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Catalysts that influence leaders' value system development

towards a prosocial value orientation

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore antecedents of leaders' value systems towards a

prosocial value orientation. Using a socio-cognitive model on stages of adult values'

development, the spiral dynamics model, the study revealed specific catalysts over the life span

of a leader. A qualitative, exploratory method was used to gain new insights by conducting 19

semi-structured interviews with senior leaders in various industries in South Africa. Key

findings include that as leaders develop, their value systems adjust, causing them to transcend

in the spiral dynamics model, from the self-enhancement focused to the other focused or self-

transcendent values. Catalysts play a nuanced role in this development, where early life role

models cultivate other-focused values, whereas career role experiences activate self-focused

values of achievement and resilience. When leaders received opportunities for taking on larger

roles, they seem to transition to caring more about people and integrity and setting an example

of integrity. The study offers a conceptual framework to deepen our understanding of the

development of leaders' value systems and the importance of reflection. Organizations could

benefit from taking note of these recommendations to develop their leaders' prosocial value

orientations.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility (CSR), prosocial, values

1

1 INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, in South Africa, poor leadership and unethical leadership behavior is at a high (van Zyl, 2014). Former President, Thabo Mbeki, was quoted in the press as saying, "Where you have this problem of a leadership that is self-centered, perpetuating itself in power, accumulating all the wealth and so on, then it's not a policy issue, it's a leadership issue" (Lekabe, 2017). It is concerning that corruption is pervasive in South African government and business environments (Friedman, 2020), because corruption can reduce foreign direct investment into a country (Cuervo-Cazurra, 2006), which would worsen poverty levels in South Africa.

Brown and Treviño (2006) clarified that leaders with ethical value systems care for the broader society. Barnett (2019, p. 172) also highlights that business leaders should pay attention to the broader society, beyond the interest of their immediate primary stakeholders "who might have direct power over the firm". In addition, he pointed out that trust improves as these primary stakeholders observe a company's Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) activities (Barnett, 2019). Ethical leaders, who care for society at large, also act as role models and create ethical norms in their organisations (Ko et al., 2018). South Africa could benefit from ethical leaders, who are less self-centered, and more others-focused or caring towards the broader society (Hilson, Hilson, & Dauda, 2019), especially since South African business environment is characterized by low trust levels (Giokos, 2016). An organization which are perceived as caring for society through CSR initiatives build trust by signaling to its primary stakeholders that it is "other-considering," not purely self-interested (Barnett, 2019). For the organization to be perceived as caring, its leaders have to sincerely care and in this study, we call this characteristic a leader's prosocial value orientation. The current study is therefore aimed at exploring the development of leaders' value systems towards a prosocial value orientation in South Africa.

Mukherjee (2016) argues that many of the business scandals in the twenty-first century were enabled by failure of corporate leaders. The force behind institutional failure could be attributed to leadership failure (Mukherjee, 2016). On the other hand, Hahn (2015) observes that when leaders' behaviours illustrate prosocial motives, their organisations in turn, exhibit prosocial corporate behaviour. This prosocial corporate behaviour then elicits proorganisational behaviour by the organisation's stakeholders. Brief and Motowidlo (1986) clarify that prosocial values include an orientation towards social justice, moral reasoning, social responsibility and true empathy. Bandura's classic work defined the term prosocial behavior as helping behavior that benefits others (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Katz (1964) differentiates prosocial behaviour and the motive behind the prosocial behaviour. That is, Katz (1964) stipulates that the actor performs the behaviour voluntarily without expecting to receive material or social rewards in return. Other scholars prefer to keep the definition broad and only focuses on the intent to benefit others or the consequences of the behaviour, without the altruistic motive (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986).

An important extension to the theory of Bandura (Bandura & Walters, 1977) that the current paper is addressing is this motive behind the prosocial behaviour. We argue that the values of the individual leader matters. The individual leader's value system influences the leader's intent or motive with which the leader would act prosocially, and this value system would be observed by the stakeholders of the organisation, which in turn would influence their prosocial behaviour towards the organisation (Hahn, 2015).

In South Africa, the sometimes strained relationships between corporations and their surrounding communities (Heyns & Mostert, 2018), require leaders who instill trust, by showing through their behaviour their prosocial values of sincerely caring about the broader society. We argue that corporate citizenship, as theorised by Matten and Crane (2005) requires

leaders with a prosocial value system. The research question about how leaders develop these prosocial value systems is therefore an important one for the South African environment.

While recent theoretical frameworks around "good" leadership (including moral, ethical and virtuous leadership) focus on leaders' value systems (Newstead, Dawkins, Macklin, & Martin, 2019) and build on Schwartz's (1999) earlier theories, the antecedents to the development of leaders' value systems are under-researched. This study set out to fill that void and contribute empirical findings to deepen understanding and advance theory development around these antecedents. The definition of values used in this study is aligned to the classical theory of Schwartz (1994, p. 3), who defines values as "desirable trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity". Leaders place relative importance on specific values and the combination of these constitute their value systems. The difference between morals and values is important for the current study. Morality is a set of standards that act as a reference for all actors of modern society (Besio & Pronzini, 2014). Morals are more associated with groups in society, namely, "prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other" (Haidt & Kesebir, 2010, p. 3); whereas, values focus on an individual's guiding principles for themselves.

Cieciuch and Schwartz (2012, p. 1) note that, "the five formal features that recur in most definitions of values are that values (a) are concepts or beliefs, (b) pertain to desirable end states or behaviours, (c) shift specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance" (p. 1).

Leaders' value systems determine whether their decisions and behavior are ethical or unethical and, as such, values indeed matter (Cowan & Todorovic, 2000; Setó-Pamies & Papaoikonomou, 2016; Brown & Treviño, 2006). Lemoine, Hartnell and Leroy (2019, p. 148)

note that "the moral nature of leaders is now seen by many as not only necessary for the good of society but also essential for sustainable organizational success."

The current debate relates to theoretical questions originally asked by Schwartz (1992) about the content and structure of values. For example, there are far more discussions around which virtues (values expressed in behaviors) constitute good leadership (Riggio, Zhu, Reina, & Maroosis, 2010; Hackett & Wang, 2012), and their consequences (Fehr, Kai Chi, & Dang, 2015), than those that explore their antecedents. This study thus focuses on these antecedents. Early ethical leadership scholars, Trevino and Youngblood (1990) and, more recently, Ciulla (2017), encourage research to consider the cognitive moral development of leaders towards ethical value systems, which are others-focused or prosocial and this study is an answer to that call.

The question could be asked, what informs leaders' value systems? Psychologists such as Rokeach (1973) were already noting in the seventies that values are the criteria people use to select and justify their actions and evaluate others. Values, and in particular the development or antecedents to value systems, are therefore the focus of the current paper. Kjellström and Stålne (2017) encourage researchers to use adult development theories as a lens and the current paper responds by applying specific adult development stage theories.

The research problem thus identified is that there has not been any explicit exploration of the catalysts that influence leaders' value system development towards being focused on others or prosocial values, which would lead them to genuinely care about the broader society. The research question is: What are the catalysts that can assist leaders to shift towards a value system that is ethical and thus having a prosocial value orientation towards the broader society? Who could best answer this question but leaders themselves? The researchers therefore interviewed senior leaders about the development of their value systems.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The literature review commences with a discussion of leaders' value systems, then moves to catalysts, and finally addresses prosocial value orientation frameworks.

2.1 Value Systems

There are several theoretical models about the development of values by organizations and leaders. Cacioppe and Edwards (2005) list, for example, Ken Wilber's integral theory, Richard Barrett's corporate transformation model and William Torbert's inquiry model. These theorists were, however, more concerned with justifying the structure of their moral judgment models than with the antecedents, on which the current study focuses.

The cognitive-developmental theory of moral evolution of individuals, originally outlined by Lawrence Kohlberg (1973, p. 630), is relevant to this study as it suggests developmental stages as the lens through which to consider an individual's value system, because "a higher or later stage of moral judgment is preferable than an earlier stage". Kohlberg's (1973) contribution includes a continuum for moral development and assessment of the moral maturity of an individual. Some of the criticism of his theory is that only some people will maintain the same ethical stance in both work and non-related ethical decision making (Fraedrich, Thome, & Ferrel, 1994). The interrelationship between moral maturity and ethical decision making is clearly demonstrated in these observations of Fraedrich et al. (1994). For the purposes of the current study, Kohlberg's (1973) continuum from pre- to conventional to post-conventional moral maturity relates therefore to the development towards ethical value systems.

The literature differentiates between values focused on self-enhancement (such as hedonism, power and achievement), termed "modal values" by Ros, Schwartz and Surkiss (1999), and those on the other end of the continuum which are focused on self-transcendence (such as universalism and benevolence), which Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May and Walumbwa (2005) term "end values" in their leadership studies. This concept of a continuum is also used

in Spiral Dynamics, which is constructed around the idea of value systems and their adjustment to a changing world, based on the knowledge that life conditions continuously change and as leaders adapt, their critical thinking develop and their value orientation becomes more focused on the greater good and then even later placing the people and planet's needs before their own (Beck & Cowan, 2014; Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005; Cowan & Todorovic, 2000). Don Beck and Chris Cowan (2014) formulated their socio-cognitive adult development stage theoretical model from psychologist Clare W. Grave's seminal work on spiral dynamics.

In the current study, the spiral dynamics model and Kohlberg's (1973) moral development theory were considered to ascertain the influence of catalysts on the leader's value system/morals. Table 1 compares the two frameworks to explain the decision of using the Spiral Dynamics model for this study.

TABLE 1: COMPARING THE SPIRAL DYNAMICS MODEL TO MORAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY

Beck's Spiral Dynamics Model	Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory
Focuses on: Values	Focuses on: Morals
Explains: Value Systems	Explains: Moral Code
Concerns with: Type of thinking	Concerns with: Stages of moral reasoning
Aspires to contribute to an understanding of:	Aspires to contribute to an understanding of: How
Conceptualising of reality	individual develops their morals
Investigates how: Leaders develop throughout their	Investigates how: Development happens from
lives by adapting to changing circumstances	childhood to defining the leaders morals in adulthood

(Authors' own compilation from various literature sources)

The table illustrates the different focus areas of the Spiral Dynamics model, compared to the Moral Development Theory of Kohlberg. With Spiral Dynamics, the individual is perceived to develop a type of thinking that assists the individual to act in accordance with the environment over the lifetime of the adult (Van Marrewijk & Werre, 2002), whereas with the Kohlberg's model, the focus is on the levels and stages of moral development from childhood to adulthood (Weber, 1991). As the study focuses on the development of the adult individual

mid-manager from starting their career, to their current management style, as well as to their aspoused values, spiral dynamics is the model most relevant to this study (Beck & Cowan, 2014). In addition, moral development theory is only focused on childhood to adulthood development, without further stages during an adult's lifetime (Robin, et al., 1996; Weber, 1991). As unethical behaviour in business is becoming a norm in South Africa and ethical behaviour is based on a leaders' value systems, using the Spiral Dynamics model that refers to value systems, is befitting this study.

This model includes both the adult development phases of leaders and the development of organizations. In addition, the hierarchy of the helix provides a well-established measurement of value systems leaders transcend through the levels of development (Beck & Cowan, 2014). That is, the Spiral Dynamics is the basis of a psychometric assessment tool widely used in business to assess value systems of mostly managers during recruitment and development of leadership (Prinsloo, 2012).

Figure 1 depicts the spiral dynamics model and indicates the different levels of developing states, called memes, represented by different colors. The memes are listed with their associated values.

There are eight fixed orders, as follows (from the bottom up): survival; security; power; order; success; community; synergy; and holistic life systems (Beck & Cowan, 2014). Individuals shift along the different memes as they change and adapt to changing circumstances, moving along the helix, maturing as people (Prinsloo, 2012; Harris, 2005). Several scholars describe the different memes and the selection below draws from a number of these (Beck & Cowan, 2014; Cowan & Todorovic, 2000; Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005; Van Marrewijk & Werre 2003).

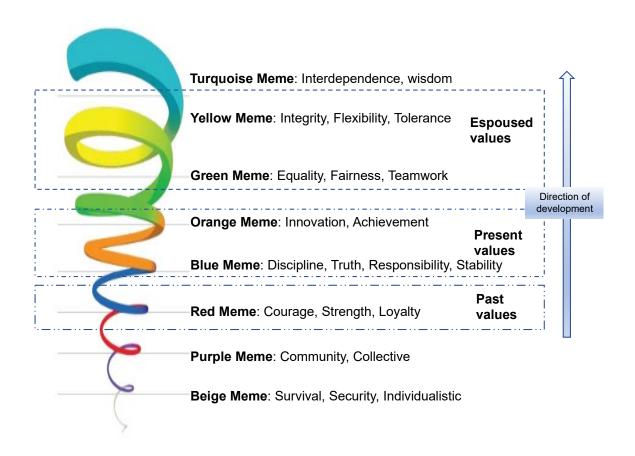


FIGURE 1: SPIRAL DYNAMIC MODEL MEMES FOR PAST, CURRENT AND ESPOUSED VALUES OF LEADERS IN CURRENT STUDY SAMPLE

(Model adapted from Beck and Cohen, 2014, and interview data applied to model)

The first meme of the spiral dynamic helix, which is the survival meme, is represented by the colour beige. This meme concentrates on survival and basic emotion, and describes all behaviour as being individualistic. The second meme is purple, and signifies the individual's belief in sacrifice of self for the tribe in order to protect the tribe from danger; the recognition that being together renders them stronger than when alone. The third meme, represented by the colour red, centres on the fact that individuals are more individualistic and put their own needs and wants before the tribe. Typical values for the red meme are courage, strength, hedonism and loyalty. In the fourth meme (blue), individuals are described as being more group

orientated; they are promoting, preserving and adhering to ensure order and stability. Typical values for this meme are discipline, truth, responsibility and justice.

The fifth meme is represented by the colour orange. In this meme, individuals are described as individualistic — they want to express themselves and obtain benefits; they want to win. Typical values for orange are reward, image, innovation and career achievement. In the sixth meme, which is green, individuals are more group-orientated and sacrificial; they strongly believe in human rights, environmental preservation, improving equality, collectivism and human connections. Leaders are proactive about sustainability, social responsibility and want to contribute to the common good. Typical values for the green meme are team work, equality, honesty and harmony.

In the seventh meme (yellow), individuals are more individualistic in their thinking and want to express themselves, but not at the expense of others. Leaders put the organization, people and planet needs before their own. Typical values for yellow are integrity, ability to reflect, flexibility and tolerance for uncertainty. The last meme is the turquoise meme. In this meme, individuals are group orientated and more self-sacrificial, they believe that all lives matter and they focus on the greater good. Leaders tend to address global species issues. Typical values for turquoise are interdependence, ability to forgive, concern for future generations, and wisdom.

Values develop throughout a individuals life, catalysts influence this development by shifting the individual from one meme to the next, this happens as the individuals' experiences changes. This changes the way the individual view the world and as such creates discomfort for their current way of thinking which is allocated to a meme, therefore the individual moves to the next meme, a new way of thinking. Ethical leadership lies in the green meme, as this is the meme where leaders are proactive about sustainability, social responsibility and want to contribute to the common good, ethical leaders values are transparency, fairness and team orientation. The green meme represents values of team work, equality, honesty and harmony. The green meme is also where prosocial and sustainability orientation to business lies. As such

catalysts are needed to assist in developing a leaders value system to the green meme where ethical leadership lies. The next memes, namely yellow and turquoise are also characterised by values which represent a prosocial orientation.

The question remains, what prompts the development of leaders' value systems? The next section pays attention to these catalysts.

2.2 Catalysts

While the maturation of leaders is usually described in relation to their natural development through the years (Shamir, et al., 2005), Bennis and Thomas (2002) use the term 'crucible' to describe a critical transformational experience in a leader's development, which unleashes leadership abilities. Gardner et al. (2005), in turn, refer to trigger events, which they define as prompting dramatic and sometimes subtle changes in a leader's circumstances that facilitate personal growth and development. These trigger events serve as catalysts for heightened levels of self-awareness. Kegan (1982) explains this self-awareness as reflection and the perspectivetaking capacity of testing one's own hypotheses and self-schema to deepen one's understanding of how one makes meaning of the world. Shamir, Dayan-Horesh and Adler (2005) agree that difficult circumstances or painful events, as part of a leader's life story, are mostly overlooked as important sources of development. Gardner et al. (2005, p. 347) note that "the personal history of the leader may include family influences and role models, early life challenges, educational and work experiences." Relevant to the current study, Shamir et al. (2005, p. 21) specifically refer to the moral element in these life stories, where the choices leaders make represent the right choices, "when the easier, but less moral, ways of coping were not taken by the leader".

Catalysts in a leader's development include life trials, upbringing, opportunity, learning through experience, working experiences, travel, culture, role models, family and social influences (Shamir, et al., 2005; Turner, & Mavin, 2008). Positive events, such as career promotions which lead to expanded responsibilities or education in a new field that raises

questions about a leader's work and life, to the extent they are reflected upon, can also aid leadership development (Gardner et al., 2005). While these catalysts in a leader's development are acknowledged by the current literature, the link to the Spiral Dynamics model and, specifically, the catalysts which prompt particular transitions, have received limited attention. We therefore explore the link between catalysts and specific memes in the current study.

The social learning theory theorized by Bandura (1977) emphasizes the importance of role models in the social cognitive literature, where positive behaviors are vicariously learned from credible, trustworthy leaders, who grab the attention of observers. Lemoine et al. (2019, p. 155) explain that followers observe their moral leaders' behaviors because leaders are attractive and credible role models. Followers emulate these positive behaviors because they expect them to be valued, rewarded and supported in the workplace, and these positive behaviors in turn generate positive outcomes. The social exchange theory by Blau (1964) explains that followers respond to positive relationships with leaders by engaging with the positive behaviors.

Exploring the catalysts that influence leaders' value systems assists in understanding the development of leaders' prosocial value orientation. The discussion now turns to others-focused or prosocial value orientation.

2.3 An others-focused prosocial value orientation

Carroll (1999) originally identified a pyramid of four levels of CSR or Corporate Social Responsibility (and updated them in Carroll, 2016), where business moves from taking economic responsibility for being profitable, to legal responsibility for obeying the law, to ethical responsibility and ultimately to philanthropic responsibility for being a good corporate citizen (Waddock, 2004). Other scholars, such as Wagner-Tsukamoto (2018), reconstructed Carroll's pyramid framework by proposing integrative CSR economics and creating the concept of ethical capital. Considering the various streams of thought within the CSR literature (Garriga & Mele, 2004; Bondy, Matten, & Moon, 2004; Reiter, 2016), the Porter and Kramer's (2011)

construct of shared value, is a specific approach to sustainability that relates to strategic CSR, or business case CSR, where CSR initiatives make business sense and contribute to good reputation (Peloza & Falkenberg, 2009; Busch & Friede, 2018). With regard to Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), our literature review revealed that Porter and Kramer's (1999, 2011) initial, and later Kramer and Pfitzer's (2016), conceptualization of shared value relates to the Instrumental Stakeholder Management Theory as defined by Jones (1995) as the financial benefit of attending to stakeholders' needs.

The concept of shared value has been severely criticized as lacking theoretical foundation (Crane, Palazzo, Spence, & Matten, 2014), and as essentially repackaging other theoretical frameworks, such as Elkington's (1998) triple bottom line, or Emerson's (2000) blended value, or Hart's (2005) opportunities for businesses in sustainability investments.

Von Liel (2016) argues that the creating shared value framework (CSV) is more sustainable than the original conceptualization of CSR, or even corporate social investment (CSI), because most leaders perceive these initiatives (CSR and CSI) as financial contributions and not as a sustainable business model (Rezaee & Tuo, 2019). Creating shared value thus has the potential to be more sustainable through offering a financial benefit to the organisation, while also addressing social needs. This represents the "business case" approach to CSR. In the South African context with a low economic growth rate, the survival of businesses is essential and therefore, the financial benefit to the organisation while taking care of social needs might be most appropriate. However, the current study highlights an important aspect of the shared value construct that Porter and Kramer (2011) might have overlooked and that is the motive with which the leaders are implementing these shared value projects. While Porter and Kramer (2011) might have promoted a "win/win" orientation, where society could benefit from the companies' CSV initiatives, the question remains whether this orientation might create mistrust between companies and their surrounding communities, when the motive with which the

company's leaders undertake these initiatives are seen as self-centered or company-interest-centered in stead of others' centered. However, leaders with ethical value systems genuinely care for the broader society (Brown & Treviño, 2006). We therefore argue that ideally, leaders with a true pro-social value oientation, would serve their stakeholders and intend to satisfy their needs, while considering how the business' sustainability needs could be met. However, the difference between genuine pro-social motives and a CSV orientation is illustrated when leaders want to satisfy stakeholders needs only when it suites or benefits the business. In these situations, the motives of leaders are not truly prosocial, since prosocial orientated leaders would have prioritised stakeholder needs' satisfaction above those of the individual leader or his/her business. In the context of South Africa, which is characterised by low trust levels (Giokos, 2016), the self-centered value orientation of leaders could worsen the situation and even cause business to be less trusted by employees and other stakeholders in society.

Our review of the Spiral Dynamics model literature, revealed that a prosocial value orientation is most prominent in the green meme and memes that follow, namely the yellow and turquoise memes in the spiral dynamics model. The current study is interested in how the value systems of individual leaders develop towards others-focused or a prosocial value orientation, as represented by the memes in the Spiral Dynamics model literature.

Based on the discussion above, the study set the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What are the leaders' past, current and espoused value systems?

Research Question 2: What are the catalysts in the development of leaders' value systems?

Research Question 3: What are the leaders' value orientations towards stakeholders?

3 METHOD

This study used a qualitative, exploratory approach and semi-structured, in-depth interviews guided by the theoretical background. The philosophy was interpretivism (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). Ethical clearance was obtained from university to

ensure the research was conducted in an ethical manner. The sampling method was non-probability sampling as a complete list of the sample was unavailable for selection. Purposive sampling was used as the researchers' judgement assisted in sampling 19 senior leaders in different industries, including Agriculture, Engineering, Finance, Manufacturing, Logistics, Marketing, IT, Construction and Real Estate. The scope was senior leaders, including CEOs, executives, directors and senior managers. Each respondent's industry and job title are provided in Table 2.

TABLE 2: INFORMATION ON SAMPLE

Interview	Age	Gender	Industry	Job title	
Interview 1	37	Male	Telecommunications Executive Director and C		
Interview 2	30	Male	Telecommunications	Senior Digital Product Manager	
Interview 3	60	Female	Development	Chief Executive Officer	
Interview 4	31	Male	Logistics	National Sales Manager	
Interview 5	34	Male	Logistics	Managing Director	
Interview 6	52	Female	IT	Sales Operational Manager	
Interview 7	37	Female	Logistics	Regional Operational Manager	
Interview 8	38	Male	Agriculture	Chief Financial Officer	
Interview 9	36	Male	Power Utility	Director of Power	
Interview 10	34	Male	Development	Project Manager	
Interview 11	35	Male	Logistics	Branch Manager	
Interview 12	35	Male	Logistics	Regional Technical Manager	
Interview 13	34	Male	Agriculture	Technical Formulation Manager	
Interview 14	57	Female	Agriculture	Accounts Payable Manager	
Interview 15	37	Male	ITC African Chief Accounts		
Interview 16	40	Male	Manufacturing Group Engineer		
Interview 17	44	Male	Manufacturing General Manager		
Interview 18	37	Male	Manufacturing Extrusion Manager		
Interview 19	50	Male	ITC Managing Director		

The first section of the interview contained questions relating to the leader's past, current and espoused values, which included the development of their values and explored catalysts that influenced shifts in their value systems. Questions include, What values are most important to you? What were your values ten years ago? What are your espoused values? We offered 21 value words as prompts for leaders to consider the development of their values. We sourced these words from the descriptions of spiral dynamics by Van Marrewijk (2003) and Cowan and

Todorovic (2000), which, for example, include 'achievement' as representative of the orange meme, and 'responsibility' as representative of the blue meme.

The second section contained questions relating to the leader's leadership style and its development. Questions include, What was your journey to becoming the leader you are today? What type of leader would you classify yourself as? What legacy as a leader do you think you will leave behind? The last section included questions regarding the leader's orientation to creating a shared value framework. Questions include, What do you understand regarding the concept of creating shared value? What is your opinion about business needs and societal needs? This again related back to the leader's value system. The transcripts revealed that leaders actually referred to their values even when the questions were not explicitly about their values, such as when asked about the legacy they would like to leave. Shamir et al. (2005) found that leaders implicitly reveal aspects of their leadership development and so we "approached the stories as depositories of meaning" (Shamir et al., 2005, p.19), even when the leaders did not explicitly link their stories to the development of their value systems. We read the transcripts from the perspective of asking about the meaning of the story from a values systems development point of view.

Codes were established by systematic coding patterns and insights from the transcripts. Themes were then established by collating the codes into themes, which were developed after the codes were reviewed many times (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes were checked for relations and Atlas ti software was used to generate a thematic chart. Frequency analysis was used to identify the values most frequently selected (Hsieh, & Shannon, 2005). Using the spiral dynamics model, the values selected by the respondents were allocated to a meme for past, current and espoused values (Beck & Cowan, 2014; Van Marrewijk & Werre, 2002; Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005). Themes identified the catalysts that influenced the leaders to shift to a new meme. Frequency analysis identified the most prevalent catalysts (Hsieh, & Shannon, 2005).

The process of creating themes was done in an iterative manner until some saturation was achieved, in the sense that no other major categories were identified. Towards the last interviews, no new themes were revealed. In the coding process, we applied the data structure method, as Gioia et al. (2013) advised. See figure 2, for an illustration of how the first order concepts, fed into the second order themes and then ultimately into aggregate dimensions. More detail of how many concepts had been identified per second order theme and into aggregate dimensions are offered below when specific catalysts are discussed.

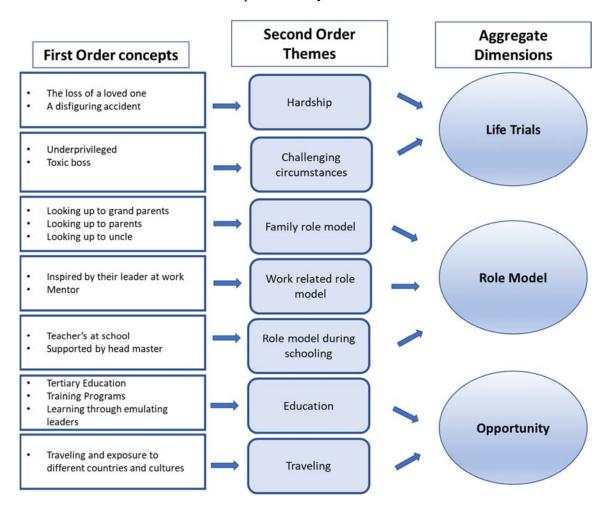


FIGURE 2: ILLUSTRATION OF DATA STRUCTURE IN CODING TRANSCRIPTS

4 RESULTS

4.1 Value System Development

Research Question 1: What are the leaders' past, current and espoused value systems?

Table 3 shows the past values most selected by the interviewees; most frequent were courage, responsibility and achievement. Table 3 also represents the current values selected by the interviewees, as well as the frequencies. These are the values the leaders regard as most important at present. Responsibility and equality were the value words with the highest frequency for current values.

Lastly, table 3 illustrates the espoused values and the frequency with which they were selected by the interviewees. These are the values the leaders will strive towards in the future. Equality and responsibility were the value words with the highest frequency. It is important to note that values such as wisdom, flexibility and tolerance were also selected as espoused values.

TABLE 3: PAST, CURRENT AND ESPOUSED VALUES MOST FREQUENTLY SELECTED BY LEADERS

70	Values	First Selected Value	Second Selected Value	Third Selected Value	Additional Selected Values
Past values	Courage	2	3	6	2
va	Strength	4	2	1	
ast	Responsibility	2	3	6	3
L	Achievement	7	3	1	2
	Integrity	2	0	1	1
	Values	First Selected	Second Selected	Third Selected	Additional
		Value	Value	Value	Selected Values
=	Responsibility	1	9	4	2
rer	Discipline	1	1	2	
Current	Equality	4	2	3	2
O X	Integrity	11	3		
es	Values	First Selected	Second Selected	Third Selected	Additional
Ž		Value	Value	Value	Selected Values
^a	Responsibility	2	2	2	3
eq	Innovation	1	1	4	2
snc	Equality	2	3	1	5
Espoused values	Integrity	4	3	1	
	Tolerance	2	1	2	1

4.2 Catalysts Influencing the Development of a Leader's Value System

Research Question 2: What are the catalysts in the development of leaders' value systems?

The focus was on the journey the leaders had taken to become the leaders they are today. Leaders discussed their upbringing, education, job experiences, difficult times in their lives and other events they felt assisted their development. The catalysts identified, as well as their frequency, can be seen in Table 4. Life trials, role models and opportunity were most prevalent. (Note: When respondents specifically referred to their values, and even when values were implicitly mentioned, we added bold font to emphasize words which describe values. Also, when a specific meme was represented by these values, we related a color and a description word to link the meme).

TABLE 4: CATALYSTS IDENTIFIED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LEADER'S VALUE SYSTEM

Catalyst	Frequency
Life Trials	35
Role Models	28
Opportunity	23
Work Environment	13

4.3 Life trials

Life trials was the catalyst most frequently mentioned when leaders discussed their journeys to become the leaders they are. Different types of life trials were discussed, including toxic bosses, becoming disabled by losing a limb and other tragic events. Respondent 15 explained the difficulties of working with a toxic boss, as well as how this experience ultimately influenced their development, "I can think of one boss, I don't know if you could call it toxic but he was challenging to work with. And I think maybe when I left the company you realise that indirectly, although I hated him at the time there are some skills that I learnt, and one was to be thorough and two was basically to do things to the best of your ability before - taking

ownership." The respondent developed values of achievement and results-driven focus through this experience, which prompted values in the **orange meme** of **success orientation**.

Respondent 19 experienced a tragic event that changed his value system: He developed resilience through this life trial, "I lost my leg and that had a big impact; still it's got a big impact on my life"; "The positive side is I think I never had things too easily but at the same time when I then achieved something, the reward for me was a lot bigger. So, I learnt a lot how to overcome and to be more resilient, to fight for things that you want to achieve in life." Later, this respondent's life values associated with the yellow meme of synergy were developed, as well as inspiration, associated with the turquoise meme of a holistic life system.

Respondent 6 reflected as follows on crucibles, "In terms of hardships I think we all have the things that we go through in life and every single one of those things that are tough develop you as a human being and you develop resilience and you develop empathy. And I think especially as you get older the empathy becomes even more so." In this instance, the value of resilience to achieve, associated with the orange meme, was complemented by the value of empathy, associated with the green meme of equality. The green meme is therefore relevant here as it is linked to ethical leadership and a prosocial value orientation. These instances appeared to signify growth from a lower level meme (orange) to a higher self-transcendence meme (green), in terms of spiral dynamics theory. Interestingly, this respondent observed that empathy increases with age. This aspect will gain more attention in the discussion section below.

Gaining something positive like resilience or empathy from a negative experience or crucible, however, depended on whether the individual leader could reflect and make sense of the event in such a way that they could gain further valuable growth.

During the coding process, every story shared by participants that had an element of hardship, including losing a loved one or losing a limb, had been coded as life trials. All

challenging circumstances, whether personal or professional were coded as challenges. These two categories of 35 codes were grouped into the life trial theme.

4.4 Role models

This section focuses on the influence of role models on value systems during various stages of leaders' life spans (Gardner et al., 2005), their responses to exposure to these role models and the link to specific memes or levels of consciousness.

Respondents discussed the importance and influence of role models multiple times. A variety of people in the interviewees' lives were viewed as role models — grandfathers, parents, leaders and sometimes hardworking, successful people they looked up to. These role models played significant roles in the development of leaders' value systems, as respondent 10 noted, "I was always looking up to my father and my grandfather. They're the first people that I actually looked up to and they were a great example and they still are, and that's where I learnt the integrity thing, how important that is."

This is an example of the end – or more mature – values, such as integrity, being prompted by the early life experiences of being exposed to role models. In some instances, the resilient or hard-working role models represented values associated with the **orange** or **achievement focused meme**, but also the higher integrity value of the more mature memes. Integrity, for example, is one of the values associated with the **yellow meme** of **synergy**.

As respondent 12 explained, "The one person was my neighbor who started, well I saw him start his business from having absolutely nothing to, well today he is one of the biggest companies in his industry." This respondent further explained that this role model not only taught him resilience, but also to go about business in an ethical way, "the work was a lot more than the people that did it the wrong way, yet he still succeeded with all of those restrictions... that's when I saw that the people that do things the wrong way might get things quickly but

doesn't last that long, and that is why I have that thought whenever I do anything is that do it the right way and it will last longer than anything else."

Respondent 2 explained integrity as follows, "So, if I communicate to my team that this is where we are, we are in a difficult place or it's communicating the good and the bad and being very transparent and clear where you are and setting the direction. And the moment you don't have that integrity...if you start breaking your value system it boils into the culture of what you're trying to build and it disperses and you are very rarely going to build that up again if it's broken. So, I think integrity for me personally is very big." Here the leader developed the value of integrity, associated with the yellow meme, even though he was addressing the value of responsibility of the team, associated with the orange meme.

Respondent 4 shared his response to being exposed to leadership, "it taught me tolerance in making sure that it's kind of that equal - equality and fairness piece as well, making sure everyone is heard because my ideas aren't necessarily the best." This example seems to illustrate the green meme of equality.

An important theme that emerged was reciprocation by leaders by becoming role models themselves.

Leaders in the sample who had had role models explicitly shared that they responded by purposefully becoming role models to others. Respondent 13 clearly stated, "Basically to be a role model to the people below me, like my role model was to me." Respondent 7 said, "I try to give back to my team of the influences of what my previous leaders and my mentors have done for me - I do for my team." Respondent 3 said, "I'm very much a leader that leads by example. I never expect somebody to do something that I haven't done before, and to be a leader with the people, you lead with them, you can't lead from behind". The value of equality, associated with the green meme, is also represented in these quotes.

Respondent 8 observed, "During my process of my working career I've been treated fairly, so to speak, and I believe that for me I see as kind of a challenge for us as leaders to be fair in making some of the decisions around people. I've been given the chance and I believe that people should also be treated the same." The chain reaction and ultimate exponential growth of value-driven leaders stems not only from role modelling, but also from actively mentoring others. Respondent 8 also said, "I try to mentor them and bring them up to lead other people."

Most participants had a story of someone they looked up to. The role models they looked up to were parents, a family member, a leader at work and teachers at their schools. Initially, the role models were coded into the above mentioned four categories, they were then combined into the dimension role models, which consisted of 28 codes.

4.5 Opportunity

Catalysts of opportunity included education, further upskilling within the business and opportunities to progress within the business. Respondents identified their academic journeys, including secondary education, tertiary education or training by the business, as part of their leadership development. Respondent 1 reported that he worked his way up from the bottom, explaining "From that aspect grew from grassroots level in the company, from a technical manager into [...] an executive director."

Respondent 7 explained that the company sent her for training which assisted in her progression into a regional manager role, "They sent me for internal training programs, I also myself was on the [...] Academy, I did a banking course at [...] Business School and today find myself as regional manager." Respondent 7 said these opportunities showed her there were many other people who would never have these opportunities and this assisted her value system transition from the orange or success orientation meme to the green meme of developing

more **empathy** with others, in her case with those less fortunate who had not had the opportunity to study.

It was interesting to see how the opportunities leaders received also prompted them to create opportunities for others and develop others. Caring about others' development relates to the **green meme** of **equality**. It was not always clear whether the development was geared towards becoming better people, in terms of higher-order values. It appeared that people were predominantly developed to achieve more success, relating to the **orange meme** of **success**:

Respondent 2 discussed collaboration, saying, "So now it's more on the collaborative level, keeping the environment right and [...] fostering them along the paths that they need to go."

Respondent 5 said, "I always influence people to become better people and I've always motivated people to do better in life". Respondent 4 noted, "I share as much of my knowledge as much as possible and try to uplift others through that. So, with my team often what I do is I share information and try and up skill people around me so that honestly, I'm not necessary anymore." Respondent 6 also related, "I always want people to think about I made their lives better or I helped them grow in some way, and that's really – if I ever do anything in my teams or – it's about how can I make this person be better.... I now know what I can do and where I can make a difference and how I can make a difference." Respondent 10 reflected on the legacy he wants to leave and said, "If I can leave the legacy that I improved the lives of people."

Interestingly, opportunities that involved leaders having to carry more responsibility, especially owning businesses or managing larger business units with many people, acted as catalysts for leaders to mature in terms of their value systems. For instance, the quote below illustrates the shift in motive from being business- and money-focused towards offering employment and caring about sustaining the ability to provide this employment going forward. Respondent 3 actually gained awareness of this shift "from business to people", saying,

"I think I've always been very much integrity, fairness, responsible, disciplined type of person, but I think more to the company and not the people. So, I think the evolution with me happened not in the actual qualities or ethics it is in the implementation of it where discipline was important and responsibility because for the company, I worked for I need to bring in an R800 million government tender for them, it was a money thing. Where the same things are still playing but I'm now responsible and I've got integrity to make sure that the business is going forward for these people, it's not a money thing. If I mess up here or I close the business where are they going to go? So, I think the focus changed from business to people in my career, but I think I've always had the basics, I don't think I went from one to the other."

Figure 1 (in the literature review) illustrated the findings of this research study. Table 5 summarizes these results, integrating the quotes from the interviews with the types of catalysts.

The opportunity theme only emerged after re-reading the transcripts multiple times. Opportunity to education as well as businesses sending employees for training were the straight forward first two category that we identified. By re-reading the transcripts, we identified more categories, such as daily opportunities for learning at work was a third category. Some participants shared how early responsibilities at home assisted with their learning capability and was the fourth category. The final category was learning through the exposure of traveling. Participants also shared how traveling broadened their outlook as they learned about different culture and places in the world. This was the fifth category. There were five categories consisting of 23 codes, as part of this opportunity theme.

TABLE 5: QUOTES FROM RESPONDENTS LINKED TO VALUES AND MEMES OF THE SPIRAL DYNAMICS MODEL BY COWEN AND TODOROVIC (2000)

	Meme, Description	Quotes from interviews	Catalysts linked to memes
8	Turquoise: Service to future generations	"from a leadership perspective, it's not about you, it's about others" (Respondent 1) "if you got a bad character it dies with you at the grave and if you have a good character it will live forever" (Respondent 1)	Role models: Integrity, hard work: "his dad and his grandfather were role models that's where I learnt the integrity thing, how important that is" (Respondent 1) "a lot of my principles today is still based on what he told me when I was young" (Respondent 13) "values like respecting other people regarding their integrity" (Respondent 8)
7	Yellow: Making a difference: collaborating with community	"I share as much of my knowledge as much as possible and try to uplift others through". (Respondent 4) "I classify myself as an enabler. I like to encourage people to be the best version of themselves and I do that by leading by example." (Respondent 6)	Life trials: boarding school and through good role models (Respondent 17) Role models: "I've worked for fantastic leadersthey also tried to grow people and they did fantastic things for their community and in South Africa." (Respondent 6)
6	Green: Internal cohesion: community vision	"We literally had family values and our main value was respect for each other and for yourself and we used to have a monthly and a quarterly meeting, a family meeting that my folks called and we'd sit around the table and we'd discuss our family values" (Respondent 2) "working with the actual staff and not actually just sending orders down to the store." (Respondent 1) "My legacy as a leader is number one I love looking after people, when they fail and you can help them and be remembered in life." (Respondent 1)	Role model: respondent spoke about "how one of their bosses inspired" (Respondent 2) "That's why I believe in fairness, believing in giving the opportunity to the right people." (Respondent 8) Opportunities, Travel as catalyst: "that's why equality is such an important piece to me". (Respondent 4) "lived in multiple countries. I think doing that one learns operating in different cultures" (Respondent 6)
5	Orange: Transfor- mation: Learning, renewal	"culture of working hard and putting in the effort got me up to that point where I was once again a high performing student." (Respondent 4) "I learnt to work hard from a young age, and I enjoy work actually" (Respondent 10)	Life trials: Loss of a limb: "I learnt a lot how to overcome and to be more resilient to fight for things that you want to achieve in life" (Responden19) Role model: "it has been how hard working my dad has been and I've always seen him as a role model" (Respondent 5)
4	Blue: Tradition: Efficiency, protection	"Responsibility, that is very key, that is driven by ownership and you need to take ownership and responsibility for your deliverables, for your actions and in my team, I drive a big portion of being very clear on what is expected of you which means you are responsible for it and you need to take ownership for it." (Respondent 2)	Life trials: Bad boss: "I learnt, and one was to be thorough and two was basically to do things to the best of your ability before and also taking ownership". (Respondent 15)
3	Red: Self- Esteem: Strength, Loyalty	"I hope I inspire guys to want to achieve more, people to understand that it's possible to aim quite high and still get there." (Respondent 16)	Life Trails: Loss of someone close: "nobody that's going to look after you, you have to stand up and just carry on" (Respondent 18) Role model: "some of the values that I've got [from single mother] I think maybe integrity definitely, and courage, she was very courageous." (Respondent 16)
2	Purple: Relationship/ Customer/ Supplier/ Staff	n/a	n/a
1	Beige: Survival: Financial stability	n/a	n/a

4.6 Prosocial value orientation

Research Question 3: What are the leaders' value orientations towards stakeholders?

While role models were discussed as catalysts above, respondents also mentioned role models passionate about community upliftment and communities as important stakeholders. Respondent 6 related, "There was just a group of people who were fantastic leaders and they also tried to grow people and do exactly the same, and they did fantastic things for their community and in South Africa." Respondent 5 said, "As a leader, I continuously try to find how us as business can create value for the communities, for the government and for the business in its own."

The respondents luckily seemed to be deeply aware of the social needs in South Africa. Respondent 16 said in this regard, "if you look at South Africa you will understand that socially we are in a bad state, we are not – let's take few things, poverty levels are quite high, unemployment 27% or whatever that number is and all those kinds of things, women and youth being unemployed".

Respondent 8 discussed the power of stakeholders and how businesses must therefore take notice of them, "There's a lot of movement around these communities, they've got organisations, they've got power and with the technology and social media it's so easy to be rendered, for you to close your business. So, I think its businesses responsibility to make sure that in the areas or in the communities they operate they do the right thing."

Respondent 1 also elaborated on the potential benefits for businesses if they were to address societal needs, saying, "the more you take care of society the more customers you should have [...] if you do something for society then you are ensuring that you have a larger pool of people that could possibly generate more income for your business." On the one hand, it seems that the comment resembles a systems thinking perspective on the **interdependence** of business and

society, which is associated with the **yellow meme**; however, it could also be seen as a self-enhancement approach, associated with the **orange**, **achievement driven** meme.

Unfortunately, with deeper exploration, this study found that the respondents' motives as reflected in their value systems, revealed a self-centered or business-centered orientation. Their underlying motive for engaging with the community revealed that the respondents' perception of their own and their companies' value orientation include, "we push more on societal needs and then we believe that if we get that one right then business will always be profitable" (Respondent 5). Respondent 5, also stated, "I believe in creating shared value. So, if I meet some of your societal needs therefore, you'll also come back and buy into my products." This focuses on the outcome of initiatives which might benefit the business itself. Respondent 4 concurred, "I do think a lot of companies do do that, however I think that it's a tick box exercise for many large companies, it's to get tax write offs to get good publicity, that kind of thing." Respondent 18 in turn emphasized, "whatever is happening outside locally in the area is affecting business, because it can creep into your business if the society is not doing well". For respondent 14 the image was important, "The industry image – their image of us is very important as well, and how we conduct ourselves".

Respondent 1 later showed that his motive might purely be driven from wanting to make a difference, "You have to give back to society. You have to uplift the community in the industry and that ecosystem that you are working in." Interestingly another principle was mentioned by this respondent, who spoke about what is best for the majority of stakeholders, "...always doing right what is right for the majority of the people and making those difficult decisions.... It's not about extracting value for yourself. It's about deploying and building the value for everybody in the organization."

Respondent 19 explained the potential for all when addressing societal needs, stating, "If you can set up your business [...] in a way that specific societal needs are addressed while you

are making money then I think we will be in a **completely different world** compared to where we are today."

It was interesting that some respondents realized that shared value initiatives are, unfortunately, driven more by motives of compliance regulations and tax benefits, and merely take the form of financial contributions. Respondent 16 explained, "They play for compliance, they just pump money and leave it." Respondent 2 explained, "in South Africa there's a big need for job creation and getting the society uplifted and I don't think businesses are doing enough in that space." Luckily, there is an acknowledgement amongst the respondents that businesses are more concerned with profits and their own needs than societal needs. As respondent 5 observed, "More than often you find that if you focus more on profits then you don't meet societal needs."

It was interesting who the respondents named as stakeholders. For instance, respondent 1 observed, "So, when you look at an organisation of 500 people it's not only 500 people that you are responsible for. It's the stakeholders...The employees and their families because they earn the money and they take it home." Respondent 16 said, "Society becomes a stakeholder in business, society and then let's say immediate surroundings. Society as in the immediate surrounding people or society, residential, whatever it is, they are stakeholders there." The respondents' discussions around stakeholders mostly represented aspirational value systems. It is unfortunate that their current value systems were not representing of the higher memes, associate with prosocial value orientations, however they indeed aspired or espoused to the genuine prosocial value orientations towards these organizational stakeholders. The sample of respondents also unfortunately also lacked in-depth understanding of prosocial value systems and shared value initiatives. The discussion focuses on the relationship of our findings to current literature and future research.

5 DISCUSSION

This section commences with a discussion of the findings in the context of the study and in light of the theoretical background. The findings contribute to an understanding of the catalysts that influence the development of a leader's value system towards an others-focused prosocial value orientation.

5.1 Leaders' Value Systems

Table 5 allocates the value words provided during the interviews to their respective memes in the spiral dynamics model. The past, current and espoused values leaders selected are grouped and mapped against the model. For past, current and espoused values, the memes with the highest frequency were the red, blue and yellow memes respectively. (Figure 1 presented the spiral dynamics model with the past, current and espoused values selected by the interviewees in the most prevalent memes.)

Only one senior leader's values were represented by values associated with the green meme of true empathy and the yellow meme of synergy. This leader had gone through several life trials throughout his life. For the majority of the respondents, hard work and responsibility were the highest frequency values for current values (representing the blue meme), values associated with the red meme were the highest frequency for past values, and the values associated with the green and yellow memes were the espoused values. These findings illustrate that the leaders transcended through value system frameworks as they matured in their leadership journeys, supporting Graves' original work on spiral dynamics concerning transcendence from one meme to the next as leaders develop (Beck & Cowen, 2014; Cowen & Todorovic, 2000). Table 6 shows the frequencies selected by leaders for past, present and espoused values.

TABLE 6: THE FREQUENCY OF MEMES SELECTED BY LEADERS FOR PAST, CURRENT AND ESPOUSED VALUES

Past Values	Frequency	Current Values	Frequency	Espoused Values	Frequency
Red Meme Courage Strength Loyalty	24	Blue Meme Discipline Truth Responsibility	23	Yellow Meme Integrity Flexibility Tolerance	18
Blue Meme Discipline Truth Responsibility	19	Yellow Meme Integrity Flexibility Tolerance	19	Blue Meme Discipline Truth Responsibility	15
Orange Meme Innovation Achievement	15	Green Meme Equality Fairness	11	Green Meme Equality Fairness	11

This also indicated that the leaders that were interviewed wanted to develop to the green and yellow meme's where ethical leadership lies, but was not yet there. This finding was concerning, since the South African business environment is perceived as having low trust levels (Giokos, 2016). When leaders do not exhibit a prosocial value orientation, they might be perceived as self-centered and that their business needs would be more important than the needs of the broader society. This might lead to even lower trust levels and a decrease in stakeholders reciprocating with a prosocial value orientation towards the business. Barnett (2019) in this regard, advised that the primary stakeholders of the business would mistrust the company, when the leaders are not perceived as having prosocial value orientations towards the larger society.

These leaders current value systems were in the blue meme, where individuals were group orientated, adhering to stability and order, holding values such as discipline, truth, responsibility and justice as important.

Cacioppe and Edwards (2005) likewise emphasize that leaders are drawn to new ways of thinking, associated with new memes, while skills associated with previous meme continue to serve them. We observed this when leaders described their value system frameworks. The identification of value system shifts assisted us to identify specific catalysts that create

discomfort, or questioning of current values, and which subsequently stimulate a value system shift.

5.2 Catalysts Influencing the Development of a Leader's Value System

During the interview process, respondents shared the stories and trials they experienced during their journeys to become the leaders they are today. Many of these challenges were tragic, such as losing a limb (Turner & Mavin, 2008, Shamir et al., 2005; Gardner et al., 2005) and acted as crucibles, as originally explained by Bennis and Thomas (2002). Though the challenges suppressed them at the time, the leaders learned from and overcame them, and ultimately increased their levels of resilience and strength as well as their drive towards success, associated with the orange meme. The focus on self-preservation is clear in these value frameworks. The leaders' reflections, with cognitive processing of what happened to them, were illustrated in their sense-making about what happened, confirming the emphasis of Kegan (1982) on the development of self-awareness. This process also relates to scholars' observations that as leaders adapt through life stages, their cognitive ability and critical thinking develops (Beck & Cowan, 2014; Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005). We concluded that it was not the crucible as such that created a shift in leaders' value systems, but their internal cognitive processing of the external event.

The findings show that role models for our sample of leaders included family members, neighbors, leaders at work and teachers, which aligns with the research of Shamir et al. (2005) and Gardner et al. (2005). These people were catalysts for the development of the leaders' value systems, especially towards ethical ways of leading. The findings further suggest that leaders actively searched for role models in their lives, wanted to give back and thus aspired to be role models to their subordinates. Blau's (1964) theory, whereby leaders, having been exposed to role models they admire, want to give back by being role models themselves, is relevant here. Gardner et al. (2005) also refer to leaders who reciprocate by aspiring to be role models.

The leaders in our sample also identified opportunities that assisted in the development of their value systems, such as education, and realized that these opportunities had not been available to all. Education per se was therefore not necessarily a catalyst for a value system shift. Instead, it was the questioning of current value systems which led to transcendence to values associated with a higher level meme. This finding aligns to the work of Gardner et al. (2005), who emphasize the importance of questioning values. While Shamir et al. (2005) report that age is an important element in the development of leadership, our study revealed that leaders on higher managerial levels reported current values associated with higher levels of maturity according to the spiral dynamics model. In addition, for the leaders in our sample, the opportunity to be responsible for a larger business unit, with more people, helped their value systems to transcend, mostly from the orange, achievement, self-focused meme towards values associated with the green meme, an others-focused meme with its higher levels of empathy. We therefore suggest that leadership enables leadership; however, the leader's internal cognitive processing about the opportunity to lead, or how the leader makes sense of the experience, actually creates the value system shift. Without repeating the findings here, one of the respondents appropriately referred to his own evolution from being focused on business to becoming focused on people. It is important to qualify that it is more than maturity through age which allows leaders to transcend in their value system frameworks; actual promotion to lead larger groups of people, as well as internal processing about this experience, is what prompts leaders to shift their values. Further empirical research is required to investigate the relationship between age, opportunities to lead and internal cognitive processing, as well as the possible mediating variables of mentoring and role modelling.

The findings show that the leaders in our sample aspired towards the values of ethical leadership, such as transparency, fairness, team orientation, and leading by example (van Zyl, 2014; Brown & Treviño, 2006). When leaders discussed the type of legacy they wanted to leave

behind, improving people's lives, inspiring people, building value for all, advocating education and being role models were some of the themes that emerged. These are mostly represented by the values of the green (being empathetic and others-focused) and yellow (valuing being an inspiration to others) memes. Improving the lives of others was an important legacy for these leaders. As Dempsey (2015) and Brown and Treviño (2006) note, unethical behavior filters from leaders through the organization; organizations therefore have to create opportunities for leaders to achieve their aspirations of improving the lives of others to assist in developing ethical leaders.

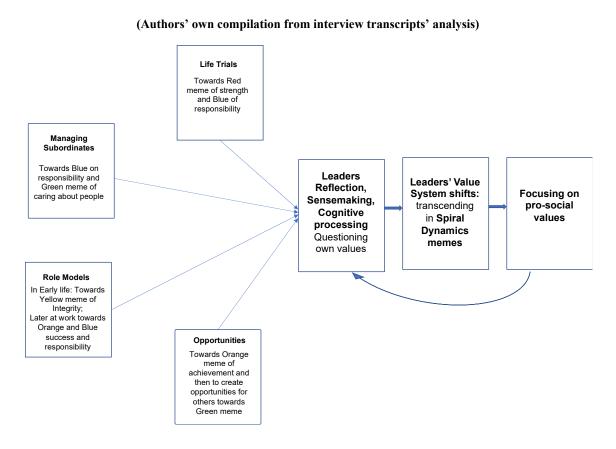


FIGURE 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF CATALYTIC IMPACT ON LEADERS' VALUE SYSTEMS (Researchers own synthesis from interview data)

Figure 3 illustrates the conceptual framework of catalytical impact on leaders' value systems

5.3 Prosocial values of leaders towards genuinely caring for society

Several themes emerged in the current research that align with and support the literature, including: businesses have a responsibility to address societal needs (Wiengarten et al., 2017; Joyner & Payne, 2002); businesses solely focused on profits are short-sighted and unsustainable (Setó-Pamies & Papaoikonomou, 2016; Norman & MacDonald, 2004; Glac, 2015); corporate social investment is driven by legislation and tax benefits, and not by engaging society, (Epstein & Buhovac, 2010; van Zyl, 2014; Brown & Treviño, 2006); there is an opportunity for business to address societal needs (Prahalad & Hammond, 2002). The green, yellow and turquiose memes are the value systems whereby leaders put the needs of the organization, people and planet before their own. Leaders expressed the desire to start putting people and the planet before their own needs. It was concerning, however, that a focus on stakeholders, especially the community and environment, was mostly an aspirational value system rather than a current one and that only limited actual actions had already been taken. The motive with which the upliftment projects was undertaken was a further concern. Luckily, it appeared that some of the respondents did in fact realise the lack of a prosocial value orientation with which the CSV as well as CSR projects had been implemented. The fact that there had been awareness is promising, since leadership development would require these leaders to have awareness on what has to be addressed. In the implications for organizations section below, we elaborated on the steps towards leadership development.

6 CONCLUSION

This conclusion includes a summary of the findings in a proposed conceptual framework, implications for organisations, research limitations and future research suggestions.

6.1 Implications for organisations

Figure 2 presents a conceptual framework of the impact of catalysts on leaders' value systems.

Values were discussed in relation to the leaders' values and catalysts were discussed in relation to the development of the leader's value systems in the theoretical background section. Figure 2 shows how catalysts can assist in developing leaders' value systems and therefore their views and actions towards stakeholders in demonstrating their prosocial care for society. The figure also indicates that the reflection and sense-making process is an important element in the maturation of leaders' value systems. Learning and Development or Human Resources functions in organizations could thus assist leaders in the maturation process by, for example, offering executive education, mentoring or executive coaching opportunities, so that leaders have a safe space to reflect on their experiences and make sense of life trials, or the impact of role models, on the development of their value systems. These executive education, mentoring and coaching initiatives must focus on raising awareness of leaders about the impact of the lack of prosocial value orientation on the trust of their primary stakeholders in their CSR and CSV projects or as Barnett (2019) called it, CSR acts.

Leadership opportunities also proved to be instrumental in developing leaders' value systems. Our conceptual framework illustrates that a focus on broader stakeholders' needs, that is, beyond employees towards the community, as would be represented by CSR or corporate volunteering initiatives could influence leaders' opportunities for reflection and sense-making around the important role of business in society; this, in turn, could have a circular influence on leaders' value system transcendence to higher level memes. Implementing projects which demonstrate prosocial care for society, like with CSR initiatives, could thus act as a catalyst for developing leaders' value systems. Organisations could implement smaller steps, including catalysts like work challenges, career opportunities and role models, as tools to develop leaders' prosocial value orientation.

Human resources practitioners could work with and purposefully recruit leaders whose values represent transcendence towards the yellow meme of high integrity and transparency, as

well as towards the turquoise meme of interdependence. These leaders could then serve as role models, offering opportunities for others to reflect on value systems conducive to the common good. Leadership development during executive education programmes should focus on understanding value systems and their impact on the role played by business in society. Developing deeper insight into both their own and other leaders' value systems would support the maturation process of leaders towards creating value for the broader society. Our findings seem to be transferable (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013), in the sense that considering the motives of having a genuine prosocial value orientation towards stakeholders when implementing CSV or CSR initiatives appear to be an important principle. South Africa is however, reasonably representative of emerging and developing countries and we would thus propose that it would equally be important for CSR and CSV initiatives in these countries to exhibit genuine prosocial values to instill trust in business as truly caring about society. Further studies might investigate whether this proposition holds, especially in other emerging markets, which might also be characterized by low trust levels towards by society towards business.

Organizations which aspire to be sustainable and implement value creation towards society have the potential to explore untapped markets. By assisting communities, the organizations' customer bases expand and stakeholder loyalty increases. However, as our study pointed out, the motives which which these CSR or CSV initiatives are carried out, are also important.

6.2 Limitations of the current study and recommendations for future research

Generalization of these findings to other contexts is limited as the study was exploratory. There was geographical bias as the sample size was small and only included senior leaders in South Africa. Transparency and response bias could be limitations as not all the respondents wanted to expose their life journeys to the researchers, even though they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of the research findings. A limited number of industries was represented in this research.

Based on the insights derived from this research study we recommend the following future research to add further value to the literature: We uncovered the importance of the value systems of leaders who are undertaking shared value projects. Further research is required to investigate the theoretical underpinnings of the construct of shared value, specifically around the deontological and teleological philosophical orientations. See Gregor (1998) for an explanation of the two philosophical orientations. The emphasis on the underlying motives as represented by the leaders' value systems require further research. Our conceptual framework on the catalysts that impact leaders' value systems could be validated by conducting a quantitative analysis using a larger sample of senior leaders. The relationship between age of the leaders and their managerial levels on the one hand with the maturation levels according to the spiral dynamics model on the other, could contribute to theory building around the antecedents of leaders' value system development. A comparative study on the effectiveness of the conceptual framework on organizations in different countries, where leadership styles and cultures differ could be undertaken.

The current study contributes meaningful insights into the development of the value systems of 19 leaders through an exploratory qualitative study. The study identified the catalysts that impact the development of a leader's value system, which in turn influences the leader's focus on genuine care for society. Unfortunately, our study illustrated that the leaders' existing motives as reflected in their value systems, revealed a self-centered or business-centered orientation. Their aspirational value systems were focused on contributing to society and reflected pro-social values. The study offers a conceptual framework to deepen our understanding of the development of leaders' value systems and the importance of reflection. Organisations could benefit from taking note of these recommendations to develop their leaders' prosocial value orientations.

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