

# Definition schema for redefining leadership: an integrative approach

Puneet K. Bindlish · Sharda S. Nandram · Rajen K. Gupta  
IIT (BHU) · Nyenrode · Praan · OMRISE Banasthali · Management Development Institute

CENTRAL PROPOSITION

Multiple worldviews.  
An open schema.

A framework for defining leadership across contexts, perspectives and purposes.



Read the research

## 01 Background and question

Leadership research contains many overlapping definitions, often shaped by dominant assumptions about leaders and followers. This paper proposes an integrative definition schema that can accommodate local knowledge alongside contemporary leadership scholarship [1,2].

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can leadership be defined through a schema that includes the observer, context and diverse understandings of purpose?

## 02 Conceptual framework

GLocal

Culturally grounded and globally integrative

Holistic

Knower, knowing and knowledge together

The schema relates an entity, its path and purpose, its constituents, observable manifestations and the observer’s worldview. Its form remains open to contextual interpretation [1].

## 03 Evidence and method

GLocal fundamental research combines a critical review of leadership definitions with indigenous philosophical exploration. Semantic, philosophical and taxonomic criteria are used to construct an open definition schema rather than test a leadership intervention [1,3,4].

## 04 Worldview and the leadership schema

The source’s original table connects six worldview dimensions with the elements of the proposed leadership schema [1].

Table 2 Worldview and integrative definition schema elements

| Worldview dimension      | Integrative definition schema element(s)                                       |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Etiology (origins)       | Entity, ideal one, type, eternal constituent, intrinsic constituents           |
| Explanation (present)    | Ideal one, type, eternal constituent, intrinsic constituents, guided, followed |
| Futurology (future)      | Ideal one, ultimate purpose, union                                             |
| Epistemology (knowing)   | Observer, context, realising                                                   |
| Axiology (values)        | Path, conductor, observer                                                      |
| Praxeology (actions-how) | Manifestations, realising, guided, followed                                    |

Original Table 2, “Worldview and integrative definition schema elements”, reproduced from [1], p. 50.

Entity and purpose

Who or what is on a leadership path, and towards what ideal?

Relations and manifestations

How do constituents, context and observable qualities relate?

Observer and worldview

From whose perspective does the definition make sense?

## 05 Findings and contributions

A Make the observer explicit

The observer’s perspective shapes what counts as an entity, an ideal, a constituent and a leadership context [1].

B Connect inner and outer dimensions

The schema relates intrinsic orientation and purpose to the qualities or manifestations visible to an observer [1].

C Enable contextual definitions

The open structure can support different theories, cases and worldviews without making one perspective the sole reference point [1].

## 06 Discussion

A schema can strengthen theory building by clarifying its elements, relationships and purposes. The original mapping links leadership concepts to six dimensions of worldview, making assumptions available for discussion [1,4].

## 07 Limitations and next steps

The study develops a conceptual framework and does not evaluate applications. The authors call for use across leadership theories, leaders and organisational contexts to test and refine it [1].

CONCLUSION

An integrative definition of leadership includes purpose, context and the observer alongside the entity being studied [1].

SELECTED REFERENCES

[1] Bindlish, P. K., Nandram, S. S., & Gupta, R. K. (2019). Definition schema for redefining leadership: An integrative approach. International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management, 18(1), 34-58. doi:10.1504/IJICBM.2019.096921.

[2] Avolio, B. J. (2007). Promoting more integrative strategies for leadership theory-building. American Psychologist, 62(1), 25-33.

[3] Govindacharya, K. N. (2013). Tarksangraha. Chaukhamba Prakashan.

[4] Whetten, D. A. (1989). What constitutes a theoretical contribution? Academy of Management Review, 14(4), 490-495.