ESJ Social Sciences Peer-reviewed

Integrated Landscape Approaches: Definitions, Conceptualizations, Configurations, and Objectives through the Lens of Distributed Leadership Practices

Edward Gerald Ndilanha
Senior Advisor and Lead Researcher
Centre for Research on Organisational Development & Learning
Evin School of Management, Tanzania
Jan-Erik Jaensson
Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship
The Open University of Tanzania
Raphael Gwahula
Faculty of Business and Management
The Open University of Tanzania

Doi:10.19044/esj.2025.v21n22p40

Submitted: 05 September 2024
Accepted: 28 August 2025
Published: 31 August 2025

Cite As:
Ndilanha, E.G., Jaensson, J-E. & Gwahula, R. (2025). *Integrated Landscape Approaches: Definitions, Conceptualizations, Configurations, and Objectives through the Lens of Distributed Leadership Practices.* European Scientific Journal, ESJ, 21 (22), 40. https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2025.v21n22p40

Abstract

While it is widely recognised that integrated landscape approaches are strategic management and leadership strategies used by project team leadership to design, develop, and implement projects within integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes, it is, however, less clear how they are defined, conceptualised, configured and operationalised to achieve desired outcomes. This study contributes to knowledge by providing a new configuration and conceptualisation of the integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes conceptual framework; the four principles of integrated landscape approaches - (1) Landscape Partnership, (2) Shared Understanding, (3) Vision and Planning, and (4) Taking Action - need to be seen as strategic management and leadership objectives of the activity systems. To achieve this, the relationship between the four principles of integrated landscape approaches - (1) Landscape Partnership, (2) Shared

 ISSN: 1857-7881 (Print) e - ISSN 1857-7431

Understanding, (3)Vision and Planning, and (4) Taking Action - as strategic management and leadership objectives is explored, drawing theoretical foundations from the four widely used distributed leadership practices: engaging, developing, enabling, and empowering. Data were collected through a survey instrument distributed to a sample of 420 participants, followed by statistical analysis using EFA and CFA to validate the model. The findings and implications of the results suggest the existence of a strong relationship between the integrated landscape approaches and the four practices of distributed leadership. It is revealed that (i) they draw from theoretical foundations; (ii) they operate independently of one another; (iii) they exhibit high levels of cross-loading; (iv) they can be integrated into a network of activity systems; (v) they require enactment in a specific order of primacy to function effectively; and (vi) they constitute a normative decision-making framework.

Keywords: Strategic Management and Leadership, International Development Financed Projects, Distributed Leadership Practices, Projects Leadership Teams, Integrated Transboundary Landscapes and Seascape, Integrated Landscape Approaches, Development Corridors

Introduction

The integrated landscape management approaches or principles have been widely adopted and applied as project team leadership's strategic management and leadership objectives for designing, developing, and implementing international development financed (IDF) projects especially those undertaken within integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes (Reed, Ickowitza, Chervierc, Djoudia, Moombea, Ros-Tonend, Yanoua, Yuliania, & Sunderlanda 2020), as well as development corridors (Gannon, Pettinotti, Conway, Surminski, Ndilanha, and Nyumba, 2022).

Two major streams have attempted to define, conceptualise, configure, and operationalise integrated transboundary landscape and seascape approaches. The first and initial attempts were made by Sayer, Sunderland, Ghazoul, Pfund, Sheil, Meijaard, Venter, Boedhihartono, Day, Garcia, Van Oosten, and Buck (2013), who proposed ten principles to support the implementation of a landscape approach by emphasising adaptive management, stakeholder involvement, and achieving multiple outcomes driven by multiple objectives. These scholars argued that these principles differ from more traditional sectoral and project-based approaches, suggesting that landscape approaches provide tools and concepts for allocating and managing land to achieve social, economic, and environmental objectives in areas where agriculture, mining, and other productive land uses compete with environmental and biodiversity goals.

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The second stream emerged later and includes scholars such as Reed *et al*. (2020), who, from the ten principles, proposed five elements of integrated landscape management: (i) landscape partnership–developing a robust and stable coalition of organizations in the landscape across sectors and communities; (ii) shared understanding–building a common understanding of the state of the landscape, trends and forecasts, and one another's interests; (iii) vision and planning–forging a long-term vision, strategy, evaluation protocols, and spatially targeted action plans; (iv) taking action–coordinating efforts, developing and financing an integrated landscape investment portfolio, and tracking and communicating implementation; and (v) learning and impact–measuring landscape impacts, capturing lessons learned, and using them to adjust the landscape strategy and action plan.

From these two streams, three main issues can be noted from both Reed et al. (2020) and Sayer et al. (2013). Firstly, these principles respond to increasing societal concerns about environment and development trade-offs, emphasizing the need to shift ways of thinking and perspectives from conservation-orientated views toward increasing integration of multiple development outcomes. Secondly, various constraints are identified, with institutional and governance concerns highlighted as the most severe obstacles to implementation. Thirdly, Reed et al. (2020, 2023) noted that while several attempts have been made to formulate guiding or design principles for integrated landscape approaches, less analysis has been devoted to uncovering the theoretical foundations of integrated transboundary landscapes and seascape approaches, how they are conceptualised, configured, and defined, the intended outcomes they aim to accomplish, and the means through which these outcomes are achieved.

To address these knowledge gaps, this paper focuses on the four principles of integrated landscape approaches: (1) landscape partnership, (2) shared understanding, (3) vision and planning, and (4) taking action. Drawing perspectives from integral theory (Graves, 1966), integrated transboundary landscape and seascape approaches are not new. The principles of integrated transboundary landscape approaches can be seen as value systems, ways of thinking, or worldviews (Beck & Cowan, 1995). Martinsuo (2020, p.1) suggests adopting and applying values or ways of thinking that promote coexistence and co-creation. Cheng and Fleischmann (2010, p.2) describe values as "guiding principles of what people consider important in life."

The integral model proposed several levels describing how people think and behave (Nolan, Russell, Pickard, & Beasley, 2015). Merk, Schlotz, and Falter (2017) utilised the model to develop a Motivational Value Systems Questionnaire (MVSQ) that helps individuals identify their personal hierarchies of value systems and thus become more aware of what motivates and demotivates them in work-related contexts. According to an integral

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model previously developed by Graves (1966, 1970, 1974), integrated value systems aim to: (i) develop common goals for a shared vision; (ii) develop shared values as mechanisms of cooperation; (iii) enhance the participation of multiple stakeholders (different actors) to achieve critical contributions with multiple integrated outcomes and; (iv) achieve sustainable outcomes through capacity development.

This study contributes to the literature on strategic management and leadership of international development financed (IDF) projects by conceptualising and theorising the dimensions for the integrated landscape approach conceptual framework, building on both Distributed Leadership (DL) and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). First, it expands on the perspective that the four principles of integrated transboundary landscape approaches bring shifts in ways of thinking and worldviews among multiple actors. Second, it explores the relationship between the four principles of integrated landscape approaches - (1) landscape partnership, (2) shared understanding, (3) vision and planning, and (4) taking action - as IDF project leadership team strategic management and leadership objectives (Alnoor & Wah, 2023; Altman et al., 2023; Rodríguez-Rivero et al., 2020; Vongswasdi et al., 2024). Third, it proposes the dimensions of the integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes conceptual framework, building on the theoretical constructs and dimension measures of the four distributed leadership practices (engaging leadership practice, developing leadership practice, enabling leadership practice, and empowering leadership practice) (Hairon & Goh, 2015; Mifsud, 2024), the leaders-Task-Context (LTC) from distributed leadership theory (Feng et al., 2017a; Spillane et al., 2006), as well as the six elements of activity systems described in the CHAT framework, which include: subject, tool, objectives, rules, community, and division of labor (Engeström, 2012).

In addition to contributing to the literature on project team leadership, the study also fits into the broader research agenda on theory integration (Reed et al., 2023). However, while this area has received extensive attention in terms of practices, it has received relatively little attention in terms of theory development and measurement scale development.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature and sets out the hypotheses; Section 3 describes the empirical strategy and data; Section 4 tests the hypotheses and presents the evidence; and Section 5 concludes.

Theoretical Review and Conceptual Framework

Both Distributed Leadership Theory (DL) and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) originate from theories of distributed cognition (Cole & Engestrom, 1993; Engeström, 2012; Spillane et al., 2001, 2004).

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Theories of distributed cognition are theories of learning (Engeström, 2001, 2012). In the context of integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes, they offer theoretical and analytical frameworks that help in understanding the interactions of actors in their context (Evans et al., 2023; Margules et al., 2020). The key strength of theories of distributed cognition lies in their ability to facilitate the defining, conceptualising, configuring and operationalising of theory by introducing hybrid configuration as well as new conceptualisations, drawing dimension measures from other theories (Hamzeh, 2023; Hite et al., 2024).

Distributed Leadership Theory views leadership as distributed practices in the form of interactions among leaders, followers, and other actors in their context (Gronn, 2016; Spillane et al., 2004). Irvine (2021) argues that Distributed Leadership Theory is about practice rather than people and formal roles. Although there is no unanimous agreement on a definition of the term, Tian, Risku, and Collin (2016) define Distributed Leadership (DL) Theory as practice-based development programs or distributed leadership practices. They identify two schools of research around distributed leadership: (a) the descriptive-analytical paradigm and (b) the prescriptive-normative paradigm, which examines the practical applications of distributed leadership. Modeste, Hornskov, Bjerg, and Kelley (2020, p.5) define distributed leadership practice as "a set of tasks that occur within a given context or situation and require the work of a leader and a follower to carry it out." Other scholars define DL-practice as a "pattern in the behaviour of a collective aimed at producing direction, alignment, and commitment in an overall collective goal" (McCauley & Palus, 2020, p.3). It is also viewed as "a product of the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situation" (Liu et al., 2020, p.5). Hangartner and Svaton (2022) argue that the practices of distributed leadership depend on their context and governing conditions. Spillane (2005, p.144) articulated that "leadership practice is viewed as a product of the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situation."

CHAT, on the other hand, is a social theory and also an analytical framework (Engestrom, 2000). It is often used to study developments in work practices, organisations, and real-life contexts (Salloum & BouJaoude, 2023; Skipper, Nøhr, & Engeström, 2021). As an analytical framework, CHAT assumes that all activities are mediated by six elements: subject, tool, objectives, rules, community, and division of labour (Astudillo, Martín-García, & Acuña, 2020). CHAT also recognises that an activity system is objective –driven (Engeström, 2012). In the CHAT framework, the subject and objective form the central components of the activity system. The objective motivates the activity, and the activity focuses on turning the objective into an outcome. The subject's engagement with the activity is influenced by the rules of interaction, community, and division of labour,

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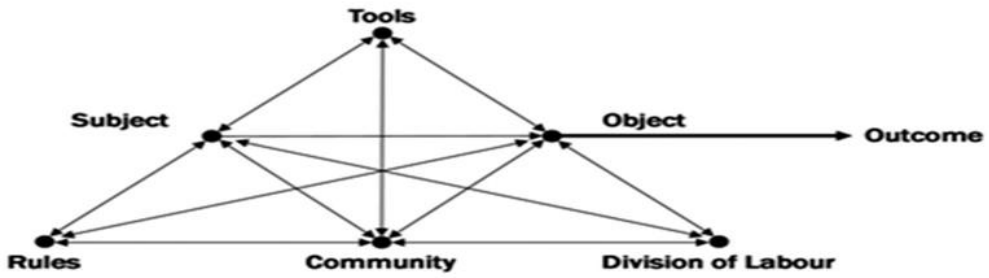
which initially emerge as a result of the division of labour in collective activities (Yang & Kyun, 2022).

Figure 1. CHAT Framework



Source: Engestrom (2000, p.962)

Bringing DL and CHAT together, an activity system can be viewed as distributed leadership practices manifested through the interaction of leaders, followers, and other actors within their context. On the basis that an activity system is object-driven, this paper proposes a newly conceptualised and configured framework for integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes. The framework builds on the Leaders-Task-Context (LTC) model developed by Feng et al. (2017), which was originally designed to understand the different dimensions of team leadership. The LTC framework emphasises the interrelationship between team characteristics, task characteristics, and contextual factors (Modeste et al., 2020, p.5). This paper expands on LTC model by incorporating attributes of the Leader (subject), Task (division of labour), and Context (tool, rules, and community) drawing from the six elements of the CHAT framework (Engeström, 2012). It further argues that these attributes moderate the relationship between objectives and their outcomes.

In this configuration of the integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes conceptual framework, the four principles of integrated landscape approaches - (1) landscape partnership, (2) shared understanding, (3) vision and planning, and (4) taking actions - are positioned as strategic management and leadership objectives of activity systems. These objectives are defined, conceptualised, configured, and operationalised to achieve four specified outcomes. The theoretical foundation and dimension measures are drawn from the four distributed leadership practices: engaging leadership practice, developing leadership practice, enabling leadership practice, and empowering leadership practice (Alnoor & Wah, 2023; Altman et al., 2023; Snihur & Bocken, 2022). Extant literature suggests that engaging leadership practice promotes the achievement of common goals and a shared vision (Kohnen et al., 2024); developing leadership practice establishes shared values as

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mechanisms for cooperation (Bryant & Walker, 2024; Ealy, 2024); enabling leadership practice fosters participation and collaboration among diverse actors (Bäcklander, 2019; Langley, 2019); and empowering leadership practice enhances the achievement of sustainable outcomes (Wang, 2024).

Mifsud (2023) notes that the four distributed leadership practices: (i) draw from theoretical foundations; (ii) operate independently of one another; (iii) exhibit high levels of cross-loading; (iv) can be integrated into a network of activity systems; (v) require enactment in a specific order of primacy to function effectively; and (vi) constitute a normative decision-making framework. Hamzeh (2023), however argues that although distributed leadership practices support theory conceptualisation and configuration, deeper analysis is required to uncover their effects.

Building on these relationships between the strategic management and leadership objectives of distributed leadership and the objectives of integrated transboundary landscapes, this paper advances a conceptual framework in which distributed leadership practices function as independent variables, while the Leaders-Task-Context construct operates as a moderating variable. This framework provides a basis for developing a governance and accountability model for landscapes and seascapes with corresponding scales and dimension measures. It is proposed as a tool to support the design, development, and implementation of International Development Financed (IDF) projects. The framework is further positioned as a strategic management and leadership tool, as well as a workplace learning and analytical framework. While conventional perspectives suggest that project team leaders should adopt leadership approaches best suited to their preferences and contexts, this paper adopts an interventionist stance. It argues that the four distributed leadership practices, as strategic management and leadership activities, cannot be applied in isolation (Engeström & Pyörälä, 2021; Spinuzzi, 2020). To achieve desired outcomes, project leadership teams must enact all four practices in a sequential and integrated manner. These practices form a primacy-based normative decision-making framework that bridges different temporal, contextual, and spatial dimensions (Harris et al., 2022, 2023).

The Effects of Engaging Leadership Practice on Achievement of IDF Project Outcomes

Van Tuin, Schaufeli, van Rhenen, and Kuiper (2020) define engaging leadership as a concept which aims explicitly to identify leadership behaviors that may induce work engagement through the satisfaction of basic psychological needs (Omar, 2020; Liu, 2020; Rahmadani *et al*., 2020; Shen *et al.,* 2020). Engaging practice draws its theoretical foundations from Self Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT is a positive leadership style that fosters employees' work engagement through a

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specific psychological mechanism which leads to positive project outcomes (Rahmadani *et al.*, 2020).
The engaging leadership practice uses common goals for a shared vision as a basic psychological motivator to inspire multidisciplinary and multicultural team members to lead one another towards the common goal through shared–leadership processes (Van Tuin, Schaufeli, van Rhenen, & Kuiper, 2020; Omar, 2020; Liu, 2020; Rahmadani *et al*., 2020; Shen *et al*., 2020). Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: There is a positive relationship between engaging leadership practice and achievement of IDF project outcomes.

The Effects of Developing Leadership Practice on Achievement of IDF Project Outcomes

Leadership development is referred to as leadership preparation and development (Woods et *al.*, 2020). Leadership development draws its theoretical foundations from both the relational theory and self-determination theory (Van Tuin *et al*., 2020). The relational theory views leadership as a 21st century strategy for addressing succession, retention, growth, and expansion needs through offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualised support, and modeling appropriate values and practices (McCauley & Palus, 2020; Printy & Liu, 2020).

Shared values are used as mechanisms for team cooperation. Developing leadership uses shared values as motivations for modeling appropriate mechanisms of cooperation (rules or guidelines) for the project team leadership (Woods *et al*., 2020;Van Tuin *et al*., 2020; McCauley & Palus, 2020;Printy & Liu, 2020). The established mechanisms of cooperation motivate project leadership team members to lead one another through shared–leadership processes towards the achievement of project outcomes. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: There is a positive relationship between developing leadership practice and achievement of IDF project outcomes.

The Effects of Enabling Leadership Practice on Achievement of IDF Project Outcomes

Schulze and Pinkow (2020, p.2) describe enabling leadership as "a third leadership style (in addition to transactional and transformational leadership) that combines exploration and exploitation across all hierarchy levels". Other scholars see enabling leadership as part of empowering leadership, with the distinction that while enabling leadership draws its foundation from traditional empowering leadership perspectives, empowering

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leadership draws its foundation from psychological empowerment, which is addressed in the next section. Tang, Zhang, and Wang (2020, p.4) claim that enabling is one of the four dimensions of empowering leadership, which includes: consulting, delegating, enabling, and informing. Enabling leadership practices draw their foundations from the Job Characteristic Theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and the Job Demands-Resources theory (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

The objective of enhancing participation of different actors is defined as enabling leadership practice (Flood *et al.*, 2020; Liu *et al.*, 2020; Modeste et al., 2020). Enabling leadership practices use participation as an empowerment motivation for individuals, organisations, and community actors to enact self-leadership towards the achievement of project outcomes (Grošelj *et al.,* 2020; Schulze & Pinkow, 2020). Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: There is a positive relationship between enabling leadership practice and achievement of IDF project outcomes.

The Effects of Empowering Leadership Practice on Achievement of IDF Project Outcomes

Empowering leadership has its foundations in psychological empowerment, which is defined as "intrinsic motivation manifested in four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact" (Grošelj *et al*., 2020, p.5). Psychological empowerment is achieved through spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relationships, and institutionalised practices (McGuinness & Taysum, 2020). Psychological empowerment motivates individuals and teams to enact self-leadership or self-influence towards achievement of project outcomes (Shen *et al.*, 2020).

The objective of achieving sustainable development is defined as empowering leadership practice (Brown, Flood *et al.*, 2020). Empowering leadership promotes communication and collaboration as psychological empowerment for teams to enact self-leadership or self-influence towards achievement of project outcomes (Grošelj *et al.*, 2020; Shen *et al*., 2020). Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: There is a positive relationship between empowering and achievement of IDF project outcomes.

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The Moderating role of The Leaders-Task –Context (LTC) in the Relationship between DL Practices and IDF Project Outcomes

The Leader-Task-Context (LTC) construct builds from the distributed perspective in Distributed Leadership Theory, which articulates that "leadership practice is a product of the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situation" (Spillane, 2005; Feng *et al.*, 2017). In this formulation, the Leaders-Task-Context (LTC) construct intends to integrate the object(s) and the project outcome. Furthermore, the "Leaders" denotes the subject (which includes individuals, organisations, and communities), the "Task" includes the division of labour, and the "Context" includes tools and rules.

This study seeks to assess how the Leader-Task-Context (LTC) moderates the relationship between DL practices and the achievement of IDF project outcomes. In consideration of the identified gaps with CHAT, this study intends to propose attributes and scale measures for the Leader-Task-Context (LTC). A moderating variable is a qualitative or quantitative variable that affects the direction and/or strength of the relationship between an independent and dependent variable. In order to infer that a variable is a moderating variable, there must be a significant statistical interaction between the predictor and the moderator (i.e. $p < .05$) (Echebiri, 2020; Knezović & Drkić, 2020; Kustanto et al., 2020).

This study provides a summary of attributes and scale measures for the Leader-Task-Context (LTC) construct. The attributes and scale measures intend to provide clarity on the definition, descriptive, and explanatory power of CHAT. This study integrates measures and scales from Campion et al. (1993, 1996), while measures and scales for individual, organisational, and community-level outcomes were developed based on organisational studies (England, 1967; Enz, 1988; Scott, 2002). The Campion et al. (1993, 1996) model is based on the studies of Gladstein (1984), Hackman (1987), and Guzzo and Shea (1992). This is because these scales examine what managers perceive as important and significant aspects of their work and thus a priority for achieving outcomes.

This study notes that there is existing interdependence, e.g., task interdependence, context interdependence, goal interdependence, interdependent feedback and rewards. These interdependences suggest that the attributes of Leaders-Task-Context (LTC) have equal priority and thus, there is no attribute which has primacy over another (Christensen-Salem *et al*., 2020; Hagemann *et al.*, 2020). Based on this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5a: The Leader-Task-Context (LTC) positively moderates the relationship between Engaging Leadership Practice and IDF project outcomes.

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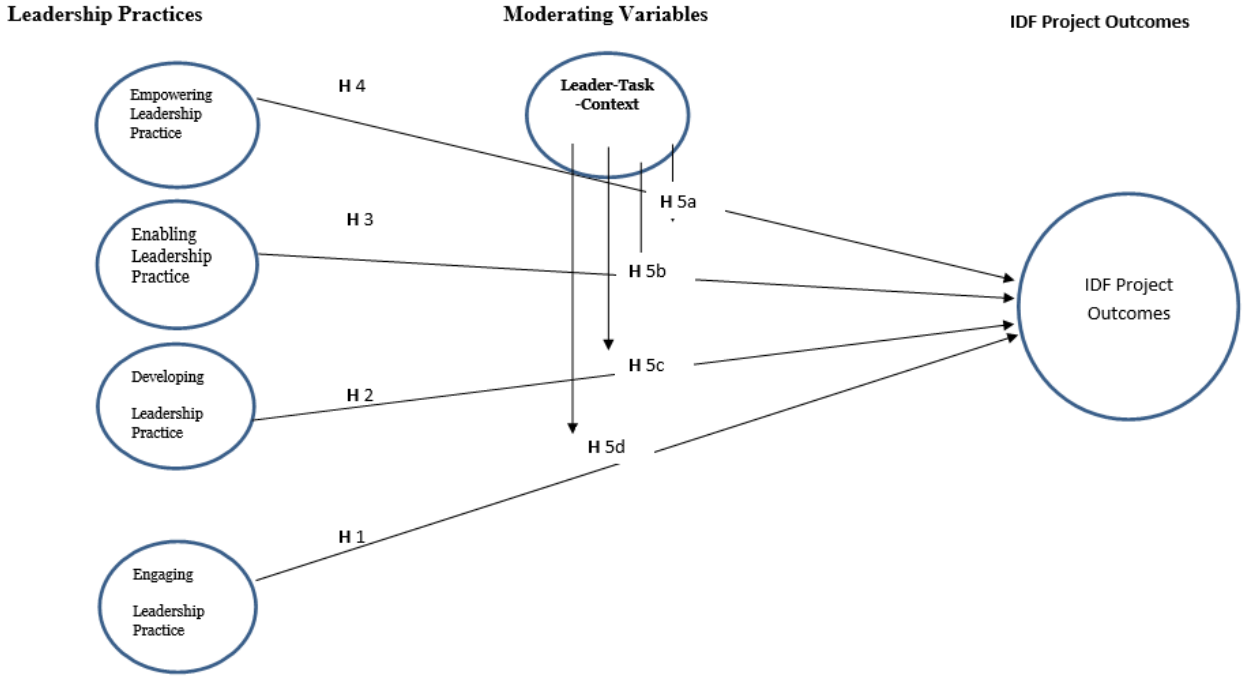
H5b: The Leader-Task-Context (LTC) positively moderates the relationship between Developing Leadership Practice and IDF project outcomes.
H5c: The Leader-Task-Context (LTC) positively moderates the relationship between Enabling Leadership Practice and IDF project outcomes.
H5d: The Leader-Task-Context (LTC) positively moderates the relationship between Empowering Leadership Practice and IDF project outcomes.

Ultimately, the above discussion suggests that not all distributed leadership practices contribute to the achievement of the same IDF outcomes. Due to differences in underpinning theories, some contribute towards the achievement of individual outcomes, others towards organisational outcomes, while others significantly contribute to the achievement of community outcomes. The rest of the paper investigates the above hypotheses, starting with a discussion of the empirical strategy and data in the following section.

Figure 2. The Study Conceptual Framework



Source based on Synthesis of Literature Review (2022)

Research Methodology

Research Philosophy and Strategy

This paper advanced a new configuration and conceptualisation of the dimensions of the integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes conceptual framework, building on the four principles of integrated landscape approaches: (1) landscape partnership, (2) shared understanding, (3) vision

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and planning, and (4) taking actions, derived from Cultural-Historical Activity Theory and Distributed Leadership Theory after being validated through Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Sample and Data Collection Methods

Data were collected and analysed over a two-year longitudinal study with 420 individual participants selected through stratified random sampling, employing a positivist philosophy. Data collection procedures followed Jennings (2012), who warned researchers to follow required 'rules', procedures, or guidelines that are embedded in philosophical backgrounds. Random sampling was used to guide the distribution of the survey instrument. The instrument was distributed to small groups between 20 and 50 participants during the planned and agreed training sessions, which took about two years to cover all 420 participants. The cohort of 420 participants was obtained through stratified random sampling, where participants were divided into subgroups or strata based on landscapes, seascapes, community-based organisations, projects, conservation themes, targets, age, and communities as suggested by Hayes (2022). Researchers followed Lynn's (2019) guidance, ensuring that invitation letters for the capacity-building session included information to the participants about the purpose of this study. In addition, researchers ensured that all participants were older than 18 years.

As the survey instrument and its dimension measurement scale were to be used as a landscape and seascape governance and accountability framework, the use of a longitudinal study for workplace learning and change was suitable, as it ensured that participants were engaged in a participatory design project, as suggested by Augustsson (2021). The learning and development were evident, ensuring participants were fully engaged in the design and review processes of the analytical tools and grasping the problem at a preliminary conceptual framework before arriving at the final framework.

Furthermore, researchers emphasised the importance of following rules and procedures, as noted by Jennings (2012), because the data collected were based on participants' perceptions, feedback, attitudes, and survey responses. The collected data were significant, as the participants formed a validation group for this study's conceptual framework and study tool. The participants represented people who typically experience the same event at a given point in time. This approach helped the researcher to easily access participants and collect data at the same point in time, and it was cost-effective. Participation in the present study was motivated because the successful establishment of the governance and accountability framework for the landscapes and seascapes would (i) enhance the governance and accountability structure, (ii) promote the establishment of clear roles and responsibilities, (iii) facilitate robust information flow systems, and (iv)

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establish an effective decision-making process (Jambo & Hongde, 2020; Lyu *et al.*, 2023).

Survey Instruments and Materials

The new configuration and conceptualisation of the integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes conceptual framework and its theoretical constructs and dimension measures were used as the survey questionnaire method for collecting standard data and information from participants. The questionnaires were administered online using Google Forms. Respondents used smartphones, tablets, laptops, or desktop computers to answer questions, thus utilising tools convenient for answering an online survey. This framework adopted the Likert-type descriptors suggested by Nykyforchyn (2022, p.3), which measure five levels of development using a five-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree (Embryonic - almost absent or at a very basic stage of development); 2 = Disagree (Developing - present but rudimentary); 3 = Average (Moderately developed- progress made but requiring significant strengthening); 4 = Agree (Well developed - high level achieved, though further improvement is possible); and 5 = Strongly Agree (Highly developed - reflects best practice at the maximum level of development).

Table 1 provides a summary of the dimension measures and scale item instruments. Due to the multidimensional nature of theoretical constructs, this study developed sub-scales, making the 30 composite variables of the landscape and seascape governance and accountability framework from 78 indicators. The large number of questions was to ensure that many details and aspects were captured, providing a meaningful explanation of the sub-scales. The sub-scale consisted of four (4) items for the independent variables, eight (8) items for the moderating variables, and a total of 18 items for the dependent variables (consisting of 3 items for individual outcomes, 10 items for organisational outcomes, and 5 items for community outcomes).

The scale reflects the complexity, multi-level nature, and multi-dimensionality of the landscape and seascape governance and accountability framework. Composite indicators were developed to help summarise complex or multi-dimensional issues and make them easy to interpret, as they reduce the size of a set of indicators to a manageable limit, which makes it easier to communicate and promote accountability.

Independent Variables (Distributed Leadership Practices)

The scale instrument for independent variables consisted of 4-item scales drawing from the four dimensions of distributed leadership, which include bounded empowerment, developing leadership, shared decision and collective engagement (Hairon & Goh, 2015). Questions in this section

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examined the levels of autonomy among different leaders regarding making independent and transparent decisions at different stages of the approval process, including: i) developing common goals for a shared vision; ii) developing shared values as mechanisms of cooperation; iii) enhancing the participation of multiple stakeholders (different actors) to achieve critical contributions which have multiple integrated outcomes; and iv) achieving sustainable development outcomes through capacity development.

Moderating Variables (Attributes of the Leaders-Task-Context)

The second section consisted of 8-item scales, examining the moderation variables, focusing on understanding existing interdependencies such as team interdependence, task interdependence, and context interdependence among individuals, organisations, and communities (Grabner, Klein, & Speckbacher, 2022; Lázaro, Del Barco, Polo-Del-Río, & Rasskin-Gutman, 2020; Marinov, 2023; Meuris & Elias, 2022; Wong & van Gils, 2022). Specifically, this section sought to understand the levels of interaction amongst individuals, organisations, and communities and their context at local, national, regional, and even global levels during the IDF projects' design, development, and implementation (Angelstam et al., 2020; Reed et al., 2020; Welling et al., 2021). The proposed attributes intended to facilitate effective management of the reciprocal influence (Jambo & Hongde, 2020; Lyu *et al.,* 2023) and address conflicts amongst multiple actors (Grabner *et al.*, 2022; Wong & van Gils, 2022).

Dependent Variables (IDF Project Outcomes)

The third section consisted of 18-item scales for the dependent variables, measured at three levels: individual (3), organisational (10), and community outcomes (5). The dependent variables suggest the existence of interdependence, i.e., goal interdependence, interdependent feedback, and rewards among individuals, organisations, and communities (Grabner, Klein, & Speckbacher, 2022; Lázaro, Del Barco, Polo-Del-Río, & Rasskin-Gutman, 2020; Marinov, 2023; Meuris & Elias, 2022; Wong & van Gils, 2022). Oliver (1999) reviewed England's Personal Values Questionnaire, which includes 66 value items grouped under five categories: business goals (e.g., high productivity, industry leadership, organisational growth); personal goals (e.g., achievement, money, power); groups of people (e.g., unions, customers, shareholders); personal characteristics (e.g., honor, aggressiveness, conformity); and general topics (e.g., competition, religion, emotions). Following Oliver's (1999) suggestions, this study adopted value-based instruments because they integrate different perceptions of values, including personal values, organisational values, and community values. The dependent variables are assessed based on how existing organisational policies,

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regulations, or guidelines support individual outcomes, such as personal goals, career goals, professional goals, contribution to organisational goals, and contribution to community goals. The organisational outcomes examine how existing policies, regulations, or guidelines support the organisation as a trusted partner, improve financial sustainability, and strengthen communication capacity (England, 1967; Enz, 1988), while the community outcomes includes honest communication, respect for property, respect for life, respect for religion, and respect for justice (Scott, 2002).

Control Variables (Position, Gender, and Age)

Control variables included position, gender, and age (i.e., under 25, 25–35, 35–45, 45–55, over 55). Hayes (2022) and Lynn (2019) suggested stratification, which benefited this study in two ways: first, it allowed researchers to obtain a sample of leaders that represented the entire population of interest; second, it ensured that each subgroup was represented, making it easier to compare landscapes, seascapes, communities-based organisations, age, and position. This was important for ensuring the training session gave equal opportunities regardless of gender, age, religion, education, affiliations, etc.

Table 1 presents the study variables, which include the independent variables (the four practices of Distributed Leadership Practices), the moderating variables (The Leaders-Task-Context), and the dependent variables (IDF Project Outcomes), which were analysed using Generalised Structural Equation Modeling.

Table 1. Summary of Composite Measurement Instruments and Items used in this study

Sources	Variable Measured	Items used	Measurement	Items used
Hairon and Goh (2015)	Distributed Leadership Practices	1	**Ordinal scale 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Average, 4 = Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree**	**Engaging Leadership Practice** Common goal for a shared vision
		1	**Ordinal scale 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Average, 4 = Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree**	**Developing Leadership Practice** shared values
		1	**Ordinal scale 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Average, 4 = Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree**	**Enabling Leadership Practice** Stakeholders' participation
		1	**Ordinal scale 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Average, 4 = Agree and 5=Strongly Agree**	**Empowering Leadership Practice** Achieve Sustainable Development Outcomes
England (1967)	Dependent Variables	3	**Ordinal scale 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Average, 4 = Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree**	**Individuals Outcome** Personal development, career development, professional development

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Enz (1988)		10	**Ordinal scale 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Average, 4 = Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree**	**Organisations Outcome** Increased funding, revenues, profitability, customers, partners, adaptability, communication, sustainability, Technology, productivity
Scott (2002)		5	**Ordinal scale 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Average, 4 = Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree**	**Community Outcome** Respect for Life, Respect for Property, Respect for Justice, Respect for Biodiversity, Respect for Information
Campion, Medsker, and Higgs (1993, 996) and Campion *et al*., (2020; 2001)	Moderating Variables	2	**Ordinal scale 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Average, 4 = Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree**	**Leaders** Self-Leadership Shared-Leadership
		2	**Ordinal scale 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Average, 4 = Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree**	**Task** Self-managed teams and Cross functional teams
		4	**Ordinal scale 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Average, 4 = Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree**	**Context** Impact, innovation, collaboration, communication

Source: Researcher 2022 based on literature review

Analysis and Results

The data were analysed in two primary stages. First, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with principal components extraction and varimax rotation was applied to the data. The objective was to make a fair and consistent comparison between the psychometric properties of the Landscape and Seascape Governance and Accountability measurement scale framework for IDF Projects and the results from the previous three sub-scales. Second, in an effort to examine the extent to which the Landscape and Seascape Governance and Accountability measurement scale framework for IDF Projects effectively represents the Theory, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model was tested through an analysis of covariance structures using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Cross-Loading Criterion

Table 2 below, presenting the rotated component matrix, indicates the factor loading on the host factor. The strong correlation indicates the dynamic interactive influence process among the individual items in the group. All the factor loadings are > 0.4, indicating an acceptable level of Indicator Reliability (Hulland, 1999, p. 198). Other scholars suggest that as part of confirmatory

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factor analysis, none of the factor loadings below (< .50) should be removed. In this study, these indicators were not removed, as the model-fit measures were assessed based on the model's overall goodness of fit (CMIN/df, GFI, CFI, TLI, SRMR, and RMSEA), and all values were within their respective common acceptance levels (Hu & Bentler, 1998).

The Analysis of the Measurement Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was computed using AMOS to test the full measurement model (Figure 3 – Measurement model). The model-fit measures were used to assess the model's overall goodness of fit (CMIN/df, GFI, CFI, TLI, SRMR, and RMSEA) and all values were within their respective common acceptance levels (Hu & Bentler, 1998). The 30 factors represent the full scale, and when tested they all yielded a good fit (Figure 4.8) for the data: CMIN/df = 4.168, GFI = .809, AGFI = .751, NFI = .694, RFI = .627, IFI = .749, CFI = .744, TLI = .688, SRMR = , and RMSEA = .088, according to Hu and Bentler (1999; 1998).

The Validity and Reliability of the Full Measurement Model

This study addressed issues of reliability and validity according to suggestions by Awang (2011), who advised researchers to determine unidimensionality, validity, and reliability of latent constructs. To achieve unidimensionality, the researcher first ensured that all measuring items have a factor loading of at least 0.5 for their respective latent construct and that all factor loading is positive, as suggested by Hair *et al*. (2014). In this study, most of the conditions were met, indicating that unidimensionality was achieved, thus opening the door for validity and reliability testing.

These latent variables were developed based on the Bollen et al. (2022) suggested criteria for good scaling indicators. The criteria for a good scaling indicator include high face validity, high correlation with the latent variable, factor complexity of one, no correlated errors, no direct effects with other indicators, a minimal number of significant over-identification equation tests and modification indices, and invariance across groups and time. Bollen et al. (2022) note that it is common practice for psychologists to specify models with latent variables to represent concepts that are difficult to directly measure.

Table 3 below shows that all Item Loadings were > than 0.4, indicating Indicator Reliability (Hulland, 1999, p. 198); all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were > 0.5, indicating Convergent Reliability (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981); all Composite Reliability (CR) values were > 0.7, indicating Internal Consistency (Gefen, *et al*, 2000); and all Cronbach's alpha values were > 0.7, confirming Indicator Reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

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Table 2. Rotated Factor Matrix of the Measurement Model

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	DL_Practices	Organisation Growth Criteria	Context	Task	Community	Organisation Systemic Criteria	Organisation Systemic Criteria	Community	Individuals	Leaders
Enabling	0.951									
Developing	0.801									
Empowering	0.636									
Engaging	0.600									
Profitability		0.838								
Growth		0.736								
Funding		0.617								
Productivity		0.505								
Thought_Leadership										
Collaboration			0.881							
Innovation			0.668							
Communication			0.666							
Impact				0.866						
SMTeams				0.720						
CTTeams				0.552						
Respect_information					0.760					
Respect_Biodiversity					0.757					
Technology										
Visibility						0.860				
Partnerships						0.474				
Adaptability							0.950			
Respect_Property										
ProfDevGoals										
Respect_Health								0.791		
Reputation								0.541		
PersonalGoals									0.699	
Respect_Beliefs									0.594	
CareerGoals									0.533	
Self_Leadership										0.556
Shared_Leadership										0.401

Extraction Method: Generalized Least Squares

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations Source: Field data (2022)

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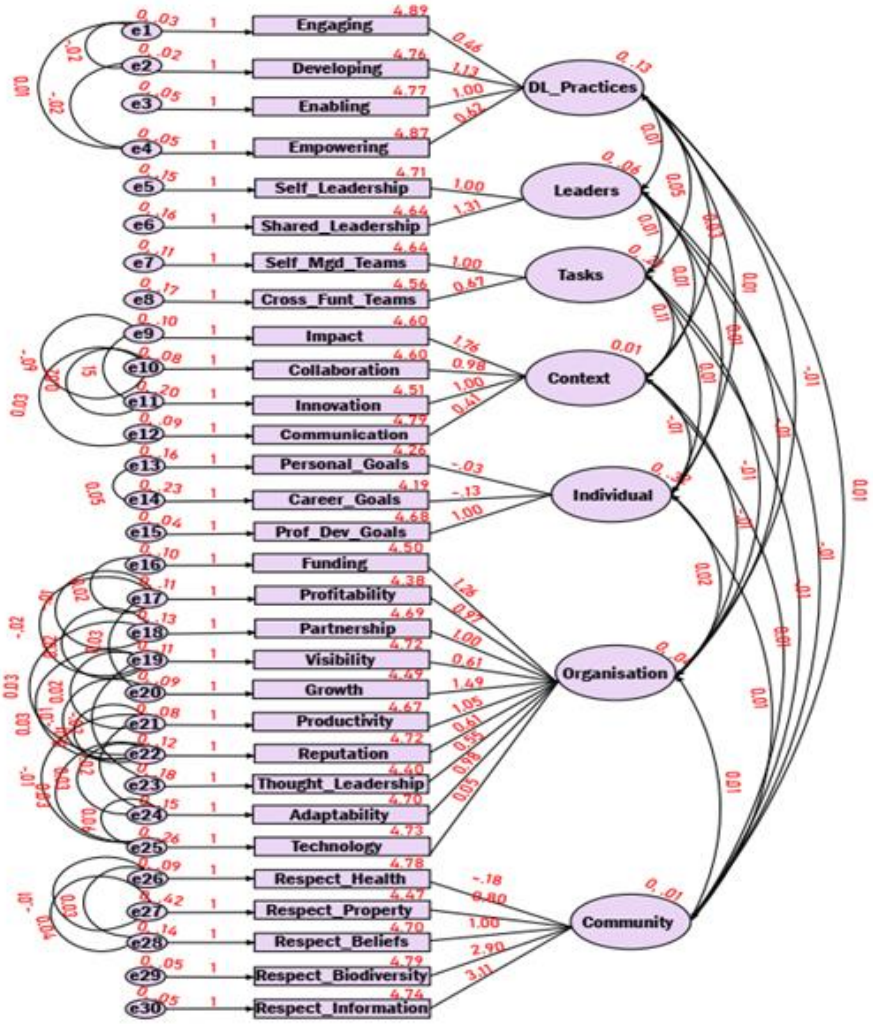
Figure 3. Composite – Measurement Model



Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 3. Summary of Reliability of the Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Composite Reliability	Construct Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
			CR	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Leaders Task-Context			0.896	**0.535851**	0.854
Leaders	Shared_Leadership	0.635			
Leaders	Self_Leadership	0.542			
Context	Innovation	0.674			
Context	Collaboration	0.809			

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Context	Impact	1.116			
Context	Communication	0.473			
Tasks	CTTeams	0.591			
Tasks	SMTeams	0.814			
IDF Project Outcomes			0.832	**0.3167**	0.713
Individual	ProfDevGoals	1.076			
Individual	CareerGoals	-0.155			
Individual	PersonalGoals	-0.047			
organisation	Partnerships	0.508			
organisation	Profitability	0.529			
organisation	Funding	0.64			
organisation	Visibility	**0.364**			
organisation	Growth	0.718			
organisation	Productivity	0.603			
organisation	Reputation	**0.353**			
organisation	Thought_Leadership	**0.265**			
organisation	Adaptability	0.474			
organisation	Technology	**0.021**			
Community	Respect_Beliefs	**0.228**			
Community	Respect_Property	**0.109**			
Community	Respect_Health	**-0.053**			
Community	Respect_Biodiversity	0.733			
Community	Respect_information	0.764			
DL_Practice			0.866	0.6233	0.829
DL_Practices	Engaging	0.65			
DL_Practices	Developing	0.933			
DL_Practices	Enabling	0.846			
DL_Practices	Empowering	0.696			

Source: Field Data (2022)

Discussion of the Results

The discussion focuses on elucidating the possible meanings and explanations of the ten dimensions within the context of IDF projects that are designed, developed, and implemented in integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes. The findings provide evidence of the dimensionality of the integrated transboundary landscape and seascape construct (See Table 2, Rotated Factor Matrix). The exploratory factor analysis revealed ten dimensions of the integrated transboundary landscapes and seascapes approach conceptual framework, which build upon the four principles of integrated landscape management and the moderating variables represented by the Leaders-Task-Context. These findings support early theoretical conceptualisations in the literature that transboundary landscape and seascape approaches are multi-dimensional constructs (Reed et al., 2023). Recognising

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this multidimensionality sharpens the understanding of the integrated transboundary landscape and seascape approach and enhances its application in the design, development, and implementation of IDF projects.

The conceptual framework in Figure 2 is derived from the theoretical and empirical literature reviewed. A conceptual framework typically contains variables or key factors that indicate presumed relationships between them and is presented either graphically or narratively (Saunders *et al.,* 2019). In this study, the constructs and dimension measures were applied both as a governance and accountability framework and as a learning framework to support the design, development, and delivery of IDF projects in line with integrated transboundary landscape and seascape approaches (Reed et al., 2020, 2023).

The perception indicators in the framework are value-based measures that promote integrated transboundary landscapes and seascape approaches aimed at addressing the deterioration of work standards and fostering higher levels of coexistence and interdependence. These indicators build on human values drawn from the integral model developed by Graves (1966, 1970, 1974). Martinsuo (2020, p.1) highlights the importance of adopting values and ways of thinking that promote coexistence and co-creation, while Cheng and Fleischmann (2010, p.2) describe values as "guiding principles of what people consider important in life."

This framework also incorporates the Likert-type descriptors suggested by Nykyforchyn (2022, p.3), which measure five levels of development using a five-point scale: 1= Strongly Disagree (Embryonic - almost absent or at a very basic stage of development); 2 = Disagree (Developing - present but rudimentary) 3 = Average (Moderately developed – progress made but requiring significant strengthening); 4 = Agree (Well developed - high level achieved, though further improvement is possible); and 5 = Strongly Agree (Highly developed - reflects best practice at the maximum level of development).

Within this conceptual framework, the independent variables are represented by four distributed leadership practices (Hairon & Goh, 2015): engaging, developing, enabling, and empowering leadership. The dimension measures are as follows: engaging leadership promotes achievement of common goals and a shared vision (Kohnen *et al*., 2024); developing leadership fosters shared values as mechanisms for cooperation (Bryant & Walker, 2024; Ealy, 2024); enabling leadership promotes participation and collaboration among diverse actors (Bäcklander, 2019; Langley, 2019); and empowering leadership enhances the achievement of sustainable outcomes (Wang, 2024).

The Leaders-Task-Context serves as a moderating variable. Here, "Leaders" denote individuals from groups, organisations, and communities;

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"Task" reflects the division of labour; and "Context" encompasses tools, rules, and communities. This study argues that the attributes of the Leaders-Task-Context positively moderate the relationship between distributed leadership practices and IDF project outcomes. Specifically, the indicators include self-leadership and shared-leadership for Leaders; self-managed and cross-functional teams for Task; and impact, collaboration, innovation, and communication for Context. These indicators are based on Campion *et al*.'s (2001; 2020) team model.

When adopted, these structures, systems, and processes lead to interconnected IDF project outcomes such as sustainable development and global benefits that support people, nature, and economies while promoting equitable sharing of benefits among individuals, organisations, and communities. At the highest level (Level 5, "Highly developed"), the Leaders-Task-Context attributes are expected to foster: (i) effective governance and accountability structures, (ii) clearly defined roles and responsibilities, (iii) robust information flow systems, and (iv) effective decision-making processes.

Martinsuo (2020, p.1) further argued that project outcomes are shaped by management values as exercises in sense making, negotiation, and co-creation, where beliefs are adjusted to transform practices and outcomes. This perspective is adopted in the present study to ensure the effective management of interdependencies at individual, organisational, and community levels.

Oliver (1999) reviewed England's Personal Values Questionnaire, which includes 66 value items grouped under five categories: business goals (e.g., high productivity, industry leadership, organisation growth), personal goals (e.g., achievement, money, power), groups of people (e.g., unions, customers, shareholders), personal characteristics (e.g., honor, aggressiveness, conformity), and general topics (e.g., competition, religion, emotions). Following Oliver's suggestion, this study employed value-based instruments to capture perceptions of personal, organisational, and community values (England, 1967; Enz, 1988; Scott, 2002).

At the individual level, three perception measures were identified: personal development, career development, and professional development, drawing from Akgunduz *et al.* (2020, p.2). They investigated the effects of rewards and proactive personality on the meaning of work and turnover intention, focusing on three components: valence, expectancy, and instrumentality. Data were collected through a survey of 224 hotel employees in Turkey. The results indicated that both financial and non-financial rewards negatively influence turnover intention, while proactive personality and financial rewards positively affect the meaning of work.

At the organisational level, ten perception measures were used to assess organisational effectiveness and performance, based on Enz (1988):

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increased funding, revenues, profitability, customers (thought leadership), partners, adaptability, communication, sustainability, technology, and productivity. Enz (1989) found that perceived value congruity between department members and top managers influenced the ability of departments to shape strategic issues.

At the community level, five perception measures of social impact were adopted from Scott's (2002) organisational moral values model: honest communication, respect for property, respect for life, respect for religion, and respect for justice. However, this model was criticised by Shadnam, Bykov, and Prasad, (2021) for its weak theoretical connection between sociology, morality, and business ethics.

Conclusion

Integrated landscape approaches to project team leadership draw on distributed leadership practices. From this foundation, they provide governance and accountability structures, support the clarification of roles and responsibilities, establish effective decision-making systems, and facilitate robust information flows. These features are essential for enabling participation and collaboration among diverse actors at local, national, regional and global levels.

The results suggest that integrated landscape approaches encompass four leadership practices that: (i) draw from theoretical foundations; (ii) operate independently of one another; (iii) exhibit high levels of cross-loading; (iv) can be integrated into a network of activity systems; (v) require enactment in a specific order of primacy to function effectively; and (vi) constitute a normative decision-making framework.

Theoretical Implications

This study advances theoretical understanding of distributed leadership in IDF projects within integrated transboundary landscapes. It enriches knowledge of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), linking work-based practice with development-oriented research.

Practical Implications

The findings provide guidance for project team leadership by emphasising the development of growth models, normative decision-making frameworks, multi-stakeholder decision-making frameworks, and governance and accountability systems that ensure clear roles, robust communication, and effective decision-making. The framework highlights organisational change as multi-voiced, decentralised, and driven by contradictions, where emancipation of actors and protected spaces foster the potential of multi-voicedness amid asymmetric power relations.

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Policy Implications

Policies should promote: (i) effective governance and accountability structures, (ii) clearly defined roles and responsibilities, (iii) robust information flow systems, and (iv) effective decision-making processes. When these distributed leadership practices are applied within IDF projects, they ensure that projects deliver growth that is both green and inclusive, benefiting people, nature, and economies, while also supporting equitable distribution of economic gains.

Study Limitations and Future Research

The four leadership practices were measured quantitatively. To gain deeper insights into their adoption, application, and emotional dimensions, future research should employ mixed- methods approaches combining qualitative and quantitative measures.

Conflict of Interest: The authors reported no conflict of interest.

Data Availability: All data are included in the content of the paper.

Funding Statement: The authors did not obtain any funding for this research.

Declaration for Human Participants: This study has been approved by the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania on behalf of the Government of Tanzania and the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology for both its staff and students who are doing research in Tanzania, and the principles of the Helsinki Declaration were followed.

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