Toward a Multi-Level Theoretical Framework of Neuro-Linguistic Programming in Leadership Development: Integrating Emotional Intelligence, Cultural Context, and Organizational Hierarchy

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ABSTRACT

Despite growing interest in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) for leadership development, the theoretical mechanisms through which it enhances emotional intelligence (EI) remain fragmented and underspecified. This conceptual paper addresses this gap by developing an integrated, multi-level theoretical framework. Through a synthesis of literature across psychology, leadership, and cross-cultural management, we propose the Cultural-Hierarchical NLP-EI Framework. This model delineates the cognitive, behavioral, and relational pathways linking NLP techniques to EI dimensions and specifies the moderating roles of cultural context and organizational hierarchy. The framework provides a theoretical foundation for future research and practical guidance for designing culturally-sensitive leadership development programs, using the African managerial context as a key illustrative boundary condition.

INTRODUCTION

An era of unprecedented global complexity and interconnectedness has intensified the need for leaders who can navigate ambiguity, foster collaboration, and inspire trust. Emotional intelligence (EI) is firmly established as a cornerstone of effective leadership (Goleman & Cherniss, 2024). Empirically, leaders high in EI are better equipped to manage interpersonal relationships, make sound ethical decisions under pressure, and cultivate resilient organizational cultures (Alsalman & Chyad, 2025; Woime & Shato, 2025). Thus, researchers and theorists in the human resource management field and organizational psychology continue to be concerned with finding and formulating interventions that will statistically increase these vital emotional competencies.

Looking at all the developmental paradigms, the most paradigm worthy of mention in the research is the Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), which has become a ubiquitous but theoretically debated model in the field of leadership coaching. NLP is based on the idea that the subjective experience is organized with the help of neurological mechanisms, language, and patterns of behaviors, and that these arrangements can be simulated and adjusted later to reach defined results (Boughattas et al., 2022). The advocates argue that NLP-based coaching that applies the system of reframing, anchoring, and meta-model questioning can help to make quick changes in the basic beliefs, emotional conditions of a person, and behavioral habits, covering such pillars of EI (Passmore and Rowson, 2019). Practically, it has come to be included in more executive development programs with hopes of more self-sensitive, compassionate, and responsive leaders.

Despite its popular application, the scholarly understanding of how and under what conditions NLP influences EI remains fragmented. A pronounced theory-practice divide characterizes the literature: while practitioners report successes, academic research is often limited to empirical studies that, while valuable, lack a robust theoretical foundation to explain their findings (Villarreal-Zegarra et al., 2024). NLP interventions have been reported to influence EI in many studies; the mechanism involved is not always explained because there are

differences in the thinking, language, and behaviour processes that make up these alterations. This theoretical gap hinders the extrapolation of the existing results and the building of the successive body of knowledge.

Critical overlooking of contextual moderators also adds to the theoretical uncertainty. It is not a vacuum, but leadership is embedded in cultural and organizational milieus that influence how emotions are manifested, sensed, and controlled. An increasing body of literature on African leadership, such as the one on collectivism and high-context communication, or gender roles expectations, can provide significant insight into how cultural dynamics can severely affect the effectiveness of leadership development interventions (Galperin et al., 2024). However, most NLP studies and model building are anchored to Western cultures in the understanding, which leaves a gap in determining how cultural and organizational factors, including hierarchy, moderate the process of the NLPEI relationship. The question of whether NLP will be used is irrelevant; rather, it is about its relevance to whom and in what situations it can best be used to cultivate certain EI competencies (Watanabe et al., 2024).

This paper aims to address these critical theoretical gaps by moving beyond isolated empirical findings and revising these critical gaps in theory. The main aim of ours is to build an integrated and multi-level theoretical framework that defines the channels through which the NLP methods can impact the dimensions of EI and define the moderating role of cultural considerations and organizational rank. We present an argument that the connection between NLP and EI depends on a complex interaction among individual, cultural, and structural factors and, as such, cannot be assumed to be universal.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we review the theoretical foundations of EI in leadership and deconstruct the core principles and techniques of NLP, analyzing their potential points of connection. Second, we critically review the literature available to find certain gaps on the theoretical front, especially with regard to the cultural and hierarchical moderators. Third, and most importantly to our contribution, we present the Cultural-Hierarchical NLP-EI Framework. It has suggested the following testable propositions: (1) cognitiveaffective processes between certain NLP methods and certain EI dimensions; (2) the moderating role of cultural variables, with the African managerial setting as a salient state of British boundary conditions; and (3) how one location in the organizational hierarchy affects the growth of strategic versus interpersonal emotional skills.

Theoretical Foundations

To construct a robust theoretical framework, it is essential to establish the conceptual bedrock for understanding the interaction between Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and emotional intelligence (EI) in the development of leaders is also impossible without laying down the conceptual base first. This section critically examines and synthesizes the theoretical foundations of three domains: (1) multidimensionality of EI in the leadership situations; (2) theoretical principles and theoretical terrain debatable by NLP; and (3) paramount, but frequently neglected, importance of the cultural and hierarchical situations on the outcomes of the leadership development.

Emotional Intelligence: Working With Individual Traits to Leadership Ability.

The construct of EI has evolved significantly since its definition, evolving from a leading changeable individual-difference variable to a leading critical variable. The field is rooted in two prevailing theoretical frameworks in spite of its popularization by Goleman (1995). The conceptualization of EI is the ability model (Darvishmotevali et al., 2018), which describes this concept in terms of separate cognitive skills (with regard to processing emotional information), including the capacity to perceive, apply, comprehend, and regulate emotions. Conversely, trait EI or mixed models (Maddocks, 2023) use self-reported dispositions and behavioral tendencies, combining ability with the aspects of personality.

This is an important distinction as far as leadership theory is concerned. The ability model offers insights into how leaders interpret the emotional messages, and trait models in most ways can better explain the outcomes of leadership effectiveness, like cohesion of the team and subordinate satisfaction (Chhaganlal & Mishra, 2025). Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), which measures four dimensions of SelfEmotion

Appraisal (SEA), Others-Emotion Appraisal (OEA), Use of Emotion (UOE), and Regulation of Emotion (ROE) (Potgieter et al., 2024), can be considered an effective point of convergence between these models. It evaluates ability-like elements by using a self-report, which makes it very applicable to researching developmental interventions. The self-perception of leaders of their emotional skills is a major product (Wittmer & Hopkins, 2021).

The development of theoretical backgrounds has well-established EI as an asset of individuals and as a core to relation and strategic leadership. The components of theories of transformational leadership, say, are full of high EI requirements, including individualized consideration, inspirational motivation (Korakis & Poulaki, 2025). Resource-based approach is concerned with the EI of a leader. It can be considered an intangible strategic resource in the leader that creates a competitive advantage with better social coordination and trust (Salameh-Ayanian, Tamer, & Maalouf, 2025).

Neuro linguistic programming: Unpackaging Principles and Theoretical Mechanisms.

The teaching of Neuro-Linguistic Programming began in the 1970s in the investigation of highly effective therapists, postulating that the subjective experience has a design that could be replicated, instructed, and modified (Khasanov, 2023). In its simplest form, NLP is based on a number of theoretical presuppositions which the theory calls its presuppositions which carry huge implications concerning the development of leadership. According to the principle that the map is not the territory, people act based on what is inside their minds and not reality. This is in line with the social cognitive theory (Wang & Shao, 2024), which is keen on the use of cognitive representation in determining behavior.

The change mechanisms outlined by the theoretical architecture of NLP propose three major processes, each of which could be relevant to EI development:

1. Cognitive Repatterning: The methods, including the so-called meta-model, a sequence of linguistic tasks to distortions, deletions, and generalizations in a speech, are aimed at changing the underlying cognitive maps which determine emotional reactions. Ideally, this ought to directly positively influence the understanding aspect of EI by creating more dimensional and precise internal outputs of emotional experiences.
2. State Management: Techniques like the one termed as the anchoring (linking a particular stimulus to a particular emotional state) and the one termed as the submodality shift (altering the qualities of a mental image in the sense of sensory qualities) are meant to confer volitional control on the emotional state of individuals. This provides a possible process of enhancing the control and manipulation of feelings.
3. Perspective-Taking: The perceptual positions method, which involves an individual taking a position to look at a situation as though he/she, another person, and an observer of the situation would offer a systematic approach in the development of cognitive empathy. This is theoretically a way of addressing the Emotion Appraisal (OEA) dimension of EI in the Other, as it has the effect of broadening the frame of reference of the individual in a systematic way.

Even though it seems counterintuitive, NLP has found some usefulness and fails to be contested theoretically in academic psychology. The criticisms are usually over the basis on insufficient empirical evidence to validate the claims and allegations that overpower the evidence (Thomson, Reiter, & Belz, 2024). However, it is this same argument that brings us to the necessity of a modern, theoretic exercise, namely, a shift in attitude of wholesale acceptance or rejection toward a more specific, testable specification of the mechanisms by which its methods may work, specifically in the field of leadership EI.

The Crucible of Context: Culture and Command of Moderators.

Leadership is not a situational free event, and neither is the development of leadership abilities. A severe drawback of the current models that associate development and intervention schemes like NLP and EI outcomes is that they often overlook compelling contextual moderators.

Culturally, the expression, interpretation, as well as management of emotions are highly rooted in culture (Hofstede, 2015). In the African context of leadership, the situation tends to focus more on communalism, relational dependence, and high-context communication, meaning derived out of situational and nonverbal signals (Nkomo & Kekana, 2024). This is in contrast to the more individualistic, low-context cultural milieus where most of the NLP principles were initially developed. This would theoretically indicate that NLP procedures that emphasise OEA and relationship management can be especially effective in high-context, collectivist cultures, in which the art of accurately decoding nonverbal signals is paramount. On the other hand, the methods that focus on explicit self-expression (SEA) might be facing dissimilar cultural rules on emotional divulgence.

Regarding the organisational hierarchy, leadership positions require varying arrangements of emotional abilities at the various levels (Fuentes & Sánchez, 2025). High levels of OEA and ROE are also necessary frequently because junior managers need to cope with the dynamism of the team interactions and the personal conflicts within the team. The top-level executives, in their turn, work in a more strategic sphere where UOE, the capacity to use emotions and motivate large groups of people to promote the vision, becomes of paramount importance. The theoretical implication is that the one-size-fits-all approach to NLP intervention cannot be highly effective. The application of certain NLP practices must rely upon the EI requirements in place in the hierarchical job of the leader. This is in line with the principle of requisite leader intelligence, which creates the argument that the cognitive and affective conditions to be reasonable vary in a systematic manner in accordance with the level of the organisation (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023).

Gaps and Theoretical Integration Requirement.

Though the above theoretical analysis is important in laying the foundation of knowledge, it also reveals major gaps and missing links in the existing academic literature on the role of Neuro-Linguistic Programming in causing the enhancement of emotional intelligence in the leading environment. The literature available is good, but it provides a disjointed landscape with three critical gaps in theory, which are what our proposed framework aims to fill. Such blank spaces not just affect the process of academic development, but also restrict the effectiveness and ethical use of NLP-based leadership development in practice.

Gap 1: Mechanistic Black Box between NLP Techniques and EI Dimensions.

The most glaring gap in the theoretical framework is that one cannot find an accurate, testable theory that would project selected methods of the NLP model onto the specific processes of mind, heart, and action that comprise emotional intelligence. NLP is perceived as a unitary form of intervention and EI as a unitary outcome in the literature, which forms a theoretical black box (Passmore and Rowson, 2019). We understand that NLP interventions may influence EI, yet we do not have a consistent theory about the methods that are best to develop this or that EI competence, and, still, why.

As an example, does the meta-model method, which concerns the imprecision of the linguistic terminology, increase the Self-Emotion Appraisal by improving the inner vocabulary of the emotional states? Or does it have a more direct effect on Regulation of Emotion (ROE) by interfering with such cognitive patterns that are antecedents of emotional responses? The theoretical silence surrounding these questions today implies that it is common to find that the coaching practice is founded on trial and error or the preference of the facilitator, instead of a principled conceptualization of mechanism (Campion, 2025). This limitation makes it impossible to refine methodologies of NLP systematically, as well as restricts the predictive ability of different results among people. It should have a theoretical framework that goes beyond the correlational assertion to offer certain causal directions on how the operating elements of NLP are related to EI architecture.

Gap 2: Cultural and Hierarchical Contingency and Overlook.

The second and critical theoretical omission is the near-complete failure to consider the cultural and organizational context as the central moderating variable. NLP models and research are largely ethnocentric, where most of the studies are based on Western, individualistic, and low-context cultural paradigms (Galperin

et al., 2024). This forms a profound theoretical issue when blindly applied to various contexts, including the collectivist, high-context, and relationally-oriented environments, which typify most of the African organizations.

In theory, we have to pose: Do the presuppositions of NLP universally apply? To give an example, the method of reframing, or changing the meaning of an event, can prove to be incredibly effective in a culture in which people are valued and their ability to take agency or exercise cognitive control is exalted. But when one has a culture where people tend to explain events more collectively or by a spiritual orientation, when meaning is more determined and social, it may be that this will decrease its effectiveness (Hong, 2025). On the same note, the theoretical relationship between hierarchy and EI requires highlighting that has not been investigated in the NLP literature. The emotional skills that a junior manager needs to manage conflict within the team (high OEA and ROE are required) are conceptually different from the skills that a senior executive needs in order to motivate a multinational organisation (high UOE and strategic SEA are required) (Woime & Shato, 2025). These fundamentals on the contextual differences cannot be explained using a single size-fits-all theoretical model. Such a disconnect not only hampers generalisability but also exposes the culture to culturally indifferent or even hierarchically inappropriate developmental practices, which can be inefficient at best and counter-productive at worst.

Gap 3: Loss of touch with the already existing psychological and leading theories.

Third, NLP has been left in a state of theoretical isolation, and it is seldom combined with the rest and larger platforms of psychological and leadership theory. This alienation breeds scholastic scepticism and restricts the conceptual enrichment of it. In order to be considered seriously as a research field of human resource management and organisational psychology, NLP should be strategically integrated into the current theoretical tapestry (Sun & Jung, 2024).

To take a case in point, how do the NLP processes of anchoring and state management refer to the betterknown theory of classical conditioning and emotion regulation in cognitive psychology? What is the relationship of the meta-model interface with the theory of cognitive restructuring of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)? As a leadership question, the development of EI using NLP, how does this development differ or align with the advanced theories of leadership, like transformational, authentic, or servant leadership? Without these theoretical links, it subjects NLP to the accusation of having become a fad on the pop psychology front, lacking a solid scientific base (Ruiz-Palomino, Yáñez-Araque, Gutiérrez-Broncano, & Estévez, 2025). A solid theoretical framework should be an integrator that shows how the mechanism of NLP is either in line with already existing psychological and leadership constructs or provides a new extension of them.

The Need to have an Integrated Theoretical Framework.

The combination of these three gaps generates a strong demand for the theoretical formulation that it has undertaken in this paper. The existing level of knowledge is not enough to lead to future studies or advanced practice. We have not got a model that is at the same time:

1. Mechanically accurate: There are specifications of how techniques relate to the EI outcome.
2. Contextually advanced: Moderating cultural and organisational factors.
3. Theoretically unified: Relating the NLP principles to the conventional psychological and leadership theories.

This three-part divide has real effects. In the case of researchers, it results in a disordered conglomerate of evidence that is hard to combine. To HR practitioners and coaches, it leads to the use of a sledgehammer when surgical tools are supposed to be used, and this could be a waste of resources and not produce leaders (Zainal et al., 2025). In the case of the field of HRM, it amounts to a loss of a chance to gain a better theoretical insight into how the emotional capabilities of leaders could be developed in a conscious and systemic manner.

Thus, the main contribution of this paper is to suggest the Cultural-Hierarchical NLP-EI Framework. It is the framework which is directly aimed to fill these gaps by offering a consistent, multi-tiered framework which: (a)

specifies the actual theoretical mechanisms that connect NLP techniques and EI dimensions; (b) considers cultural context and organisational hierarchy as fundamental, moderating factors of the model; and (c) explicitly aligns these factors with already established theories of cognitive psychology and organisation studies.

The Cultural-Hierarchical NLP-EI Model.

To fill in the critical gaps defined, we propose the Cultural-Hierarchical NLP-EI Framework. This multi-level theoretical approach transcends the linear input-output approaches to coaching in a bid to offer a dynamic, contingent approach of the contribution of Neuro-Linguistic Programming to the ways of influencing emotional intelligence. In Figure 1, it is assumed that the effectiveness of particular methods of NLP is not universal but processed through the prism of various cognitive-affective processes and is, in essence, mediated by one's cultural background and organisational rank structure. The essence behind the framework is an interrelation of three theoretical areas: (1) the direct mechanistic pathways, (2) the moderating effect of cultural context, and (3) the moderating effect of organisational hierarchy.
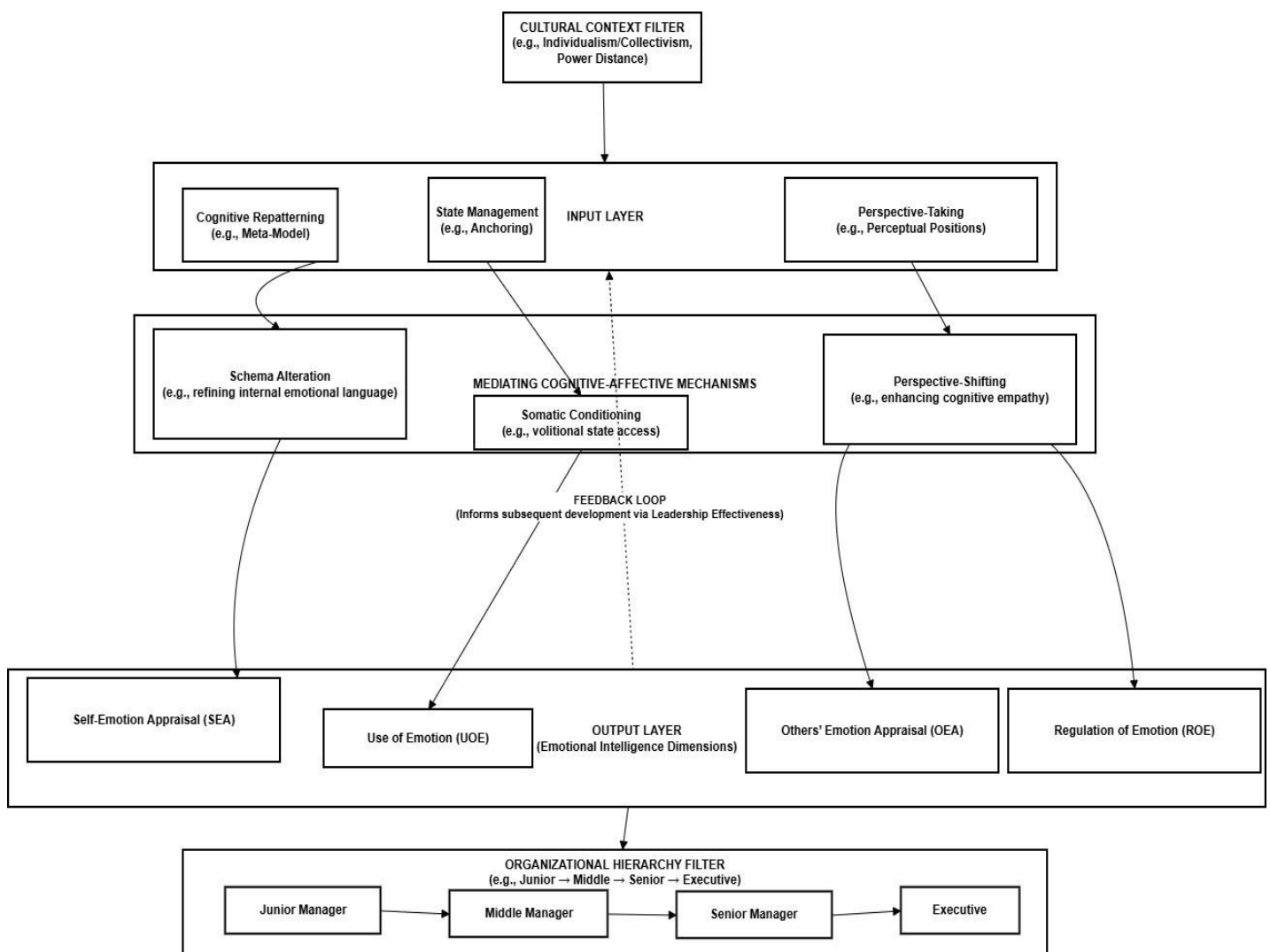

Figure 1. The Cultural-Hierarchical NLP-EI Framework. This dynamic system model illustrates the theorized process through which NLP techniques enhance leaders' emotional intelligence, contingent upon cultural and hierarchical contexts.

The model features a central flow from Input (NLP Technique Clusters) to Output (EI Dimensions), mediated by cognitive-affective mechanisms. Crucially, this entire core process is embedded within and influenced by two continuous moderating filters:

1. The Cultural Context Filter (top) encompasses the core process, representing dimensions like Individualism/Collectivism that influence the interpretation and application of the techniques and mechanisms.

2. The Organizational Hierarchy Filter (bottom) undergirds the core process, representing the leader's organizational level, which determines the salience and functional utility of the resulting EI dimensions.

Solid arrows within the core process indicate the primary, theoretically-specified pathways from techniques to mechanisms to outcomes (Propositions 1-3). For instance, Cognitive Repatterning techniques are primarily theorized to work through Schema Alteration to enhance Self-Emotion Appraisal (SEA). The dotted arrow from the Output Layer back to the Input Layer represents the Feedback Loop, where gains in leadership effectiveness reinforce and shape future engagement with NLP development. The positioning of the filters visually conveys their role as pervasive, concurrent influences on every stage of the development process (Propositions 4-7)

Core Propositions: The Direct Mechanistic Pathways

The basis of our framework defines which kinds of NLP techniques are most/most directly assumed to have specific theoretical connections to the EI dimensions to which they are claimed to have the strongest relationship.

Proposition 1: NLP skills of cognitive repatterning (e.g., the Meta-Model, reframing) will have a more direct positive impact on the understanding aspects of EI specifically, thus improving the quality and accuracy of the Self-Emotion Appraisal (SEA) through the challenge and reorganization of the linguistic and cognitive schemas that make emotional experience.

Rationale: The Meta model is a direct focus on linguistic distortions (generalizations, deletions, distortions) that spawn poor or inaccurate internal representations. It makes internal states more accurately described, making one, in theory, increase his/her vocabulary on the emotional level and distinguish his/her emotional perceptions, creating the cognitive framework of the higher SEA (Atzil-Slonim et al., 2024).

Proposition 2: NLP practices oriented on the management of states (e.g., anchoring, sub-modality changes) will have a more direct beneficial impact on the management aspects of EI, in particular, will enhance the aspect of Regulation of Emotion (ROE) by providing individuals with tools of volition to break negative emotion loops and have an opportunity to enter a resourceful state.

Rationale: The stimulus-response loop induced by techniques like anchoring allows one to induce an intended emotional state (e.g., calmness, confidence) intentionally. This gives a practical, somatic process of emotion control in real time, therefore, going beyond pure cognition and moving towards embodied emotion control.

Proposition 3: The conative instruments of the NLP approach (e.g., perspective-taking, i.e., perceptual positions, mirroring) will directly have a beneficial impact on the relational aspects of EI, specifically, enhancing the deepening of the OESs Emotion Appraisal (OSEA) by systematically training the ability to read emotional signals and perceive the emotional perspective of other people.

Technology: The use of the perceptual position's technique is a theoretical mind drill. Hypothetically, when one builds a pattern of over and over again shifting one's own point of view to that of another and a neutral observer, they improve their aptitude for correctly inferring and sympathizing with the feelings of others, and as such, the OEA ability is built and strengthened.

The Intermediate Impact of Cultural Context.

The model assumes that the cultural dimensions have a strong impact on the intensity and expression of the paths that are outlined in Proposition 1 and 3. The African managerial context is not a constraint to us; it is rather a relevant area to be illustratively theorised to represent these moderating effects.

Proposition 4: The effectiveness of the NLP techniques will be mediated by the cultural aspect of

Individualism above Collectivism. Techniques addressing OEA (P3) will prove to be more successful in highcontext cultures (or most of the African societies), given that these techniques are not only less common

and less hectic in individualistic cultures, but there is also a possibility they will be embraced and potentially even more successful.

Theoretical Justification: The innate drive to know others is high in the context of collectivist cultures in which such a sense of identity is interdependent and the society is committed to harmony. This cultural priority is compatible and enhanced by NLP techniques, which offer a structured approach to the latter (e.g., perceptual positions). On the other hand, individualistic cultures might make cognitive re-patterning methods that target the self more culturally congruent.

Proposition 5: The cultural aspect of Power Distance (the tolerance of hierarchical inequalities) is going to moderate the relationship between NLP and EI. Normative inhibitions might limit the efficacy of NLP techniques used by junior managers in assessing the feelings of senior leaders (a particular type of OEA), though the efficacy of the technique in managing horizontal relations will be more effective in high power distance cultures.

Theoretical Justification: A Social filter is a result of High-power distance. A junior manager can clearly recognize the frustration of a senior leader using OSA methods, but will not be allowed to act on the situation due to conventional (cultural) reasons. Therefore, cultural norms of upward communication also moderate the theoretical correlation between the NLP technique on the one hand, and the functional behavioural result of OEA on the other hand.

Moderating Power of Organizational Hierarchy.

The framework also outlines that the dimensions of EI that are most likely to be requisite to perform optimally by an employee based on the organisational hierarchy will be identified, and the most effective NLP techniques will be identified based on this information.

Proposition 6: Organisational hierarchy meets the NLPEI relationship such that:

a. NLP techniques focused on OEA, ROE (Propositions 2 and 3) will produce the biggest effect on leadership performance in junior managers, as their competencies will form the basis of team management and team conflicts.
b. The NLP activities related to UOE and strategic SEA (Propositions 1 & 2) will have the most significant influence on senior executives because they are the primary attributes of a visionary leadership style, and the ability to inspire masses of people and to manage his/her emotional state during the period of high-stakes decision-making.

Theoretical Justification: This is in concord with requisite organisation theories (O'Leary & Boland, 2019) and stratified systems theory. Junior-level work is more transactional and interpersonal and requires a high level of relationship EI. The job at higher ranks is more tactical and symbolic, which requires EI skills that can be utilised to achieve influence and energy mobilisation towards long-term objectives. Interventions based on NLP that are adjusted to such level requirements will prove to be more useful and, consequently, more perceived and actual effectiveness.

Integrative Proposal 7: There is no independence; rather, there are some interactive effects of cultural context and organisational hierarchy. The hierarchy moderating the relationship between NLP and EI will be influenced in terms of cultural norms (e.g., high power distance). To refer to the example, middle managers will experience most acutely the limitation of upward OEA (fitting upwards P5), who will have to use the interface between the senior leadership and employees on the frontline.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The Cultural-Hierarchical NLP-EI Framework is not just a descriptive framework; it is a generative framework, the one that is intended to trigger a shift of paradigm with which scholars and practitioners are conceptualizing the interaction between developmental interventions and emotional competencies. The ramifications of this framework are massive, as they offer novel avenues of theoretical progress as well as introduce practically mindful guidance towards the field of leadership development.

Theoretical Implications

Our framework has a number of contributions that are notable to the theoretical scenery of human resource development, leadership, and organizational cross-cultural psychology.

1. Re-contextualising Leadership Development Theory. The main theoretical implication of our framework consists of the fact that our model is a direct challenge to the universalistic, one-size-fits-all approach typically taken in most of the literature on leadership development. Integrating cultural and hierarchical moderators by directly making them part of the model is what leads us to believe that the question of what works is always incomplete without the question of who and under what circumstances (Odindo, K'Aol, & Njenga, 2025). That is taking the field out of the realm of simple efficacy studies into a more contingent-based theory of leader development. It implies that the performance of any intervention, such as NLP, cannot be interpreted outside the ecosystem where the leader is enclosed.

2. The analysis of an NLP Theoretical Bridge. As observed, NLP has been in theoretical isolation. Our framework can be seen as an important form of integrative bridging of NLP techniques and presuppositions with already established psychological constructs. We can use the purported connection between cognitive repatterning and the schema theory or between state management and the theory of emotional regulation to give an academic lexicon and mechanistic account, which gives NLP the opportunity to be critically analysed and refined as part of the general academic discourse. This demystifies NLP and makes it an instrument rather than a practitioner-oriented instrument into a set of falsifiable theoretical propositions (Hassan, Binzafrah, & Alqahtani, 2022), which makes it a more legitimate academic instrument and increases its contribution possibilities.

3. Furthering Multi-Dimensional- It should be noted that there is a Multi-Dimensional, Contingent View of Emotional Intelligence. The model means that EI is not a unidimensional characteristic that is being developed in the same manner. Rather, it is a collection of different, still connected, abilities that can be focused upon selectively as well as that evolve more rapidly under diverse conditions and intervention. We provide a more specific theoretical perspective on further research by suggesting that there are areas of affinity between particular techniques and particular dimensions of EI (Propositions 1 -3). This shifts the research on the EI development question from did EI improve to the more advanced: what aspects of EI were improved, in what way, and who among leaders had this improvement happen.

4. Developing the Cross-Cultural and Strategic Leadership Theory. The propositions of moderation (P4-P7) are direct events to both the cross-cultural leadership theory and the strategic leadership theory. In the case of cross-cultural research, we are offering a model peculiar to the way cultural dimensions at the macro-level (e.g., Individualism/Collectivism) are converted into micro-level psychological processes that shape the effectiveness of developmental tools. To the strategic theory of leadership, we provide the theoretical description of why a certain type of leadership and, consequently, the type of leader development varies between the levels of the organization, and we explain these variants by the different emotional demands of the strategic and operational work.

Practical Implications

Application of the framework not only benefits the academy but also gives practical evidence-based advice to human resources professionals, executive coaches, and organizational leaders.

Respecting the Design of Leadership Development Programs. The framework gives a framework of a clear blueprint of transitioning from generic development initiatives to bespoke development initiatives. The model can be used by human-resources professionals as well as coaches to:

Perform a pre-intervention diagnosis: Before structuring a program, it is important to evaluate the most commonly existing cultural picture of the organization/cohort and determine the key EI requirements at various levels of hierarchy.

Reorient towards audience: Do not use a universal curriculum, but selectively use NLP techniques depending on the audience. An example of this is a senior-executives program in a high-power-distance culture may place

a strong emphasis on techniques to utilize emotion (UOE) and strategic self-emotion appraisal (SEA), a frontline-supervisor program may pay much attention to regulation of emotion (ROE) and emotion appraisal of others (OEA).

Personalize communication and framing: It is proposed in the model that the frame of an intervention is paramount. In a collectivist culture, presenting the NLP exercises through the perspective of team harmony and the success of relationships, which, in accordance with the OEA, will possibly bring more engagement than the perspective of individual success.

In the case of Executive and Leadership Coaching. The model enables coaches to be more accurate and internationally aware in their practice.

This is also because some techniques are better suited to a specific context with a client, and thus, by using a theoretical study, coaches are able to choose their techniques informedly rather than depending on a repertoire they have always preferred.

Expectations management of clients: Using the model, coaches explain to clients the reason behind the application of a particular technique, which increases buy-in. An example of this scenario is where a coach, talking to a junior female manager in a particular cultural context, explains that they are working on emotional regulation (ROE) through anchoring to gain confidence in helping to assert her point of view, directly addressing the trap of looking at the contextual barriers.

Various approaches can enhance cultural agility: the framework equips coaches with the ability to think systemically, which is based on the cultural and organizational forces that define the reality of their client, thus contributing to their more productive role as a partner in leadership development.

Concerning Organizational Strategy and Management of Talents.

Strategic HR alignment: The framework promotes the mental repositioning of the strategic framework of leadership development from an unnecessary training investment to a strategy lever. The HR can prove a direct contribution to performance by matching development with the particular leadership strengths needed at each stage to implement the organization's strategy.

Succession planning and pipeline development: The model offers a theoretical foundation for the development of leadership pipeline differentiation. Interventions can cultivate the EI competencies junior leaders will require in the next level and not at the current one when they are high-potential.

Increment ROI on investment in development spending: The framework emphasizes the need to promote context-active interventions so that organizations can increase ROI on ineffective and generic training programs.

Future Research Directions

The Cultural-Hierarchical NLP-EI Framework creates a strong and multidimensional research agenda for the future. It provides a roadmap to the academic inquiries, having removed large-scale questions of efficacy in favor of specific, contingent statements. The subsequent research questions, grouped by the main substantive parts of the framework, are aimed at proving, narrowing down, and deepening the suggested model, and so developing the existing knowledge of leadership development as a theory.

Testing/validating the Core Mechanistic Pathways.

The main empirical job is to study the particular causal relationships between the NLP methods and the EI dimensions as presented in Propositions 1-3. This demands the departure of world-view testing of NLP and EI, to the small, micro-level studies.

As a direction of research, experimental studies of technique-specific effects are proposed. The future study must make use of controlled experimental designs that help to isolate the effect of individual NLP techniques. In the

example, a laboratory experiment may do so by randomly assigning leaders to a group of three conditions: (1) a Meta-Model training session (with cognitive repatterning), (2) an Anchoring training session (with state management), or (3) a control group. A direct test of propositions 1 and 2 would be on the pre- and post-intervention actions of the specific EI facets (SEA in group 1 and ROE in group 2). These designs are able to achieve causal precedence and establish the individual contribution of each technique.

Dynamism Research Direction 1B: Neurological and Physiological Correlates. The researchers ought to include psychophysiological and neuroimaging to uncover the black box of the mechanisms. In other words, is successful anchoring associated with decreased amygdala activation and higher activity in the prefrontal cortex during stress, and thus, a biological indicator of the enhanced ROE? Does the perceptual positions technique involve brain activation in the theory of mind? Such studies would base the theoretical mechanisms of NLP on well-established neuroscience, which would overcome one of the main academic objections.

Exploring the Cultural Moderators: outside the Western context.

Propositions 4, 5 require a cross-cultural research program that does not consider culture as a nuisance variable but as a primary conceptual entity.

Adaptability of Research Directions 2A: Cross-cultural Comparative Studies. The scholars must undertake quasi-experiments or longitudinal field research on the efficacy of the identical NLP intervention on groups with different cultures. An example of this is that a standardized NLP-based coaching session might be administered to the manager groups in a collectivistic, high-context nation (e.g., Kenya), an individualistic, low-context nation (e.g., United States), and a mixed context (e.g., South Africa). Pre-registered hypothesis would predict that the collectivist cohort would experience stronger gains in OEA, whereas the individualistic cohort would experience stronger gains in SEA, which would directly test Proposition 4.

This research focuses on exploring the notion of cultural fit from a qualitative perspective. It is urgently required to conduct a qualitative study with qualitative research to see the lived experience of NLP coaching within a non-Western background. Phenomenological research and face-to-face interviews with African managers may offer answers to critical questions: How are the NLP concepts translated and interpreted? Which methods are considered culturally compatible or incongruent? This study has the potential to reveal subtle cultural barriers/facilitators that can be neglected by quantitative designs to influence the culturally mindful adaptation of NLP frameworks.

The Study of Hierarchical and Interactive Effects.

Propositions 6 and 7 demand that the research designs should take into consideration the company structure and its interaction with culture.

Multi-Level, Longitudinal Field Research. The strictest test of the entire framework would be a longitudinal study that would follow the progress of the leaders at various organizational levels (e.g., junior, middle, senior) on receiving NLP coaching. Repeated measurements across all four WLEIS dimensions would enable the researcher to generate growth patterns and assess the test of whether such growth patterns vary significantly according to hierarchical level as postulated in Proposition 6. This design is able to document the dynamic process of EI development as time goes by.

Research Direction 3B: Situational Studies. In order to test the interactive Proposition 7, researchers need to utilize the configurational approach through the application of such methods as the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). This would include the analysis of several cases (e.g., coaching engagements) to determine what sets of conditions (e.g., high power distance AND middle manager AND use of OEA techniques) produce successful EI outcomes. It works well where the interactions, which are complex and non-linear as postulated in the framework, are concerned.

Developing the Nomological Network.

The framework is connected to the existing theories to give new directions related to other fields of inquiry, rather than NLP and EI.

Research Direction 4A: The Connection to Leadership and Performance Results. The gap between NLP techniques and non-intangible leadership results is the new point that needs to be bridged by research. Future research must examine whether contingent evolution of EI (e.g., the promotion of UOE among the executives) in turn has a beneficial effect on leadership performance in terms of subordinate scores, team performance scales, or the quality of strategic decisions.

Research Direction 4B: Studying Boundary Conditions and other Mechanisms. The framework must be falsified against rival accounts. As an illustration, can the consequences of the state management techniques on ROE be considered unique, or can they be functionally equal in comparison with existing practices of mindfulness? The other evidence-based interventions via the same EI outcome can be pitted against NLP techniques in research, which can be used to mark their distinct value and conditions of use.

Considerations and Innovations in Methodology.

To follow these directions, it should have methodological refinement. Direction Research Question 5A: Context-Sensitive Measures. Measures of perceived cultural congruence of coaching interventions should be developed and validated by the researchers. On the same note, more discrete measures of job-specific EI demand measures are required to test the propositions related to hierarchy.

Research Direction: 5B: Adopting Open Science Practices. Considering the disputable situation in NLP, the upcoming studies of this field should be marked with a high level of methodological rigor. To develop a credible cumulative body of knowledge, it is necessary that hypotheses and analysis plans are pre-registered, open data is used, and finally, that attempts at replication are undertaken.

CONCLUSION

The research problem that this paper aims at the Literature is a major theoretical gap in the literature concerning leadership development, as it reveals the disaggregated and context-free nature of the knowledge about the effectiveness of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) in terms of the development of emotional intelligence in leaders. We react by proposing the Cultural-Hierarchical NLP-EI Framework, a multi-level theoretical approach that goes beyond the efficacy issue simplism towards a contingent, nuanced perception of the development processes.

The main input of the framework is that it has a combined form. First, it describes certain, falsifiable pathways between groupings of NLP methods, cognitive repatterning, state management, and perspective-taking, one to each of the particular aspects of emotional intelligence which these theorized methods are postulated to directly affect the most. This exposes the mechanistic specifications that have hitherto lacked in the literature.

Second, and more importantly, the framework is that such pathways are not universalistic in nature but are impetuously controlled by the cultural background of a leader and the organizational structure. The framework questions the assumptions of universality, which have limited research and practice in understanding culture and hierarchy.

The results of this model are far-reaching. Ideally, it establishes a connection between the remote field of NLP and the rest of psychological and leadership theories, providing a literature base upon which subsequent research can be founded. In practice, it can provide human resource experts and coaches with a blueprint for creating culturally responsive and strategically oriented leadership development interventions that are principled. Above all, it creates a strong research agenda that challenges scholars to empirically verify and improve its propositions by cross-cultural comparisons, multilevel longitudinal research, and by exploring the neurological counterparts of the hypothesized mechanisms.

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