' personal values were closely related to their leadership orientations. Both Singapore-based and China-based participants agreed, "leadership is a process of connecting people and information sources to create collective influence," which aligned well with their preference for collaboration and connectedness. Meanwhile, India-based participants agreed that "leaders and followers share in the leadership process," consistent with their strong preferences for openness, collaboration, and connectedness. Indonesia-based participants who believed "the key to successful leadership is the relationship between the leader-follower" also favored collaboration, connectedness, and openness as their top values. Finally, Asian-based expatriates chose a definition of leadership that was quite different from that of Asian respondents. This definition was anchored in empowerment and inclusivity—"leaders need to empower multiple groups, not just individuals, to allow for an inclusive diversity of voices"—which was aligned with their top-ranked personal value of "diversity."

Table 9

Mean Scores on Personal Values by Geographic Cultural Cluster

Mean Scores on Personal Values by Geographic Cultural Cluster

	Confucian Asia		Southern Asia		
Personal Values	**Singapore-based Asian Participants**	**China-based Asian Participants**	**India-based Asian Participants**	**Indonesia-based Asian Participants**	**Asian-based Non-Asian Participants**
Power	**3.7**	**3.4**	**2.8**	**2.0**	**2.5**
Control	4.1	**3.4**	4.0	3.6	3.7
Success	4.5	**4.6**	4.3	4.3	4.5
Achievement	4.8	**4.6**	4.3	**5.0**	4.2
Status	3.6	**3.4**	2.8	2.3	3.0
Authority	4.3	4	3.3	3.0	2.5
Autonomy	4.3	4.4	3.7	4.6	4.5
Connectedness	**4.8**	4.4	4.7	**5.0**	4.5
Diversity	4.7	4.4	4.7	4.6	**4.7**
Collaboration	**4.8**	**4.6**	4.7	**5.0**	4.5
Openness	4.7	4.4	**4.8**	**5.0**	4.5
Kindness	4.6	**4.6**	4.3	4.3	4.2

Table 10 summarizes the emotional intelligence mean scores of participants by geographic cultural cluster. Mean scores were calculated based on the screening question SQ10 (see Appendix D), deriving means from the Likert 5-point scale for each participant cohort against agreement statements related to emotional intelligence. This question was initially developed for the quantitative survey (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020) based on an existing EQ instrument from the *Harvard Business Review* (McKee, 2015). For this qualitative study, six statements were selected from the original survey comprised of 25 questions with three questions used to evaluate participants' understanding of self and three questions to appraise their emotional intelligence toward others.

Table 10

Mean Scores on Emotional Intelligence by Geographic Cultural Cluster

Mean Scores on EQ by Geographic Cultural Cluster

	Confucian Asia		Southern Asia		
Emotional Intelligence	**Singapore-based Asian Participants**	**China-based Asian Participants**	**India-based Asian Participants**	**Indonesia-based Asian Participants**	**Asian-based Non-Asian Participants**
Inner-Directed	**3.7**	**4.2**	**3.8**	**4.2**	**3.25**
• Staying calm	4	4	4.2	3.6	4.5
• Controlling impulses	3.3	4.2	3.0	4.3	4.2
• Mood change	4	4.6	4.2	4.6	4.2
Outer-Directed	**4**	**4.4**	**4.3**	**4.3**	**3.3**
• Others' viewpoints	3.8	4.4	4.5	3.0	4.0
• Others' experiences	4	**4.6**	3.7	**5.0**	4.2
• Others' behaviors	**4.3**	4.4.	**4.7**	**5.0**	**5.0**

All participants consistently rated the emotional intelligence statements toward others higher than those toward self, indicating a high degree of social skills. Within the ways of

relating to and managing others, the statement that received the highest agreement mean score was “I try to understand why people behave the way they do,” which is consistent with an awareness of other’s feelings, needs, and concerns in line with the demonstration of empathy (Goleman, 1998b).

In addition to participants, the study sample also included thirteen experts to enrich the data corpus and strengthen the analytic findings (M. Miles et al., 2020). These experts were classified into three groups, aligned to the review of literature, and included:

- Experts in learning;
- Experts in leadership and organization design; and
- Experts in Asian leadership.

Table 11 provides an overview of each expert detailing their key demographics (age, race/ethnicity, nationality, and gender), location, current position, and expertise area. Each expert was classified under a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality, with a number representing their interview order. Many experts who agreed to be interviewed for this study were highly respected voices in their field including researchers, authors, and academics. They comprised a rich sample from seven different markets around the world, representing nine nationalities and eleven Ph.Ds. These experts provided invaluable additional data that enhanced the study findings through data comparison, validation, and the process of interpretation. The interviewed experts helped identify, develop and relate concepts from the raw data, gave theoretical meaning to the lived experiences of participants, and provided new language for theorizing concepts and their relationships.

Table 11

Overview of Experts by Area of Expertise

Overview of Experts Interviewed by Area of Expertise Aligned to the Review of Literature

ID	Expertise Area	Position	Location	Gender	Nationality	Race / Ethnicity	Age
Expertise Area: Learning							
#4 PhD.	Connectivism & Leadership	Author and Editor, Leadership Consultant	United Kingdom	Male	British	Caucasian	50-59
#7 PhD.	Networked Learning	Professor and Director of Learning, University of Wollongong	Australia	Male	Dutch	Caucasian	40-49
#10 PhD.	Co-Creator of Connectivism	National Research Council Canada	Canada	Male	Canadian	Caucasian	50-59
Expertise Area: Leadership & Organization Design							
#1 PhD.	Global Leadership	Adjunct Professor, National University	USA	Female	American	Sri Lankan	25-39
#6 PhD.	Global Leadership	Adjunct Professor, INSEAD Business School	United Kingdom	Male	Swedish	Caucasian	50-59
#13 PhD.	Global Leadership	Chief Cognitive Officer	Hong Kong	Male	Australian	Caucasian	40-49
#8 M.L.	Organization Design	Angel Investor, Senior Advisor in Asia & Europe	Sweden	Male	German	Caucasian	50-59
#11	Organization Design	Enterprise Coach for Business Agility	Singapore	Female	Australian	Caucasian	40-49
#12 PhD.	Organization Design	President & CEO of Buurtzorg Asia	Hong Kong	Male	German	Caucasian	50-59
Expertise Area: Asia							
#2 PhD.	Asian Consumer Behavior	Professor of Marketing, Singapore Management University (SMU)	Singapore	Male	Singaporean	Indian	40-49
#3 PhD.	Business in Asia	Associate Professor, Management Department at ESSEC School of Business	Singapore	Male	Indian	Indian	40-49
#5 PhD.	Leadership in Asia, Diversity & Inclusion	Author, Leadership Speaker Founder & CEO at The Horan Group	Singapore	Female	American	Caucasian	50-59
#9 PhD.	Asian Consumer Behavior	Deputy Head of Department Associate Professor of Marketing at National University of Singapore (NUS)	Singapore	Female	Singaporean	Chinese	40-49

Presentation of Key Findings

Summary of Meta Themes from Participants and Experts

Complexity. This study presented a very definitive narrative arc from both participants and experts. The first research question, which asked, "what challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?" provided data on the context of the phenomenon and its causal conditions. It functioned as act one, setting the scene and explaining the seeds of conflict. The first interview sub-question IQ1 ("what leadership challenges are keeping leaders and their teams up at night?") revealed a rapidly evolving environmental context. Participants and experts described the world in a deep state of flux, with 2020 marking a turning point of global turmoil and instability. Disruption and uncertainty were creating what some participants equated to a vacuum of leadership, and others a full-on crisis. Experts tended to go further, indicating a regression of leadership into more authoritative and controlling approaches. This new environment was bringing out strong feelings of anxiety, anger, and mental health issues challenging leaders in completely new ways and forcing them to get involved in much more personal and human resources issues than what they were traditionally accustomed to. The second interview sub-question IQ2 ("what are the main reasons for these challenges?") unearthed the causal conditions driving the dynamics of the context. It revealed the underlying structural conditions that have been at work for decades (i.e., global order in flux, changing cultural norms, social injustice, the pace of change, technology disruption, and generational divide) that were compounding the leadership challenges leaders and teams experienced. The third interview sub-question IQ3 ("what impact, if any, has the global pandemic had on leadership?") provided a definitive answer to the magnitude of the global pandemic; COVID-19 was seen as an unexpected shock of gigantic proportion described as a reset moment putting into question the

fragility of humanity, the very existence of most businesses, and an inflection point for leadership. The fourth interview sub-question IQ4 ("how would you describe leadership today globally versus ten years ago?") garnered data that painted a clear picture of the profound transformation of leadership on many levels: the context of leadership, its aims, the process it followed, the relationships involved, the structure it relied on, and how to measure it. Participants and experts agreed: leadership ten years ago versus today was an entirely different concept, and the relationship between ontological leadership entities and outcomes could be placed on a spectrum of opposite polarities. In summary, the open and axial data codes pointed to the selective theme of complexity as the over-arching theme to answer the first research question on leaders' challenges in the Asia region when leading teams today.

Connectivity and purpose. The second research question, which asked, "what leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders and teams use?" offered insight into the strategies used by leaders and followers to manage the challenges they faced and the consequences of their actions. This question provided act two of the story, explaining how leaders and teams were growing and changing in response to conflicts and circumstances. The fifth interview sub-question IQ5 ("how would you describe how teams work together nowadays?") presented the specific ways in which Asian leaders were working with their teams, revealing that they were breaking traditional ways of working, investing in team communication, and developing a culture of always-on learning. The leadership approaches that were described emphasized a team-centric way of working in marked contrast to leader-centric approaches that were being deliberately retired. The sixth interview sub-question IQ6 ("how would you characterize relationships among team members?") painted a picture of workplaces where everyone had to show up differently based on trust, collaboration, and greater

transparency. Experts particularly called out the need for greater adaptability and explained how learning was being developed in new unstructured, and opportunistic ways, within and outside the workplace. The seventh interview sub-question IQ7 ("what are the main reasons explaining the way leadership operates in your team?") highlighted the changing nature of leadership based on greater connectivity and purpose. Participants provided very consistent accounts of how leaders were becoming more people-focused with a new emphasis on emotional intelligence and the ability to nurture others, have empathy, demonstrate humility, vulnerability, compassion, and customer-centricity. Beyond work performance, teams were described as seeking a higher purpose based on more ethical concerns, an interest for societal benefits, and a focus on inclusion and diversity. The eighth interview sub-question IQ8 ("what are the implications of these team relationships?") elicited the consequences of these new dynamics. Participants and experts noted changes at three levels: (a) the changing role of followers becoming leaders in their own right, (b) the changing role of leaders as connectors of information, people, and emotion, and (c) the changing role of organizations, moving toward network structures. In summary, the open and axial data codes revealed two selective themes—connectivity and purpose—to answer the second research question describing the leadership approaches and paradigms that leaders and teams used when leading teams in Asia.

Community. The third research question, which asked, "how do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context?" presented the intervening conditions related to the phenomenon. This question was analyzed as act three, helping to further explain respondents' problems and how they were resolving them. The ninth interview sub-question IQ9 ("how would you contrast leadership approaches in Asia versus other parts of the world?") presented a tale of two worlds colliding. Participants and experts described how

leadership in Asia was transitioning from traditional hierarchical heroic-centric paradigms (based on tradition, order, consensus, face, compliance, and obedience) to newer, more collective, and digitally connected approaches (based on the start-up model, experimentation, creative consultation, shared values, and common purpose). The impact of this transition was deemed necessary to compete in today's world and attract new talent. Yet, the transition was also described as disruptive, creating tension across generations. The tenth interview sub-question IQ10 ("What role does culture at large play in regard to leadership") demonstrated the significance of national culture in setting leadership expectations and practices. All Asian participants, regardless of their cultural cluster and country of origin, indicated that the common ground in Asia was the family unit's primacy. Family culture shaped how leaders constructed their teams, their work practices, and even their careers, taking people along with them across jobs. The family's construct also dictated why leadership in Asia was inherently collective, governed by trusted non-confrontational relationships, and concerned with group outcomes versus individual ones and a strong focus on community. Furthermore, participants described how the definition of success was evolving with changing cultural expectations and gender roles in Asian societies. The eleventh interview sub-question IQ11 ("What role does organizational culture play in regard to leadership?") took a more in-depth look at culture within the organizational setting. Participants agreed that company cultures played a significant role in setting leadership approaches with a marked difference across local, regional, and international companies. Companies that were family-owned were seen as more traditional and likely to follow a leader-centric paradigm anchored on the original founder and be averse to change. However, participants noted that on the whole, the Millennials generation and technology were exerting pressure on all organizations to move to more distributed leadership models.

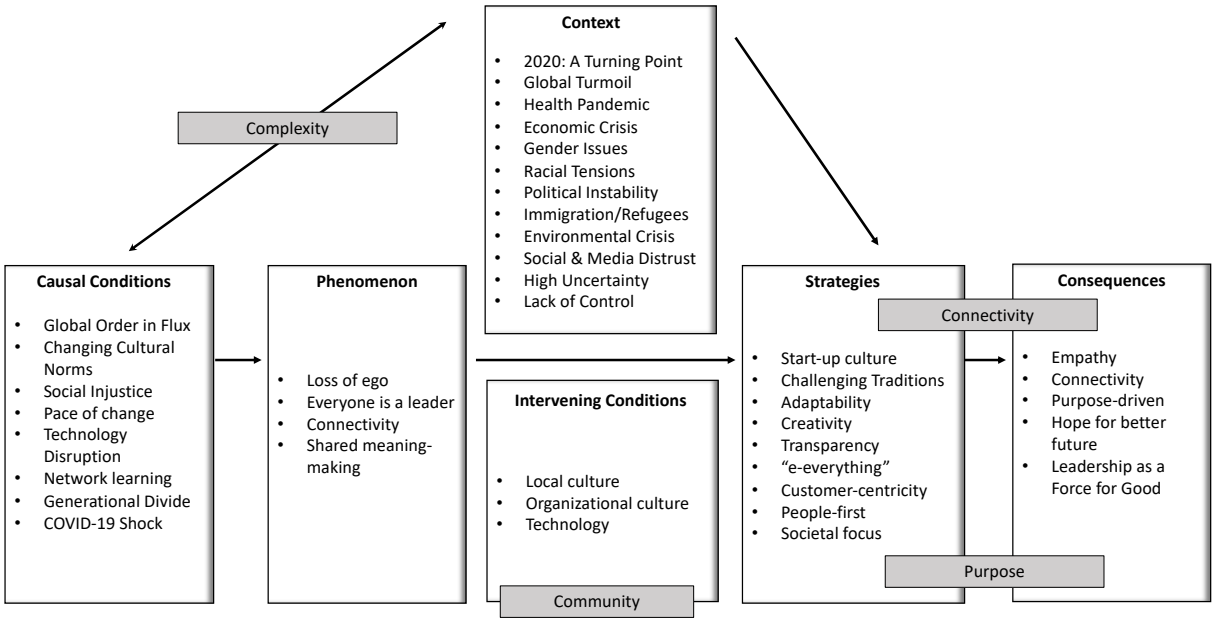
Throughout the conversation, participants addressed the twelfth interview sub-question IQ12 ("What role does technology play in regard to leadership?") without even been asked. Technology was described as having a profound impact on the way leaders and teams work with an acceleration effect since the global pandemic. Technology was seen as foundational for any business activity, enabling new business ideas and models. Technology's impact was pervasive in providing access to information, creating efficiency, an aid to decision-making, allowing collaboration, and creating deeper connections across people and time zones. At the same time, participants noted that technology had its limits and could introduce negative aspects: it could concentrate power and influence if not well managed, create weak ties, inhibit creativity, reduce spontaneity, and bring about distractions and exhaustion. On the whole, technology was seen as charting a new path for leadership with more democratized information, connected people, and virtual leadership. In summary, the open and axial data codes revealed one common selective theme—community—to answer this third research question on the role of culture and technology, which were both seen as highly influential in the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context.

New leadership era. Finally, to close the conversation, participants and experts were asked to reflect on the future of leadership. This was a means to piece together the final understanding of the phenomenon studied and provide resolution. The thirteenth interview sub-question IQ13 ("What is your outlook on leadership in the future?") revealed that participants had a positive outlook for leadership and saw an opportunity for substantial renewal. The fourteenth interview sub-question IQ14 ("How would you describe leadership in ten years from now?") provided a very rich set of data on the many areas being considered for change: new organizational structures, new ways of hiring, new ways of developing talent, new ways of

evaluating people, new reward systems, and new areas of focus for leadership. The 15 and final interview sub-question IQ15 ("As you reflect on what's ahead, what does leadership in Asia mean to you?") opened up new perspectives for leadership. Asian participants and experts noted that leadership was shaping up to become more representative of local culture, of gender, and a newfound Asian confidence. They indicated the significant opportunities they saw for this part of the world to lead a new leadership era and be at the forefront of a new kind of leadership that would be more collective, digitally connected, and purposeful.

Figure 15

Theoretical Model for the Study's Meta Themes



Note. Adapted from "A Grounded Theory Study: Constructions of Survival and Coping by Women Who Have Survived Childhood Sexual Abuse," by S. Morrow and M. Smith, 2007, *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 42,* p. 24-33 (https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.42.1.24). Copyright 1995 by American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

Together, the three research questions and the 15 interview sub-questions helped explore the underlying elements of a new leadership phenomenon. A theoretical model for answering the central research question, "if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their

understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?" is provided in Figure 15, which proposes a visual summary of the meta themes from all the interviews and their interconnections.

Findings from Research Question 1

Disruption. The first research question asked, "What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?" To answer this question, participants and experts first provided an overview of the rapidly evolving environmental context surrounding them, characterized by disruption, which was the first axial code resulting from the open codes (see Figure 16). The world was portrayed in a deep state of flux, with 2020 marking a turning point:

- "Everything changed within the last year; in fact, 2020 is really the date where people's understanding of the world and their part in it has changed; let's call it a thunderbolt year" (Participant #1).
- "This year is a deep spiritual and cultural reckoning for the world" (Participant #5).
- "I don't think ever before, there has been such pressure put on leadership" (Participant #7).
- "I don't think we will ever come back to normal again" (Participant #13).
- "You know, I think everyone in their heart wants to overcome this and get back to normal. But sometimes we know it may not be. Maybe we have to adjust to the new normal" (Participant #16).

Participants decried the global turmoil characterized by a global economic crisis, environmental disasters, gender issues, racial tensions, political instability, and social media distrust:

- “This is the first time in my life that I feel it’s so critical to follow the news every morning. It’s like a black swan every day. You just don’t ever think about something like this would ever happen in your lifetime” (Participant #20).
- “Right now, the world is in such turmoil with the pandemic and what we have going on with all this social injustice and advocates and scholars who are speaking out” (Expert #1).
- “The world is facing some existential issues that for the first time in a couple of generations have forced us to actually consider our value system more deeply, like our environmental impact and diversity” (Expert #6).

The causal conditions for world disruption were twofold: (a) underlying structural conditions and (b) the recent global pandemic. First, participants and experts noted a number of factors that had been in motion for decades. The pace of change was accelerating:

- “How fast are you adapting to change? It’s a constant question” (Participant #9).
- “There’s no longer long-term planning. You cannot plan. It’s change all the time” (Participant #16).
- “The main challenge that we face is the team structure and the ways of working, which become obsolete every six to 12 months” (Participant #21).
- “Organizations need to be much more agile and flat in their decision making. It’s meant to be faster that way, right, to be able to respond to competitive threats or new trends that are happening faster and it’s not industry specific, it’s everywhere in the world” (Participant #22).

- “In the last 20 years, of course, the world has become far more disrupted. What’s happened since then are two things: the world accelerated the way that business needed to move and more agility was needed with a globalized world” (Expert #6).

Participants noted that technology disruption was a daily reality fostering change:

- “The disruption that technology has brought is huge and it’s happening across industry. So that is one huge leadership challenge” (Participant #9).
- “Technology and developers are changing things and the market so quickly” (Participant #11).
- “A big challenge that I’m facing is the digital transformation; it’s a space that we’re all trying to catch up in. The degree of understanding of the space is very different across different people” (Participant #28).
- “Many people have a very primitive understanding of what we mean by digital, so digital means different things to different people. If you are not embracing this kind of technology, then there’s no way you can blossom and adapt to the change” (Participant #16).
- “AI and technology are really changing the world and challenging our former models of leadership” (Participant #25).
- “In the past, we didn’t have such global connectivity. Now with technology we express ourselves through so many online platforms, there are more opinions. We now have to consider everyone’s principles when leading” (Expert #1).

Social injustice was rampant based on wealth inequality:

- “The biggest problem globally is poverty, you know the income gap, with rich people holding too much global wealth. So, the biggest challenge I will say for leadership is searching for a better society and solve the income gap” (Participant #26).
- “From a global perspective, I think there’s a rise of social inequality with the haves and the have nots. And I believe that what I’m seeing is this groundswell of people who are saying, I’m going to do something. I’m going to take action, because whoever is in charge is not taking action” (Expert #5).
- “I think there’s been huge polarization whether you look at income or the distribution of wealth over the last 50 years. It’s incredible. And that has created the grounds for people to gravitate to leadership with the stereotypical strong men, like Trump or Modi” (Expert #2).

Changing cultural norms were placing leadership at the heart of societal issues:

- “The whole world has a far-reaching impact on leadership and multinational leaders need to be cognizant of not just generating profits. They need to care about the environment, care about the people, the community, and all that cultural sensitivity is even more important with all these geopolitical tensions” (Participant #19).
- “You haven’t necessarily been schooled in that way of dealing with the world and dealing with people in a socio psychological sense, nor do we have the right role models around us. The visible role models of leadership are very much retrograde. And so, the challenge that many leaders have faced over the last 20 years is to cede control, to let go of the reins to give people autonomy in order to facilitate happier, healthier organizations” (Expert #6).

A major structural issue faced by leaders was the generational divide across generations, which was seen as particularly acute in Asia due to the youth of the population in most countries:

- "What's different is the workforce right now. Because if you look at all the demography of the population, especially in emerging markets, it's a young population. And sooner or later, the magnitude of the size of the Millennials who come into the workplace will become the majority workforce and this is becoming a new norm for all leadership" (Participant #12).
- "There are multi-generational workforce pressures and managing the expectations of different groups of stakeholders" (Participant #27).
- "I think there's a generation gap. Because when the younger people come into the workplace, they have a different expectation of a leader and you couldn't actually bridge that gap" (Participant #6).
- "The impact of young people on leadership is huge. Anyone born after 1996 has a very different view of leadership and a very different view of diversity and inclusion. And in Asia you've got countries that have a very large population of young workers, right. So, Vietnam, Indonesia, China, India. We also have Japan. Maybe not in such a large percentage, but you do have a significant shift happening in Japan with that younger group called the 'Satori' generation. They see the world differently and interact with technology differently" (Expert #5).
- "In the Indian context of hierarchy and privilege, they don't see why these younger people are becoming directors in three or five-year's time when it took them 20 years" (Participant #17).

- “There’s a personal challenge and tension between the older generation and the younger one, but they have both a lot to learn from each other” (Participant #23).
- “What Millennials are doing is they’re creating discomfort. I see it because some of the conversations I’m having with senior leaders, they invariably always come back to a kind of generational conflict. If you give Millennials an idea or a direction or an influence, they immediately start to challenge it. And that’s changing leadership and creating a crisis of confidence in senior leaders” (Expert #4).

Millennials were seen to have different values and mindsets such as autonomy, independence and being quite outspoken due to their exposure to social media:

- “What is clearly a massive reason for change is the Millennial generation coming into the workforce and with that comes a different mindset, different expectations of their career and their role in the world” (Participant #8).
- “I think Millennials today have grown up living through technology and they’re really quite independent particularly like in China and Asia. They’re basically from the one child policy and they’re thinking how they want to do things the way they want” (Participant #11).
- “They’re more exposed to media of different sorts and to technology that enables very democratic ways of working” (Participant #10).
- “The Millennials and young people are more aware of the issues of our times because of information access and their constant consumption of social media” (Expert #3).
- “We brought them up to be have confidence, have autonomy, you know, to be able to question things, to be curious, so that’s what they’re doing and it’s challenging leaders” (Participant #6).

- “In Indian culture, often people don’t speak up because of consensus. The younger guys are not afraid and are charged up with ideas. They have this sense of confidence and don’t care ruffling feathers” (Participant #23).
- “They are not achievement oriented like us. They want to express themselves, put videos on TikToK, be different, be recognized” (Participant #20).

As a result, Millennials’ expectations of work and leadership were unique, requiring more communication and transparency and less hierarchy and control:

- “They’ve gotten different ways of expressing themselves and don’t expect the same from the leadership. They expect you to communicate more and share where you’re coming from” (Participant #14).
- “I think the Millennials have very different ideas about how to lead organizations, how to work, how to use social platforms. It’s not just about one person holding on to a certain knowledge because there’s a lot of transparency” (Participant #4).
- “Millennials want more transparency. They want to know, ‘Why are we doing this, what’s the ultimate goal?’ to see the transparency from beginning to the end and how this leads to the bigger picture” (Expert #9).
- “Millennials want a sense of access. They want platforms and opportunities and leaders who make way for that. They want success early and to grow fast” (Participant #7).
- “Millennials would like to have access to the top management as an open-door policy and remove all the barriers of power of distance. It’s super important to make sure they know that we as a leader don’t exercise power of distance” (Participant #12).

- “There’s a war for talent and young people will not stay if you just tell them what to do. Take an MBA at 26 or 27 years old, he or she will tolerate that kind of construct. You’ve got to be a little looser with your control structures and give people a bit more autonomy” (Expert #6).

Another characteristic noted by participants and experts was youth’s interest in societal issues, such as social injustice, the environment and a search for greater purpose:

- “We see the Millennials speaking out, especially about pride and social injustice” (Expert #1).
- “They actually want to work and be able to contribute to the survival of this planet” (Participant #6).
- “I think the expectation of younger talent is very different. They’re looking way beyond salary, for other aspects around people, purpose, culture, a sense of pride when they’re talking to their friends or individuals about the organization” (Participant #13).
- “When we look at the younger generation and the current workforce, they are very, very cautious about social justice. This will require leadership to really understand what exactly the purpose of the organization is rather than the P& L alone” (Participant #2).
- “Millennials have a different way of working. They want transformational leadership and purpose. Today, transformational leadership needs to really focus on the purpose not on the task because this young generation came into the workforce with the ability to use technology even faster” (Participant #12).

- “When you hire younger employees and Millennials, they ask much more questions about what the company is doing around the community, giving back to CSR programs, and the whole idea of purpose-driven organizations and all that. So that’s the one trend that started maybe five years ago and it has accelerated” (Participant #22).
- “Leadership to them possibly means really being recognized for doing something different. Not necessarily leading large teams, but maybe it’s around working for a company that’s more ethical or being part of a larger cause” (Participant #17).

As a result of all these differences, leaders confessed to not knowing what youth’s trigger points were:

- “You have to be kind of cautious knowing what motivates them. They want to be different. So, we have to be really smart to understand what would be the trigger with them, the community, the environment? So, we can influence them” (Participant #11).
- “I think if I look at the number one challenge it’s how to work with the younger generation; it’s a very purpose driven generation. They can be very subjective. But the moment when they buy into something, they would just give their whole heart. So, I think the challenge for the leader is to identify what exactly is their trigger point” (Participant #2).

Leaders also expressed concerns about talent retention given the volatility of the younger generation and their lack of corporate loyalty:

- “We all know that they don’t want to be routed to one place and work in a company for the next 15 years. That’s all gone. There’s a huge amount of restlessness. So, I

think one big challenge for any leader is to figure out how you keep your best talent" (Participant #9).

- "Because talent churn exists to such a great degree particularly in Asia, organizations are reluctant to put that long-term planning and investment into young people sometimes. They pop in and out of jobs and want to try many different things" (Participant #13).
- "They have financial security with their parents and grandparents as a safety net so they can move from one job to another" (Participant #12).
- "Most of the evidence points to the fact that they are unlikely to be loyal to any one single organization" (Expert #6).

Aside from these deep structural conditions (i.e., global order in flux, changing cultural norms, social injustice, the pace of change, technology disruption, and generational divide), COVID-19 was seen as an unexpected shock of gigantic proportion further aggravating the disruption in the world. Participants described the global pandemic as a reset moment, raising questions on the very existence of life and economic activity:

- "I look at COVID as the great reset" (Expert #5).
- "Suddenly a small little organism that you can't even see to the naked eye has made the entire world shut down adding to the problems we already had and creating a reset" (Participant #9).
- "I think it's been called the biggest test of courage and conviction" (Participant #14).
- "It's a moment you realize how vulnerable actually human beings are" (Participant #26).
- "Suddenly, people have seen how fragile humanity can be" (Participant #9).

- “It’s called into question the very existence of the business and some industries; so, it’s really, I think, stretched minds” (Participant #17).
- “COVID has been an inflection point with unintended consequences, remote working, work life balance, the stock market, fear, what is essential and what isn’t” (Expert #3).
- “The impact of COVID is gigantic; I really think it is a seminal shift; we’re going to work differently and we’re going to need to lead differently” (Expert #6).

COVID-19 was seen as a change accelerator:

- “COVID has been a dividing moment and an accelerant to change” (Participant #13).
- “Satya Nadella said it right: it’s been two years of transformation done in two months!” (Participant #12).
- “You would have heard from Satya right: two years of transformation in two months” (Participant #15).
- “The behavior of social connectivity has been going on for at least five years and COVID-19 has just accelerated it” (Participant #20).
- “COVID just accelerated the pace of transformation and it has taught us to deal with a lot more ambiguity, fast and uncertain changes” (Participant #19).
- “COVID, oh, it’s been huge. I think people are looking at this going, oh my gosh, we have to accelerate our digital programs and digital transformation to step up because it’s like, well, how do we continue to service our customers?” (Expert #11).

Fundamentally, COVID-19 was interpreted as a test of leadership:

- “I think COVID is not a health crisis, to be honest. It’s a deep crisis of leadership” (Participant #5).

- “It’s been a crisis that has been telling. So, there are companies that talk about how core people are to them, but at the first sign of trouble, they’re doing these massive layoffs. It’s time to walk the talk. So, leadership has been tested” (Participant #23).
- “So, in my opinion, for leadership at this moment nobody comes to mind. I cannot name a single leader around the world saying, hey this person knows how to get us out of this darkness. A lot of the young generation has lost confidence and don’t believe in leadership anymore. COVID made that clear” (Participant #26).
- “COVID is resetting leadership and how we’re looking at it differently. It’s made us question or made us have these discussions on how we develop leaders for the next generation” (Expert #5).
- “Now that we’re in a recession, people need to be far more adaptable and I think the need in leadership has turned into the type of model of adaptive leadership at speed and that has very big implications for the individual because most individuals are not set up psychologically to cope with that and to deal with that world that we’re living in now, a world where leadership is distributed” (Expert #6).
- “On leadership in general, I think people had to learn to accept that they have to live with a situation where their direct reports are not physically present. This is a big change for Asia where the traditional way of managing is that the boss sits in front of a big room with all their staff there. So, it’s probably been even a more serious shock in Asia because this idea of working from home or remotely is not so common. So now this COVID has forced everyone to change and be able to become like a start-up almost” (Expert #12).

Uncertainty. The widespread disruption characterizing the world was creating a new level of uncertainty, which was the second axial code derived from the open codes (see Figure 16):

- "The world is a messy place, where so much is unknown and seemingly volatile and chaotic, it doesn't feel great to the average person" (Participant #3).
- "There's so much uncertainty right now that's happening everywhere in the world externally. The biggest challenge that I have is articulating my impact. I'm questioning myself and I feel I have an imposter syndrome. I don't have enough resources to create the impact that I'd like for the business right now" (Participant #28).
- "There's never been a scarier and more uncertain time" (Participant #14).
- "We are in a situation for which there's no reference to follow. You'll have to figure it out yourself. It's not something you have prepared for accurately with so much uncertainty, so you are off balance and you have to follow your inner compass only" (Participant #26).

Participants described strong feelings of tension, mistrust, anxiety, anger and injustice that they were personally experiencing and also had to manage with their direct reports:

- "I personally have been outraged with everything going on" (Participant #5).
- "People are just looking at the world around them and they see a lot of redundancies happening, 'What does that mean for me, my family, my work my career?' It's all these unknowns that are creating anxiety" (Participant #18).

- “Many young people are living alone so in this kind of an environment to be alone and not be sure of whether tomorrow your job will go or will it remain, can be quite disturbing and harrowing” (Participant #9).
- “People’s sense of what was normal, and things were taken away, and they’re overwhelmed, and they’re traumatized and they’re anxious” (Participant #5).

Mental health problems were highlighted as a new leadership challenge:

- “My biggest challenge is my team’s mental health” (Participant #5).
- “Some people are suffering mental health issues and on the Zoom call they look absolutely fine” (Participant #7).
- “Personal well-being is a top concern for leaders now” (Participant #13).
- “A lot of the youngsters are living on their own and suddenly find themselves tremendously in a sense of isolation, even though technology has enabled connectivity far better than before. Suddenly, now they’re having to cook for themselves and clean for themselves. There is fear of going out and not being able to distinguish work time and playtime by sitting at home. All this has created a sense of despondency, which can lead to depression if not tackled” (Participant #24).
- “A lot of people are sitting alone in their apartments. So, as leaders we’re going to need to attend to things that were far more hidden than in the past and will be much more visible in the future, namely mental health” (Expert #6).

Participants noted that the overwhelming sense of disruption and uncertainty equated to a crisis of leadership:

- “I don’t think ever before, there has such pressure put on leadership” (Participant #7).

- “You know, it’s an interesting time because to me it feels like leadership is in a very transitional state right now” (Participant #25).
- “I’m a very different human being. I think there’s a dearth of leadership and people are outraged about the entire thing” (Participant #5).
- “I think basically there is a death of leadership” (Participant #19).
- “I think the responsibility of leadership is missing right now” (Participant #16).

Experts tended to go further, indicating a potential regression of leadership into more authoritative and controlling approaches:

- “Leadership at a political level has gone back to the Middle Ages, in many ways, as if there is one individual who would know what to do all the time. It’s a descent into authoritarianism. From a corporate side also, we seem to be gravitating more towards personalities and narcissism is on the rise” (Expert #2).
- “The reality now politically is that people are taking back control and becoming far more autocratic in the way that they exhibit and demonstrate leadership. And I think, unfortunately, that some of that will naturally transfer into organizations, because we use role models. I think we’re going to end up with a struggle fairly soon in organizations where people will change back and say, well, isn’t it right that we should become more command and control again?” (Expert #6).
- “There’s been wider levels of fear and anxiety in society; people are worried about the future, about their place in the world, etc. And because of that worry and fear, the standard desire from people is to have the authority leadership” (Expert #13).
- “Look at the US, what’s happening: there’s a lack of leadership I would say from a government perspective. So, then you have these other leaders rising up and saying,

‘We need to do something’ whether that be state or be citizens rising up. This is really reshaping leadership” (Expert #5).

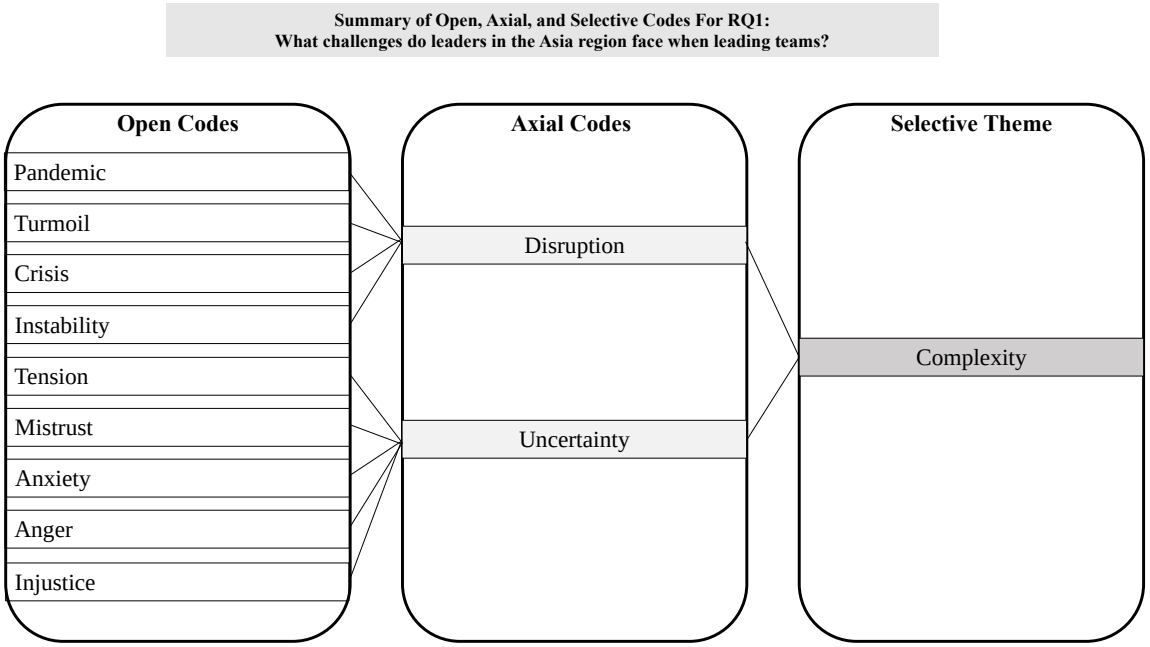
Complexity. The open and axial data codes pointed to the selective concept of complexity as the over-arching theme to answer the first research question on leaders’ challenges in the Asia region when leading teams today (see Figure 16). Participants and experts agreed that disruption and uncertainty had brought on an age of complexity for leadership:

- “Things are so complicated, there’s just so much complexity” (Participant #13).
- “There’s a lot more challenges and complexity as well” (Participant #8).
- “The kinds of challenges that we’re facing today can’t be solved by a single country, a single company or person because there so complex” (Participant #22).
- “So, if I can describe leadership now versus in the past 10 years, I would describe it now as being incredibly complex” (Expert #1).
- “The world is not getting easier today. The world is more difficult, more complex, more complicated for us” (Expert # 8).
- “Leadership is broader, a lot more encompassing, and it’s to do with the world that we live in today. It’s a lot more complex, a lot more uncertain and corporates are expected to step up” (Participant #19).
- “The complexity of the problems I think are much more different and challenging for leadership. You know, before, as I said, leadership really was much more local, but now an election in the US has significant ramifications globally. Actually, an election in the Philippines has significant ramifications regionally, which in turn can have ramifications globally. So, there’s this whole interconnectedness and this whole new complexity” (Participant #25).

- "I think the world needs a more collective style of leadership to solve these increasingly complex problems. And I don't think that one person with the loudest voice can do it" (Expert #5).
- "There's a lot of complexity, and when you're the CEO of a global firm with thousands of people around the world, you cannot manage the whole thing. So, there's been a necessity to delegate and operate in a world where teams are distributed, and organizations work in complex matrices" (Expert #6).

Figure 16

Summary of Codes for RQ1



Note. Adapted from *"The Art of Coding and Thematic Exploration in Qualitative Research,"* by M. Williams and T. Moser, 2019, *International Management Review, 15*(1), p. 45–55 (http://www.imrjournal.org/uploads/1/4/2/8/14286482/imr-v15n1art4.pdf). Copyright 2019 International Management Review. Reprinted with permission.

When asked to contrast leadership ten years ago versus today, participants and experts presented evidence of a profound leadership transformation (see Figure 17):

- “The difference between leadership ten years ago and today is black and white” (Participant #1).
- “I don’t believe for the last nine years, things changed very much at all, and then everything changed” (Participant #1).
- “Ten years ago, it was a lot more smooth sailing for lack of better word. I felt that leadership was a lot more seamless back then” (Expert #1).

Figure 17

Leadership Evolution at a Glance

Leadership Evolution At A Glance		
	Leadership 10 Years Ago	**Leadership Today**
Context	Stable	Unpredictable
	Hard Power	Soft Power
	Autocracy	Democracy
	Inherited	Earned
Aims	Profit-driven	Values-driven
	Prestige	Purpose
	Knowing	Learning
Process	Directing	Connecting
	Transactional	Transformational
	Task-oriented	Team-oriented
Relationships	Male-dominated	Diverse
	Individually driven	Collectively driven
	Managing shareholders	Managing multi-faced stakeholders
	Seniority	Ageless
	Position	Creation
	Fear/distance	Trust/proximity
	Force	Kindness
	IQ	EQ
	Organization-centric	Customer-centric
Structure	Hierarchy	Networks & Communities
	Top-down	Multi-directional
	Long lasting	Agile & Responsive
Measurement	Business KPIs/Metrics	Doing Good

First, the context of leadership changed from stable to unpredictable (see Figure 17):

- “Leadership used to be structured, safe, monotonous, unified and one way” (Participant #29).
- “Today the speed of change in unpredictable and leadership has to answer to that” (Participant #13).

Soft power was more critical than hard power:

- “There’s a different kind of role model where it’s not the usual mold. It’s a different form of power. New leaders are not born rich, or with a name like a Rockefeller or Vanderbilt, or whatever. They have soft power, using emotion” (Participant #5).
- “I think definitely the soft goals to me have become more important” (Participant #6).
- “I think those skills are a lot softer and a lot less autocratic than perhaps what they used to be” (Participant #13).
- “There’s a lot more emphasis, I think, on the softer skills” (Participant #22).
- “Encouraging people, you know, the soft skills will be so much more in demand than they ever were” (Participant #9).
- “There is more emphasis on the softer side because intuitively, you know that people feel a bit more isolated than before. So, you need to make sure you build community, and make yourself even more available as a leader” (Participant #14).
- “There’s more effort on the softer issues, getting people comfortable with each other, getting them to open up, speak their minds a lot more, inviting the opinions of the group” (Participant #24).
- “Power today is about listening, making an impact, being responsible, role modeling, and taking the organization with you” (Participant #20).

The context of leadership shifted from autocracy to democracy:

- "It feels like good leaders have become much less autocratic in their style and much less dictatorial, 'I'm the boss, you will do this.' It has to be a lot more collaborative and supportive nowadays" (Participant #13).
- "Today, I would say that there is more distributed and democratic accountability with leaders" (Participant #7).
- "A leader used to be an autocrat, not anymore. Employees, especially Millennials, want to be heard, and they want to be recognized. They want to be part of things, not just take instructions and want to play a meaningful role" (Participant #19).
- "Companies like Alibaba are trying to adopt a more distributed power approach. And therefore, I think a lot more peer to peer leadership, not just top-down leadership. I think that is actually very much what resonates with the core of Asian values and culture" (Participant #14).

Leadership shifted from being inherited to needing to be earned:

- "Leadership used to be very top driven and quite unaccountable, I would say because, I mean, if you're a leader you kept all the cards very close to your chest" (Participant #7).
- "True leaders are those who've earned it nowadays. You earn the respect, the autonomy, the equity, the influence" (Participant #5).
- "Leaders today need to actually first and foremost be able to earn trust" (Participant #6).
- "A leader does not come with a rank. What matters to me is the qualities of the leadership, and the person has to prove it" (Participant #6).

Secondly, aside from the context of leadership, participants noted that the aims of leadership had also changed. While leadership used to be profit-driven, participants indicated that leadership was now more values-driven:

- "Work was definitely a functional role many years ago. I don't think people talked about work satisfaction as much as we do now. I would say the narrative started changing about getting satisfaction at work, fulfillment, and values" (Participant #6).
- "For leaders, it was always about profits. Now suddenly, leaders are realizing, 'What do we do for the planet?' Now I need to balance citizenship and the social conduct of my company with the need for profits" (Expert #2).
- "Of course, profit is absolutely fundamental, but CEOs need to work out the correlation between positive movements, let's call it social and virtuous cycles and the balance sheet. It requires a different mindset and a different way to look at the business and the organization" (Participant #1).

Leadership evolved from being about prestige to purpose:

- "New leaders want to win the hearts and minds of people. It's about purpose, whereas with the previous generation it was essentially about money and the survival instinct" (Participant #19).
- "We are talking about leadership with purpose" (Participant #2).
- "It needs to be much more purpose-driven than perhaps it was ten years ago. I think leaders need to define a genuine purpose for their organization that can unify their teams" (Participant #13).
- "Young people are looking for leadership, someway, somehow, and government leaders are not giving it to them. So, they're looking elsewhere and for corporate

leaders to essentially step up and take charge and demonstrate that strong leadership is there and that it can be done through the purpose of their own organization and impact the rest of the community around them" (Participant #19).

- "Leadership used to be guided by structure and systems; now it's driven by purpose" (Participant #29).

Leadership was no longer about concentrating knowledge but distributing it and encouraging learning:

- "You know, 30 years ago if you were in a senior leadership position, the expectation was that you were the smartest person in the room and it was about you holding on to that knowledge" (Participant #25).
- "There's a lot of demand these days for people in leadership roles to actually be constantly learning, especially on the technology front" (Participant #6).

Thirdly, the leadership process was altered dramatically. Leadership was no longer defined though directing subordinates but rather by connecting with people:

- "Earlier, leadership used to be, I mean, although it was never my style, but you could have that style of a little dictatorial directing approach" (Participant #9).
- "It was still very much the strong man leadership approach and sort of the chain of command" (Participant #12).
- "If you talked to a leader 20 years ago, he would have said, I have my people in the office, and we have a task to do, and I keep an eyes on everybody. And then we leave at 5:30 pm, and we go home, and then I begin my other life. I think what's happening now is that there is no other life; everything is connected and integrated. You will be thinking about your people and it may well be a globally distributed team who are

communicating with you via a number of different channels all the time, even on the weekend, and there's a symbiosis and constant connection" (Expert #6).

Leadership was less transactional and task-oriented, and more transformational and team-oriented:

- "It used to be about assigning roles, goals, and deadlines" (Participant #6).
- "Leaders would communicate in an almost like one-track way down to employees, and it was the law of instruction" (Participant #19).
- "Now people want the leader to be a bit more human, not just transactional or functional" (Participant #6).
- "People want the opportunity to be empowered, to actually go to a place where I otherwise wouldn't go without the leader" (Participant #6).

Fourth, the types of relationships characterizing leadership changed from being primarily male-dominated to being more diverse:

- "A leader needed to be a strong man, somebody who could get into a room and was a fighter" (Participant #27).
- "In India, it was extremely rare to see women in leadership positions. The lack of role models ten years ago was staggering. So, I think that's changing, and now you see many more women sit on the leadership team here in India" (Participant #23).
- "I think there is much more appreciation of diversity, not just of gender, but also the kind of skills that you bring to the table" (Participant #23).
- "I believe the number one challenge right now that CEOs are facing is the issue of diversity and inclusion. We need to make the boardroom more diverse and how we

are ensuring that there's different types of representatives from all different cultures and backgrounds and ethnicities and skillsets" (Expert #1).

While the leadership relationship used to be primarily driven by an individual, it had become increasingly collectively driven:

- "The archetype of the leader at the top of the pyramid, or at the front of the pack whatever analogy you want to use; that's gone" (Participant #10).
- "Ten years ago, it was hierarchical, and they still saw the leader as that figurehead, and they followed the master way" (Participant #16).
- "We used to talk about big leaders, this person and this person. Now that we're connected with technology, we realize leaders can be anyone. They don't need huge power as long as they're a force together" (Participant #26).

A decade back, leadership was primarily concerned with relationships to shareholders, while today, participants described the importance of managing multi-faced stakeholders:

- "I think ten years ago it was only about charting the company's vision. It was only about operating profitably and answering to the shareholders" (Participant #19).
- "There is a conversation on the fact that as a business we're in business for more than just money; we truly impact the lives of stakeholders at large in society" (Participant #17).
- "Today, it's a multi-faceted group of stakeholders that the leaders need to answer to. No longer just to shareholders; you have to answer to staff, to the external community, partners, vendors, the government, activist groups" (Participant #19).

- “I think we’re shifting from what is the purpose of an organization that used to create value for shareholders, all the way to the purpose of an organization to create value for a broader set of stakeholders” (Participant #10).

The face of leadership was no longer based on seniority or age:

- “We’re starting to see that leaders can be young, and yet they can galvanize the world. Because being a leader today is about creating change because you’ve earned it, or because you were affected by it. You can use emotion to galvanize, you don’t necessarily have to wait 30 years to suddenly be the boss” (Participant #5).
- “Young people, they just come out of nowhere, they prove that they can do well, be leaders and disrupt the entire way of things” (Participant #16).

Leadership was no longer a matter of position:

- “It’s no longer because you’re the boss that I listen to you. It has to be about an exchange of value not rank” (Participant #16).
- “So, we’ve been moving for the last 40 years into flatter organizational structures, less hierarchies, and greater distributed teams and distributed leadership. And leadership within that isn’t a position; it becomes an activity that’s pushed to the edges of the organization” (Expert Interview #13).
- “I think historically there was more a cult of the leader. Whereas now it’s the cult of the creator, no matter what position you have” (Participant #13).

The fear, distance and force built into leadership for decades was replaced by trust, proximity, and kindness:

- “There was definitively an element of ruling by fear. Today that wouldn’t cut it” (Participant #6).

- “Ten years ago, people saw a leader like kind of a role model, but you would feel a certain distance. But today, I feel a leader is next to you all the time. You can consult with them, reach out to them. There’s just a level of trust” (Participant #11).
- “I think that the strong leaders that stand out from this will be able to command the trust and the love of their staff. It will not be a style that’s won through dictatorship; it’s really a style that’s won through the fusion of success with others” (Participant #19).
- “There’s a stronger sense of mutual respect and trust between employees, independent of power relationship” (Participant #3).
- “Kindness now is hugely important” (Participant #9).
- “It’s about leading with heart and the mind” (Participant #15).

Emotional intelligence and customer-centricity were described as very significant relationship dimensions for contemporary leadership:

- “I think it’s become much more around EQ than IQ; it’s a real sense of emotional intelligence and understanding of what people need personally and professionally” (Participant #13).
- “Effective leaders have to really demonstrate emotional intelligence and really understand their people and what motivates them, and you know their strengths and their weaknesses” (Participant #13).
- “Leadership EQ is more important now than it was earlier” (Participant #9).
- “Everything needs to start with the EQ and translate down to the customer” (Participant #1).

- “All businesses have to respond to much more demanding employees and customers and so leaders need to have higher EQ” (Participant #14).

Fifthly, the structure of leadership developed from hierarchical forms to networks:

- “Before it was all about hierarchy. Now I think people want to be treated as another decent human being. People want to be treated like you know they’re actually able to think and get respect” (Participant #6).
- “Well, I think one of the things I’d say from my experience is how the hierarchies of before no longer exist. Cheryl Sandberg talked about it that it’s not a career ladder anymore, but a jungle gym. Your willingness to go up, down, sideways in your career is essential” (Participant #22).
- “I think organizational structures have changed. They used to be the classic top-down structure hierarchy. Now it’s more like a jazz band playing together where everyone improvises” (Participant #24).
- “It’s not about the people who report to you; it’s about the people in your network that you can influence” (Participant #22).
- “In the past, organizations were very ordered and directed; it was high command and control. Now, organizations are actually described in terms of what a neuroscientist would say is like neural networks” (Participant #25).

Leadership structures were becoming more agile and responsive to change:

- “The speed of change is creating organizational structures that need to be agile and where you can react and hire individuals who are prepared to respond” (Participant #13).

- “It’s about the pace of change and how you anticipate that change so that you can evolve with agility. It’s about building a very dynamic and agile workforce culture that can shift very quickly” (Participant #10).
- “You have to change the way you work and the way you make decisions to be a lot more agile. And so, I think that presents itself as a very clear business challenge” (Participant #14).

Finally, participants and experts noted that leadership was measured differently, shifting from less tangible metrics to more qualitative forms of evaluation:

- “The Baby Boomer leadership style is really KPI centric and a reward and punishment style” (Participant #12).
- “Leadership used to be all the things you could measure, the tangible stuff” (Participant #6).
- “Performance metrics were heavily weighted on financials, and you know, they were easily measured because of their numbers; it would be fairly straightforward. Now there are trade-offs that could be financial, against people, against the community, the environment, and all these different things. And you know it’s very difficult optimizing every single one of them” (Participant #10).
- “You don’t just decide on your performance goals anymore. You actually have to take in the feedback from the ground up in terms of what your employees want, what they care for, and what’s good for the community” (Participant #19).
- “Ten years ago, the CEO was just trying to put together a team to help run the company and to meet organizational outcomes and goals. Now, there’s so many different factors a CEO has to consider” (Expert #1).

- “Is your company building the world or destroying the world?” (Participant #5).
- “Today’s leadership evaluation is, are you a force for good?” (Participant #1).

In summary, the findings from the first research question revealed that today’s leadership challenges were plentiful and multi-dimensional. Participants and experts placed their challenges within a context of greater complexity characterized by disruption and uncertainly, resulting in a profound transformation of leadership. Figure 18 summarizes the main leadership challenges that leaders in the Asia region faced when leading teams.

Figure 18

Summary of Top Leadership Challenges

	Top Leadership Challenges
Environmental	Pace of Change Business Survival Technology Disruption Uncertainty
Aims	Team Trust Individual Understanding Collective Empowerment
Process	Communication Bonding Humility Empathy Compassion
People	Generational Gap Talent Acquisition/retention Mental Health Diversity
Structure	Safe Environment
Measurement	Less Quantitative, More Qualitative

Findings from Research Question 2

Findings from the second research question, which asked, "What leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders and teams use?" were grouped into four main axial themes: (a) adaptability, (b) expertise, (c) distribution, and (d) collaboration (see Figure 19).

Adaptability. Asian leaders demonstrated high levels of adaptability to cope with the complex environment surrounding them. They notably explained how they were breaking traditional ways of working, developing a start-up culture in their teams:

- "When I recruit people, I say, guys, we're doing a start-up and you are the co-founders" (Participant #2).
- "My team is kind of like a start-up within a big Asian firm" (Participant #16).
- "We work like a start-up, culture is as flat as possible, not top-down. And it's ok to fail" (Participant #18).
- "We are a start-up culture, we experiment a lot, we are entrepreneurial, collective, faster, and messy. Work is essentially a big experiment for us." (Participant #29)
- "We work like a start-up because the only way you can grow is to relinquish control from the top and create many, many leaders." (Participant #24)

Asian leaders were removing traditional signs of power, challenging hierarchical ways of working, and making leadership democratic:

- "Here, power does not come from rank; it's based on the project you're leading. If you're leading Singles Day, you are the powerful one, sometimes even more powerful than the president of certain business units" (Participant #20).

- “I started to realize this whole thing of hierarchy top-down just does not work. It is a lot about understanding and recognizing the value that often people in the front lines and more junior level create, so we can improve ourselves. It’s really about flipping the whole hierarchy over on its head” (Participant #27).
- “That’s been a fantastic process to see around less hierarchy, relationships and giving more people of a voice” (Participant #3).
- “I make every decision very, very democratic” (Participant #7).
- “I would describe the working style as democratic. What’s valued is a lot more your personal grit and determination and hard work you bring to the table. It’s very much more egalitarian. And I think this is looked at not just as a value to be spoken about, but to be lived and breathed” (Participant #23).
- “I think if COVID has taught us a lesson, it’s that nobody has the right to the best ideas based on hierarchy. Ideas can literally come from anywhere. If you don’t give access to the junior person, you will never know what you’re missing out on” (Participant #14).
- “It’s a flat team without hierarchy and mostly informal authority. Authority comes from knowledge, from connecting the dots, not seniority or age” (Participant #16).
- “I use a polygon model versus hierarchy. I am in the middle of the polygon, and I function as the enabler, I build capabilities. I don’t make decisions for my team” (Participant #29).
- “It’s all about teamwork. It’s not a factory where things happen with a certain position. With team building, you need to have a set of people working very consistently together towards a certain objective. There is a certain level of

consistency that is required in teamwork, and they need to build a very healthy respect for each other to constantly arrive at a solution and a like-mindedness so that they click well together. It's not about hierarchy at all" (Participant #24).

- "I think the only way organizations can go into the future is if they prepare for collective intelligence in an organization. They have to unlearn the nasty habits of alpha leadership and hierarchy and even the idea of how we succeed in organizations. The scorecards are completely conditioned around winning" (Expert #4).

Leaders explained how they were experimenting with new structures to adapt to change and break up silos:

- "It's taken me a while to break down silos so we could collaborate better within our team and with other units" (Participant #18).
- "We are breaking a lot of silos in the last 12 to 18 months, there's no legacy in how we work anymore. We just keep adapting" (Participant #2).
- "Our work teams are amorphous; I would say they expand and contract on demand. The organization is a little shapeless. The team takes the shape of the problem or the opportunity that we are solving" (Participant #7).

Most participants described their way of working as some form of agile and adaptable process:

- "We collaborate very much in an agile-based approach with high velocity, high-frequency check-ins at the start of the day and at the end of the day" (Participant #8).
- "We are dynamic and agile because I think there's a managerial philosophy to pick the young stars to challenge them to grow fast" (Participant #20).

- "We're constantly moving, what they call now 'fail fast, fail forward,' you know, we follow a very iterative innovation approach within the company. So, it's not just with start-ups. We're all going flatter and more agile" (Participant #22).
- "Actually, a really interesting trend around agility and agile transformations is the talk in Asia about them. There's not a lot of organizations that are experimenting with it. So, what's happening is actually a lot of the leaders are being asked to lead these kinds of transformations, whether they be Chief Digital officers, or the CEO, or even the COO. But no matter what happens, they absolutely have to take other leaders on the transformation journey" (Expert #11).

Expertise. Asian Leaders stressed the importance of creating domain expertise within their teams through the use of specialists:

- "No one really knows everything. And so, our team is structured in a way that people bring spikes of domain expertise" (Participant #8).
- "I think there's a recognition that to deliver an outstanding job for your organization, you need to rely on specialists, and you might have a particular area that you are an expert in, and you need to collaborate very effectively to deliver a solution that is rounded" (Participant #13).
- "The leader is like the maestro of an orchestra. You have to rely on having picked outstanding musicians who are experts in their instrument, playing the French horn or the saxophone, and trust everyone to do their part" (Participant #25).
- "You have to let go and bring in people who complement your skills because there's just so much to learn" (Participant #15).

- “We don’t do things in isolation. We’re quite conscious of the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, and there’s a lot of respect because everyone brings their area of specialization” (Participant #4).
- “There’s this discussion about everybody working up as a pool of talent, and you get roped into a project based on your expertise” (Participant #28).
- “I guess the organization will be a lot more productive if we can break up tasks, so there’s more interdependence. It means the individual who does the task needs to have more domain expertise, instead of people knowing a little bit of everything. Also, information that’s needed can become shared equally across the organization instead of having to rely on someone to assess it” (Expert #9).

Specialists were also brought on as part-time or project workers:

- “I hire interns more than my full-time employees because I want to facilitate a change culture and having specialists, especially in digital” (Participant #12).
- “Today, the way the world is moving and where resources are all over the world, you need to access people from different parts of the globe on a long and short-term basis” (Participant #24).
- “When it comes to short-term projects like a pitch, we work in coalitions. It’s not like teamwork; you don’t need to know people’s strengths, you don’t need to like me. I can just come into the room, I can solve your problem as an expert and leave; and that’s a coalition. So, what is happening in today’s business is a mix of both more teamwork and coalitions depending on the type of project we work on” (Participant #24).

- "I have to be prepared to be leading an organization where not everyone is in my formal team structure, and I need to learn how to make them purposeful and productive when they are part of it. The reality is that I don't see the future where everyone is a full-time employee in your team; you're going to have a team structure where a bunch of them are going to be gig contributors who are coming in for a specific project or for a specific thing that needs to get done" (Participant #27).
- "Knowledge can be distributed in a network that is not located in a single place. The one example is flying an airplane from New York to Paris; no one person has that knowledge" (Expert #10).

To facilitate the development of special capabilities and skills, leaders described how they were developing a culture of constant learning:

- "I think of our organization like being a learning organism. It takes the best bits of everything and evolves" (Participant #8).
- "It's no longer a know-it-all mentality. It's about creating a learning mentality" (Participant #15).
- "You need to encourage a growth mindset" (Participant #17).
- "It's really important to always to be curious and keep learning, have that growth mindset" (Participant #18).
- "We do a lot of internal education and external sessions to learn and groom our people" (Participant #13).
- "We select new leaders based on learning and a trial process. We keep good HR records, and we have a scoring system to track people based on their projects. Each person gets to lead a bigger project with learning, so there's a laddering process from

a leadership and project management standpoint. Leadership is like a trial process versus ranking" (Participant #20).

- "The boundaries or the context in which people are learning is widening. It's what we call 'learning in the wild.' We start to notice that learning and knowledge processes in organizations are integrated into aspects of daily activities in the organization. Professionals are engaged through daily activities with advancing their knowledge. We see open practices of learning and innovation. So, from a leadership point of view, it's important to create this open space for a facilitation of learning and knowledge processes; you could say that the boundaries of organizations are sort of unfolding and sort of opening up" (Expert # 7).

Distribution. At the heart of the new ways of working was the distribution of leadership through empowerment, transparency, shared decision-making, and collective influence:

- "I feel a lot of the decision-making and the power is in the team, and they are empowered to come up with the decisions and ideas themselves." (Participant #10)
- "You have to be as transparent as possible to give confidence to everyone and let them make the decisions" (Participant #18).
- "Leadership is bit like a blockchain. It's a comparison where leadership becomes distributed, not the prerogative of one person because this person has more degrees or more knowledge, but it's about plurality and making the best use of, you know, the different qualities and different capabilities within teams and optimizing that. And so I think yeah, it just becomes more distributed, and we just rotate in terms of leadership" (Participant #4).

- “There’s a lot of that transparency and shared knowledge and people are able to take on leadership roles regardless of what your job title is” (Participant #4).
- “Our way of working is very project-based. We only manage under the project management philosophy, so we assign a project, project members task force on that, and so the leadership happens, day in and day out within a group, so everybody can be leaders and it depends on what project you’re leading” (Participant #20).
- “We use the D-A-R-C-I model when working. We use it to identify the right leader depending on who is the subject matter for each project. Everyone can become a leader as a result” (Participant #29).
- “We share leadership. Different people play the lead at different times to make the project successful. Our founder said that, the three of us together are bigger than each of us” (Participant #24).
- “In certain situations, you may not be the leader. You may have to be very comfortable with letting go. And, you know, at least in American businesses, letting go is not something that a lot of companies are comfortable with” (Participant #25).
- “Distributed or shared leadership sits very nicely with the idea of networks and how knowledge and other processes are shaped and happening within these networks and if you as a leader, if you feed those networks to flourish, then I think you will have a lot more power within your organization” (Expert # 7).

Collaboration. Leaders challenged their teams to take on more accountability and ownership to collaborate together:

- “Nowadays, because people have more access to information, there’s more knowledge across the team. So, the leader has to empower the team to kind of inspire them to be more self-driven. It’s more important than before” (Participant #11).
- “I don’t give them the solution; it’s more about giving them open questions versus tasks and let them find the answer themselves, so they have ownership to drive that solution on their own” (Participant #11).
- “We’re not going to give you a list of things to do. We’re going to give you an idea of where we want to go. But, you as the individual, need to figure out how to get there. Now that was a very big shift and it takes a lot of coaching and confidence because the education system in Indonesia primes people for the fact that you’re not allowed to fail” (Participant #21).
- “I give my team that ownership, okay, look, I’m empowering I’m trusting you, go and do it” (Participant #18).
- “I give a lot of freedom to my team; I invite them to co-create with each other and assume ownership to make things happen and own their decisions” (Participant #28).
- “From a leadership point of view, we should facilitate the process of autonomy and accountability. If you think about it from a knowledge practice or a knowledge ecology point of view, I think it’s much wiser to make sure that you let people connect because if you give people lots of autonomy, they’ll probably learn a lot and they also need to take up the responsibility to feed it back into the organization, so they bring the knowledge back” (Expert # 7).

Collaboration was the pervasive way of working in teams:

- "Collaboration becomes absolutely critical because of the complexity" (Participant #13).
- "A lot of leaders talk about divide and rule. They like to create a kind of healthy competition. But what we realized is that building collaboration with each other is a better strategy than a sense of competition between teams. It gives people faith and trust instead of building silos. It's a visual image of holding hands with each other for fighting whatever is coming" (Participant #7).
- "Collaboration is a very strong value we hold, and that guides our way of working" (Participant #29).
- "Our team is very, very collaborative. It's a very homey culture, everyone takes care of each other quite a bit" (Participant #17).

Technology was relied on heavily for team collaboration and used by the leaders themselves to keep up with their teams:

- "It's a collective leadership model where everybody has access to the decision-making process enabled by technology" (Expert #4).
- "The way we collaborate is simply through technology everywhere: video, Google Docs. Just click, and you're responsible, and you can assign any action to someone. I would say the analogy is that technology is like our coffee" (Participant #12).
- "When I was at Twitter, I had responsibility for Latin American markets, Middle East, North Africa countries in Asia. I didn't visit for a year and a half or two years at a time, and I still led those people. So, it was a form of leadership that was radically

different; e-leadership, I think is possible, and using technology to be a remote leader" (Participant #3).

- "It's how you build those interpersonal skills using virtual leadership. You cannot do that without technology and especially video. When I arrived in my new job, we didn't even have video conferencing. I could not see my team, so I ended up getting a personal Zoom account" (Participant #22).

To facilitate collaboration, leaders noted how they were investing heavily in communication with their teams, often describing it as a necessary "over-communication" approach:

- "Leaders are over-investing their time to communicate and connect and just speak to people and just being there for them and recognizing how difficult it is for people personally and professionally right now" (Participant #13).
- "Our trust level has gone up because we're actually over-communicating" (Participant #19).
- "We over-communicate to support and do regular check-ins, just to make sure the teams do have a sense of belonging, empowerment, and trust." (participant #11)
- "We have realized the importance of communication; I would say even the need to over-communicate" (Participant #14).
- "We all know we need to over-communicate. In times of crisis, it's not too much, hey, how are you doing? Are you okay? Do you need help? As simple as that" (Participant #15).

Informal communication channels (i.e., team huddles, stand-ups, instant messages, virtual chats, and online coffees) were becoming more popular for teamwork, sometimes displacing formal channels:

- "So, we're really upping the ante in terms of trying to increase the number of calls and check-in sessions, so employees get to hear from the leaders instead of the formal quarterly townhall. We're starting to do smaller informal bite-sized chunks of communications" (Participant #19).
- "We use informal channels like our team WhatsApp group" (Participant #8).
- "It is very important that as a leader you are not waiting for the formal channels of communication to inform you about what is important and where value is being created" (Participant #27).
- "We have a company WhatsApp group. But, you know, we would use it to post each other on business and it's now become also sort of like the underground subversive communication process for chatting and gossiping" (Participant #25).
- "In our weekly stand-up, we don't talk about business performance, it's more about bonding and getting to know each other, which has helped immensely. It's that social connection. Last month, I gave a class on cooking" (Participant #18).
- "So, we do townhalls every three months for major announcements. But we've also created smaller groups to create more interactivity. There's a bunch of youngsters who started something called the Culture Club, to do music, karaoke, stand-up comedy, cooking, just to connect" (Participant #24).

Collaboration was driven by a deep sense of empathy for team members:

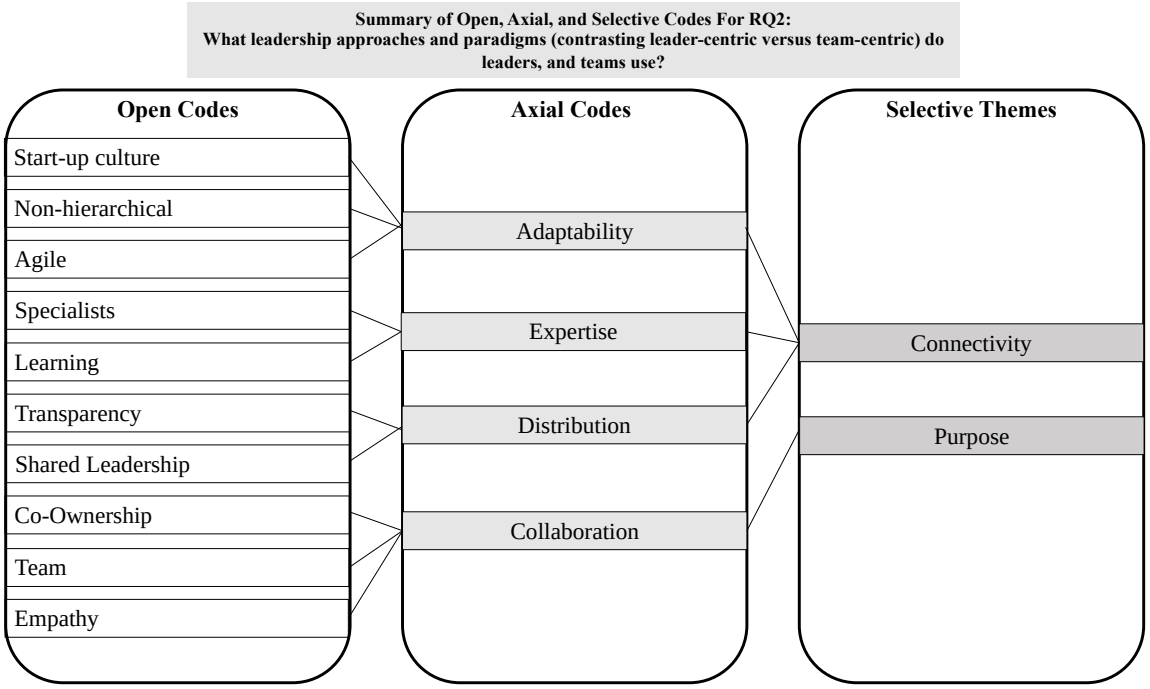
- “So, whether you’re letting go of people or you’re motivating people, you know employee experiences are in the limelight like never before. So, the leader has to be empathetic, be much more thoughtful and considerate than ever before, because it has huge ramifications” (Participant #17).
- “I think having a sense of empathy is very important. We’re putting ourselves into our team’s shoes when we communicate with them. I think that’s the difference culturally” (Participant #11).
- “Leaders need to have empathy because without that, how can you understand others and their basic needs, or someone who is working remotely or in a different language? So that’s really where I see the biggest change from before” (Participant #15).
- “Empathy; it’s almost like a unique signature that I have. I’m extremely people-oriented” (Participant #17).
- “It’s about being able to have a lot of empathy for the people who are involved in that process. And this COVID situation has brought out the reality that leaders need to understand their context and therefore develop an empathy that can go with that” (Participant #27).
- “COVID has meant that leaders need to be more constructive and have empathy” (Expert #2).
- “With COVID, I guess the leader has to show more empathy because the circumstances are more stressful. So, you need to be more empathetic, and when things are slower moving, less efficient, more mistakes are made or whatever, I would discount that stress” (Expert #9).

- "Companies have to lead, manage, and work virtually and determine how to look at globally distributed teams. We help leaders build capacity around things like empathy and have meaningful conversations with people at a time when there's so much overwhelming stress" (Expert #11).

In summary, the leadership approaches described by Asian leaders were based on breaking traditional ways of working for high adaptability, domain expertise, the distribution of leadership, and team collaboration. The open and axial data codes revealed two selective themes: (a) connectivity and (b) purpose, which best described the leadership paradigms that leaders and teams used when leading teams in Asia (see Figure 19).

Figure 19

Summary of Codes for RQ2



Note. Adapted from *"The Art of Coding and Thematic Exploration in Qualitative Research,"* by M. Williams and T. Moser, 2019, *International Management Review, 15*(1), p. 45–55 (http://www.imrjournal.org/uploads/1/4/2/8/14286482/imr-v15n1art4.pdf). Copyright 2019 International Management Review. Reprinted with permission.

Connectivity. Leaders were clearly moving away from directive leadership in favor of facilitation (see Figure 20). Asian leaders described how they were becoming more people-focused and developing a new level of connectivity with their teams:

- "The leader becomes more of a facilitator rather than keep the direction or make all the decisions; it's more a process of facilitation" (Participant #2).
- "The leader is just a facilitator really" (Participant #4).

This connectivity was based on demonstrating more emotional intelligence and the ability to nurture people:

- "I don't want to sound cliche, but my role is first about people" (Participant #18).
- "In Chinese, we say, you need to cultivate the heart first" (Participant #26).
- "The organizational change I'm doing right now is looking for people with different forms of intelligence: IQ, EQ, AQ (I made that one up, it's their Adversity Quotient), and DQ, the Decency Quotient, are you a decent leader and a human being?" (Participant #5).
- "I think that the emotional intelligence piece is critical. The way that then it affects leadership and hiring organizational practices, if done well, has really significant impact and ramifications throughout an organization" (Participant #13).
- "What the leader needs to do today is spend extra hours to nurture; that's what leading really means" (Participant #12).
- "You need compassion and to be able to listen and to be able to talk about stuff outside of the office, to be able to nurture, make friends with your people a little more. All that has become especially important in the post COVID world" (Participant #9).

Leaders also discussed the importance of humility for leadership today:

- "There's a lot more recognition of humility. I feel humility wasn't really part of the toolkit of leaders before. But I think there's a recognition that you as the leader don't know it all" (Participant #17).
- "With the impact of technology, you suddenly see a lot of people in a very senior positions realizing that they need to catch up on some of the skillsets, and therefore they become a lot more humble, open to learning new things and not embarrassed to ask questions. There's a recognition that just because you work in an industry for a long time, you don't have all the answers" (Participant #28).
- "A lot more humble and really bringing people with them on a journey as opposed to, I'm the big boss, you'll do what I say" (Participant #13).
- "Be highly communicative and very humble, willing to take feedback, willing to take advice" (Participant #19).
- "There is an urgent need for constructive humility to make up for the glorification of individuals and a heavy dose of arrogance in leadership at the moment. Humility becomes a very valuable commodity because it percolates down and becomes a character of an organization, and that can have spill over benefits" (Expert #2).

In addition, Asian leaders explained how they were demonstrating more vulnerability and compassion toward their teams:

- "So, I think that's the transition which is happening in leadership now: people are open and much more vulnerable" (Participant #23).

- “People want that authenticity, you know, emotions, which used to have no room in the boardroom. Now, if you’re not authentic, you cannot lead. And vulnerability that’s become a number one superpower, particularly in Asia” (Participant #5).
- “You have to show your vulnerability because you have to admit what you don’t know” (Participant #15).
- “The COVID effect is going to last for some time, and in certain cases, there might be permanent changes that should be taking place. So, therefore, leadership has to be compassionate” (Participant #9).
- “What’s happening in the world takes a toll emotionally on people, and therefore, I think that compassionate leadership or a leadership that listens to more than just your rational problems, and becomes your emotional guide is needed more and more” (Participant #9).
- “People want compassionate leadership, I mean fundamentally it’s about, do you care about my me?” (Participant #18).
- “In the past, I think leadership qualities were defined by the alpha male, but I think there are intrinsic female qualities like compassion and having more empathy and having more EQ that matter now” (Participant #4).
- “I think a leader has to be more open, very personal, and compassionate so people can feel that they can tell you what they’re struggling with. It’s typically not something that is natural for some of the male leaders because it reveals a bit more of the personal or the emotional side. We need leaders that are more empathetic, more caring, more nurturing” (Participant #22).

Purpose. Teams aspired to be driven by a higher purpose beyond only sharing work commitments (see Figure 20):

- "When you find yourself being a leader, you need to chart a bigger purpose, bigger than yourself to make other people's lives better or the world" (Participant #26).
- "Purpose is the fundamental thing. It's almost like that NorthStar of what your company believes in and what leaders are all about" (Participant #19).
- "When you are a leader, people are looking up to you. They don't just want somebody to show them the way but also what that person stands for, what does he believe in, does he support A versus B, you know, what are his world views on society, what is the purpose?" (Participant #9).
- "I'm a connector; I believe in bringing people along. Our success is a collective success, harnessing the strength of everyone for a shared purpose" (Participant #15).
- "I would say we begin with what the broader purpose of what we want to achieve" (Participant #15).
- "My role as a leader is making sure everyone in the organization understands why we are doing this and why it's so important, giving people a shared purpose" (Participant #12).
- "Leaders cannot follow a value system that is just a motto written on the gateway of the lobby anymore. They have to walk the talk and make their teams live the values. In Chinese, we say, the pearl is threaded" (Participant #20).

Ethical concerns, diversity, and inclusion were important values in driving teams:

- "I think the world has been calling for a particular kind of leadership; I don't like the word, but I'm going to use it; it's ethical leadership with a concern for society and the world" (Participant #5).
- "Before people were not as conscious or careful about making sure that everybody was consulted, or that everybody felt included, but now it is important to make sure that people are included" (Participant #4).
- "I think teams nowadays are a lot more diverse; they have different teams composed of people from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and a lot more diversity from all different parts of the world" (#Expert #1).
- "We need diversity because if you want to serve the world, you have to represent the world" (Participant #15).
- "When all the knowledge becomes available to everyone, then diversity becomes an important quality of a team" (Participant # 4).

The transformation of leadership, the role of leaders, followers, and their shared goals are summarized in Figure 20.

Figure 20

Past Versus Present: Summary of Leadership Entities and Outcomes

Relationship between Ontological Leadership Entities and Outcomes			
Entity	**Outcome**		
	Past		Present
Leaders	Direction	→	Facilitation
Followers	Alignment	→	Domain Expertise
Shared Goals	Commitment	→	Purpose

Note. From "Complexity Theory and Leadership Practice: A review, a Critique, and Some Recommendations," by Rosenhead et al., 2019, *Leadership Quarterly*, *30*(5), p. 12 (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2019.07.002). Copyright 2019 by Leadership Quarterly. Reprinted with permission.

Three major implications were outlined by participants and experts as a result of this leadership transformation: (a) the changing role of followers becoming leaders in their own right, (b) the changing role of leaders as connectors of information, people, and emotion, and (c) the changing role of organizations, moving toward network structures.

There was a marked change in the role of followers. For this reason, the word followers was seen as inadequate and antiquated:

- "The word followers; I wouldn't necessarily call them that. I actually see them as leaders in their own right. Especially when you work with the younger generation, they don't see themselves as followers at all" (Participant #19).

- “The idea of followers needs to be retired because one thing that happened is that the key to leadership is not just somebody who shows me the way, but leadership is someone who gives me confidence, who brings out the best in me and gives me room to fly so I can lead too” (Participant #9).
- “So, it’s interesting that I am a little bit uncomfortable with the word followers. I feel like as a leader, you need to have the ability to build a community. I feel like when you have followers, they just follow you. You don’t get something back. Whereas I feel like in my experience, being a leader, I actually get a lot more from my team, right. It’s almost like I impart things to them, but they also bring things back to me” (Participant #24).
- “To me, followers connotes the kind of people who are behind you. But another way to think about it is that I wouldn’t really say that people are necessarily followers right, but they’re just part of the leadership team” (Participant #10).
- “I don’t see my people as followers. I would describe them as leaders. The leader-follower hierarchy is a misconception” (Participant #29).
- “The idea of the superhero who can step in and save the day and somehow patronize the follower and steer; let’s get away from that language of influence. I think we need a new model of leadership that moves away from transformational language and even moves away from the language of leader and follower, and we can get more into a different kind of language around collaboration integration and collectivism” (Expert #4).

Participants used new language to describe followers as “co-founders,” “backers,” “passengers,” and “teachers:”

- “There are no followers; they are my co-founders’ team and back me up” (Participant #2).
- “We have shared values and we back each other up. The whole idea is that people stand up for each other right and there’s a sense of coverage that can come from anyone” (Participant #7).
- “Followers have become journeymen and women, passengers that go with you, not follow you” (Participant #9).
- “The youngest people and most junior people in the room are the ones that are more digitally native and give the seniors the input because they’re out of their depth. So, the followers are the new teachers” (Participant #28).

As followers were seen as leaders in their own right, leaders’ role was also redefined. Most notably, participants indicated that leaders were no longer the central source of knowledge:

- “Historically, a leader might have had authority on the basis that they had more information or more knowledge. You look towards a leader because the leader knows everything. But in an era where you have access to a lot more information, knowledge, and sometimes because you might even know more about a particular field or domain than your leader, then it is no longer about the fact that the leader has knowledge or superiority” (Participant #10).
- “You know, 30 years ago, if you were in a senior leadership position, the expectation was that you were the smartest person in the room. You had done the job because you were the expert. Fast forward today, with the explosion of knowledge and information. There’s no way the leader can know everything” (Participant #25).

- “So the traditional leadership, right, I would say, maybe in the 70s, you would expect the leader to actually know everything, right. The person sets the direction and makes sure that they are the fixer of the basic mission and so forth. But in this world, you’re facing more ambiguity, and leaders don’t know it all” (Participant #15).
- “The leader is not expected to know everything and have the utmost decision-making power. It’s not about holding that knowledge anymore but being able to find the best-qualified people” (Participant #4).
- “One thing I know for sure is that I don’t know everything. My role as a leader is to be a participant and a learner” (Participant #8).
- “Everybody’s got access now, so I need a leader who tells me how I can learn things. Earlier you looked up to the leader because they were the best and knew more than you, not anymore” (Participant #9).
- “I think leaders need to recognize that you don’t always have the best idea. You have to create an effect on the rest of the organization so that everyone feels they have a role to play to contribute to a better outcome for the company” (Participant #14).
- “I would like to think that all leaders know that they’re not the smartest person in the room. If we can get to a place where as a leader, you know that your job is to bring this diverse group of people to address whatever that problem might be” (Participant #22).

As a result, many leaders talked about the importance of dispensing with the ego traditionally associated with leadership:

- “Leaders who have big egos will not cut it anymore; you have to be part of a work team” (Participant #2).

- “There needs to be a removal of ego to lead today” (Participant #5).
- “Leadership has to restructure itself by letting go of ego” (Participant #26).
- “Leadership should not be about catering for the ego of the leader, which is very tempting. What you should do as a leader is rather coordinate, get in the right mode to understand which expertise is demanded, at what point of time, and then bring the right person in” (Expert # 8).
- “I would describe the change as: from the sage on the stage to the guide to the side. It’s a paradigm that relates to learning with the teacher on the podium lecturing for knowledge transfer, as opposed to the teacher as the facilitator of group learning processes” (Expert # 7).

As facilitators, leaders were focused on creating the right environment for their teams:

- “It’s not necessarily about, okay, the leader’s vision. I mean, of course, those things are important, but also to create an environment that is safe for people to feel like they can express themselves and can do things collectively. It’s what is really changing everything because then you see that the team forms beautifully into sort of a community” (Participant #28).
- “Right now, my leadership role is to create the environment, and my role is to give them nurturing” (Participant #16).
- “I think what’s really important for me is to create an environment that helps facilitate collaboration and inspires that creativity” (Participant #18).
- “It comes down to building an environment for your colleagues, your teams, your employees in order to produce the best type of work that’s needed to move the company forward” (Participant #21).

- "Leaders, your job is not to score the goal. You just need to be the best midfielder in the business. Someone else will score the goal, but you've got to make it so easy, extend that generosity, create that space, giving it to someone to score" (Participant #24).
- "If you are leading an organization with all these networks that you're trying to empower, what you do is rather than sort of delegate, now you provide the space" (Expert # 7).
- "So, in my book *Constructing Leadership*, I use the term 'swarm leadership.' The beekeeper is for me the person who creates the environment; it can create the condition and emergence. That person that can come from any place in the structure and can begin to have the conversations to create the environment for people to have a more collective experience" (Expert #4).

Leaders acted as brokers of relationships, alternating between being advocates, coaches, and mobilizers:

- "When I work within the vertical line of my company, I am an advocate. I help my team understand the corporate strategy and what it means to them short and long term and mobilize our resources to get there. I'm facilitating that envisioning process as well as on top of my personal advocacy if it's not clear. On the horizontal line (aka within my team), I'm a relationship broker, and I manage people, their roles on projects, and spotting who can be the next leader. I'm almost doing human resource allocation" (Participant #20).

- “I’m more like a connector. I’m the one who connects this team to the rest of the organization, pretty much in terms of resourcing and information flow. I’m flexing it as a leader” (Participant #23).
- “My leadership is fluid, from knowing when to intervene to knowing when to only check in with the team. It requires a certain amount of wisdom, perspectives, and self-awareness” (Participant #27).
- “I speak last. I listen more. I make my role a supportive role, I am more of a coach” (Participant #29).
- “People don’t just do what we tell them. I’m the coach, and my team are the leaders in fact” (Participant #29).

The fundamental role of leaders was to act as connectors—not just of information, but of people and emotion:

- “I see my role as empowerment, connecting, and enablement. I would say I’m a connecting enablement person and in doing so it allows my team to have a platform” (Participant #8).
- “Connecting people is the world’s most important proposition” (Participant #1).
- “My main area of expertise is managing people and the second is really connecting that because there’s so many things moving around, so I have to be the one being accountable to connect the dots” (Participant #11).
- “Leadership must be about a form of connecting knowledge with and through others” (Expert #4).

Leaders demonstrated a new aptitude; the ability to mobilize and energize others:

- "I don't call myself a CEO, I call myself a Chief Energy Officer. I need my people energized and driven to a purpose" (Participant #7).
- "It's not about the leader making decisions on behalf of the group, but it's about somebody who can get that momentum going with the group so they can actually make a change of decision together" (Participant #4).
- "I see the leader's role as increasingly as a curator, a mobilizer of people through a sequence of interconnected people actions, enablers, and stakeholders" (Participant #10).
- "The leader is a catalyst. It's about harnessing energy because it's something that doesn't have a limitation, whereas time is limited. Therefore, you need to be a lot more balanced in all aspects of your life, being able to create the synergy between people and then blend together life and work in a way that is giving momentum, an energy within the team" (Participant #28).
- "Catalyzing people's energy to a purpose has been our greatest way of working, and giving a huge amount of warmth and personal touch in realizing it." (Participant #7)
- "If we're talking trends, today the literature would be the literature of caring, the duty of care. Care, connect, and contribute" (Expert #10).

Experts explained that leadership with connection and purpose departed from traditional centralized aims and control mechanisms leading to new emergent outcomes:

- "Well, as soon as they come out with a mission statement and things like that, I roll my eyes; that's the old way of running an organization. To my mind, the new way of running an organization is respecting that individuals have their own values, their

own aspirations and that they are working toward those, and trying to find ways of creating mechanisms of cooperation that are fulfilling their objectives, which leads to an emergent result" (Expert #10).

- "I don't dismiss the idea around having some form of organization. I just think that we need to organize it in a different way. As long as a goal is not a conditioning goal but is an agreed and shared goal" (Expert #4).
- "A network is a perceptual system. What will emerge from a network depends on what it perceives. So possibly a leader modeling and or demonstrating collaboration might be a role that creates emergence" (Expert #10).

Finally, participants and experts discussed the changing role of organizations, moving toward network structures.

- "Every business is basically becoming a technology business and a network business" (Participant #13).
- "Your company can survive in the shared economy only with decentralized professional networking, but you can't just become a platform but a company that makes sense for society through networks" (Participant #20).
- "I believe that a structure that facilitates conditioning is against forms of collective intelligence. Take honeybees: they have clear roles, they go off, they will do sense-making, they will scan, they will build intelligence, and they will come back, they will begin to work with a colony with these levels of intelligence. They will filter it down, and then they will make a group decision. And I think we're in a good place to do that with leadership given the technology that's coming through" (Expert #4).

In conclusion, the findings from the second research question revealed that the leadership approaches and paradigms used by leaders and team today were team-centric in marked contrast to leader-centric approaches. Asian leaders noted the changing nature of leadership based on greater connectivity and purpose. Participants and experts outlined changes at three levels: (a) the changing role of followers becoming leaders in their own right, (b) the changing role of leaders as connectors of information, people, and emotion, and (c) the changing role of organizations, moving toward network structures, letting go of centralized aims and control mechanisms in favor of new emergent outcomes.

Findings from Research Question 3

Findings from the third research question, which asked, "How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context?" were grouped into two main axial themes: (a) family and (b) empowerment (see Figure 21).

Family. When asked about leadership approaches in Asia versus other parts of the world, participants and experts described Asian leadership as the tale of two worlds colliding and a struggle between family culture and new world empowerment (see Figure 22). On the one hand, many companies were still using hierarchical heroic-centric paradigms based on tradition, order, consensus, compliance, and obedience:

- "Asia is very much based on order and hierarchy and about the collective, and trust. And so, I think that's a bit more like Confucianism, you know, influenced by culture. But I think that's changing" (Participant #4).
- "There's clearly a hierarchical context within which Asian companies operate. There's the kind of 'dear leader/fearless leader,' and I think it's kind of a great man theory of organization's decision-making" (Participant #3).

- “I think by and large in Asia, I mean, I don’t want to categorize, but the way Asians look at the organization needs to be very clear, with reporting lines and hierarchy” (Participant #2).
- “There is a cultural expectation for compliance or obedience; it’s kind of expected. The good news is that I do believe with new generations getting into the workforce that’s changing” (Participant #6).
- “I think it swings from sort of a more autocratic, presidential style of leadership in China, the big man in their swivel chair, smoking a cigar type, old school, hierarchical, consensual, to a changing approach with the younger entrepreneurial type companies” (Participant #13).
- “It used to be whatever the old man says; there’s a joke in Indonesia as long as the boss is happy, we’re all good” (Participant #18).
- “I still think that in traditional businesses and government, it’s a bit more patriarchal, and the leader is at the back pushing everybody forward, or the leader is at the front yelling at everybody to move forward” (Participant #21).
- “As part of our consulting conversations with an organization, we’ll often talk about the Laloux ‘Teal’ model. A lot of organizations in Asia would be sort of orange and red, which means that they are very hierarchical, with a machine culture; they’re more authoritative in process, rules, and structure, and it’s all very controlled” (Expert #11).

On the other hand, participants pointed out how things were rapidly changing, particularly with non-governmental companies, non-family-owned businesses, and newer start-

ups, which were seeking more collective, distributed, and digitally connected approaches based on experimentation, creative consultation, shared values, and common purpose:

- "Over the last six or seven years, there's been a bit of a shift in terms of people's mindsets. All of a sudden, a career was not putting on a suit and working at a bank or your dad's company. And that kind of lines up with the growth of start-ups, but also the growth of small business and the tech space in Indonesia. So, I think from a leadership perspective, there is a pre—when people were told exactly what to do and stayed within the boundaries of what they needed to do—and a post, with this kind of new wave of businesses where the requirements are exactly the opposite" (Participant #21).
- "I think there are two types of teams in China. There is the team that is, let's say, born by the China company as opposed to the international team. And I think the two are very different animals" (Participant #1).
- "It's very different worlds between the first generation bathed in the Communist history of the country with crusty, traditional state-owned companies, and then on the other extreme, you have self-made structures and private equity who own the money. They are two different animals; the state-owned wants to control everything like pricing and guaranteed employment; it's very political. Self-made companies are enterprises that have business rationality on the other hand" (Expert # 8).
- "I think you can look at it on a spectrum—say gaming companies that are all about customers and teamwork and believe that everyone in the company has a view and should be heard. And on the other end of the spectrum is the communist or Confucius hierarchal model" (Participant #1).

- “The newer technology Chinese companies are open to Western influences of management like Alibaba and Tencent and particularly some of the gaming companies. Yeah, they’ve got very bright people who are more open” (Participant #1).
- “Big start-ups in China, like Bytedance, are working this way now like start-ups. For example, like Alibaba, they reshuffle the leadership team organization every 12 to 18 months. Everyone can lead everything depending on the circumstances and situation” (Participant #2).
- “What we see is that those larger tech companies have nailed the shift. More recently, those companies are more likely to have a very different culture around change and evolution. They hire young employees who have different expectations of the organization and are willing to try something quite different” (Expert #11).
- “I think what’s changed in the past two to three years is that there is a growing community of companies and managers who are really interested in new management concepts, agile organizations, and are using the book from Frederic Laloux. He came to Shanghai for a conference three years ago, and we were both invited to speak. Hundreds of people volunteered to translate his book. Honestly, I couldn’t have imagined this, but for or me, it showed huge interest and promise” (Expert #12).

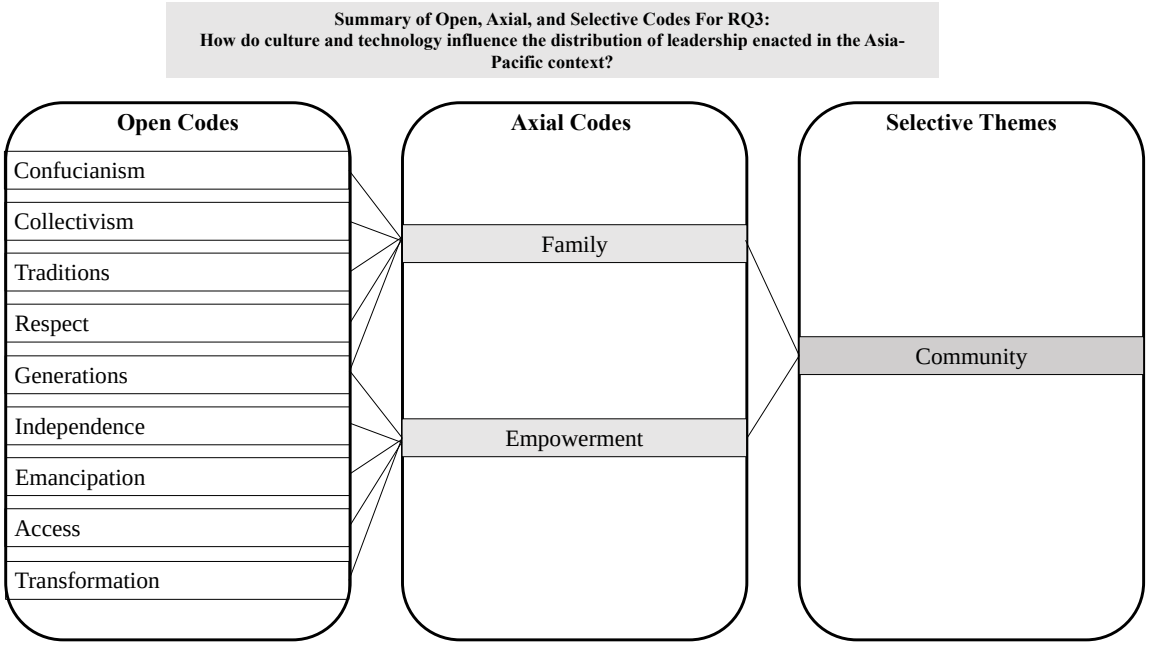
Experts noted that the impact of this transition was not without friction and effort and that it would take time for the majority of firms in Asia to pivot:

- “Teal’ is like becoming a big utopia where you are very purpose-driven, people are very empowered, the organization as a system, and almost runs itself. And to be completely honest, being a Teal organization in Asia, if you’re a big listed regulated company is very hard” (Expert #11).

- "A key challenge to move towards 'Teal' in Asia are the managers and their ability or lack of ability to give up control. Managers are, of course, also used to be in control and often think that is expected from them. So it is also a long journey for them to build confidence so that they can achieve their objectives by empowering their staff to take decisions themselves" (Expert #12).

Figure 21

Summary of Codes for RQ3



Note. Adapted from *"The Art of Coding and Thematic Exploration in Qualitative Research,"* by M. Williams and T. Moser, 2019, *International Management Review, 15*(1), p. 45–55 (http://www.imrjournal.org/uploads/1/4/2/8/14286482/imr-v15n1art4.pdf). Copyright 2019 International Management Review. Reprinted with permission.

Participants shared that national culture played a significant role in setting leadership expectations and practices. All Asian participants, regardless of their cultural cluster and country of origin, indicated that the common ground in Asia was the family unit. Family culture shaped how leaders constructed their teams and established their work practices. Team members were

treated as family members and often moved jobs with their leader creating lifelong bonds stronger than corporate ties:

- “Family and family bonds can play a big role in Asian life. And I think that starts to also get transferred to leadership in Asia. Leadership is like a family. People want a relationship that is almost filial with their team” (Participant #9).
- “I think in Asia there’s a little patriarchy, and even a stroke of matriarchy. I mean, a lot of people want to see a father like figure or a mother like their boss” (Participant #7).
- “We’re all about family; we’re all about gatherings; we’re all about connections; we’re all about being a collective consciousness, despite the lack of homogeneity of cultures, this is what Asia is about. So if the inherent societal, cultural, mental, and psychological foundation is there, that’s also what we do at work” (Participant #5).
- “We have this thing called the family handbook and we use the analogy because we were born here, right in Asia. And we say that we have three values that define us around the family culture that we want to do” (Participant #14).
- “There’s more concern for family, community, society than for individual endeavor. For example, in Asia, we’re not laying off anybody. We don’t need all these people, but we’re keeping them anyway because it’s the right thing to do; they’re like family. And so, I’m seeing a very different leadership; I guess it’s a more human focus. It’s this combination of bottom line and humanity and our impact on the social systems” (Expert #5).
- “Family is the common denominator and something everyone agrees upon and can respect” (Expert # 8).

Participants in the Confucian Asia cluster attributed the importance of family to the philosophical traditions of Confucianism:

- "I would say, first and foremost, from an Asian context, because we have our culture of, you know, that stems very far back from Confucianism, it's all about the tradition of the family, the patriarch, and the matriarch of the family" (Participant #6).

The family construct explained why leadership in Asia was seen as an intrinsic collective practice:

- "I think that not enough has been written about this, but if you look at the history of the world, Asia has always thrived. You know, the Silk Road and everything. It was always about collaboration and trading across different cultures. I think collaboration is the DNA of the Asian psyche" (Participant #14).
- "It's all about family culture, that's where we learn collaboration from. Many of us in Asia live with two or three generations, so we actually have to learn to get along" (Participant #15).
- "Asia is governed by relationships as opposed to contracts in the West" (Participant #3).
- "It's actually very collective. You know how you actually hold together as a family? Well it's how you make decisions that are for the good of the whole team as opposed to for the individual" (Participant #10).

The family metaphor extended to the types of relationships between colleagues at work described as non-confrontational, based on trust and respect, and focused on a duty of care:

- “You’re supposed to have a personal touch; if you don’t have a personal connect, then you cannot empathize with somebody’s personal context and lead in Asia” (Participant #7).
- “So, I strongly believe Asian countries have a lot more of a collectivist mindset. So, in that sense, I also feel that Asian leadership has more of a caring side” (Expert #5).
- “I think in the West, collaboration is very much, ‘I do this, and this is my part, and you do that part.’ So everyone does their part, and then they come together. Whereas in Asia, our expectation is for you to care about helping others, giving your point of view on all the other parts that you are not involved in because we are delivering it as a whole solution together. If you fail the whole family, then the company fails” (Participant #14).
- “In India, new ideas have to be appropriately couched in ‘respectful clothes’ before they are presented to somebody because this is not an individualistic culture that is brash like in the West. You cannot come across as too aggressive or threatening when you are presenting an idea or speak first. Also, an idea has to improve the lot of everyone” (Participant #23).

As a result, Asian leadership was depicted as holistic:

- “I think Asian models of leadership traditionally have been quite hierarchical and I guess what we’re seeing is this migration to more, holistic and collective leadership styles now” (Participant #10).
- “We are now moving towards this space where leaders understand what people need, and they have to be a lot more holistic and focusing on all of the aspects in their lives” (Participant #28).

- "You need to create understanding and help your teammates in a very holistic way beyond the task and be a passenger in that interaction, understand them as people" (Participant #8).
- "I feel leadership needs to be a lot more holistic, in the sense that it's more inclusive" (Participant #10).
- "Leadership in India is much more holistic. I find Americans very brutal. In India, there's more respect for other human beings and others' feelings. We're not a cutthroat culture, we have a sense of harmony, peace, and spirituality, and we bring that to leadership" (Participant #24).
- "If you look at Asia, there's always been a spiritual element that ran through Asia, whether it be India or Thailand or Buddhism, Japan, whatever. That has merged together work, family and personal life, and health and well-being. And I think leadership now needs to look at that holistic approach" (Expert #5).

Figure 22

Asian Leadership: A Tale of Two Worlds

Empowerment. While family culture provided a common framework for leadership, participants and experts also noted that the definition of success was evolving with changing cultural expectations and gender roles in Asian societies leading to more emancipation and desire for empowerment (see Figure 21):

- "The definition of success has changed in Asia because this idea of milestones of success, 'I went to a good University, I got this job, I have this car' has been over, you know, and experiencing life and being empowered is now the new form of success" (Participant #5).
- "There are now huge opportunities for women in India, and you'll see many progressive CEO women on boards and women having more authority in leadership positions that one hadn't seen before. Of course, it is still an old boys club in many circles, but there's definitely a conversation around diversity and women that has improved greatly" (Participant #17).
- "I do think that women in South Asian countries have a lot stronger voice. The Western part of the world thinks that women are suppressed in Asia; they are not" (Expert #1).
- "I'm hearing more and more stories of people that wouldn't be seen as the typical leader. Asian women are now speaking at the heads of these major corporations" (Expert #5).

Aside from national culture, corporate culture also influenced leadership approaches greatly with a marked difference across local, regional, and international companies. Companies that were family-owned were described as more traditional and likely to follow a traditional leader-centric paradigm with the original company founder resisting change:

- “I think the older Asian generation is very much still in a command and control and really trust their own family members” (Participant #19).
- “A lot of proprietor-led companies which are traditional Indian companies have an old mentally. I would say they still have a lot of ground to cover and are totally different from MNCs, which are driven by technology and more transparent approaches” (Participant #23).
- “Many large conglomerate families want to innovate and want to change. Right. They know the importance of investing in digital transformation, but yeah, the old guard says we’re still making money so fine” (Participant #18).
- “Older organizations are more hierarchical and less collaborative, more directive. It’s definitely less about the emotional connectedness to individuals. It’s never binary, but I think on a spectrum, it’s a little bit more task versus emotion” (Participant #8).

However, these models were being challenged by the younger generation eager for more independence, access, and distributed leadership models:

- “The older generation Chinese are not international enough, even though they are very strong leaders, because they follow traditional leadership. But from my generation onwards, we’re more internationally educated and connected by technology, and we have seen the Asian economic miracle giving us confidence and the humbleness to change leadership ways” (Participant #26).
- “A lot of Asian companies only were propelled through new wealth in the last decade or last two decades. So, you have the businessman in his 60s who is now passing on the company to his son or daughter, and that will change everything” (Participant #19).

- "When I was working in China, we would meet these old Chinese men in their 60s and they were all caught up in their culture. But they understood they had to do something to bridge to us and they brought the new generation of their children. They were brought up completely differently, understood technology, spoke English, and we could make deals with them at dinner without anyone losing face. The sons and daughters are the new leaders, and they know tomorrow will be different" (Expert # 8).
- "I think it's even more challenging for Asian young people because obviously, they have a whole legacy, a set, a backdrop of how things were done; this is how your father has done things and how the organization has been run this way. And now they have to transform the organization towards a more digital, a more transparent, a more engaged and communicative manner to integrate the best of the West and East" (Participant #19).

The impact of technology on leadership in Asia was described as foundational, just like that of culture. Technology was seen as a key pillar of business activity and an essential tool:

- "Google today is a public utility; Facebook today as a public utility. It's no different than the power utility. The reality is when 100% of a society derives meaningful utility from your use; you are a public utility" (Participant #3).
- "We all need to understand with social media, with the internet and all this technology, everything, whether your industry is in tech or not, is going to go digital. It's a fundamental shift. And so, what that means is that our worldview really has to incorporate this absolute change" (Participant #15).

- “I feel that technology in the past was used more as a luxury. But now, we need technology for us to still continue to work together and for us to connect. So if we didn’t have technology, I would imagine we would have a massive economic collapse” (Expert #1).

Technology’s impact on leadership was profound; it extended further than being the main gateway to information and creating efficiency gains. Technology was described as a paradigm-shifting force that leaders were leveraging to build new digitally-enabled business models:

- “In Asia, there’s a lot of the leading by scale. Jack Ma, as leader, has made a huge influence in China with the economy and e-commerce. The whole technology infrastructure has that scale to connect the dots and influence a whole new generation. I think it’s quite a phenomenon” (Participant #11).
- “Now game-changing ideas can be achieved using technology” (Participant #5).
- “It’s become easy for people to shift from one thing to the other, to be able to give up their jobs, their zip code, and to be able to dream of starting things on their own right and become an entrepreneur” (Participant #9).
- “Technology has really accelerated our options for farmer engagement. In places in China, where the broadband is relatively good even in the rural areas, we’re able to do farmer engagement by video. We basically retrain females and do demonstrations in the field with a selfie video. And it’s been amazing to see thousands of farmers logging in to watch that. In fact, now the discussion is how much of what we’ve learned in this big experiment should we take forward in the future for new business ideas” (Participant #22).

Technology was enabling a new level playing field by empowering everyone, everywhere:

- “I feel like in a way it helps level up the playing field. As I mentioned earlier, right, I guess a lot of the knowledge is actually with people that are younger, less experienced, so it makes it easier to share their opinions” (Participant #28).
- “I think technology empowers everyone; it gives them the means to live their lives in a way that will make them happiest and at the same time to deliver the objectives that they’ve signed up for” (Participant #1).
- “I don’t see any differences between Millennials in Indonesia and in the United States because with the internet they share common values in terms of their ability to use technology, to be creative, because every night, everyone now can be a singer on YouTube, everyone now can be a writer, everyone can be an influencer, a photographer for Instagram. I think the level playing field is the same” (Participant #12).
- “The internet is the first medium that we’ve ever participated in as a society that’s a two-way medium. And by its very nature, the fact that the internet is participatory has shifted power from the producers to the consumers in a way that’s undeniable. People realize they have agency and empowerment” (Participant #3).
- “Technology is changing how we interact and is making things more content-driven. There’s more substance; ideas become more important than seniority or rank because how we interact is more faceless. The content and ideas have more power than the person who said them. We’re all empowered” (Participant #29).

Furthermore, technology was deepening the relationships of people and the quality of their connections by connecting physical, social, and emotional dimensions:

- "So obviously we use technology now to stay in touch. Right. You know, I've always been a really huge believer that technology can enable connection. As long as it enables deeper connections" (Participant #5).
- "To really connect to everything, to people, to commerce, to payments" (Participant #11).
- "There is no power distance, which means that everyone can reach you and everyone can ask you questions. Everyone can say something to you at any time" (Participant #12).
- "It helps make us more connected. It helps the transfer of knowledge but also the transfer of emotion" (Participant #24).
- "With technology, there's been an even greater need for human contact, a greater need for insight, for just the humanity that we can add at a very visceral primal level and that we crave. So, what leaders are having to do is negotiate the twin channel of running their business in a highly efficient way using technology to make decisions or get stuff done, and at the same time paying attention to people, their hearts and minds" (Expert #6).

For all its merits, technology was also decried for certain negative aspects, all of which were primarily related to how it could damage human relationships: concentrating power and influence, creating weak ties, inhibiting creativity, reducing spontaneity, and creating distractions and exhaustion. On the whole, the influence of technology on leadership was significant and instrumental in creating a new leadership phenomenon. With more democratized information,

empowerment, and deeper connections, technology was supporting more distributed, collective, and digitally-enabled forms leadership:

- "Leaders are standing at an intersection for leadership, working with big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence. I'm a true believer that technology will change the landscape for the whole economy quite dramatically and for leadership" (Participant #20).
- "I suspect that if you draw a straight line, you would sort of see, you know, leadership style against the use of technology and it would sort of be version 1.0 style. But as you think about adopting more technology and you sort of democratize the information analysis available, you start thinking very differently about leadership" (Participant #10).
- "The fact that people have different expectations of leadership to some extent is also due to their access to technology. You can say that expectations of leaders will align themselves with the evolution of technology" (Participant #10).
- "Technology allows us to defy leadership. Before, we only had the newspaper and books. Now we have the powerful tools of social media, and leadership can be watched every minute, so leadership is far more exposed as well as leaders" (Participant #26).
- "The role of the leader is evolving because maybe they can be replaced with technology in the future. Both are merging" (Participant #28).

Community. In summary, the open and axial data codes revealed one common selective theme—community—on the influence that both culture and technology had on Asian leadership (see Figure 21).

- “In Asia, leadership means you’re responsible for a community” (Participant #2).
- “It’s really about this collective community and bringing everyone else along” (Expert #5).
- “Leadership is ultimately about creating community, creating safety and giving people a sense of belonging, making sure people feel they are connected” (Participant #2).

In summary, the findings from the third research question revealed that culture (national and organizational) and technology exerted a significant influence on leadership in the Asia context. Culture and technology operated in tandem on the transformation of leadership from traditional leader-centric models to more collaborative and digitally-enabled ones. Asian leadership was clearly rapidly morphing toward newer social norms to deliver on the aspirations of a younger workforce eager for more empowerment, community, and meaning.

Final Reflections

As parting thoughts, participants and experts were asked to reflect on the future of leadership in Asia. Overall, participants had a positive outlook for leadership and saw an opportunity for substantial renewal:

- “Well, I actually look at the future very positively” (Participant #1).
- “Yeah, I’m hopeful, we’re moving in the right direction, it’s just not that fast although we have all the tools and technology already” (Participant #3).
- “We will always need leadership in the future because leadership matters; it’s just going to be something very different” (Participant #20).

Experts were more cautious than participants, noting that the opportunity for re-invention might take longer and face obstacles given the current global crisis of leadership and the lack of

role models in public life. Both groups were eager to chart changes on many levels for leadership, starting with the need to evolve to new organizational structures:

- “I think we should stop the conversation around leadership transformation. And I think we should have more conversations around organizational behavior and digital transformation. We have to change the actual organization in terms of the whole system and the sort of technology enabler for that” (Expert #4).
- “Leadership is becoming more like organized organizational environment design” (Expert #10).
- “I think design skills are going to be super critical in the future. Leaders will have to design different organizational structures” (Participant #3).

Less centralized models based on collaboration were seen as the way of the future:

- “I think that what will happen is that organizations will get flat. I think there will be a lot of specialists who are working together rather than having very hierarchical organizations” (Participant #23).
- “Leadership will keep evolving. I think employees are going to be more fluid because you can work for this company now and then go and work for this company then. And you’re going to see a lot of fluidity in the workforce, and that actually impacts leadership” (Expert #5).
- “In 20 years, you won’t be working for a company. You’ll actually have seven or eight resources or swarms you’ll be working for, and you’ll be connected to those through technology. Everything will be connected, and I won’t see employees or workers or followers; what I see is real resources pulled into a swarm decision-making process” (Expert #4).

Participants also pointed out the importance of promoting new ways of hiring (based on values more than just skills) and developing new leaders:

- "Our business schools that do these leadership programs are churning out the leaders of tomorrow. How do we make sure that they're building into the curriculum and into the educational system new ideas that challenge the stereotypes that follow certain frameworks, like strong men?" (Participant #22).
- "What's depressing for me is that we're teaching these tools, particularly to younger leaders and the mid-level, which are about categorization and these approaches around influencing and control, working the hierarchy, gaining commitment and the rest. I think none of this is going to be relevant in probably even ten years. It's actually counterproductive and dangerous to the whole collective intelligence" (Expert #4).
- "I think leadership development is going to be more of a systems-thinking, more expansive than focused on the individual as is typically the case in US firms and their frameworks" (Expert #5).

Rather than individual competencies, participants aspired for future leadership to bring a new point of view on the world:

- "I think societal impact and purpose are no more 'nice to have;' they are going to be very fundamental to the future of leadership" (Participant #2).
- "Neutrality is no longer tolerated. People question, 'What do you stand for?' So, I think that leadership neutrality is no longer allowed. Consumers and people are impatient and fed up, and they want ethical leadership, and they want values-based leadership" (Participant #5).

- “The first thing a leader should look at is what is the greater good? I think you can’t be a leader in the future and not be responsible for the greater good” (Participant #5).
- “In the future, the purpose and cause will matter more and be more important than the personal figure leading” (Participant #29).

A central issue was the need to promote connection with emotional sensing and attuning for future leadership:

- “I don’t think there will be annual reviews anymore. What we need is leaders that are extremely adaptable and have high EQ and are very good at sensing the environment” (Participant #25).
- “Some of the best leaders that I’ve worked with could read body language and understand how people are feeling and what impact that’s having on their work and how they’re doing their job. When everyone is working in a distributed manner, it will require a lot more effort from the leadership in order to plug those gaps and sense things” (Participant #21).
- “Communications skills will be more important than ever because most people will have virtual interactions before they may meet physically, so the ability to develop emotional ties over technology will be critical” (Participant #6).
- “I think with technology, which is high tech, you really need to be more high touch. Because it’s harder to know how people are feeling, what they’re thinking. So, I think the leader needs to be more grounded to figure out what people really think” (Expert #9).
- “We’re going to have to be forensically attuned to the way people look and the way that they speak and the words that they choose and the presence, how they show up

because the physical signals that we might see are going to be far less apparent" (Expert #6).

- "I think we'll have to play that human part a lot more in the next ten years. So, the best leader for ten years down the road is someone who can, I wouldn't say read people's mind, but relate to people, rather than relate to decisions, spend lots of time taking care of teams' emotions" (Participant #2).

Thinking about the future of Asian leadership, participants and experts were bullish about Asia's role in leading a leadership renaissance and being at the forefront of a new kind of leadership that would be more collective, digitally connected, and purposeful:

- "Asia has a lot of talent but not enough confidence. In contrast, America has too much confidence and not enough talent. Leadership needs more representation" (Participant #3).
- "I personally feel that a lot more could be done out of this region, especially because we know growth is out of here, we know the economic recovery is going to first come out of this region. So, leadership should not just stay in where it's traditionally headquartered but be based on where we plan to operate where we plan to make the profit" (Participant #4).
- "In Asia, there's a lot of leading by scale. Jack Ma as leader, he has made a huge influence in China with the economy and e-commerce. The whole infrastructure technology has that scale to connect the dots and influence a whole new generation. I think it's quite a phenomenon" (Participant #11).
- "Asia needs to take the forefront of leadership, because look at how they handled this COVID crisis. And they did a very good job with it, especially Jack Ma, this young

Chinese leader who is helping countries around the world with masks and gowns. So, if there's a shift going on, then leadership could be going from the West to Asia" (Expert #5).

- "The future of leadership will be about the rise of Asia. I think for the longest period of time, we had large MNCs based in the West and Silicon Valley, pretty much leading the pack. I think that's going to change, and China is going to change a lot of it. A lot of these newer generation companies are going to be in Asia, like Alibaba, with different values and attention paid to teams" (Participant #23).

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings from this research. Qualitative data analysis is about "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (Bogdan & Bilken, 1982, p. 145). The findings presented in this chapter followed this approach and answered the central research question "if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?" through a systematic data analysis of three sub-questions and fifteen interview sub-questions. Key findings included:

- F1 (linked to RQ1)—Leadership challenges were plentiful and multi-dimensional, forcing Asian leaders and teams to operate in a context of greater complexity characterized by disruption and uncertainly, resulting in a profound transformation of leadership;

- F2 (linked to RQ2)—Asian leaders were breaking traditional ways of working with leadership practices shifting from concentrated (leader-centric) to distributed (team-enabled) based on a desire for more connectivity and purpose;
- F3 (liked to RQ3)—Culture (national and organizational) and technology exerted a significant influence on leadership in the Asia context. The leadership process was based on a system of shared and digitally connected relationships supporting community and meaning making.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

Chapter Overview

This qualitative grounded theory study focused on the exploration of leadership arising within the Asia region. Its purpose was to explore the integral social relationships and group behaviors of leaders and followers in a part of the world where research remains scarce. In the context of a region leading the world with highly networked digital and social practices, the study examined the lived experiences of individuals and groups who lead and are led to investigate the conceptualization of a more collective and connected form of leadership, defined as Connectivist Leadership (Corbett & Spinello, 2020). In line with the Straussian grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), the study brought the idea of the phenomenon to be studied and leveraged data from a three-stage coding methodology comprised of open, axial, and selective coding to generate a new leadership theory.

This final chapter considers the study's key findings, reviewing the key questions and issues addressed in the context of the problem statement, purpose, research questions, and methodology. It "discusses the findings and expounds on their importance, meaning, and significance" (Simon & Goes, 2013, p. 299) in the context of the study's conceptual framework and the existing literature. Drawing from a multi-discipline approach in learning and network theory, organizational design, and intercultural studies, the existing scholarly knowledge is leveraged to contextualize the interview data from participants and experts and identify the gaps the current study can fill (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This chapter is structured to include the Chapter Overview, Context, Findings, Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations, Evaluation, and Chapter Summary.

Context

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory study was to explore a new form of leadership emerging within the Asia region by examining the lived experiences of individuals who lead and are led in this region. The central research question for the inquiry was, "if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?" Three sub-questions guided the study:

- RQ1—What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?
- RQ2—What leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders and teams use?
- RQ3—How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context?

The study sample consisted of 42 individuals, comprised of 29 participants, all based in the Asia region across China, Singapore, India, Indonesia, and 13 global experts in learning, organization design, and Asian leadership, aligned to the review of the literature. Interviews took place in August 2020 using video conference calls due to the global pandemic and social distancing restrictions.

Findings

To answer the central research question, the study offered research findings through a systematic data analysis of three sub-questions leading to three final findings, which included:

- F1 (linked to RQ1)—Leadership challenges were plentiful and multi-dimensional, forcing Asian leaders and teams to operate in a context of greater complexity

characterized by disruption and uncertainly, resulting in a profound transformation of leadership;

- F2 (linked to RQ2)—Asian leaders were breaking traditional ways of working with leadership practices shifting from concentrated (leader-centric) to distributed (team-enabled) based on a desire for more connectivity and purpose; and
- F3 (linked to RQ3)—Culture (national and organizational) and technology exerted a significant influence on leadership in Asia. The leadership process was based on a system of shared and digitally connected relationships supporting community and meaning-making.

Meta Themes' Interpretation Within the Conceptual Framework and Review of Literature

Meta themes were identified through the stories shared by participants of their lived experiences, their discourse (i.e., words and sayings), body language (i.e., gestures and facial expressions), and symbolic artifacts of communications (i.e., communication tools) as they reported reality through their eyes. Using an interpretive social constructivist framework, the study allowed participants to fully and freely describe their own experiences, thoughts, and emotions, emphasizing the role of culture in cognitive development (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Three meta themes emerged from this study in correspondence with the three sub-questions and final findings: (a) complexity, (b) connectivity and purpose, and (c) community. They are presented in the context of the study's conceptual framework and the review of literature in Figure 23.

Figure 23

Meta Themes Aligned to the Conceptual Framework and the Literature Review

Meta Themes Aligned to the Conceptual Framework and the Literature Review

	Study Meta Themes Findings	Review of Literature Findings	Conceptual Framework
Learning Models	• **Complexity** (F1): Changing environment for leadership, where one center of knowledge (the leader) is insufficient • **Connectivity and Purpose** (F2): leaders promoting an always-on learning culture and 'learning in the wild' • **Community** (F3): technology democratizing information access, distributing knowledge and creating communities of practice	• A change in the way knowledge is constructed and mediated through a web of social interactions and online information networks	• Exploring leadership within new learning and knowledge paradigms
Organizational Models	• **Complexity** (F1): Asian leaders and teams operate in a context of greater complexity characterized by constant change, disruption, and uncertainly leading them to have an agile mindset	• A change in how organizations are structuring themselves to adapt for change through organic and agile systems, using technology and team-based approaches, with virtual e-leadership becoming commonplace in organizations	• Exploring emerging post-heroic leadership within new organizational paradigms
	• **Connectivity and Purpose** (F2): Asian leaders were breaking traditional ways of working with leadership practices shifting from concentrated (leader-centric) to distributed (team-enabled) based on a desire for more connectivity and purpose	• A change in the unit of analysis for leadership: evolving from the individual to the collective, away from legacy leader-centric views to more collective and connected approaches, and a holistic understanding of the leadership system	
	• **Connectivity and Purpose** (F2): New ways of working are changing the role of followers who are becoming leaders in their own right	• A change in the role of followers who are no longer seen as subservient to the leader but become an integral part of the leadership dynamic, and can take turns becoming leaders themselves based on changing environmental conditions	
Cultural Models	• **Community** (F3): Culture and technology exerted a significant influence on leadership in the Asia context. The leadership process was based on a system of shared and digitally connected relationships supporting community and meaning making.	• A change in the focus of leadership studies delineated primarily by Western-centric theories and global models to embracing alternative understandings of leadership informed by more complex local, societal, and cultural values	• Exploring leadership beyond Western-centric cultural paradigms

Complexity and learning models. The research findings from the open and axial data codes pointed to the concept of complexity as the over-arching selective theme to answer the first research question on leaders' challenges in the Asia region when leading teams today. Participants described a rapidly evolving environmental context marked by disruption and uncertainty. Faced with a world in a deep state of flux, participants noted that no one leader could have enough knowledge to lead on their own. The complexity of business problems was more challenging than ever before, requiring the collaboration of domain experts with in-depth knowledge and global coordination to operate successfully. Henceforth, leaders no longer saw themselves as a single source of truth or knowledge, resulting in a fundamental re-appraisal of their role from sole decision-makers to team enablers and relationship brokers. Leaders and followers alike acknowledged that the leader's role was not to centralize or hoard knowledge for power but rather facilitate information access through interactions, collaboration, networking, and shared learning.

These research findings were consistent with the study's conceptual model of exploring leadership within new learning and knowledge paradigms (see Figure 23). Literature that disagrees with this finding includes traditional learning theories (H. Mann, 1853; Swett, 1876), which are based on obedience and authority with teachers as the central source of knowledge and learners as recipients. Similarly, behaviorist learning theories (Pavlov, 1927; Skinner, 1938; Thorndike, 1913; Tolman, 1932; Watson, 1930) aim to calibrate human behavior through stimulus-response mechanisms disempowering learners and making teachers conditioning supervisors. In contrast, literature that agrees with the findings includes the more contemporary learning theories such as cognitivism (Bruner, 1961; Köhler & Winter, 1925; Piaget, 1952), constructivism (Bruner, 1961; Dewey, 1922; Knowles et al., 2005a; Piaget, 1977; Vygotsky &

Cole, 1978), humanism (Bandura, 1977; Barth, 1988; Maslow, 1943), and connectivism (Downes, 2007, 2008; Siemens, 2005b, 2006). These theories support a change in how knowledge is constructed and mediated through a web of social interactions and online information networks. New learning theories also shift the teacher's role to a group mediator, facilitator, collaborator, and connector, which was the exact language used by participants when describing leaders today. The data were well aligned with some key aspects of constructivism, humanism, and connectivism in crucial areas:

- The principles of learning, for meaning-making and creating connections;
- The act of learning, based on social interactions, feelings, and communities;
- The role of learners, as meaning-makers and networkers;
- The role of teachers, as connectors and collaborators; and
- Teaching practices, based on communities, peer input, and reflection.

When describing the changing role of leaders and followers, participants closely mirrored the teacher and learner relationship presented by connectivism, which establishes them as equal collaborators and places more emphasis on building the learner's ability to navigate information, create connections, and take part in the human activity within networks.

Complexity and organizational models. Aside from changing the way knowledge was constructed and the relationships between leaders and followers, complexity was also fostering new organizational structures and ways of working that were more agile and responsive to change. Shortening business cycles, shifting consumer demand, and constant change forced Asian leaders to break traditional ways of working and respond with innovative organizational structures. The most noteworthy break from the past was removing hierarchical ways of working in favor of collaborative approaches and teamwork, with flatter structures, part-time staff, and

project-based work. Literature that disagrees with this finding includes the mechanistic organizational systems that promote legacy leader-centric approaches. Centralized (A. Smith, 2008), scientific (Fayol, 1916; Taylor, 1911), and bureaucratic organizations (Weber, 1979) were precisely what participants aimed to eliminate, seeking to deliberately remove the structural concentration of power and the resulting dominating and directive leadership approaches. Using start-up culture (i.e., innovating and failing fast) and experimenting with new team-based configurations, participants sought to break silos by reorganizing their teams through specialization areas, distributing decision-making, and sharing leadership. Throughout their entire workflow, teams used technology to share information, collaborate, ideate, and innovate in real-time. The research findings were consistent with the study's conceptual model of emerging postheroic leadership within new organizational paradigms (see Figure 23). As described by this literature, organizations structure themselves to adapt for change through organic and agile systems, using technology and team-based approaches, with virtual e-leadership becoming a commonplace practice. Within theories of organic organizational systems, the participant data was most aligned with the literature of agile organizations, which offers fluid, lean, and flexible structures designed for change and customer-centricity (Denning, 2015; Zeffane, 1992). Most participants would agree that "the shape of leadership needs to change from a hierarchical pyramid, with leaders at the pinnacle and followers beneath, to a network where leadership and followership work fluidly, and interchangeably, as a network of actors" (Simon Western, 2019, p. xvii). While some participants referenced matrix organizations (Davis & Lawrence, 1977) and noted that they were imperfect for today's needs, there was no consensus on the ideal structure or organizational theory for the future. Participants were all trying out their versions of agile, indicating that what mattered most was to remove hierarchy and be as democratic and distributed

as possible. As such, participants aligned with the concept of the “innovative organization” (Mintzberg, 1979) promoting decentralized decision-making with knowledge workers capable of managing complex tasks and dealing with change. Several experts referenced the Teal organizational model (Laloux, 2014), indicating it was gaining a lot of interest and momentum in Asia.

Connectivity and purpose, and learning models. The research findings from the open and axial data codes pointed to the concepts of connectivity and purpose as the over-arching selective themes to answer the second research question on the leadership approaches and paradigms that leaders and teams used when leading teams in Asia. Leaders explained that they were investing heavily in developing a culture of always-on learning for their teams agreeing strongly with the words of Toffler (1970) that “tomorrow’s illiterate will not be the man who can’t read; he will be the man who has not learned how to learn” (p. 271). The need for learning was driven by the context of greater complexity (and thus seen as a necessity to adapt to change) and a desire to create more connectivity across teams and shared purpose. In redesigning their responsibilities and their teams, leaders used learning as a framework to bring people together, break down hierarchy, seniority, and titles. Learning allowed leaders to even the playing field by having younger, more junior people with specific knowledge (e.g., digital skills) train the more senior leaders. Thus, leaders could let everyone take part in discussions, decision-making and create bottoms-up influence. Team knowledge sharing and making also enabled shaping organizational culture based on more profound connections, diversity of thought, and openness. Some participants described their organization as “a learning organism,” fostering a growth mindset. Importantly, always-on learning was not just enabled within the confines of the organization through corporate training. Among the new ways of working, Asian leaders

referenced the importance of allowing their teams to learn on their own, through time off, educational credits for classes outside of work, and networking. Some companies practiced an open desk policy to bring other workers into their office to help create coworking spaces and invite external points of view. Others mentioned inviting external speakers regularly to inspire their teams to think outside of the box. An expert interviewed (Expert #7) described this phenomenon as “learning in the wild” with a widening of learning integrated through praxis of daily activities, working communities, and extended networks.

These research findings were aligned with the study’s conceptual model of exploring leadership within new learning and knowledge paradigms (see Figure 23), fostering social interactions and information networks (offline and online). The connectivism literature agrees with these findings and has firmly established that learning is a life-long activity versus a specific point in time or academic pursuit (Siemens, 2005a). Specifically, connectivism encourages learning outside of the school environment and stresses the criticality of learning networks within and outside organizations, noting that “learning now occurs in a variety of ways—through communities of practice, personal networks, and through completion of work-related tasks” (Siemens, 2005a, p. 1). Contrary to behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism that see learning as residing within an individual’s brain, connectivism contends that learning is socially constructed as “a connection-forming (network-creation) process” (Siemens, 2005b, p. 1) and involves the interaction of both individuals and technology. Furthermore, the four principles of connectivism—connectedness, diversity, autonomy, and openness—directly align with participants’ motives for facilitating an always-on learning culture (Siemens, 2005a). Through learning, leaders influenced organizational culture, made everyone more open to

change, brought diverse perspectives, and promoted new ways of working collectively and autonomously.

Providing purpose through meaning-making was also a primary concern driving the learning agenda of participants. Siemens (2005b) explains that “meaning in a network is created through the formation of connections and encoding nodes” (p. 13). Latent Semantic Analysis (Landauer & Dumais, 1997) shows that learning can be enhanced beyond the value contained within one element by introducing a new node that enhances connections between concepts previously unrelated. In practice, domain experts, external speakers, and part-time workers fulfilled this role (new network nodes), bringing unexposed knowledge to leaders and teams through adaptive, self-organizing sharing rather than the traditional leader-centric and hierarchical knowledge cascade model. Connectionist theory (Lord et al., 2001) offers the assumption that leadership develops and is affected by networks of relationships occurring at various levels throughout organizations and assumes that leadership is a perceptual process. The perceptual processes from individuals can be affected systematically by a variety of social and task constraints that are both affective and cognitive. In facilitating always-on learning, Asian leaders activated semantic encoding of new ways of leading through expanded relationship networks and perceptions.

Connectivity and purpose, and organizational models. In addition to promoting an always-on learning culture, connectivity and purpose were also driving new ways of working, consistent with the study’s conceptual model of emerging postheroic leadership within new organizational paradigms (see Figure 23). As described by this literature, there has been a change in the unit of analysis for leadership, evolving from the individual to the collective, away from legacy leader-centric views to more collective and connected approaches, and a holistic

understanding of the leadership system. Participants highlighted the changing nature of leadership based on greater connectivity and purpose. They illustrated new ways of working (i.e., start-up culture, removal of hierarchy, teamwork, specialists, and e-leadership) to distribute leadership through empowerment, transparency, shared decision-making, and collective influence. Participants also explained that leaders were no longer the center of gravity for leadership and instead were "leading from behind," focused on giving their teams more ownership and accountability. As part of the leaders' changing role, participants emphasized removing the ego associated with leadership and instead demonstrating humility, vulnerability, compassion, empathy, and emotional intelligence.

Further to the change in the unit of analysis for leadership from the individual to the collective, participants expressed emerging postheroic leadership views in line with the literature review describing a change in the role of followers who were no longer seen as subservient to the leader but an integral part of the leadership dynamic. They could take turns becoming leaders themselves based on changing environmental conditions. Participants highlighted that the word "followers" had become inadequate and antiquated, given their new role as "co-founders," "backers," "passengers," "teachers," and "leaders" in their own right.

The literature that disagrees with these findings includes the legacy leader-centric approaches within mechanistic organizational systems that promote leadership theories primarily anchored on traits (Bernard, 1926; Carlyle, 1841; Kohs & Irle, 1920; R. D. Mann, 1959), skills (R. Katz, 1955), and style (Stogdill, 1948), where the leader is the primary and sole focus of leadership. In these theories, leadership is charismatic, dominating, directive, controlling, and entirely leader centric. In contrast, the literature that agrees with these findings is part of the emerging postheroic leadership paradigm with leadership theories based on relational and

responsive approaches. It is worth noting that Asian leaders were incredibly progressive in their views of followers, going much further than reciprocal leadership theories such as the Leader-Member Exchange (Dansereau et al., 1975) theory, which treats leadership as a dyadic relationship but still manages interactions within a leader and subordinate approach. Participants often mentioned Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1998b) stating its importance not only on their personal values (as seen in the screener and participant profile descriptions) but also in their leadership practices relating to their team members. The views and experiences expressed by participants closely matched networked leadership theories such as shared leadership (D. V. Day et al., 2004; Pearce & Conger, 2003), e-leadership (Zaccaro & Bader, 2003; Zigurs, 2003), and swarm leadership (Gloor, 2017; Kelly, 2019).

Community and learning models. The research findings from the open and axial data codes pointed to the concept of community as the over-arching selective theme to answer the third research question on the role of culture and technology, which were both seen as highly influential in the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context. Technology's role was far more significant than just that of a utility tool; it was a community platform supporting all aspects of life in Asia, foundational for any business activity, and connecting things, people, and emotion. Henceforth, technology was a force charting a new leadership path, enabling its practice and purpose to be more about equal access to information, decision-making, and distributed influence. Many participants used the word "democratization" in reference to the impact of technology on information, learning, and leadership and how they operationalized its potential in their way of leading.

These research findings were consistent with the study's conceptual model of exploring leadership within new learning and knowledge paradigms (see Figure 23). Through their

practices and end goals, participants demonstrated that they were operating in the Semantic Condition, a mechanism, based on eight network principles, for an organization (Downes, 2017):

1. Decentralize;
2. Distribute;
3. Disintermediate;
4. Disaggregate;
5. Dis-integrate;
6. Democratize;
7. Dynamize; and
8. Desegregate.

Participants exhibited the characteristics of networks and communities in their leadership approaches following the four essential principles for the creation of meaning, truth, and value in networks (Downes, 2017):

1. Autonomy—fostering cooperation, exchange, and mutual value over coordination and control;
2. Diversity—favoring diversity over sameness;
3. Openness—creating connections, perspective, context, and bridges, over closed groups and exclusive membership; and
4. Interactivity—encouraging distributed and spontaneous conversations over a centralized broadcast approach.

Community and cultural models. The community was also a vital concept tied to culture. Regardless of their nationality, participants expressed a sense of shared culture from being Asian with family-based relationships, a collaboration-oriented approach to being and

working, a learning mindset, and a holistic view of work and play with a concern for society. Participants managed their personal and work relationships as a family integrating leadership within national cultural practices. Co-workers were treated as family members, shielded from lay-offs, and often taken to new jobs alongside their leaders who acted as lifelong mentors, building an extended network of relationships referred to in the Chinese language as *guanxi*, a word often used by participants from China and Singapore in their interviews. As a result, leaders were overly concerned with leadership based on connections, trusted, non-confrontational relationships, group outcomes versus individual ones, and a focus on community. Leadership success was benchmarked against being a force for humanity and good, aiding society versus the age-old leader-centric expectations of status, money, and position.

These research findings were consistent with the study's conceptual model of exploring leadership beyond Western-centric cultural paradigms (see Figure 23). The literature review findings highlighted the need to embrace alternative understandings of leadership informed by more complex local, societal, and cultural values that challenge generalizable or universal leadership assumptions. The literature that disagrees with these findings includes most of the leadership studies, which have been constructed from Western ontology, epistemology, and axiology (S. Wilson, 2013). Despite researchers' best intentions, biases from Western worldviews have been passed on to leadership theories with assumptions of their universality. One example is the widespread assertion that transformational leadership (Downton, 1973) is one of the most appropriate leadership forms to date. However, transformational leadership did not align with what participants were describing in this study, and there were no references to improving the performance of followers to their fullest potential through idealized influence. This finding is also consistent with new research directions in leadership, which show that

transformational leadership remains a Western theory built on a universal leadership premise. Recent research in Japan has shown that transformational leadership is ineffective as transformational leaders are often seen as being too abstract and manipulative (Steers et al., 2012). Another bias in the prevailing North American leadership literature is the individualistic focus of leadership through leader-centric characteristics such as traits, personality, skills, style, and charismatic focus (Blunt & Jones, 1997; House & Javidan, 2004). This logic diminishes followers' fundamental role, sometimes presenting them as tools rather than core contributors to the leadership process and the enablers of its outcomes. Furthermore, Margaret Wheatley (2007) asserts that "Western cultural views of how best to organize and lead (the majority paradigm in use in the world) are contrary to what life teaches. Western practices attempt to dominate life" (p. 1) through fear and control rather than self-interest in people and "the more noble human traits of cooperation, caring, and generosity" (p. 2).

Literature that agrees with these findings supports the importance of cultural models for interpreting leadership and aligns with the meaning of leadership as a cultural construct (Steers et al., 2012). As presented in the literature review, the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) study offers one of the most extensive classifications of national cultures applied to leadership to date (Dorfman et al., 2012). Supporting the study's meta theme of community, GLOBE describes the desired leadership behaviors of both Confucian and Southern Asia clusters primarily driven by a community perspective through:

- Team-oriented leadership, where leadership is collective based on team-building and the common purposes of team members;
- Participative leadership, where leadership involves others and is non-autocratic; and

- Human-oriented leadership, where leadership is compassionate and generous toward others (House & Javidan, 2004).

According to Hai (2020), businesses in China and East Asia exist within a framework of family values and relationship networks, which accounts for their community orientation. Communitarian values drive a different cultural foundation for what a firm means with a concern for society at large, including servicing a vast number of stakeholders such as employees, customers, and suppliers, versus only answering to shareholders. The emphasis on serving the community was noted by participants on many occasions when asked about the influence of culture on leadership in the Asia region and their accounts of the transformation of leadership in general. Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong (1992), who researched social relations in China, compared relationship networks to ripples in water. The family clan is at the center of the circle, with actors in the community sitting on the outer rims and communitarian values driving behavior above self-interest. This image contrasts with Western businesses depicted as bundles of rice straws representing a focus on the individual with clear boundaries that do not extend to community relationships (Xiaotong, 1992).

Findings in the Context of the Leadership Literature

Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT) is a helpful emergent leadership theory to characterize and understand participants' social behavior in this study. It provides a framework to give meaning to the complexity associated with leaders' challenges in the Asia region today. The study captured the richness of participants' experiences as they depicted what was keeping them up at night, explained the reasons for their challenges, and painted a vivid description of how leadership had changed versus ten years ago. Participants isolated three main areas of contextual complexity, accounting for their leadership challenges:

1. Societal complexity—driven by structural causal conditions (i.e., global order instability, changing cultural norms, social injustice, accelerated pace of change, generational divide) and by the unexpected shock of the recent global COVID-19 pandemic;
2. Technological complexity—accelerated by digital transformation, social networking, artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality; and
3. Information complexity—spurred on by real-time, on-demand feeds, and big data proliferation.

This complex environmental context created a constant state of flux with disruption and uncertainty, resulting in a profound leadership transformation (see Figure 17). Leaders operated in a "new normal" characterized by "messy," "chaotic," "uncertain," and "unpredictable" dynamics where change was the only constant. Instability defined the world of participants at large and their organizational environment with lay-offs, companies going out of business, new business models, and new ways of operating due to the global pandemic with work from home and new e-leadership approaches. Participants characterized 2020 as a "thunderbolt year" and "a turning point," marking the paroxysm of complexity.

In the 1990s, interest in complex systems developed with the increased nature of networked dynamics in all aspects of life, from social interactions to macroeconomics through the pervasive deployment of the internet and social networks. Faced with increased unpredictability and rapid change, scholars turned to complexity science to challenge structural stability and deterministic paradigms, which were no longer suited to delineate the world and the dramatic changes in organizational environments. Complexity science draws on a wide array of disciplines, including evolutionary biology and physics, to understand the behavior of specific

systems. Complexity theory posits that organizations are Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) subject to disruption and change. It "suggests that all complex systems change to adapt to their environments. It explains that there are important limits to an analytic, reductionistic approach to understanding organizational processes" (Hogue & Lord, 2007, p. 372). The five principles of complexity science are of high relevance to the interpretation of participants' description of their environment and their ways of interacting with change (Siemens et al., 2018):

- Complexity Principle #1: Networks—Participants were aligned with the notion that networks formed the underpinning structure of society in Asia (driven by culture and technology) and fostered new ways of learning and working. The need for leadership to be anchored in a system of networks with transparency, openness, and democratic engagement was considered essential;
- Complexity Principle #2: Emergence—Participants allowed themselves and their teams to experiment with new business models, ideas, and structures to respond to change rather than control their environment. Thus, they exhibited the dynamics of emergence that scholars have attributed to Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS). "Complex adaptive systems are systems that adapt and evolve in the process of interacting with dynamic environments" (Merali & Allen, 2011, p. 41);
- Complexity Principle #3: Self-organization and social coordination—Participants practiced self-organization and encouraged ownership and autonomy among their teams. One participant (#4) equated this to "leadership as a blockchain" as work was distributed and socially coordinated by team members rather than by a central authority. This principle was also true of "learning in the wild" (Expert #7), which occurred through self-organization and social organization strategies;

- Complexity Principle #4: Feedback sensitivity—Participants made extensive use of feedback from diverse actors to inform decision-making. They particularly called out intentional strategies and numerous feedback mechanisms for allowing more junior and younger team members to voice their opinions. This approach was consistent with leveraging feedback as a central entity to enable systems thinking; and
- Complexity Principle #5: Agility—Participants demonstrated a mindset of adaptation and discussed how they were working in an agile manner with "high velocity," "iteration," and comfort with "failure" to experiment. Both the people strategies (i.e., part-time workers, consultants, interns, project work) and planning processes (i.e., daily check-ins, group instant messages, team stand-ups, virtual coffees) were designed to create flexibility and deal with unpredictability (p. 30).

Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT) is an emerging and growing body of literature (Hazy & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Lichtenstein et al., 2006; R. Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Plowman et al., 2007; Shamir, 2007; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008) that draws on complexity as a new context for understanding leadership and the way it is enacted. Applied to the understanding leadership, CLT postulates that the basis for leadership action is the adaptability to respond to chaos and unpredictability. Complexity theories of leadership propose strategies that leaders can use for developing complex responses to complex problems. CLT makes some key assumptions guiding leadership as it aims to foster change through a non-positivist perspective looking at "leadership as influence in the context of interactive networks rather than as agents who direct and control change" (Russ Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2011, p. 395).

First, the organizational paradigm guiding CLT is that organizations are Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) subject to disruption and change. To facilitate action in complex

organizational systems, CLT advocates for nonlinear dynamics and the end of centralized, hierarchical organizations with controlling leadership in favor of adaptive behavior, organizational change, and transformation (P. Allen et al., 2011). This view is consistent with the research findings and how Asian leaders described their organizations and were re-imagining their ways of working (i.e., embracing the start-up model, removing hierarchy and traditional signs of power, creating new structures, and doing away with long-term planning).

Second, the unit of leadership analysis in CLT is the collective dynamic, a complex set of processes involving a network of relationships among multi-level components in an organizational system. CLT promotes collective interactions and a richness of ideas from multiple and divergent places (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). This approach is also consistent with the research findings. Participants and experts alike described how leadership in Asia was transitioning from traditional hierarchical heroic-centric paradigms (based on tradition, order consensus, face, compliance, and obedience) to newer, more collective, digitally connected, and networked approaches.

Third, CLT recasts the role of leaders in the context of managing uncertainty through creativity, enablement, and learning. Different scholarly orientations underscore different functions that leaders play, but they all converge on the belief that leadership is about distributed influence instead of the traditional leadership paradigm of control. This assessment is also consistent with the research findings as leaders emphasized their changing roles from a single source of truth, knowledge, and power to becoming enablers and connectors. According to Uhl-Bien et al. (2007), CLT envisions three types of leadership described as intertwined functions: (a) adaptive, (b) administrative, and (c) enabling. Adaptive leadership encourages innovation and adaptive outcomes with a focus on creativity and learning. Administrative leadership fulfills a

managerial role to plan, structure, and coordinate organizational activities and resource allocation. Enabling leadership plays the role of a mediator between administrative and adaptive leadership to enable adaptive outcomes. Its role is to promote the right conditions so adaptive leadership can occur. In all these cases, leadership is not the act of a single individual, but rather the actions of a group dynamic of interdependent actors. The participants from this study were most aligned with the adaptive and enabling leadership functions of the CLT. Some Asian leaders depicted their roles as generating creativity, learning, and readiness for change (adaptive leadership), while others saw their roles as creating an "environment," a "space," and a "framework" for leadership to emerge (enabling leadership).

Moreover, CLT articulates the types of relationships that leaders have with their teams within distributed influence. In this study, Asian leaders indicated that they were brokering various relationships within the organizational environment, alternating between being an "advocate," "facilitator," "coach," "mobilizer," and "energizer." As part of CLT, leadership for organizational adaptability (Uhl-Bien & Arenab, 2018) addresses how leaders lead change through networked behaviors such as brokering, connecting, facilitating, and energizing to trigger and amplify the emergence of creativity, innovation, learning, and growth. This literature supports the study findings; participants indicated that they were dissociating themselves from top-down leadership through vision statements and centralized goals in favor of adjusting their behaviors based on the environment to connect with their teams through purpose. "The core challenge for leaders is to develop systems that enable efficiency and innovation by combining centralized purpose with decentralized power" (Uhl-Bien & Arenab, 2018, p. 92).

Aside from taking on different roles at different times, Asian leaders also shared that they were "making sense" of the complexity and "connecting the dots." CLT supports this finding and

describes “emergence” as a critical concept of this theory. It is the spontaneous response of actors through self-organization that allows the emergence of new ideas and innovation. Therefore, leaders are “sense-makers,” giving meaning to complexity and change, rather than trying to control it.

Leadership for organizational adaptability also advocates for leaders to play disruptors by promoting tension, uncertainty, and surprise. Leaders enable the process of “conflicting” to shape adaptive outcomes (Lichtenstein, 2014) and take part in destabilizing things (Plowman et al., 2007). According to Capron and Mitchell (2009), “conflict can help create new views of problems and generate new insights for solutions” (p. 308). However, this interpretation of conflict may present a Western-centric bias on how innovation is universally created. This part of the theory was not consistent with the study findings as Asian leaders, due to cultural factors such as seeking harmony (Fang & Ling, 2003) and saving face (Javidan et al., 2010), did not see their role as enabling conflict. In contrast, they focused on managing change through connectivity, community, and shared purpose.

Fourth, CLT conceptualizes the role of followers as contributors of the emergence of innovation and novelty. CLT challenges that “the leader is at the center of change, maneuvering and motivating players and directing organizational response as issues arise” (Russ Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2011, p. 395). In alignment with the study findings, CLT finds no more “followers” per se as they are part of an interactive network dynamic that produces adaptive outcomes with their leaders. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) propose that “leadership should be seen not only as position and authority but also as an emergent, interactive dynamic—a complex interplay from which a collective impetus for action and change emerges” (p. 299).

Fifth, CLT proposes a leadership metaphor anchored on complexity science and leadership as a living organism. From its foundations in complexity science, CLT looks at adaptation through the lens of evolution and organizations behaving like biological systems (Merali & Allen, 2011). CLT encourages leadership through swarm behaviors and nonlinear interactions, in line with other theories using swarm intelligence as a new way to think about business (Bonabeau & Meyer, 2001; Gloor, 2017; Kelly, 2019).

In summary, Complexity Leadership Theory offers a very different point of view on leadership than traditional leadership theories; it redefines the organizational paradigm (through Complex Adaptive Systems), the leadership genesis (change ecology), the leadership agenda (adaptability), the unit of leadership analysis (collective dynamics), the role of leaders (managing uncertainty through ceding control), the role of followers (adaptive outcome producers), and the leadership metaphor (leadership as a swarm). To date, "there is little evidence in the empirical literature of actual take-up of complexity theory as a basis for action in leadership. One exception is the VISA Corporation, which has been cited as the best example of an organisation purposefully adopting complexity principles" (Rosenhead et al., 2019, p. 19). This study's results broadly align with the theories of Complexity Leadership Theory; participants agreed that one of their biggest leadership challenges was to enable organizational and people adaptability to cope with complexity. However, the study findings also highlighted some other dimensions not included in the Complexity Leadership Theory. Firstly, connectivity was a vital dimension of the leadership phenomenon explored in this study. Participants conceptualized leadership in the context of connectivity at two levels: (a) leadership was enabled by connectivity through complex networks of technology and people, and (b) leadership was in service of connectivity to connect not just information flows and tasks, but people, their intelligence, expertise knowledge

areas, their human emotions, and their energy. Secondly, the theme of purpose was central to this study, guiding participants' team-centric approaches, the changing role of leaders, followers, and organizations, and their expectations for the future of leadership.

Findings and Literature Gaps

Connectivity. The meta theme of connectivity discussed as part of F2 and linked to RQ2 guided (a) the strategies that Asian leaders and their teams used to respond to complexity (connectivity to adjust to complexity) and (b) was a direct consequence of the environmental context (increased connectivity as a result of the leadership transformation), as presented in Figure 15. Leadership, as participants enacted it, was based on creating and growing connections to:

- Connect information across the organization, thus democratizing leadership through learning and equal information access;
- Connect people to tasks by identifying and matching domain expertise areas to projects;
- Connect various forms of intelligence to create better solutions and outcomes; and
- Connect people for human bonding, emotion, and collective energy.

Asian leaders depicted themselves as "connectors" and the "glue" to others seeking to be in constant connection with their teams (even outside of work) and taking time to manage an extended network of relationships both inside and outside the organization. When describing how to mentor and grow other leaders, Asian leaders did not discuss training for individual leadership competencies but rather encouraged the formation of networks and relationships. Connection skills were deemed essential for leadership success in the future.

The leadership framework of Complexity Leadership Theory anchors its organizational paradigm on Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) within a context of change and disruption. Although it recognizes that leadership is not an individual behavior and acknowledges the importance of networks in new organizational structures, it does not directly address connectivity as a central motive for leadership. Thus, a problematic gap exists in the literature, requiring exploring other theories and ideas to address leadership for connectivity adequately.

In describing the emergence of leadership in social networks, Clemson and Evans (2012) demonstrate that an initial power-law dynamic always emerges in leadership structures with most agents following the choices made by a few others. Few leaders naturally stand out, and the majority take on the role of followers. However, as the degree of distribution of the network evolves, there is a distribution of influence, and the power-law in leadership is cut off. This network model explains what Asian leaders sought to achieve through connectivity: to diminish the power-law network dynamic influence.

Pescosolido (2002) proposes that leaders are managers of group emotions. In times of uncertainty, leaders provide an emotional response that helps teams interpret and manage events, resolving ambiguity, and fostering collective action. This affective response creates a shared emotional currency that builds collaboration, bonding, and solidarity. Group emotional management is based on an emergent dynamic rather than individual competencies; different group members can take on this role at different times based on various conditions, including the leader's level of empathy, group norms, and feedback. The idea of expressing leadership as a group's emotional management is consistent with the study findings as Asian leaders described themselves as connectors of people to drive "team momentum," and collective "energy."

A recent body of research explores how to recast leadership for the development of human capacity. Bennis and Nanus (1998) argue that a new generation of socially connected and aware leaders leverage emerging technologies to create new organizational structures and shape leadership through collaboration and shared values. The likely leadership model of the twenty-first century consists of more collegial organizations with distributed power and the leader not only as a change agent but as a "social architect" focused on people (Bennis & Nanus, 1998, p. 7). This literature is consistent with the findings and the perspectives of both participants and experts on leadership as a philosophy of connecting to and with people.

Simon Western (2019) leverages the critical discourse analysis of Foucault (1972) to identify four dominant leadership systems of thought in the last century:

1. The Controller, placing leadership within an environment of efficiency and productivity,
2. The Therapist, focusing on relationships and worker motivation;
3. The Messiah, anchoring leadership on vision and culture; and
4. Eco-leadership, emphasizing connectivity, and ethics.

In the Eco-leadership discourse, leadership focuses on breaking down silos, democratizing influence and power, and creating connectivity through networks enabled by networking technology. This "new leadership for new times" (Simon Western, 2019, p. 255) is a recent response to the turbulent changes of the digital age and the modern networked society. Two forms of Eco-leadership exist concurrently: (a) Commercial Eco-leadership, which leverages the connectivity of networks for business activity, and (b) Ethical Eco-leadership, which is more progressive and aims to leverage connectivity for ethical purposes by connecting organizations to the broader ecosystems they interact with for societal well-being. Combining

both connectivity and social responsibility, Ethical Eco-leadership is well aligned to the study findings in terms of how participants described their leadership practices, the technology tools they used, and their organizations' evolution towards ecosystems connecting people internally and externally for the greater good.

Purpose. Another meta theme part of F2 linked to RQ2 was the concept of purpose. Purpose was cited as one of the main reasons explaining the way leadership was enacted in the Asia context as a result of (a) societal cultural expectations, (b) new expectations of Asian youth in the workplace, and (c) team motivation. Participants and experts agreed that leadership had taken on "a purpose orientation" with more significant concern for justice and "leadership for good" in the last few years, which was accelerating.

The field of leadership ethics appearing in the late 1990s examines how leadership can contribute to better societal outcomes (J. B. Ciulla, 1998). However, most of these ethical theories remain leader-centric and focus on a leader's conduct and character. Asian leadership studies also make a strong case for morality and values. The Chinese CPM Leadership Behavioral Model (Ling et al., 1987) advances that a leader's Character (the "C" factor) is a critical leadership competency that confers the right to the leader to play a more prominent role in society. Similarly, the Chinese Implicit Leadership Theory (Ling, 1989) identifies personal morality as the top-ranked dimension of Chinese leadership, noting that personal morality is a critical cultural expectation of leadership. To a certain extent, this is consistent with the study findings as Asian leaders were demonstrating Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1998b) and moral virtues with a marked focus on "empathy," "humility," "compassion," and "vulnerability." Alibaba CEO, Jack Ma (2018), who is an iconic Chinese leader globally spoke about the evolution of leadership noting that "last century, people competed with muscle. This century, it's

not muscle, it's wisdom." He stressed the importance of having high EQ for success even noting the importance of "LQ", the love intelligence quotient. In this study, participants' search for purpose was also motivated by a more significant collective endeavor to provide a sense of direction and meaning to life and business activity.

In their analysis of plural leadership, Denis et al. (2012) identify four types of leadership that propose different phenomena in collective leadership influence:

1. Sharing leadership for team effectiveness;
2. Pooling leadership at the top to lead others;
3. Spreading leadership across levels over time; and
4. Producing leadership through interactions.

In the fourth category, "leadership is fundamentally more about participation and collectively creating a sense of direction than it is about control and exercising authority" (Denis et al., 2012, p. 254). They advocate bringing a social network perspective to plural leadership dynamics to provide a more critical perspective on the role of power and purpose in leadership enactment.

Hickman (1998) argues that the current environmental context of turbulence is placing leadership within a new social imperative and that organizations must "purposely link their survival efforts to the survival and well-being of society" (p. 560). A new framework of "transformistic organizations" is needed to link economic activity and human capabilities to societal purpose. A transforming leadership approach (J. M. Burns, 1978) is required to create motivation through morality for the advancement of society instead of just for the benefits of the corporation. Consequently, leadership becomes a form of social activism to translate economic

activity into societal well-being. Transforming leadership within a transformistic organization framework requires a fundamental shift of leadership toward greater connectivity:

- Building interconnectedness (externally and internally);
- Utilizing interaction-focused organizational design;
- Liberating human potential and increasing human capabilities; and
- Identifying and developing core values and a unifying purpose (Robinson Hickman, 1998).

This conceptual framework, although not a leadership theory per se, is well aligned to the study findings as it recognizes the complexity of the environment faced by participants and how organizations and leadership are both transforming to answer the social imperative of today's more considerable societal challenges and leadership's activist role.

Conclusions

The findings of this qualitative grounded theory study established the emergence of a new form of leadership within the Asia region. The lived experiences of 42 study participants were systematically analyzed through three research questions and fifteen interview sub-questions to determine the actions, interactions, conditions, and consequences of the new leadership phenomenon. The findings were conclusive in answering the central research "if, and to what extent, are leaders and teams shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships?" A theoretical model is provided in Figure 15, which proposes a visual summary of the meta themes from all the interviews and their interconnections. The final study findings are also listed below:

- F1 (linked to RQ1)—Leadership challenges were plentiful and multi-dimensional, forcing Asian leaders and teams to operate in a context of greater complexity characterized by disruption and uncertainly, resulting in a profound transformation of leadership;
- F2 (linked to RQ2)—Asian leaders were breaking traditional ways of working with leadership practices shifting from concentrated (leader-centric) to distributed (team-enabled) based on a desire for more connectivity and purpose; and
- F3 (linked to RQ3)—Culture (national and organizational) and technology exerted a significant influence on leadership in the Asia context. The leadership process was based on a system of shared and digitally connected relationships supporting community and meaning-making.

The main conclusions of this study can be best summarized through the participants' voices. As parting thoughts, participants and experts were asked to think about the title of a book that would best exemplify the future of leadership in Asia. These findings are presented here directly against the central research question breaking it down into key analytical sections.

C1: A New Understanding of Leadership

Participants and experts agreed that it was a pivotal time for leadership as they were entering a new leadership "era" manifested by a new level of awareness and mental models:

- "I'd like to think that we are going into, for lack of a better word, almost like a new era, whereby we're seeking some form of enlightenment." (Participant #6)
- "I think we're going to have to raise the level of awareness of what leadership really is. We need a new level of consciousness, actually. I think most leaders are not fit for

purpose. In order to lead effectively in this new world, I think we need to become deeply grounded in ourselves first." (Expert #6)

- "In the past, leadership had a very sharp silhouette, you know, you had a very sharp idea in mind of what was a leader, but now it's very blurred lines. I would hope to see some new leadership models emerge." (Participant #16)
- "We've always started the whole leadership conversation with the sort of classic ID of the leader; you know it's an older man with a beard, he's sort of looks very strong and powerful and all these kinds of things. That is so deficient, and we need to facilitate a transformation of letting go. I don't think we have that image yet; we haven't created it culturally. It needs to be softer and visualize allies by giving your power away. I like the opportunity to think about how we can create a new icon for leadership to foster new understanding." (Expert # 7)

One expert chose to title his book on the future of leadership: "Purpose, chaos and navigating uncertainty" (Expert #5). This captured well the overall sentiment of reimagining leadership to respond to greater complexity (F1) through purpose (F2). As they were shifting their understanding of leadership, Asian leaders and their teams also expressed their confidence in Asia being at the forefront of a leadership renaissance:

- "We're resetting the leadership mindset because Asian culture can be very collaborative, you know, friendly. So, if we set up this right, it could actually be a new model, it's the new Asian way." (Participant #2)
- "The timing I think is right. You know, I think it's a moment of reckoning for Asia for it to be bigger in the scheme of things. America has been the bully in the playground for a long time." (Participant #14)

- "I think there is great opportunity for leadership in Asia. In Chinese, we say 危机, which means that a crisis also brings the opportunity." (Participant #26)

C2: New Leadership Practices

Research findings evidenced that leadership practices were shifting from concentrated (leader-centric) to distributed (team-enabled). Book titles on the future of leadership included:

- "Democratizing leadership." (Participant #3)
- "Leadership as a blockchain." (Participant #4)
- "Representative leadership." (Participant #3)
- "From Hierarchy to Merit." (Participant #5)
- "Leading from the center of the polygon." (Participant #29)
- "The future of us." (Participant #27)
- "The death of Superman and the birth of the Avengers." (Expert #13)

Participants situated the future of leadership in a postheroic leadership paradigm in line with the changes they were already making:

- "In the future, leadership will be a lot more distributed. We will be leading from the passenger seat and purpose will be the driver, not the person anymore." (Participant #29)
- "I think it's all about democratizing leadership, where distributed people take turns leading." (Participant #4)
- "We went from the corner office, to the open office, which democratized work, and then came COVID and there's no office anymore! So, what it means for leadership is that we went from leadership charisma, personality, and physical presence to a new human emotional structure." (Participant #9)

- "I guess you could finally go all the way to the end of the spectrum, which is, you know, everyone's a leader." (Participant #10)
- "The best leaders will be able to lead without knowing because they will be open to actually being led themselves." (Participant #6)

C3: A New Leadership Process

Research findings supported the notion that leaders and teams were shifting to a system of shared and digitally connected relationships. Research findings revealed the importance of the Asian family structure as a critical cultural paradigm for fostering collective ways of working. In the future, such practices were deemed essential, with an increased focus on leadership as a form of deep human connection with book titles including:

- "Don't follow me, walk with me, we'll go together." (Participant #9)
- "The connector curator leadership approach." (Participant #10)
- "Shining the light on others and illuminating the way together." (Participant #17)
- "The leadership murmuration." (Participant #25)

Participants saw leadership evolving more toward social and psychological sciences than business management, with the leader embracing a key connector role described as the "glue:"

- "I think a good leader of a team within an organization needs to create purpose and bond with collaboration. Provide togetherness and a glue without potentially much physical contact." (Participant #13)
- "Leaders should not be the boss, be the glue. Bosses provide authoritarian hierarchy, whereas being the glue is what holds a team together." (Participant #24)
- "The leader is really the glue for everything together, bringing knowledge together and the right talent. Leadership should be circles of influence: one element is creating

influence around you, and then there's a circle for the team, and then a bigger circle of influence of leading the organization through change. It's all interconnected." (Participant #11)

- "The level of power distance between leaders and employees will shift substantially. I think that ultimately people will self-organize, and the concept of leadership will be much more about how you build great teams of people that believe in what they're doing, and you get out of their way. It's going to be about the concept of deep democracy and listening to the teams. And people will not be getting leadership roles because they have strong technical expertise but because they are purpose-led and human-focused." (Expert #11)

Research findings also highlighted the influence of technology in facilitating digitally-enabled bonding and relationship building through networking. Participants and experts anticipated that new connected ecosystems would become more pervasive in the future:

- "The future is about being a connected ecosystem." (Participant #7)
- "It's critical that all the people in this ecosystem are sort of connected with the leader and each other." (Participant #11)
- "It's the idea that you're leading in an ecosystem that is about connection, communications networks, and pushing leadership to the edges. Leadership is no longer an activity, or a position." (Expert #13)
- "Whatever your role or your team, you will need comfort with technology because it's about the whole ecosystem that you work with. Leaders have to reshape the narrative and take ownership of the change process from where we are today to where we want to be." (Participant #27)

- “The organization can actually be a lot stronger because it’s got to not just be about one or five people at the top, but it’s about every single node of this very complex structure that’s connected to each other like a cell structure.” (Participant #10)
- “I don’t think organizational leadership or global leadership will ever be the same. In fact, I think we’ll see a lot more virtual connectivity in the years to come. Leadership will evolve with a lot more technology platforms, artificial intelligence, and blockchain, for example.” (Expert #1)
- “For me, the progression of the idea around swarm is to think of it in terms of network and sense-making network. The traditional idea of how things are done in the organization is that the leader usually is an alpha leader with some kind of idea or point of direction. And this idea gets rolled down, and everybody is given tasks and targets around it. And that to me is the problem, because I think it starts the wrong way around. So, what I’m trying to explore is the idea of having these emerging pockets of what I’m calling ‘swarm activity’ where the structure of the decision making is around the network; so, you have a business intelligence network filtered through technology. And you build that business intelligence network over time, and you have an emergent resource that anytime that you can tap into.” (Expert #4)
- “It reminds me of the flocks of birds that move in these intricate patterns. It’s not like geese that fly in the structured V shape. It’s actually a big flock of birds with no apparent leader, but you know that there’s something guiding them because they move in these very intricate patterns. And it’s called a murmuration. So, I think of this image for the future of leadership. I think that as we get more and more interconnected and work with larger groups of people, this murmuration concept of

purposeful, directed, but fluid collective movement will occur. It is where we're moving towards, the leadership murmuration." (Participant #25)

C4: A New End Game for Leadership

The study findings were, therefore, conclusive in answering the central research question using data to explain the leadership transformation phenomenon in Asia born from a new understanding of leadership (C1), distributed leadership practices (C2), and a networked leadership process (C3). However, beyond the research question guiding the initial inquiry, the data also revealed another dimension: the outcome of leadership itself was evolving (C4). Participants and experts indicated that they were seeking a different end game from leadership. This goal was not defined according to extant traditional leadership models (i.e., efficiency), or team leadership (i.e., team performance and development), or transformational leadership (i.e., motivation through moral uplifting). According to participants, the end game of the new leadership phenomenon was to make sense of the world collectively and derive a greater social purpose from the business activity:

- "Leadership for good." (Participant #1)
- "Leadership for a shared purpose." (Participant #2)
- "Leadership for purpose and human bond." (Participant #13)
- "Purposeful leadership." (Participant #19)
- "Leadership for common purpose and equality." (Participant #15)
- "Purpose-led and human-focused leadership." (Participant #26)

Experts took the analysis a step further, characterizing the new leadership phenomenon as a means to achieve the existential purpose of connected humanity. The new leadership concept challenged the standard view of human consciousness as a first-person and singular experience

and proposed that leadership is a form of extended collective consciousness and inter-brain connection:

- "Let's say we use Kegan's levels of consciousness development model. You need to be operating on a creative level rather than at a reactive level so that you are no longer self-authoring. And there's a level higher than that of course, which is sort of an integral level which is rare, and once you're there, then you've got a fighting chance to change leadership." (Expert #6)
- "The collective brain is more efficient, more effective than the single brain. In terms of business, we're not a superorganism yet. That, to me, is the end game of connectivity and hyper connection because I'd like to see in 100 years' time, this idea of organizations with these interconnected networks make up a business super organism where they truly see the value of connectivity over individual efforts and performance." (Expert #4)

In conclusion, this study's findings presented a very rich data corpus that answered the central research question and exposed a new construction of leadership in the Asia region. In the words of Einstein: "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it" (M. J. Wheatley, 1999, p. 7). There is a need for a new ontological and epistemological perspective arising from leadership in Asia that challenges (a) the Newtonian mechanistic world order in favor of a community-oriented understanding and (b) the Descartes division of parts thinking in favor of the interconnectedness of life. While the emerging literature on learning has integrated the advances of the digital age on knowledge creation and organization design has proposed new organic, systems-oriented structures, the leadership literature is trailing. This next

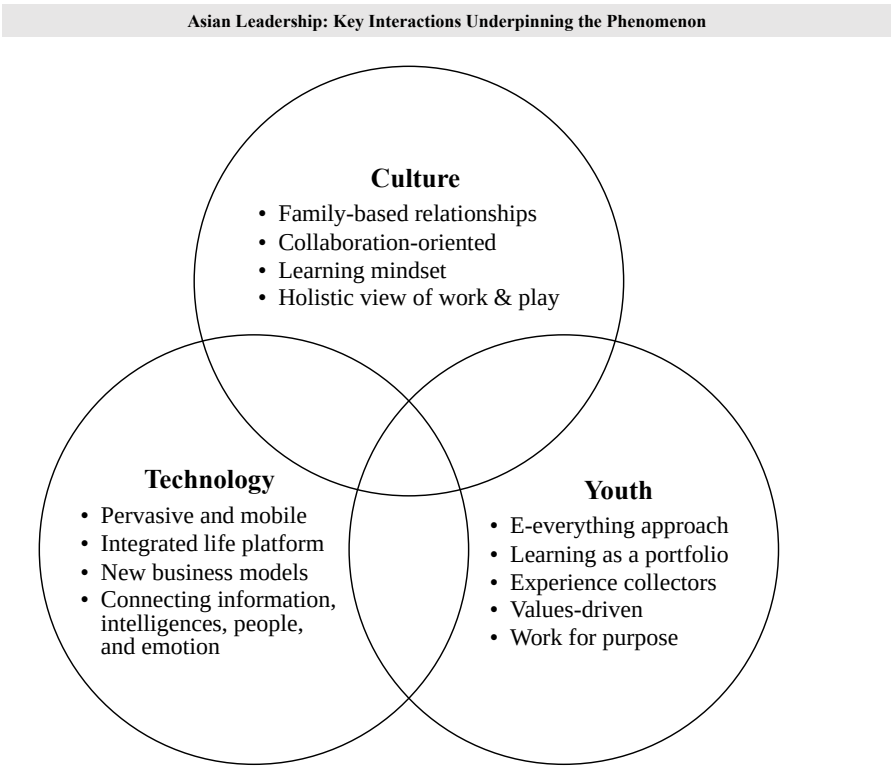
section seeks to address these omissions by developing a new proposed leadership theory called "Connectivist Leadership."

Theory Development: Connectivist Leadership

Key interactions underpinning the phenomenon. While most of the factors in the contextual environment in this study were global (i.e., global turmoil, health pandemic, economic recession, political instability, environmental crisis), three aspects that were unique to Asia underpinned the leadership phenomenon: (a) culture, (b) technology, and (c) youth (see Figure 24). Both culture and technology were intervening conditions that had a strong influence on the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia-Pacific context, while the youth was a major causal condition underlying the phenomenon.

Figure 24

Asian Leadership: Key Interactions Underpinning the Phenomenon



As documented in the literature review, Asian culture based on family relationships has an abiding influence on the structure of Asian societies and is a core driver of leadership expectations and practices (see Figure 24). All Asian participants, regardless of their cultural cluster and country of origin, indicated that the family was a common cultural pillar that shaped how they led and constructed their teams. Anchored on the family frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017), leadership in Asia operated from a mental model that was collective, collaboration-oriented, based on trusted relationships, and concerned with group outcomes and community well-being. Learning was seen as a strong value to attain success and lift one's family out of poverty. Thus, Asian culture favored a growth mindset and using knowledge as a social equalizer to democratize power and influence. As family members and staff were considered family, Asian leaders described a more holistic approach to leadership (inclusive, purposeful, and humane oriented), rather than transactional.

Technology in the Asia region was portrayed as pervasive, mobile, and fully integrated into participants' daily life (see Figure 24). More than just a utility or productivity tool, technology encouraged new business models and the empowerment of everyone, everywhere. Technology was seen as a "life platform," allowing people to live, work, play, and learn. Henceforth, technology was fully integrated into work processes and used across business and personal activities seamlessly (i.e., social networking, instant messaging, scheduling, and collaborating). Technology supported pervasive connectivity by connecting information and, importantly, people, forms of intelligence, and emotions.

Asian youth was exerting pressure on society and organizations to move to more distributed leadership models (see Figure 24). Participants noted how Millennials and Generation Z arrived in the Asian workplace in large numbers with very different values and expectations of

work and leadership. Millennials are defined by Nielsen Media Research (The Nielsen Company, 2018) as adults born between 1977 and 1995 and aged between 25 and 43 years old. Generation Z (Gen Z) are the demographic cohort succeeding Millennials born in the mid-to-late 1990s to the early 2010s. Both generations are technology savvy and spend significant amounts of time on social networks, the internet (primarily from their mobile phone), and video and collaborative platforms. East Asia and Southeast Asia are the top two social markets worldwide, with $1B cumulative users accessing social media platforms across both regions (Kemp, 2016). Consequently, participants explained that youth in Asia exhibited an "e-everything" mindset with expectations mirroring their use of technology: autonomy, transparency, open communication, and instant access to information. Gen Z believed in technology's promise to change everything, radically transforming organizations, eliminating hierarchy, and democratizing leadership. According to Asian leaders, youth looked at jobs as a collection of experiences, using them as a portfolio approach to self-development. Youth were driven by learning rather than titles and salaries. Above all, youth had high expectations of leaders whom they saw as mentors, exemplifying moral values, and a strong "point of view" on the world. As a result, Millennials and Gen Z in Asia were driven by a sense of purpose with a desire for corporate leadership to address more substantial issues than corporate profit alone. They looked to business leaders to tackle social justice, environmental issues, community engagement, and well-being through increased connectivity.

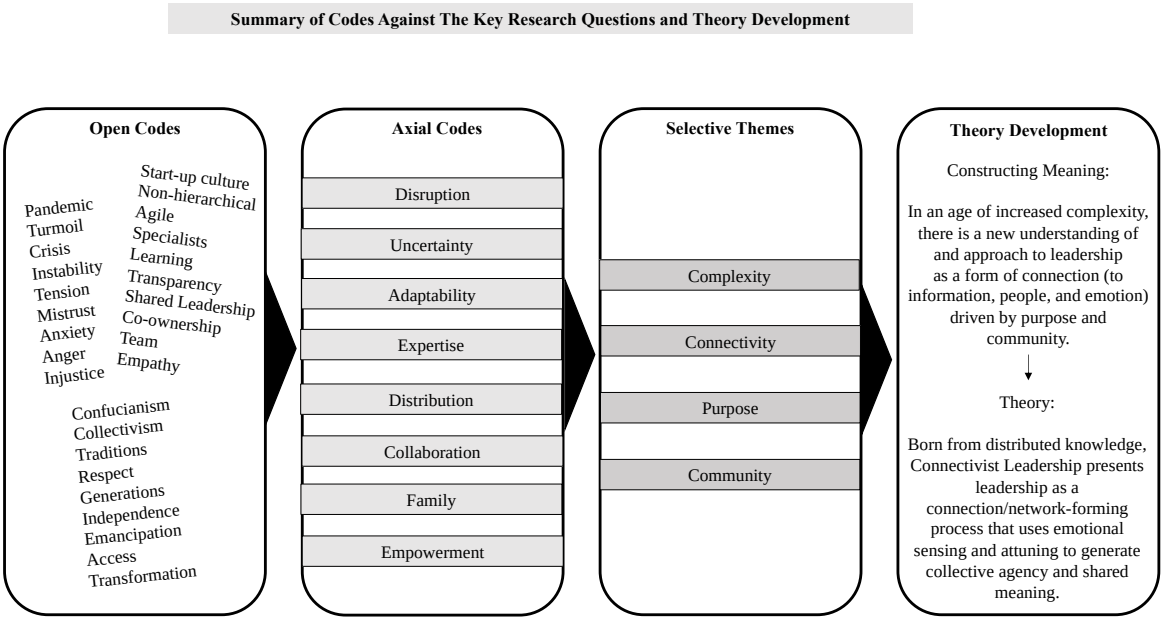
Summary of codes and theory development. The open and axial data codes generated from this study pointed to four selective themes: (a) complexity, (b) connectivity, (c) purpose, and (d) community. The analytical process consisted of "the linking of action and interactional sequences" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143) by outlining the change in conditions through the

environmental context, the causal conditions, the strategic responses to change, the intervening conditions, and the consequences that resulted from the response. This process was fully outlined in Figure 15, with each of the selective themes placed in the context of the interactional sequences, showing how they contributed to the phenomenon. Having traced the conditional paths (contextual, causal, and intervening) and related the themes to key concepts, it was possible to construct meaning and develop a new leadership theory (see Figure 25). According to Kaplan (1964), a theory aims to make sense of natural phenomena.

From the outset of this study, the researcher brought the social phenomenon to study. The topic of Connectivist Leadership was explored in a previous literature review (Corbett & Spinello, 2020), a content analysis (Corbett et al., 2018), and a quantitative study (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020). This qualitative grounded theory study was able to capture data to explain the new leadership behavior, outline the practices supporting the behavior, provide a perspective on the behavior, advance a theory on the behavior, and provide clear categories and hypotheses that can be replicated in future research (Thai et al., 2012). Grounded in data, the construction of meaning from this study is as follows: in an age of increased complexity, there is a new understanding of and approach to leadership as a form of connection (to information, people, and emotion) driven by purpose and community. The leadership theory developed from this study is called Connectivist Leadership. Born from distributed knowledge, Connectivist Leadership presents leadership as a connection/network-forming process that uses emotional sensing and attuning to generate collective agency and shared meaning (see Figure 25).

Figure 25

Summary of Codes and Theory Development



A network approach to leadership. Connectivist Leadership is an invitation to adopt a network perspective for leadership based on the principles of Connectivist learning. Its premise is the importance of connections for learning, distributing power, sharing human emotion, and creating meaning collectively. Most of the extant leadership models have a similar ontology: leadership is about influence. According to Bell (1975), influence is a persuasion process to impact people in a relationship. This mental model accounts for the over-abundance of literature on (a) the locus of leadership, or *who* creates the influence (individual, collective, or shared) and (b) the process of leadership, or *how* the influence is enacted through various power dynamics (hard, soft, or social power).

Connectivist Leadership presents leadership as a different kind of relationship—not one of persuasion, but of connection. The goal of the connection is not to persuade but to create shared meaning and purpose. The connection process uses emotional sensing and attuning

(through listening, empathy, vulnerability, compassion, and humility) developed through trust networks. Therefore, leadership becomes a communal relationship that fosters collective agency.

The study of leadership reflects the *zeitgeist*, the popular views, mindset, mental models, and technology paradigm of the moment (Drath, 1998). The review of literature (see Figure 2 in Chapter 2) presented a classification of leadership models into five major epochs aligned to the evolution of learning:

- Being—Traditional learning theories and Great Man/Trait Leadership Theories, which assume leadership is based on power and domination;
- Doing—Behaviorism and Transactional Leadership Theories, which operate on the principle of stimulus-response and directive patterns of behavior;
- Thinking—Cognitivism and Contingency/Situational Leadership Theories, which leverage mental activity to determine the right circumstances for action;
- Feeling—Constructivism/humanism and relational leadership theories (path-goal, servant, transformational, and ethical) focused on relationships and emotional affect; and
- Connecting—Connectivism and networked leadership theories (team leadership, connective leadership, shared leadership, distributed leadership), which embrace a view of a hyperconnected world with systems thinking and sense-making.

Connectivist Leadership situates itself within this fifth, more contemporary, category. However, leadership theories often lag the times as scholars need to delimit the phenomena and provide methodological rigor to address new behaviors and the full set of interactions involved (Mendenhall et al., 2017, p. 16). Rost (1991) argues that the crisis of leadership in the Western world is symptomatic of the expression of dominant values of a bygone industrial era focused on

people management, goal achievement, individual orientation, and control. With the shift of the industrial age to the knowledge economy, “networks and networking have moved to the foreground of discussion of policy and practice in fields as diverse as business, health, social services, and economic development” (Earl & Katz, 2007, p. 240). However, network analysis has been primarily used to study organizations rather than leadership. Using a network perspective has become a useful way to study corporates (Nohria, 1998) with the shift to organic organizational systems. The importance of networks of relationships in organizations was recognized as early as the 1930s by Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939), and the recent literature on agile organizations has been plentiful (De Smet et al., 2019; Hock, 2000; Laloux, 2014; Mintzberg, 1979; Robertson, 2015; Snow, 2015; Ulieru et al., 2002). Nevertheless, the study of organizations through networking relationships has not yet translated to a redefinition of leadership (via connectivity), nor its basic premise (developing influence through persuasion).

Furthermore, the study of networks has remained technical with an interest in the way networks are built, rather than the emotional and social capital they create. A theory of networks proposed by Church et al. (2002) reviews the network threads, knots, and nets examining participation, relationship-building, dynamic change, and network structures. According to K. Allen and Cherrey (2000), leadership in networks requires building a “leader-full organization” (p. 96) structure by developing everyone’s human capacities for enabling shared, collaborative, or multi-level leadership. In studying leadership in networked learning communities, Earl and Katz (2007) note that leadership in networks results in many challenges and negotiating new relationships, not from a power base but trust and personal connections. End goals change from seeking to influence and control to gaining a collective consciousness to realize the group’s potential. Connectivist Leadership proposes to address the networking metaphor with a more

human understanding of connections and define its purpose, recognizing the emotional and collective consciousness component of leadership.

Connectivist leadership theory versus complexity leadership theory. Drawing on Pepper's work on metaphysical systems (Parker & Pepper, 1942), Tsoukas (2005) asserts that there are four main epistemological hypotheses to understand reality: (a) formism, (b) mechanism, (c) contextualism, and (d) organicism. Each variant is associated with a different "root metaphor" from which assumptions can be made regarding the world's logical structure. Connectivist Leadership is based on the worldview of organicism with the root metaphor of the integrated whole. It is informed by synthetic, integrative theories (Langley & Tsoukas, 2016) based on an organic approach used by Mintzberg's (1979) organizational structures. One of the key features of organicism is the connections that form experiences and the adoption of holism (Parker & Pepper, 1942).

The conceptual foundation for Connectivist Leadership Theory is the learning theory of connectivism (Downes, 2007; Siemens, 2005a), which asserts that "learning is a connection-forming (network-creation) process" (Siemens, 2005b, p. 3) and that knowledge is created "by means of interactions among connected entities" (Downes, 2008, p. 1). Connectivism asserts that meaning is created through the connections that organically shape it. In contrast, Complexity Leadership Theory is based on complexity science (see Figure 26), a scientific field that seeks to understand and respond to complex systems.

Figure 26

Comparative View of Complexity Leadership and Connectivist Leadership

Comparative View of Complexity Leadership and Connectivist Leadership		
	Complexity Leadership Theory	**Connectivist Leadership Theory**
Weltanschauung	Organicism (root metaphor: the integrated whole)	Organicism (root metaphor: the integrated whole)
Conceptual Foundation	Complexity Science	Learning Theory of Connectivism
Organizational Paradigm	Complex Adaptive Systems • Disruption & Change	Complex Ecosystems • Distributed Knowledge
Basis for Leadership Action	Chaos/Unpredictability	Expertise/Diversity
Leadership agenda	Leadership for adaptability	Leadership for humanity (common purpose)
Unit of Leadership Analysis	Collective Dynamics	Collective Consciousness
Role of Leaders	Manage uncertainty • Destabilize/disrupt patterns • Sense-making (of the environment) • Innovation & adaptive outcomes (creativity, learning)	Enable network dynamics • Connect people • Sense-making (of people within the environment) • Network behaviors (brokering, connecting, facilitating, energizing)
Role of Followers	Contribute to informal emergence • Adaptive outcome producers	Provide domain expertise • Knowledge & creativity nodes (distributed intelligence)
Leadership Genesis	• Change ecology	• Nexus of interactions (generative human dynamics)
Leadership Metaphor	Leadership as a living organism (swarm) • Emergence • Self-organization • Ongoing adaptation/agility	Leadership as a social network construction • Networking • Learning • Sensing & Tuning

The organizational paradigm of Connectivist Leadership Theory is complex ecosystems with distributed knowledge; Complexity Leadership Theory redefines the organizational paradigm through Complex Adaptive Systems. The basis for leadership action in Connectivist Leadership Theory is diversity (to harness and grow it); Complexity Leadership Theory responds to chaos and unpredictability. Henceforth, the leadership agenda for Connectivist Leadership Theory is leadership conceived as a nexus of connections for the good of humanity and a common purpose. Meanwhile, the leadership agenda for Complexity Leadership Theory is to enable adaptability based on a change ecology (see Figure 26). The unit of leadership analysis for both Connectivist Leadership Theory and Complexity Leadership Theory is collective rather than singular. However, Connectivist Leadership Theory is concerned with collective

consciousness recognizing that leaders' role is to enable network dynamics. Leaders must connect information, people, and emotion, help make sense of the connections within the environment and facilitate network behaviors among their teams, such as brokering, connecting, facilitating, and energizing people. Complexity Leadership Theory states that the leaders' role is to manage uncertainty through collective dynamics. Leaders may introduce destabilizing and disrupting behaviors to foster innovation, help make sense of the uncertain environment, and develop adaptive outcomes such as creativity and learning. In Connectivist Leadership Theory, the role of followers is to bring unique domain expertise, contribute to the diversity of the connections, and act as knowledge and creativity nodes distributing the intelligence within the network. Complexity Leadership Theory depicts the role of followers as adaptive outcome producers who contribute to informal emergence. Finally, Connectivist Leadership Theory operates on a social network's leadership metaphor, with leadership being fundamentally about connecting, networking, learning, sensing, and attuning to others. Complexity Leadership Theory postulates that leadership is analogous to a swarm, operating as a living organism, with the characteristics of emergence, self-organization, and ongoing adaptability and agility (see Figure 26).

Born from the study data, Connectivist Leadership Theory recognizes the age of increased complexity, but it does not merely define leadership as a response to complex systems. Connectivist Leadership Theory draws on a new understanding of and approach to leadership as a form of connection (to information, people, and emotion) driven by purpose and community. Importantly, Connectivist Leadership Theory is not a disguised form of relational leadership to create influence or persuasion through relationships. Connectivity through trusted networks of

technology and people is by its very nature what generates collective agency, shared meaning, and purpose.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore leadership within the Asia region. At a theoretical level, there was a need to assess leadership against learning, organizational, and cultural models to provide foundational knowledge for conceptualizing the research problem. Aligned with the conceptual framework (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1), the study's literature review demonstrated that:

1. Leadership has not kept up with the evolution of learning and knowledge creation, which is now aligned with a Connectivist approach;
2. Leadership too often remains anchored on legacy heroic leadership paradigms based on mechanistic organizational systems; and
3. Leadership is predominantly informed by a Western-centric discourse with fundamentally different views of relationships, morality, values, and the nature of existence.

The research study's ambition was to develop a new leadership theory grounded in-field data from Asia, an understudied part of the world. Using the lived experiences of Asian leaders and their teams and views from global experts, the study analyzed the emergence of a new leadership phenomenon and was able to contrast it with the extant literature and the current paradigmatic frame of leadership studies. Therefore, the significance of this qualitative grounded theory study is to contribute to a new leadership understanding that challenges theory and empirical evidence for the enrichment of both practitioners and scholars in the field.

For Practitioners

To facilitate a new understanding of leadership, the implications are presented using a shared team mental model. This framework is a deliberate attempt to align leadership development to team-based learning instead of an individual leader competencies approach, which would further reinforce the heroic leader-centric view of leadership. According to Klimoski and Mohammed (1994), "team mental models are team members' shared, organized understanding and mental representation of knowledge about key elements of the team's relevant environment" (Mohammed & Dumville, 2001, p. 90). Implications from this study are articulated in three parts following the shared team mental model from Converse and Kahler (1992):

1. Declarative knowledge—implications on changing *what* leadership is;
2. Procedural knowledge—implications on *how* leadership is enacted; and
3. Strategic knowledge—implications on *why* leadership matters.

Fundamentally, this study can help raise new questions on the "what, how, and why" of leadership to help business practitioners foster new leadership capacity and develop new leadership practices. Firstly, it is critical to create new shared team mental models of what leadership is. Aligned to the study conclusion C1 on the new "era" and understanding of leadership, declarative knowledge must be produced on the nature of leadership and its representation. This will involve shifting the leadership iconography (as was suggested by expert # 7) using new questions when creating teams to elicit new leadership imagery (see Figure 27). Secondly, shared team mental models of how leadership is enacted must be developed. Aligned to the study conclusions C2 and C3 on new leadership practices and processes, procedural knowledge must be generated on how leadership works. This way of working will require new

leadership behaviors (see Figure 27). Finally, shared team mental models of why leadership is being developed are paramount. Aligned to the study's conclusion C4 on the new end game of leadership, strategic knowledge of why leadership matters and its application should be resolved. Shared team agreement on new leadership outcomes will need to occur at the start of any leadership project (see Figure 27). Together, new shared team mental models generated from declarative, procedural, and strategic knowledge may have a profound impact on challenging the very nature of business organizations. While corporations have typically been conceptualized as corporate profit engines, this study suggests that recasting them as enablers of human potential with a societal imperative, and using leadership as a new form of social activism.

As this research study and its subsequent leadership theory were grounded in data from four Asian countries representing two major Asian clusters (Confucian Asia and Southern Asia), this study's implications are naturally most relevant to practitioners in the Asia region. Codifying the emergence of a new leadership phenomenon can have significant benefits for those seeking to create businesses in the region (local or foreigners), those leading teams and who are part of a team in Asia or those dealing with people located in the region such as human resources professionals and talent management specialists who are in a *The War for Talent* (Michaels et al., 2001). Furthermore, understanding the current views of Asian leaders, the transformation of leadership, and future expectations (especially of Asian youth) can be a competitive advantage to any business given the continued role of Asia in leading the global economy, especially in a post-COVID-19 world.

Figure 27

Study Implications for Practitioners

Study Implications For Practitioners			
	Current Questions →	**New Questions**	
	Leadership Iconography		
Declarative Knowledge *What* is leadership	• Who is the leader/person/individual/ in charge of this team? • How senior is the leader? • What are his/her credentials? • Who will the leader report to? • Who are the subordinates? • Who are the direct reports? • Who are the followers? • Who sits at the top of the org chart?	• Who are the people needed to connect on this team? • How strong are their bonds? • What domain expertise are needed? • Who are the cofounders? • Who are the members? • Who are the passengers? • What networks do we need to build and connect?	C1: New Understanding of Leadership
	Leadership Behaviors		
Procedural Knowledge *How* is Leadership Enacted	• Who is leading? • Who is directing? • Who is deciding? • Who is influencing? • Who is persuading? • Who has power?	• With whom and how are we learning? • With whom and how are we connecting? • With whom and how are we energizing? • With whom and how are we catalyzing? • With whom and how are we sensing the environment? • With whom and how are we attuning to each other?	C2 & C3: New Practices and Leadership Process
	Leadership Outcomes		
Strategic Knowledge *Why* Leadership matters	• What do we want to control? • What are we conditioning for? • What goals do we need to align everyone to? • How do we end up on top?	• What connected experience do we want to achieve? • How can emergence occur? • What purpose are we striving for? • What is the force for good we aim to create?	C4: New End Game of Leadership

For Scholars

Academics play an important part in setting the direction for leadership studies and establishing the standards for training and development. Therefore, this study challenges researchers to explore leadership from non-Western paradigms and propose different theoretical perspectives. Drawing from 14 years of published research from 2000 to 2013, Meuser et al. (2016) identified that only six leadership approaches (transformational, charismatic leadership,

strategic leadership, leadership and diversity, participative/shared leadership, and the trait approach to leadership) most often appeared as the focal point of leadership theory. Scholars and academics must encourage a divergence in the study of leadership rather than continue its reductionist approach.

The language of leadership weighs heavily on the expressed concepts, the images, and the emotions they carry. This study encourages scholars to reframe leadership through semantic and syntactic representations to help further advance leadership understanding. This study implies that new ways to express leadership ideas will facilitate new opportunities, starting from retiring the concept of "followers."

Technology and leadership are becoming more and more interdependent. Scholars should be encouraged to study the impact of technology on leadership and to trace its forthcoming developments on the future of leadership as innovations further connect the world socially and virtually. Moreover, a more extensive discussion is required on network ethics and privacy, and always-on connectivity, particularly as the boundaries between work and private life continue to blur.

Recommendations for Future Research

This qualitative grounded theory study developed an emerging theory of Connectivist Leadership in the Asia region. As such, it opens many new directions for research. According to Reichers and Schneider (1990), the process of development of scholarly disciplines involves three stages:

1. Concept introduction and elaboration, where an initial concept is further examined and legitimized;

2. Concept evaluation and augmentation, where the concept is critically reviewed, challenged with empirical evidence, and further enhanced with a more precise delineation of its boundaries; and
3. Concept consolidation and accommodation, where a few accepted definitions are established, enabling the concept adoption.

Forthcoming studies should take the concept of Connectivist Leadership and help further elaborate, augment, challenge, and enable its adoption by:

- Expanding the number of countries in Asia included in future research on the topic;
- Determining the similarities and differences across Asian countries through a larger sample size and specific country studies;
- Analyzing the phenomenon across gender and socio-demographics;
- Investigating the phenomenon amongst an Asian youth sample to determine how they are shaping the workforce of tomorrow; and
- Validating the concept through a quantitative approach.

As this research was undertaken during a global pandemic, future research should be also conducted at a different moment in time (post-COVID-19) to check for the theory's robustness and long-term potential. Longitudinal studies would create the opportunity to benchmark participants' lived experiences with future ones over time. There would also be great value in isolating the pandemic "shock" to determine its long-term impact as many participants and experts in this study gauged it was critical and believed it represented a historical turning point for leadership.

While the phenomenon was bounded within the Asia region, future research should also explore the transferability of Connectivist Leadership outside of Asia. Interviews with global

experts identified some key trendlines on the transformation of leadership that may allow some aspects of the phenomenon to be applicable in other parts of the world. Previous research has shown that, overall, leadership orientations in the United States are also evolving from the traditional views of power, authority, control, and hierarch to a system of shared relationships grounded in the connection between people and technology (Corbett & Sweeney, 2020). A primary concern should be to investigate the foundations of Connectivist Leadership—as a connection/network-forming process that uses emotional sensing and attuning to generate collective agency and shared meaning—without succumbing to a universalist approach that ignores the unique aspects that each culture brings in terms of the key interactions underpinning the phenomenon, and notably the cultural logic supporting them.

Finally, this study also aims to inspire other researchers to bring a greater diversity and inclusivity of voices in the study of leadership through cross-cultural scholarly collaborations to challenge Western-centric assumptions at an interdisciplinary level. The field would greatly benefit from having different scholarly perspectives beyond applying leadership to traditional management practice, psychology, and social studies. Introducing emergent research areas such as cognitive science, neuroscience, networking, and quantum physics would revitalize the field of leadership. New directions can emerge to potentially underpin the Connectivist Leadership theory, such as extended intelligence thinking (Szymanski et al., 2017), human consciousness (Valencia & Froese, 2020), collective intentionality (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2013) and holism (Bohm, 2002, 2004; Jaworski, 2012). Scholars can challenge the standard view of human consciousness as a first-person experience and help leadership studies progress toward social connectedness, activism, shared experiences of cohesion, bonding, and interpersonal synchrony.

Evaluation

The Doctoral Journey

My doctoral journey has been characterized by an unprecedented level of joy, self-discovery, and humility. I have been extremely grateful to go back to school in my late forties. I had the chance to learn about leadership theory while applying the knowledge to my life and professional leadership experiences. The Ph.D. program helped me be contemplative, appreciative, and more reflective about the challenges that leaders and teams face, the collective efforts needed to elevate people from task performance to purpose, and the time required to make the personal journey to brave leadership. I now have the tools and frameworks to situate myself in my leadership development and a clearer sense of purpose in transitioning from peak leadership to the phase of generativity and giving back. With the introspection work necessary to lead myself, I learned to frame my life story, identify my fears, passions, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, strengths and weaknesses, and danger zones where I can lose my way. This process has given me boundless gratitude for my family, early childhood experiences and helped me rationalize the choices I make today. Above all, I have come to realize the importance of the transformation from "I to We" (George & Sims, 2007, p. 57), and this change in perspective guided my dissertation topic on the postheroic leadership paradigm.

The Research Process

At first, the choice of research (area, methodology) seems random and happenstance. Nothing could be further from the truth. Why we are attracted to research, what we chose to research, and how to conduct the research are all the result of a deep inner logic that requires an understanding of one's mental models, beliefs, values, and thinking preferences. Linking research to philosophical inquiry (worldview, assumptions, research philosophy) has been one of

my favorite parts of this project. I leaped back into philosophy to rediscover the great thinkers I had studied in my College years (i.e., Descartes, Hegel, Fichte, Aristotle) to determine my *Weltanschauung.* Working from a social constructivist position was a decisive moment in my research journey. It helped me make all the subsequent choices leading to a qualitative grounded theory study. When reviewing the choices of grounded theory methodologies, I realized that I had all the answers within grasp without having to second guess. During my three years of classes in the Ph.D. program, I published three papers that were instrumental in supporting my final choice of the Straussian grounded theory approach. I developed (a) a literature review that would provide the general context for the leadership theory I wanted to research, (b) a content analysis with trend lines on where the leadership literature was headed, and (c) a published quantitative study with some clear directions on the phenomenon to research. Using my student work to inform the research process was very rewarding and purposeful. It also motivated me greatly to publish papers for the benefit of having more evidence to bring to bear in my future study. I found my Pepperdine professors to be incredibly generous and supportive in adapting their syllabus so I could apply papers directly to my area of research.

The COVID-19 Shock

No one could have predicted the massive disruption, human cost, and global economic downturn resulting from the global pandemic. This dissertation's research was conducted in August 2020, right in the middle of the tumult, as 77% of the world's economies were in the middle of a recession (Maguire, 2020). As reported by participants, COVID-19 was a trying experience depicted as "an unexpected shock," "a reset moment," "a change accelerator," and a sign of a deeper leadership crisis. Many aspects of the research had to be changed because of COVID-19 restrictions: shifting the face-to-face format of the interviews to video calls; ensuring

the interviews were in English due to IRB limitations and practicalities of video versus having a translator in person; interviewing people individually versus in groups; and building the pandemic into the discussion guide and probing its impact fully on the phenomenon. At first, these changes were stressful as they created uncertainty; I also feared they might impact the quality of the research. However, some significant benefits ensued: sampling respondents using Linkedin and direct email was very effective; the time to conduct the interviews was condensed as it was possible to manage several interviews per day over video; interview transcripts were provided within hours and for free through the video platforms; I stayed immersed in the data every day and was able to replay videos multiple times, which made my analysis stronger and enabled rich memoiring and note-taking.

Chapter Summary

This final chapter presented a discussion of the research findings in the context of the existing literature, the study conclusions, and their implications. This qualitative grounded theory study explored the emergence of a new leadership phenomenon arising within the Asia region. The research examined the lived experiences of 42 individuals, 29 participants based in Asia across China, Singapore, India, Indonesia, and 13 global experts. Together, their stories provided data to conceptualize a more collective and connected form of leadership. The study addressed how leadership in Asia was evolving on multiple levels: the understanding of leadership was entering a new era manifested by new mental models (C1); leadership practices were shifting from concentrated and leader-centric to distributed and team-enabled (C2); the leadership process involved a networked system of shared and digitally connected relationships (C3), and the outcome of leadership was enabling human connectivity with a societal imperative for positive change and purpose (C4).

In an age of increased complexity, the study isolated a new leadership phenomenon where leadership was becoming a form of connection to information, people, and emotion, driven by purpose and community. Grounded in the views of participants, this new leadership theory was defined as Connectivist Leadership. Born from distributed knowledge, Connectivist Leadership presents leadership as a connection/network-forming process that uses emotional sensing and attuning to generate collective agency and shared meaning. Challenging the reductionist view of the Western-centric leadership literature focused primarily on transformational, charismatic, and trait approaches to leadership, this study opens new horizons for reimagining leadership beyond the legacy concept of influence through persuasion. As charted in Asia, the future of leadership is a shared experience of cohesion, bonding, and interpersonal synchrony. Its ambition is not to submit others to a first-person vision or centralized aims but to enable social connectedness, shared experiences, bonding, and interpersonal synchrony for society's greater benefit and purpose.

The implications of this study are far-reaching. Scholars and practitioners can ask fundamentally different questions to develop the next generation of leaders. The iconography and language of leadership should be entirely reimagined. Instead of asking, "Who is the leader in charge of this team?" a more meaningful departure point for leadership is to enquire, "What connected experience do we want to achieve?" Technology (providing virtual and augmented reality) and artificial intelligence afford one of the greatest opportunities ahead to manifest leadership as a connection/network-forming process and transform leadership as a force for good through connectivity. The data from this study points to the fact that Asia is at the forefront of a new leadership era: collective, networked, and purposeful. As organizations transition from

“Egosystems to Ecosystems” (Kelly, 2019, p. 69), the new scorecard for leadership must decisively pivot from winning to connecting.

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APPENDIX A

Quantitative Collective Leadership Questionnaire

WELCOME TO THE RESEARCH STUDY!
You are invited to participate in a research study on leadership. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read this document. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of the study is to better understand how work is organized and distributed across different companies around the world. Your answers will greatly contribute toward a common understanding of organizational approaches to leadership.

PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT
If you agree to voluntarily to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer an online survey which is anticipated to take about 20 minutes. You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to, click "Not Applicable" in the survey to move to the next question.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION
The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or completing only the items which you feel comfortable. Your relationship with your employer will not be affected whether you participate or not in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
We will keep your records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if we are required to do so by law, we may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require us to break confidentiality are if you tell us about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.
The data will be stored on a password-protected computer in the researcher's office for five years after the study has been completed and then destroyed. The data collected will be coded, and identifiable to each respondent, but kept confidential. Your name, address or other identifiable information will not be collected. The survey will be done using an online survey tool called Qualtrics, which is the market research leader and widely leveraged at Pepperdine University. Qualtrics protects the security of worker information by using Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) software, which encrypts anything identifiable.

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION
We understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries we may have concerning the research herein described. We understand that we may contact Frederique Covington Corbett, frederique.covingtoncorbett@pepperdine.edu, or Matthew Sweeney, matthew.sweeney@pepperdine.edu if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT—IRB CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research, in general, please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.
By clicking on the link to the survey questions, you are acknowledging you have read the study information. You acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason without penalty.
If you would like documentation of your participation in this research you may download a pdf and print a copy of this form upon completing the survey.

Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

- I consent, begin the study
- I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

Please enter your contact information (optional, if you are comfortable for us to contact you at a later date)
First Name:
Last Name:
E-Mail:

Q1. What is your age?
Years
18 26 34 43 51 59 67 75 84 92 100
Slide scale until proper age is recorded
Not Applicable

Q2. What is your gender?
Male
Female
Other
Not Applicable

Q3. What is your current marital status?
Single
Married
Living in a domestic relationship Divorced

Separated
Widowed
Other
Not Applicable

Q4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
No schooling completed
Some high school, no diploma High school graduate
Some college, no degree Trade/Technical/Vocational training Associates degree
Bachelor's degree
Master's degree
Professional degree
Doctorate degree
Post Graduate
Not Applicable

Q5. How would you describe your race or ethnicity?
African American/Black American Asian
Asian
Chinese Hispanic/Latino
Indian
Malay
Middle Eastern Native American Pacific Islander White/Caucasian Mixed/Multi-Racial
Other
Not Applicable

Q6. How would you describe your spiritual practice?
Atheist (don't believe in god) Agnostic (don't know if God exists) Buddhist
Hindu
Christian
Muslim
Jewish
Deist
Other
Not Applicable

Q7. Which country do you reside in full time?
Select and Type in Country
Not Applicable

Q8. What is your household income?
Less than USD $10,000
USD $10,000–$24,999
USD $25,000–$34,999
USD $35,000–$49,999
USD $50,000–$74,999

USD $75,000–$99,999
USD $100,000–$149,999
USD $150,000–$199,999
USD $200,000–$1,000,000
More than USD $1,000,000
Not Applicable

Q9. In which of the following areas do you live?
Urban/City
Suburban
Rural
Not Applicable

Q10. What type of internet connection do you have?
Dial-up model
Cable or ISDN
DSL or WIFI
T1 or Fiber
None
Don't Know
Not Applicable

Q11. How would you describe your proficiency on the internet?
Novice—just learning
Intermediate—comfortable using the internet
Advanced—able to use all of the internet
Not Applicable

Q12. How would you describe your current employment status?
Not working Homemaker Unemployed
Looking for employment Disabled
Employed, working part-time
Employed, working full time
Retired
Student
Other
Not Applicable

Q13. If you are employed, what kind of company do you work for?
Government/State-owned
Company Association
Foundation
Sole Proprietorship
Partnership
Corporation—Local (in one country only)
Corporation—multinational (in multiple countries)

Other
Not Applicable

Q14. If you are employed, what is the size of your employer?
1
2–9
10–24
25–49
50–99
100–499
500–999
1000–4,999
5,000–9,999
10,000 +
Not Applicable

Q15. If you are employed, what industry do you work in?
Consumer
Financial services Healthcare
Industrial
Media
Entertainment
Private equity
Professional services
Telecom
Technology
Other
Not Applicable

Q16. If you are employed, what function do your work in?
Consultant
Finance
General Management
Human Resources
Legal
Marketing
Operations
R&D
Sales
Engineering Technology
Supply Chain
Other
Not Applicable

Q17. If you are employed, what is your level at work?
Intern

Entry level
Middle level
Manager
Senior manager
Director
Senior Director
Vice President
Senior Vice President
C-Level (CIO, CTO, COO, CMO) President / CEO
Chairman
Not Applicable

Q18. If you are employed, how many people do you manage?
0
1
2–9
10–24
25–49
50–99
100–499
500 or more
Not Applicable

Q19. Please rate the following values according to how important they are to you as an individual:
Not at all Important
Somewhat Unimportant
Neutral
Somewhat Important
Very Important
Not Applicable

Success
Openness
Status
Kindness
Authority
Collaboration
Achievement
Power
Diversity
Control
Connectedness
Autonomy

Q20. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about yourself and relating to others:
Not at all Important
Somewhat Unimportant
Neutral
Somewhat Important
Very Important
Not Applicable

I am calm in the face of pressure or emotional turmoil
I am optimistic in the face of challenging circumstances
I can control my impulses
I understand how stress affects my mood and behavior
I use strong emotions, such as anger, fear, and joy, appropriately and for the good of others
I understand how other people's experiences affect their feelings, thoughts, and behavior
I try to understand why people behave the way they do
I readily understand others' viewpoints, even when they are different from my own
I strive to understand people's underlying feelings
I look forward to the future

Q21. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements on work today and in the future:
Not at all Important
Somewhat Unimportant
Neutral
Somewhat Important
Very Important
Not Applicable

Today, professional success requires a strong social network, built on both personal and professional relationships
Today, collaboration is essential to achieving great business outcomes
Today, people prefer working in less hierarchical ways
Today no individual is sufficient to have full control or full knowledge to lead others
Today, the ability to make connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill
In the future, technologies will transform the nature of work to make it more collaborative
Future organizations will promote team-based decision-making
In the future, people will seek peers, moderators, and facilitators instead of a formal instructors
In the future, influence will come from a network of people rather than from just one individual
In the future, teams will be necessary to manage the increased complexity surrounding knowledge, learning, and decision-making

Q22. Please indicate whether you would like to see more or less of these ways of working:
Less
Keep the same
More

Not Applicable

Curiosity and openness to experimentation
Focus on achievement and winning
Emphasis on doing good for the world
Order, efficiency and people playing by the rules
Collaboration, teamwork and mutual support
Emphasis on fun, excitement and passion
Focus on planning, caution and preparedness
Working across cultures
Authority and Power
Influence
Mutual meaning making
Networked interactions

Q23. Consider how you think about technology and the changes occurring around you. Using the scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:
Not at all Important
Somewhat Unimportant
Neutral
Somewhat Important
Very Important
Not Applicable

Networking technologies can transform human decision-making for the better with more logic and knowledge
Automation will contribute to economic growth
Collaborative technologies can help address societal challenges through new ways of sharing and caring
Workers will need to acquire new skills and adapt to the increasingly capable machines alongside them in the workplace
Technology may be used to help determine who is best suited for a task
Artificial intelligence could put decisions in the hands of machines

Q24. Consider for a moment your own impressions of the word “leadership.” Based on your experiences as a leader yourself, or exposure to leaders in your lifetime, what is your view of leadership? Using the scale below, indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

Totally disagree
Somewhat disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat agree
Totally agree
Not Applicable

When I think of leadership, I think of authority, power, control and hierarchy
Leadership is about the common purposes of leaders and followers
Leadership is a process of connecting people and information sources to create collective influence
Followers can influence the leadership process as much as leaders
Leaders need to empower multiple groups, not just individuals, to allow for an inclusive diversity of voices
Leaders and followers share in the leadership process
The key to successful leadership is a person with special personality traits
The key to successful leadership is having the right skills
The key to successful leadership is the relationship between the leader-follower
The key to successful leadership is the quality of the networking relationships of all those involved

Q25. How important are each of the following leadership principles in your view?
Not at all Important
Somewhat Unimportant
Neutral
Somewhat Important
Very Important
Not Applicable

Leading by example
Enabling and inspiring others
Acting decisively
Collaborating
Excelling with partners
Communicating openly
Listening
Having empathy
Being persuasive
Being commanding
Building networks and communities
Being committed to the growth of others
Working for the greater good of society

Q26. Please indicate how you think each of these factors will impact the future of leadership?
Strongly Negatively Impact
Somewhat Negatively Impact
Have no Impact
Somewhat Positively Impact
Strongly Positively Impact
Not Applicable

Political leaders
Business leaders

Academics
Researchers
People under 20
People over 50
People of mixed race
People who are multilingual
People with a global mindset
People with a high intelligence (IQ)
People with high emotional intelligence (EQ)
People from outside the United States
Women
Artificial Intelligence
Networking technologies
People with high cultural intelligence (CQ)

Congratulations. You have completed the survey. If you would like to review and adjust any of your responses, you may select the back button. If you are satisfied, please select the submit survey response below.

Submit Survey.

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent (for Participants and Experts)

SOCIAL-BEHAVIORAL ADULT PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

IRB #: 20-02-1286

Participant Study Title: Connectivist Leadership Research

Formal Study Title: Emergence of the Connectivist Leadership Paradigm: A Grounded Theory Study in the Asia Region

Authorized Study Personnel: Frederique Covington Corbett: [redacted],
[redacted]

Principal Investigator: Frederique Covington Corbett: [redacted],
[redacted]

Key Information:

If you agree to participate in this study, the project will involve:

- Males and Females between the ages of 18-50
- Procedures will include a 1-time, 60-minute interview
- There are no risks associated with this study
- You will not be paid for your participation
- You will be provided a copy of this consent form

Invitation

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are invited to participate in a research study on leadership. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read this document. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

The purpose of the study is to better understand how leadership is practiced in Asia and the use of different leadership approaches. Your answers will greatly contribute toward new insights on

understanding approaches to leadership.

What will be done during this research study?

If you agree to voluntarily to take part in this study, you will be asked to answer a one-time 60-minute interview. You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to. You are asked to answer honestly to the best of your knowledge.

How will your data be used?

Your answers will be collected, coded, and identifiable to each respondent, but kept confidential. Aggregated with others, the data from your answers will be used for the generation of leadership theory. Your name, address or other identifiable information will not be disclosed.

How will information about you be protected?

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigator's office and will only be seen by the research team during the study and for 5 years after the study is complete.

The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as group or summarized data and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

This study presents only minimal risk. You will be answering questions and be video recorded. Possible risks you might experience from your involvement in this study include: feeling uncomfortable with the set research questions or follow up inquiry; lack of interest; risk of breach of confidentiality; and possible fatigue from sitting for an hour for the interview. If you are uncomfortable at any time, you may stop the interview without any penalty.

What are the possible benefits to you?

You are not expected to get any benefit from being in this study.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

The benefits to science and/or society may include better understanding of leadership approaches, how to help others create influence for positive collective outcomes.

What are the alternative to being this research study?

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty. You may

withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study. The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or completing only the items which you feel comfortable. Your relationship with your employer will not be affected whether you participate or not in this study.

What will being in this research study cost you?
There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

Will you be compensated for being in this research study?
You will not be compensated for being in this research study.

What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?

Your welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the beginning of this consent form. If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research, in general, please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

By signing this form, you are acknowledging you have read the study information. You acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason without penalty.

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study ("withdraw') at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with Pepperdine University (list others as applicable). You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Documentation of informed consent

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered and (4) you have decided to be in the research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participant Feedback Survey

To meet Pepperdine University's ongoing accreditation efforts and to meet the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP) standards, an online feedback survey is

included below:

https://forms.gle/nnRgRwLgajYzBq5t7

Participant Name:

_____

(Name of Participant: Please print)

Participant Signature:

_____

Signature of Research Participant Date

Investigator certification:

My signature certifies that all elements of informed consent described on this consent form have been explained fully to the subject. In my judgment, the participant possesses the capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research and is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent to participate.

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

_____ _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

APPENDIX C

Participant Recruitment E-Mail

RECRUITMENT EMAIL FOR PARTICIPANTS

IRB #: 20-02-1286

Dear [name],

My name is Frederique Covington Corbett, and I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University, in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology, in Los Angeles, California, USA. In support of my Ph.D. in global leadership and change, I am conducting a study on leadership. Specifically, my research examines leadership approaches in the Asia region.

I would like to invite you to take part in this research study. Your participation is entirely voluntary, will require approximately 60 minutes of your time to answer some questions on leadership, and how you work with teams in your organization. The research will be conducted via video conference call.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. Your answers will be collected, coded, and identifiable to you, but kept confidential and anonymized. The data from your answers will be aggregated with others and used for the generation of leadership theory. Please note that you will not be compensated for participating in the research as this is an academic study, not for profit.

If you are willing to take part in this study, please send me a confirmation email back to this address frederique.covingtoncorbett@pepperdine.edu, and I will follow up immediately with a consent form, a copy of the interview questions, and make arrangements for the interview time. Please note that you can withdraw your participation in the study at any moment. Thank you very much for your consideration, and I hope you will contribute to help advance the field of leadership studies.

Very best regards,

Frederique Covington Corbett
Doctoral Student
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education & Psychology
[redacted]

APPENDIX D

Participant Screener

SCREENER FORM

IRB #: 20-02-1286

Participant Study Title: Connectivist Leadership Research

Formal Study Title: Emergence of the Connectivist Leadership Paradigm: A Grounded Theory Study in the Asia Region

Authorized Study Personnel: Frederique Covington Corbett: [redacted],
[redacted]

Principal Investigator: Frederique Covington Corbett: [redacted],
[redacted]

Instructions

Thank you for having agreed to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help us determine whether you qualify to participate in the study. As your time is valuable, the information will be used to understand if we proceed with the 60 minute interview and commit your time accordingly. Please answer the following 10 questions as openly and honestly as you can and return the form to Frederique Covington Corbett in person or via email at frederique.covingtoncorbett@pepperdine.edu.

SQ1. Please enter your contact information (all your data will remain confidential):

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

E-Mail: _____

Nationality: _____

Place you reside full time (city & country): _____

Languages spoken: _____

SQ2. Are you aged 18 or older?

- ☐ Yes

- ☐ No

SQ3. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

SQ4. How would you describe your race or ethnicity?

Asian:

- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Indonesian
- ☐ Malay
- ☐ Singaporean
- ☐ Asian American
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Mongol

Non-Asian/Other, please specify: _____

SQ5. How would you describe your current employment status?

Employed:

- ☐ Employed, working full time
- ☐ Employed, working part-time

Not Employed:

- ☐ Not working (Homemaker, Unemployed)
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

SQ6. If you are employed, what kind of company do you work for?

Private:

- ☐ Corporation—local
- ☐ Corporation—multinational
- ☐ Foundation

Other:

- ☐ Government/State-owned
- ☐ Association
- ☐ Public Foundation
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

SQ7. If you are employed, please confirm that your company…

a. Has offices in the Asia region

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

b. Encourages the use of networking technologies in the practice of daily work (such as the internet, intranet, social tools, IM platforms)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

c. Encourages collective ways of working (e.g. agile, teamwork, scrum teams, etc.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

SQ8. If you are employed, please tell us how many people you lead and manage directly…

- ☐ 0/None
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2-9 people
- ☐ 10-24 people
- ☐ 25-49
- ☐ 50-99
- ☐ 100-499

- ☐ 500 or more
- ☐ Don't know

SQ9. Please rate the following values according to how important they are to you as an individual:

	Not at all Important (1)	Somewhat Unimportant (2)	Neither important nor unimportant (3)	Somewhat Important (4)	Very Important (5)
Success	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Autonomy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Connectedness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Control	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Diversity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Power	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Achievement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaboration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Authority	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kindness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Status	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Openness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SQ10. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about yourself and relating to others:

	Totally Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Totally Agree (5)
I am calm in the face of pressure or	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

emotional turmoil					
I can control my impulses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand how stress affects my mood and behavior	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I readily understand others' viewpoints, even when they are different from my own	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand how other people's experiences affect their feelings, thoughts, and behavior	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I try to understand why people behave the way they do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SQ11. Consider for a moment your own impressions of the word "leadership." Based on your experiences as a leader yourself, or exposure to leaders in your lifetime, what is your view of leadership? Using the scale below, indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

	Totally Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Totally Agree (5)
When I think of leadership, I think of authority, power, control and hierarchy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leadership is about the common purposes of leaders and followers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leadership is a process of connecting people and information sources to create collective influence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Followers can	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

influence the leadership process as much as leaders					
Leaders need to empower multiple groups, not just individuals, to allow for an inclusive diversity of voices	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leaders and followers share in the leadership process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The key to successful leadership is a person with special personality traits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The key to successful leadership is having the right skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The key to successful leadership is the relationship between the leader-follower	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The key to successful leadership is the quality of the networking relationships of all those involved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

******** INSTRUCTIONS TO BE REMOVED FROM PARTICIPANT FORM********

The goal of the study is to recruit 20 participants to take part in the interview guide. Only participants who meet the screening criteria will be selected.

SQ1. Place you reside full time (city & country):	IF PARTICIPANT DOES NOT RESIDE IN ASIA, TERMINATE
SQ2. Are you aged 18 or older?	IF PARTICIPANT IS UNDER 18, TERMINATE
SQ3. What is your gender?	AIM TO HAVE A BALANCE OF GENDER (AT LEAST 1/3 WOMEN)

SQ4. How would you describe your race or ethnicity?	RECRUIT FOR 2/3 (15) OF PARTICIPANTS TO BE ASIAN. NO MORE THAN 5 FROM "NON-ASIAN/OTHER." DISTRIBUTION TO BE AS FOLLOWS: ☐ Chinese (4) ☐ Indian (4) ☐ Indonesian (3) ☐ Singaporean (4) ☐ Non-Asian/Other (5)
SQ5. How would you describe your current employment status?	IF PARTICIPANT DESCRIBES THEIR EMPLOYMENT AS "NOT EMPLOYED," TERMINATE
SQ6. If you are employed, what kind of company do you work for?	IF PARTICIPANT DESCRIBES THEIR COMPANY AS "PRIVATE," CONTINUE, IF "OTHER TERMINATE
SQ7. If you are employed, please confirm that your company…	PARTICIPANT MUST WORK AT A COMPANY THAT MEETS ALL 3 CRITERIA: a. Has offices in the Asia region b. Encourages the use of networking technologies in the practice of daily work (such as the internet, intranet, social tools, IM platforms) c. Encourages collective ways of working (e.g. agile, teamwork, scrum teams, etc.)
SQ8. If you are employed, please tell us how many people you manage…	RECRUIT FOR 2/3 (15) OF PARTICIPANTS TO BE LEADERS OF OTHERS. AIM FOR A MIX OF TEAM SIZES ☐ Small team leader with team of under 10 people (2) ☐ Mid-size team leader with team of under 50 people (3) ☐ Large team leader with team of 50-100 people (5) ☐ Very large team leader with team of 100 or more (5) A TOTAL OF 5 PARTICIPANTS TO BE "FOLLOWERS" WITH NO DIRECTS ☐ None/0 (5)
SQ9. Please rate the following values according to how important they are to you as an individual	RECORD AND CONTINUE

SQ10. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements about yourself and relating to others	RECORD AND CONTINUE
SQ11. Consider for a moment your own impressions of the word "leadership." Based on your experiences as a leader yourself, or exposure to leaders in your lifetime, what is your view of leadership? Using the scale below, indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements	TO QUALIFY PARTICIPANT MUST FIT WITHIN THE STATUS QUO OR EMERGING LEADERSHIP ORIENTATION. THIS WILL BE DETERMINED BASED ON TOP 2-BOX AGREEMENT SCORES. RECRUIT FOR 5 PARTICIPANTS FROM STATUS QUO CATEGORY (MAXIMUM) RECRUIT FOR 15 PARTICIPANTS FROM EMERGING CATEGORY

APPLY THE FOLLOWING FOR SCREENING

	Totally Disagree (1)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Totally Agree (5)
When I think of leadership, I think of authority, power, control and hierarchy	**CONTINUE**		**TERMINATE**		
Leadership is about the common purposes of leaders and followers	**TERMINATE**		**CONTINUE**		
Leadership is a process of connecting people and information sources to create collective influence	**TERMINATE**		**CONTINUE**		
Followers can influence the leadership process as much as leaders	**TERMINATE**		**CONTINUE**		
Leaders need to empower multiple groups, not just individuals, to allow for an inclusive	**TERMINATE**		**CONTINUE**		

diversity of voices		
Leaders and followers share in the leadership process	**TERMINATE**	**CONTINUE**
The key to successful leadership is a person with special personality traits	**CONTINUE**	**TERMINATE**
The key to successful leadership is having the right skills	**CONTINUE**	**TERMINATE**
The key to successful leadership is the relationship between the leader-follower	**TERMINATE**	**CONTINUE**
The key to successful leadership is the quality of the networking relationships of all those involved	**TERMINATE**	**CONTINUE**

APPENDIX E

Participant Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant Study Title: Connectivist Leadership Research

Formal Study Title: Emergence of the Connectivist Leadership Paradigm: A Grounded Theory Study in the Asia Region

IRB #: 20-02-1286

Part 1—Interviewer Instructions

Prior to the interview

- Introduce myself
    - My name is Frederique Covington Corbett, and I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University, in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology, in Los Angeles, California, USA. In support of my Ph.D. in global leadership and change, I am conducting a study on leadership in the Asia region. Specifically, my research examines how Asia enacts leadership practices.
- Verify the written informed consent form is signed and complete
- Remind the participant that the interview will last 60 minutes, ensure they have the time
- Gain verbal consent for video recording for the interview
- Explain to the participant that the interview guide is semi-structured in nature and meant to serve as the basis for the discussion but is not a closed survey to be adhered to. The respondent can feel free to add to the questions asked in any way they see fit and build on the information to best explain their thoughts.

During to the interview

- Actively listen
- Take note of both verbal, and nonverbal communication (e.g., pauses, any discomfort, hesitation, facial expressions, head motion, gestures, nodding, pointing, etc.)
- Probe to clarify answers
- Query the specific language and words used

After to the interview

- Thank the participant for their time
- Write down overall impressions from the interview immediately
- Use memos for key highlights of the interview

Part 2—Introduction, Study Screener Review

- Review the respondent's answers to the screener
- Confirm the participant meets the screening criteria
- Verify the written informed consent form is signed and complete
- Verify the participant is comfortable proceeding with the interview for 60 minutes

Part 3—Interview

- Goal of the interview guide is to get insights on the central research question:

If, and to what extent, are leaders and teams in the Asia region shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of collective and digitally connected relationships?

Three sub-questions will also guide the inquiry:

- RQ1—What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?
- RQ2—What leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders and teams use?
- RQ3—How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context?

The semi-structured interview guide will be based on the above research questions and address the systematic procedures from Strauss and Corbin (1990) in grounded theory to explore:

a) the causal conditions underlying the phenomenon
b) the phenomenon resulting from those causal conditions
c) the context that influences strategy development
d) the intervening conditions
e) the coping strategies
f) the consequences of those strategies

1. **Let's start the discussion with the leadership challenges you might be facing at the moment…**
   [DO NOT ASK, FOR REFERNCE ONLY: RQ1: What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?]

IQ1. What leadership challenges keep you up at night?

IQ2. What are the main reasons for these challenges?

IQ3. What impact, if any, has the global pandemic had on leadership?

IQ4. How would you describe leadership today globally versus ten years ago?

2. **Now let's talk about your experience of working in teams…**
   [DO NOT ASK, FOR REFERNCE ONLY: RQ2: What leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders, and teams use?]

IQ5. How would you describe how teams work together nowadays?

IQ6. How would you characterize the relationships among team members?

IQ7. What are the main reasons explaining the way leadership operates in your team?

IQ8. What are the implications of these team relationships?

3. **Let's move on to the role of culture and technology within the workplace…**
   [DO NOT ASK, FOR REFERNCE ONLY: How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia-Pacific context?]

IQ9. How would you contrast leadership approaches in Asia versus other parts of the world?

IQ10. What role does culture at large play in regard to leadership?

IQ11. What role does organizational culture play in regard to leadership?

IQ12. What role does technology play in regard to leadership?

4. **I'd like to close the discussion by hearing your personal reflections on the future of leadership…**

IQ13. What is your outlook on leadership in the future?

IQ14. How would you describe leadership in ten years from now?

IQ15. As you reflect on what's ahead, what does leadership in Asia mean to you?

APPENDIX F

Expert Recruitment E-Mail

RECRUITMENT EMAIL FOR EXPERTS

IRB #: 20-02-1286

Dear [name],

My name is Frederique Covington Corbett, and I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University, in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology, in Los Angeles, California, USA. In support of my Ph.D. in global leadership and change, I am conducting a study on leadership. Specifically, my research examines leadership approaches in the Asia region.

As an expert in the field of [enter relevant field], I would like to invite you to share your thoughts on this research topic. Your participation is entirely voluntary and will require approximately 60 minutes of your time to answer some questions on leadership, and your area of specialty. The research will be conducted via video conference call.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. Your answers will be collected, coded, and identifiable to you, but kept confidential and anonymized. Please note that you will not be compensated for participating in the research as this is an academic study, not for profit. If you are willing to take part in this study, please send me a confirmation email back to this address frederique.covingtoncorbett@pepperdine.edu, and I will follow up immediately with a consent form, a copy of the interview questions, and make arrangements for the interview time. Please note that you can withdraw your participation in the study at any moment. Thank you very much for your consideration, and I hope you will contribute to help advance the field of leadership studies.

Very best regards,

Frederique Covington Corbett
Doctoral Student
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education & Psychology
[redacted]

APPENDIX G

Expert Interview Guide

EXPERT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant Study Title: Connectivist Leadership Research

Formal Study Title: Emergence of the Connectivist Leadership Paradigm: A Grounded Theory Study in the Asia Region

IRB #: 20-02-1286

Part 1—Interviewer Instructions

Prior to the interview

- Introduce myself
    - My name is Frederique Covington Corbett, and I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University, in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology, in Los Angeles, California, USA. In support of my Ph.D. in global leadership and change, I am conducting a study on leadership in the Asia region.
    - Remind the expert that the interview will last 60 minutes, ensure they have the time
- Gain verbal consent for audio and/or video recording for the interview
- Explain to the participant that the interview guide is semi-structured in nature and meant to serve as the basis for the discussion but is not a closed survey to be adhered to. The respondent can feel free to add to the questions asked in any way they see fit and build on the information to best explain their thoughts.

During to the interview

- Actively listen
- Take note of both verbal, and nonverbal communication (e.g., pauses, any discomfort, hesitation, facial expressions, head motion, gestures, nodding, pointing, etc.)
- Probe to clarify answers
- Query the specific language and words used

After to the interview

- Thank the expert for their time
- Write down overall impressions from the interview immediately
- Use memos for key highlights of the interview

Part 2—Introduction, expert information review

- Review the expert's information
- Verify the written informed consent form is signed and complete
- Verify the expert is comfortable proceeding with the interview for 60 minutes

Part 3—Interview

- Goal of the interview guide is to get insights on the central research question:

If, and to what extent, are leaders and teams in the Asia region shifting their understanding and practices of leadership, from a process led primarily by an individual to a system of collective and digitally connected relationships?

Three sub-questions will also guide the inquiry:

- RQ1—What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?
- RQ2—What leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders and teams use?
- RQ3—How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia context?

The semi-structured interview guide will be based on the above research questions and address the systematic procedures from Strauss and Corbin (1990) in grounded theory to explore:

g) the causal conditions underlying the phenomenon
h) the phenomenon resulting from those causal conditions
i) the context that influences strategy development
j) the intervening conditions
k) the coping strategies
l) the consequences of those strategies

Icebreaker question: Tell me a little bit about your area of research and expertise…

1. **I'd like to now hear your thoughts on the leadership challenges you see leaders facing at the moment…**
   [DO NOT ASK, FOR REFERNCE ONLY: RQ1: What challenges do leaders in the Asia region face when leading teams?]

IQ1. What leadership challenges are keeping leaders and their teams up at night?

IQ2. What are the main reasons for these challenges?

IQ3. What impact, if any, has the global pandemic had on leadership?

IQ4. How would you describe leadership today globally versus 10 years ago?

2. **Now let's talk about work practices…**
   [DO NOT ASK, FOR REFERNCE ONLY: RQ2: What leadership approaches and paradigms (contrasting leader-centric versus team-centric) do leaders and teams use?]

IQ5. How would you describe how teams work together nowadays?

IQ6. How would you characterize relationships among team members?

IQ7. What are the main reasons explaining the way leadership operates today?

IQ8. What are the implications of these team relationships?

3. **Let's move on to the role of culture and technology within the workplace…**
   [DO NOT ASK, FOR REFERNCE ONLY: How do culture and technology influence the distribution of leadership enacted in the Asia-Pacific context?]

IQ9. How would you contrast leadership approaches in Asia versus other parts of the world?

IQ10. What role does culture at large play in regard to leadership?

IQ11. What role does organizational culture play in regard to leadership?

IQ12. What role does technology play in regard to leadership?

4. **I'd like to close the discussion by hearing your personal reflections on the future of leadership…**

IQ13. What is your outlook on leadership in the future?

IQ14. How would you describe leadership in ten years from now?

IQ15. As you reflect on what's ahead, what does leadership in Asia mean to you?

APPENDIX H

Thank You E-Mail (Participants and Experts)

THANK YOU EMAIL

IRB #: 20-02-1286

Dear [name],

Thank you for having taken the time to speak with me on [enter date]. It was most insightful to hear your views on leadership and your perspective will be very valuable in contributing to my research study.

Please do let me know if you would like a copy of the interview transcript. The purpose is for you to correct anything I might have misunderstood, or misinterpreted, and correct it if necessary.

Thank you very much for your generous time again, and your contribution to this research.

Very best regards,

Frederique Covington Corbett
Doctoral Student
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education & Psychology
[redacted]

APPENDIX I

CITI Program Course Certification

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 19-Mar-2018
Expiration Date 18-Mar-2023
Record ID 26510922

This is to certify that:

Frederique Covington Corbett

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

GSEP Education Division (Curriculum Group)
GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE) (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Pepperdine University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?we712a4b3-ecfc-4128-a71c-3c3a8f2ffca3-26510922

APPENDIX J

IRB Research Approval Letter

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: July 27, 2020

Protocol Investigator Name: Frederique Covington Corbett

Protocol #: 20-02-1286

Project Title: EMERGENCE OF THE CONNECTIVIST LEADERSHIP PARADIGM: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY IN THE ASIA REGION

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Frederique Covington Corbett:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

APPENDIX K

IRB Research Training Certification

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Frederique Covington Corbett (ID: 7061763)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Pepperdine University (ID: 1729)
- **Institution Email:** frederique.covingtoncorbett@pepperdine.edu
- **Institution Unit:** School of education and psychology
- **Phone:** 65 8876-4813

- **Curriculum Group:** GSEP Education Division
- **Course Learner Group:** GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE)
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 26510922
- **Completion Date:** 19-Mar-2018
- **Expiration Date:** 18-Mar-2023
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 83

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	19-Mar-2018	4/5 (80%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	19-Mar-2018	5/5 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	19-Mar-2018	4/5 (80%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	19-Mar-2018	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	19-Mar-2018	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	19-Mar-2018	3/5 (60%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?k4299ab17-fad4-4c78-ae33-61386a5fa027-26510922

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)
Email: support@citiprogram.org
Phone: 888-529-5929
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT**

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Frederique Covington Corbett (ID: 7061763)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Pepperdine University (ID: 1729)
- **Institution Email:** frederique.covingtoncorbett@pepperdine.edu
- **Institution Unit:** School of education and psychology
- **Phone:** 65 8876-4813

- **Curriculum Group:** GSEP Education Division
- **Course Learner Group:** GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE)
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 26510922
- **Report Date:** 12-Jan-2020
- **Current Score**:** 83

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	19-Mar-2018	5/5 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	19-Mar-2018	4/5 (80%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	19-Mar-2018	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	19-Mar-2018	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	19-Mar-2018	3/5 (60%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	19-Mar-2018	4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

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