

# **Distributed Leadership, Leader–Member Exchange, and Global Cross-Cultural Leadership**

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## **Abstract**

Distributed leadership many times is described as some kind of monolithic idea when in fact it is just an emerging set of concepts that most time combine with one another. Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory looks at the dynamics between leaders and their employees, stating that exchanges are not fixed across all interactions. Developed in the 1970s by researchers including George B. Graen and Mary Uhl-Bien, LMX theory specifies the inconsistent quality of exchanges between managers and employees, which can range from quality interconnections depicted by genuineness and mutual acclamation to substandard exchanges marked by a lack of assignation and collaboration. The theory is made up of three developmental stages: role-taking, where new members are evaluated; role-making, where early collaboration begins and members are often classified into in-groups and out-groups; and routinization, where established patterns of inter team collaboration are formed. Global Leadership focuses on effective leadership across diverse cultural settings. Also, it emphasizes the importance of cultural factors and resilience. Always recognizes varying leadership styles affected by cultural norms.

## **Distributed Leadership at its Core**

Distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership rituals rather than leaders or their duties, responsibilities, methods, and constructs. Leadership involves several leaders, many say leadership is a business quality, rather than an individual characteristic. This type of leadership defines a way of looking at processes about the everyday practice of leading employees. It is effective because of how easy it is to get workers to relabel approaches to daily activities. Many believe that this type of leadership takes old ideas and frames them in new ways that create a more successful organization (Spillane, 2004).

## **Distributed Action**

Distributed action takes place in the interactions between leaders and employees instead of a function of a leader's daily behavior. Coworkers play off each other creating a mutual interdependency between their undertakings. Interdependency is critical in obtaining successful and desired results in business processes and goals. Three types of interdependencies were cited by Thompson (1967) and they are reciprocal, pooled and sequential and are critical in accomplishing the mission and vision of the organization. The three types foster a collective environment, collaboration between all departments, and continuous day-to-day actions that build on the success of the firm. Leadership practice can be allocated across many leaders who will manage separately as well as interdependently. Many times, separate leadership methods are spread across the actions of more than one leader and are performed in sequence. This is important in

creation of an atmosphere that is collective and collaborative for all involved. The sequence will foster coordinated leadership that will broaden the creative scope of each leader and instill in them a better understanding of teamwork and interdependency that will lead to success (Spillane, 2004).

### **What is Distributed Leadership**

Distributed Leadership is a conceptual and analytical method that strives to comprehend how leadership works everyday among the employees of a multifaceted workforce. Originally applied to education research, recently it has been used in business in many different industries and instances. Rather than focusing on one particular leader, distributed leadership looks at all the leaders in all the different parts of the organization. Thereby stretching or distributing leadership responsibilities to all members of management to all departments. With hypothetical foundations in distributed cognition and activity theory, comprehending leadership from a circulated perspective is key to this theory. This involves activities as a established social process at the intersection of leaders, staff, and the tasks involved (Benson, A & Blackman, D, “To distribute leadership or not? A lesson from the islands”, 2011).

### **Origins**

This theory arose in the early part of the twenty-first century, mostly from sociological and cognitive psychology, and anthropological principles. But it was also influenced by Wenger’s theory in “Communities of Practice”. Originally, it was conceived to study school leadership, and its focus was on how leadership was enacted in schools and how it affected the social and the setting or situation happening in the school. Before this research, leadership was looked at mostly from a trait, function, and the effects leaders have on the company. Portrayals of managers were researched on what was being done, but not how it was being done, which limited conveyance across circumstances. This type of research made it very unclear on how leaders responded to the intricate and ever-fluctuating environment in schools. Transformational leadership is one research factor that differed from this research being done in the past. It shifted significantly to an idea of understanding leadership as a shared effort across the organization. Distributed leadership draws on these multi-agent viewpoints to provide better leadership and increase success at each level of the company. Distributed leadership has been described as not an activity, but rather a procedure (Benson, A & Blackman, D, “To distribute leadership or not? A lesson from the islands”, 2011). The research shows that leadership responsibilities usually involves multiple leaders, though the number depends on the routines and the tasks. Leaders act depending on the actions of employees from a distributed perspective, it is these interactions that the leadership practice is constructed from and followed out to fruition. Leadership practice is the interaction between managers and workers, instead of being a function of one, two, or more leaders actions.