WHAT IS WRONG WITH LEADER EMERGENCE?

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WHAT IS WRONG WITH LEADER EMERGENCE?

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Editorial: What Is Wrong With Leader Emergence?

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Editorial on the Research Topic

What Is Wrong With Leader Emergence?

"Who tends to become leaders or assume leadership roles?" and "Are leaders born or made?"—these questions drove research interest on leader emergence (LE) that began at a time of Great Man theory when the assumption was that certain individuals were pre-destined to lead. These questions led to trait, behavioral, contingency, social-cognitive, relational and management research on LE over the last century. Interest in LE continues today, driven by organizational needs for managerial selection and real-world concerns for social change. Concerned with the rise of authoritarian leaders during WWII, Northway (1946) asked: "how do leaders emerge and more especially, how do the demagogues and charlatans, of whom we are now world weary, arise?" (p. 190). Half a century later, Hogan et al. (1994) used LE research findings to explain "Why are there so many flawed leaders?" Today, researchers continue to explain why dominant, authoritarian leaders seem to attract follower support in times of uncertainty despite the presence of other respectable, "prestige" candidates (e.g., Kakkar and Sivanathan, 2017; see also, Harms et al., 2018). Samdanis and Özbilgin (2020) remind us that even *atypical* leaders are naively trusted to nominate successors who would promote workforce diversity and workplace democracy.

"What's wrong with LE?" was our tongue-in-cheek recognition that the past century's social scientific journey focused on LE in social settings did in fact produce important insights that challenged the originating questions and their assumptions. Besides the 1980s realization that leader emergence and leader effectiveness are two different criteria of leadership with different levels of measurement (cf. Lord et al., 1986), social psychological LE research (e.g., Hollander, 1961) also contributed to today's basic understanding that "leadership is not only about the leader", that leadership concerns collective, shared and relational processes that are not solely dependent on individual leader emergence or actions. Hanna et al. (2021) recently called for more multilevel study of leadership emergence in organizations to incorporate individual LE processes with the unit-level dynamics and emergent states.

Researchers like Acton et al. (2019) have raised concerns with the lack of conceptual and operational clarity and the apparent incoherence of LE research, largely dominated by the quantitative correlational and experimental research traditions of scientific psychology. While some studies operationalize LE via objective indicators like leadership role occupancy, others use proxies like nomination by others or ratings of "leaderlike-ness". Studies also vary in the extent of formality-informality of leadership roles.

Concerned with the context-free/blind nature of positivist psychological research, we wondered: What is the range of research interests on LE today? We were particularly interested in studies examining leadership emergence in real world social settings. We are thus delighted to curate nine papers for this Research Topic with a mix of conceptual and empirical papers (including quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods studies). In this Research Topic, Popper provides

evolutionary, psychodynamic and social psychological arguments for why leader emergence occurs naturally.

Taking a more agentic approach to LE (cf. Aycan and Shelia, 2019), Kennedy et al. show how motivations to lead mediate the relationship between the bright and dark personality traits and leadership intention. Auvinen et al. show the impact of leaders' motivation to lead on follower well being. Karakulak et al. explore gender differences in opt-out and push-out processes in LE from the lenses of emotions (i.e., worries about leading).

Focusing on processes underlying LE, Chang et al. show how values-based leadership is unlikely to emerge if left to natural processes or chance; they suggest mechanisms and boundary conditions for values-based leadership to emerge. Samdanis and Lee show how the processes of achievement and ascription can help us appreciate creative leader emergence in the social network context of "Art Worlds". Bracht et al. focus on social learning processes involved in individual leader development, which is one context in which LE occurs. Qualitative research by Myeza and April explains how the motivation NOT to lead among Black professionals in post-Apartheid South Africa is shaped by specific historical, societal, generational, inter-racial group

contexts. Finally, Ozcan reminds us that leadership is socially-constructed and is not only about the leader's traits and qualities; that cultural meanings/mental models of leadership shape the kind of leader-centered or collective leadership that emerges in social organizations.

Together, these papers echo many of the fundamental lessons learned from academic and practical interest in "why LE matters and what is wrong with it". They remind us of the limitations of our conceptualizations, theoretical lenses, methodological approaches and de-contextualized treatment of issues in real world contexts. This Research Topic also inspires us to investigate the pathways to emergence of fine leaders and avoidance of flawed ones.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

KC contributed to the writing of the editorial. ZA, MO, and KC contributed equally to the idea generation and conceptualization of the editorial. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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The Bottleneck Metaphor of Leadership Culture: How Shared Understandings About Leadership Develop in Groups and Impede Diversity and Effectiveness of Leaders

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There are two big problems related to leadership today: unequal representation and high failure rates among leaders. This conceptual paper argues that commonly shared values, assumptions, and beliefs about leadership, i.e., universal leadership culture, are the common cause of both problems. After the concepts and levels related to leadership culture were explained, we introduce a multilevel, multi-actor process model named the bottleneck metaphor of leadership culture. This metaphor describes how leadership cultures are co-constructed by multiple actors based on their involvement in leader selection and reproduce themselves in groups over time based on emergent leaders' characteristics. Next, a diagnostic tool called "the leadership mirror" is proposed for organizations that want to assess their leadership culture's current state as a starting point for further interventions. Specific suggestions are made for various actors, ranging from individuals to organizations, for their possible roles in preventing undesired leadership cultures.

Keywords: leadership emergence, organizational culture and climate, cultural change, leadership metaphors, bottleneck effects, diversity in leadership, leadership crisis

INTRODUCTION

"One of the key problems today is that politics is such a disgrace, good people don't go into government. #WhyImGettingIntoGovernment" Donald Trump, 45th President of the USA.

"People want an authority to tell them how to value things, but they choose this authority not based on facts or results. They choose it because it feels authoritative and familiar." Michael Burry, the first investor to recognize and profit from the American Mortgage Crisis in 2008.

Leadership is a significant factor in the success of groups of people in many levels, from small teams to companies, countries, and international organizations (Hogan et al., 2018). Today, there are two perpetuating problems of leadership. The first one is that toxic, abusive, and destructive leaders keep getting selected and followed despite the harm they cause (Lipman-Blumen, 2005, 2006; Padilla et al., 2007). Besides rarely leading their groups to their objectives in a sustainable manner, such leaders cause distress and negative consequences for many of their followers (Kiliç and Günsel, 2019). Although there are some successful leaders, leadership failures abound;

research shows that leadership failure rates are much higher than ideal (Aasland et al., 2010; Hogan et al., 2010). The second issue is the inequality in representation in leadership positions (Bebbington and Özbilgin, 2013). Despite societal shifts in recent years, leadership is still exclusive and mostly reserved for a few elites like rich and privileged white men (Eagly and Chin, 2010; Randsley de Moura et al., 2018).

The common point of these two issues is persistence. Their existence continues despite all the efforts and resources spent to prevent them, such as leadership development programs in organizations and equality measures taken by the governments (Bullough and de Luque, 2015; Hogan et al., 2018). Why do these issues persist despite all efforts to eradicate them? What do individuals and organizations do to eliminate them and alleviate the inequality and ineffectiveness associated with leadership?

This conceptual paper provides answers to these questions. It uses literature from various fields and disciplines, such as industrial and organizational psychology, business and management, political science, sociology, and economics. The paper's main argument is a gestalt of shared values, assumptions, and beliefs about leaders and leadership endorsed by many humans. In return, this universal leadership culture causes and maintains these two seemingly unrelated problems.

People do not make leadership-related decisions in social isolation (Lord et al., 2020). Therefore, to fully understand these decisions and their roles in leadership-related problems, we need to start thinking about the leadership cultures surrounding such judgments (Day et al., 2014). Furthermore, the current issues of unequal representation and high leadership failures oblige us to identify the mechanisms that produce leadership cultures (Hogan et al., 2018). This objective requires a broad perspective to consider the complex, multi-actor nature of the co-construction of leadership cultures over time (Castillo and Trinh, 2018) and on different levels ranging from team to universal (Lord et al., 2020) based on the characteristics and decisions of the multiple actors involved in recruitment processes (April et al., 2010).

Studies investigating the existing leadership-related assumptions and beliefs are still mostly limited to the individual level and focused on how these affect individuals' leadership-related decisions (Lord et al., 2020). In addition to that, most of these studies ask how people judge others', but not their own, leadership prospects based on the perceived fit to leadership-related values, assumptions, and beliefs (Epitropaki et al., 2017).

However, individuals' assessments of self-compatibleness to leadership roles are equally important as their judgments about others regarding leader emergence (Hoyt and Murphy, 2016; Epitropaki, 2018; Aycan and Shelia, 2019). Hence, this paper aimed to discuss the characteristics of underlying leadership cultures that affect self- and other-directed leadership judgments that lead to leader emergence in groups. Furthermore, research on how assumptions and beliefs take shape and form on the individual or shared level is still nascent (Day et al., 2014; Wellman, 2017; Acton et al., 2019). The current paper aimed to provide theoretical answers to how leadership cultures take shape and change over time. It also discusses how organizational leadership cultures can be improved based on different actors'

decisions and behaviors that lead to leadership emergence (April et al., 2010).

The current paper first defined leadership culture and explained it on several levels: individual to universal (or global). Then, the possible ways that leadership cultures might influence leadership-related decisions and outcomes are reviewed. Next, a multi-actor, multilevel process model, the "bottleneck metaphor of leadership culture," is proposed. It describes how leadership cultures are co-constructed and reproduced over time, perpetuating the two previously mentioned problems. Afterward, a diagnostic approach, "the leadership mirror," is described for organizations that want to assess their leadership culture's current state as a starting point for possible interventions. The section before the closing section includes several suggestions for various actors (i.e., existing leaders, followers/possible future leaders, and organizations) about developing better leadership cultures. The paper concludes with a discussion of potential implications of the new metaphor for future research directions.

THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP CULTURE

Leadership culture is defined as the shared values, assumptions, and beliefs about leaders and leadership that help members of an organization decide and behave accordingly in leadership-related matters (Day et al., 2014). In other words, it is a shared understanding of ideal and typical leaders. These include the spoken and unspoken norms that determine how leaders should behave and who are expected and allowed to be the group's leaders.

The concept has its theoretical roots in the theory of leader categorization (Lord et al., 1984). This well-known theory asserts that individuals hold assumptions and beliefs, namely, implicit leadership theories (ILTs), about leaders and leadership (Day et al., 2014; Lord et al., 2020). Leadership culture forms when many organization members share similar assumptions and beliefs about leaders and leadership (Day et al., 2014).

Although its original conceptualization refers to the shared understandings of leadership on the organizational level (Day et al., 2014), the concept applies to groups at any level in theory. For example, within the scope of a well-recognized research project called *GLOBE Study of Leadership* (House et al., 2004), researchers modified the concept of ILTs to address leadership values share*d at the national level. T*he resulting construct was called "culturally endorsed implicit leadership theories" (CLTs) and was used to measure and compare different countries' leadership cultures.

However, CLTs based on the individual-level construct of ILTs might not fully capture the whole of leadership culture. In addition to shared values about leadership included in the GLOBE Study, leadership culture also encompasses assumptions and beliefs about who should be the leaders and how leaders are expected to behave (Day et al., 2014). However, these are not included in CLTs (Hanges and Dickson, 2004; Javidan et al., 2010). Still, the GLOBE Study is critical because its findings indicate that distinct leadership cultures may exist on the national level while uncovering six dimensions of leadership-related

values that are common cross-culturally, which implies some degree of universality in the human understanding of leadership (Hanges and Dickson, 2004; Day et al., 2014).

Universally shared understandings about leadership may include some of the deepest, almost instinctual presuppositions about leadership. These must be the hardest to challenge and change. Possible examples may comprise commonly observed associations of leadership with dominance (Maner, 2017), power difference (Vanderslice, 1988; Wolff and Keith, 2019), hierarchy (O'Toole et al., 2002), gender (Schein et al., 1996), charisma (Menges et al., 2015; McKee et al., 2017), and perks and privileges like fat paychecks and high levels of social prestige (Regan, 2016). Although there are variations, such pairings with leadership are observed in almost every culture (Den Hartog et al., 1999). In terms of leadership understanding, these consistencies among different nations and societies show that humans might be sharing a universal (or global) leadership culture.

On the more macro levels, universal and national leadership cultures can encourage specific categories of individuals (Epitropaki, 2018) to aspire for leadership positions more than others (Davies et al., 2017; Badura et al., 2020). They can also intimidate certain groups of candidates. Women and introverts, people with disabilities, and those with disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds that do not match the collective expectations for leaders and leadership might be more worried about leading (Bebbington and Özbilgin, 2013; Epitropaki, 2018; Aycan and Shelia, 2019). Besides influencing self-assessments, shared understandings about leadership can also affect opinions regarding the suitability of different categories of candidates in leadership roles and cause stereotypes to occur (Lord et al., 2020). Due to the anticipation of these stereotypes, various groups of people, such as males and females, might feel that they fit and perform differently under different leadership cultures than each other (Eagly et al., 1992, 1995).

Similarly, in more micro scales, judgments about the same targets' (self and others) appropriateness for the different leadership positions and roles might change due to the different leadership cultures perceived to be surrounding the seat in question (Aycan and Shelia, 2019). Candidates who are unwilling to accept offers of particular leadership positions might respond differently to an offer of another rank in the organization or similar positions in other companies (Epitropaki et al., 2017; Zaccaro et al., 2018). Therefore, what matters for each candidate might be the degree of the perceived fit between their values, assumptions, and beliefs and the perceived leadership culture of the particular leadership position (Day et al., 2014). Candidates might reject offers based on the long working hours and the anticipated possibility of work–life imbalance (Aycan and Shelia, 2019) because of the expectations mandated by the surrounding leadership cultures to leaders. Like any other beliefs and assumptions, these beliefs should also be considered as included in the perceived leadership culture of the position in question (Day et al., 2014).

The same logic for micro levels also applies to differing suitability judgments for different categories of people other than the self in terms of the perceived fit between them and

various leadership positions based on leadership cultures (Ayman and Korabik, 2010; Badura et al., 2020; Lord et al., 2020). For example, people tend to associate certain leadership positions more with male and female genders (Ayman and Korabik, 2010). A wide variety of personal and position-related factors can affect these fitness assessments, like the demographic and personality characteristics of targets and the role expectations and working conditions/hours for the leadership position (Ayman and Korabik, 2010; Badura et al., 2020; Lord et al., 2020). Consequently, people from different categories might be judged as more or less suitable for leadership roles surrounded by different leadership cultures (Ayman and Korabik, 2010).

Leadership culture is different from the traditional approaches to study cultural change, such as Schein's classic book on the role of leaders in the production of organizational culture (Schein, 2004) or Schneider's attraction–selection–attrition (ASA) model (Schneider, 1987) that explains the role of members' personalities in the organizational culture change. It is relatively freer from some of the criticisms directed toward Schein's and Schneider's works that criticize organizational culture as a too complex and comprehensive construct to be only explained by leaders' influences or the personalities of members (Hofstede, 1986; Edwards et al., 2006).

Instead of dealing with a broad concept of organizational culture with more comprehensive but more challenging to define boundaries, the idea of leadership culture is exclusively about how leadership is defined and understood and the what are the expectations for leaders in a group (Day et al., 2014). This way, it deals with a much less complicated and more easily definable construct than a concept like the organizational culture that includes much larger numbers of factors than leadership culture (Day et al., 2014).

Although it is more straightforward than the broader concept of culture, measuring leadership culture is still not an easy task (Day et al., 2014). When leadership culture is measured directly with self-report questionaries, organizational members may deliberately or unintentionally provide inaccurate answers. This problem occurs possibly due to the distinctions between espoused and in-use assumptions and beliefs (Argyris, 1976a, cited in Argyris, 1976b; Schein, 2004, cited in Schein, 2004) that shape the group's leadership culture. Espoused leadership theories represent the group's ideas about leadership, a state where group members collectively wish to be at (or pretend to wish) in leadership (Schein, 2004).

In contrast, in-use theories are the ones that are currently operating and affecting the leadership outcomes of the group (Schein, 2004). Ideally, these two are aligned, but measuring leadership culture may be especially difficult when they are not. Like people, organizations also want to appear socially desirable (Brown et al., 2006). Thus, value-laden declarations by organizations, such as value charts and vision and mission statements, might not always reflect the truths about their real leadership culture. Sometimes, organizational members might not even be aware that what they think they have does not match the leadership culture they have (Brown et al., 2006; Day et al., 2014).

LEADERSHIP CLIMATE

Leadership culture is defined and used together with a parallel construct: the leadership climate, which refers to how a given group of people perceive and experience their group's leadership culture (Day et al., 2014). It is an interface in which members use their assumptions and beliefs about leadership to perceive and interact with the collective's leadership culture that developed over time. In other words, the leadership climate is produced and experienced within each cross-section of time. In contrast, leadership culture is the longitudinally accumulated product of many interactions in past leadership climates (Day et al., 2014).

There is a recursive relationship between leadership culture and climate. Leadership culture, coupled with members' leadership-related assumptions and beliefs that they bring into the picture, serves as the underlying framework for the existing leadership climate perceptions (Day et al., 2014). In return, depending on the outcomes they produce, the current leadership climate contributes to the future developments and changes in the group's leadership culture through the related decisions and members' actions over time (Day et al., 2014).

As a construct based on perception, leadership climate is much more dependent on the current leaders' characteristics and the followers who interact with them (Day et al., 2014; Swart-Opperman and April, 2018). Thus, a leader who does not comply with the group's leadership culture can cause a group to experience an entirely different leadership climate than expected from its leadership culture. Members can also experience a misaligned leadership climate due to outside factors such as a societal-level crisis or insider myths produced *via* gossiping and inaccurate storytelling about leaders (Popper, 2012; Popper and Castelnovo, 2018; Wantaate, 2019).

On the other hand, leadership culture is produced by past leaders and followers who served in the organization over time; thus, it is much more rooted and resistant to change. It has a significant role in how the existing group members experience the leadership climate. However, the future leadership culture change can mostly come from the leadership-related decisions and actions taken in the current leadership climate (Day et al., 2014). Thus, the leadership climate is like the engine producing the change in the group's leadership culture in the long run. Any attempt to change the leadership culture should start by modifying the leadership climate in the desired direction. In other words, misalignments between leadership climates and cultures could be intentionally introduced to the systems to create a change in leadership cultures (Day et al., 2014).

The author of the current paper argues that any human group can have a distinct leadership culture and climate regardless of its size and function. Although leadership cultures at higher levels influence the lower levels, indigenous leader cultures and climates of the smaller subunits under the larger shared structures (i.e., organizational or national leadership cultures and climates) can still exist. For example, different business sectors operating in the same economy can have different leadership cultures. Furthermore, organizations from the same business sector located in different countries can share similar understandings about leadership due to the shared nature of the work they do.

Similarly, different departments and branches of organizations can have distinct leadership cultures and climates diverging from the organizational-level leadership culture due to the particular leaders in those sections. Lastly, the two concepts apply to the team level since different teams under the same corporate umbrella can have different leadership types and develop various leadership understandings (Scott et al., 2018).

Figure 1 presents the different levels of leadership cultures and climates proposed in the current paper. Theoretically, leadership cultures and climates that exist at higher levels influence the leadership cultures and climates of the lower levels that they incorporate. Likewise, changes in the leadership cultures and climates at each level can trigger changes in their superordinate levels.

As the bottom line, the leadership culture and climate determine who will be the leaders or followers and what kind of leadership types a group endorses and gets (Tom, 1971; Schneider, 1987; Schein, 2004; Day et al., 2014). Thus, these two concepts might have theoretical links with critical group outcomes, such as leadership effectiveness, representation equality, and overall group performance. If human groups were rational organisms, group learning mechanisms due to negative or positive outcomes in terms of the group's benefits (Rescorla and Solomon, 1967) would improve any group's leadership culture over time. Unfortunately, the social and cognitive realities of humankind are not that simplistic. People themselves, who are the basic units of these group formations, are not entirely rational beings in their decisions and behaviors (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974).

POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS OF EXISTING LEADERSHIP CULTURES

There is no research that we know of which compiles and lists all the widely shared assumptions and beliefs about leadership. However, by looking at symptoms and figuring out what types of people are more likely to become leaders in the current conditions, it is possible to have a rough picture.

Indeed, some groups of people are represented more often in leadership roles than others (Eagly and Chin, 2010; Bebbington and Özbilgin, 2013). Individuals who are male, heterosexual, tall, attractive, and with privileged socioeconomic and racial backgrounds become leaders more often than other people (Ilies et al., 2004; Eagly and Chin, 2010; Bebbington and Özbilgin, 2013). Specific personality characteristics such as dominance and assertiveness increase individuals' chances to become leaders (Judge et al., 2009; Ensari et al., 2011). Other characteristics such as agreeableness and introversion decrease the odds (Judge et al., 2002; Dilchert, 2007; Spark et al., 2018).

Interestingly, having the so-called dark personality traits (narcissism, psychopathy, and manipulativeness) also increases the likelihood of becoming a leader (Babiak et al., 2010; Wisse and Sleebos, 2016). Narcissistic and psychopathic personality traits are about four times more prevalent among leaders than the general population (Babiak et al., 2010; Smith and Lilienfeld, 2013; Wisse and Sleebos, 2016; Landay et al., 2019). These

FIGURE 1 | The different levels of leadership cultures and climates.

findings indicate that some people are welcomed for leadership roles more than others.

Besides the unequal representation, other problems can also be traced back to today's universal leadership culture. It might also be the reason behind the high prevalence of unethical and exploitative leader behaviors and the alarming rates of failure among leaders (Aasland et al., 2010; Hogan et al., 2010). These performance-related issues might be due to the gap between characteristics that predict an effective leadership and the features that help to emerge as leaders (Hogan et al., 2018). Universal leadership culture seems to favor the latter more.

Research on leaders' effectiveness suggests that good leaders should be competent and good at communication and team

building (Luthans, 1988; Dal Bó et al., 2017; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2019). They should be open to feedback and criticisms (Collins, 2001; Cain, 2012; Tost et al., 2013). Having integrity is a must for effective leadership (Hooijberg et al., 2010). Being too dominant or assertive is negatively related to leader effectiveness (Tost et al., 2013). Instead, researchers suggest a healthy mix of humility and motivation for leaders (Collins, 2001; Owens et al., 2015). They must listen to what others think and need and be willing to delegate when needed (Wang et al., 2014).

On the other hand, the literature on leader emergence depicts a very different picture (Hogan et al., 2010, 2018). Political ability and manipulativeness work better for success in emerging as a leader (Luthans, 1988). Compared to the effectiveness requirements, what is essential here is not necessarily being but appearing confident, calm, and motivated (Hogan and Kaiser, 2005). Some call this mixture of perceived characteristics required for political and business leaders to emerge as the fearless presence (Babiak et al., 2010) or the fearless dominance (Lilienfeld et al., 2012).

Having facial features perceived as dominance signaling and being tall and masculine are pros for emergence (Judge and Cable, 2004; Anderson and Kilduff, 2009; Antonakis and Dalgas, 2009; Ensari et al., 2011). Instead of the healthy blend of humility and motivation, people who are good at emerging have a mixture of charisma and motivation that helps them to be bold at claiming and getting into leadership positions (Collins, 2001). More puzzlingly, the candidates who are perceived to be extroverted, assertive, and dominant and the arrogant, selfish, and egoistic individuals appear as more leader-like in the eyes of other people (Boudreau et al., 2001; Spark, 2020).

To sum up, today's leaders, in many aspects, constitute a homogenous group to some extent. Many leaders share similar characteristics like narcissism, masculinity, and assertiveness (Epitropaki, 2018). They are also usually from similar and mostly specific socioeconomic status (SES) levels, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations (Bebbington and Özbilgin, 2013). Furthermore, a considerable portion of today's leaders fails in sustainably delivering positive results for the organizations they lead (Aasland et al., 2010; Hogan et al., 2010). Polls indicate that political and organizational leaders are among the least trusted professions by the public in almost every society for the last two decades, and the trust rates continue to decrease (Ipsos, 2019; Reinhart, 2020). At the same time, political discourses that emphasize populism and tribalism are dangerously on the rise and threaten the democracy in many countries of the world (Moffitt, 2016; Roth, 2017; Fukuyama, 2018).

All these problems about leadership that accentuate rather than be on the mend indicate that there might be a deep-rooted common cause that produces and maintains the undesirable outcomes. What is worse is that things are going even worse as time passes. Universal leadership culture, in other words the assumptions and beliefs about leaders and leadership shared by humanity, can be the underlying reason. These associations of being and looking leader-like might be deeply ingrained in the universal leadership culture. Even 5-year-old children's decisions reflected some of these when asked to select between the pictures of actual candidates running in the elections (Antonakis and

Dalgas, 2009). They tend to choose dominant-looking candidates to be the captains of their imaginary boats.

It is not the case that only leadership scientists know the requirements of effective leadership. Laypeople also seem to be aware of these characteristics; when the qualities of ideal leaders are asked for, the answers resemble the findings of the research on effective leadership (Kouzes and Posner, 2010). However, candidates who make ineffective and unethical leaders are repeatedly chosen (Hogan and Kaiser, 2005; Lipman-Blumen, 2005, 2006; Padilla et al., 2007; Aasland et al., 2010; Hogan et al., 2010, 2018). This paradoxical situation again signals an underlying, probably unconscious, and deeply internalized factor that prevents us from making better decisions in leadership-related matters (Brunell et al., 2008).

The universal leadership culture might be the factor that causes people to select familiar and authoritative over factual and beneficial without realizing their roles in creating adverse leadership outcomes (Bligh and Kohles, 2012; Peus et al., 2012). Today, researchers know that power can corrupt (Giurge et al., in press), even at the neurological level (Hogeveen et al., 2014). However, it might be corrupting because of the deeply rooted assumptions and beliefs about leadership. If humans want better leaders than the current ones, the existing leadership cultures on almost all levels that are more welcoming to the characteristics related to success in emergence than effectiveness should be modified or replaced with better alternatives.

Exceptions of this need for leadership culture change only include a couple of particular leadership cultures. Some leadership cultures might need to be preserved due to their specific contexts that render authoritative and disciplined leadership necessary (Popper, 2012). For example, teams operating in the military, oil platforms, and other similar field settings that require quick decisions and executions might be better off with the existing leadership cultures.

BOTTLENECK METAPHOR OF LEADERSHIP CULTURE

Readers might ask what are the origins of the leadership cultures that we have today and need to change so badly? Why did they develop into the way they are today? The current paper focuses more on how leadership cultures can be improved to provide more equality and effectiveness in leadership cadres. Before moving to the intended and directed changes, we would like to offer some possible answers to these questions.

There are three explanations that we can think of as to why today's universal leadership culture is more aligned with qualities for leadership emergence than leadership effectiveness. The first comes from the evolutionary perspective on leadership. According to this view, today's leadership emergence-related qualities were functional for survival in human groups' past environments (van Vugt et al., 2008). Thus, these were naturally selected and have evolved to become the qualities that people unconsciously search for when they judge potential leaders (White, 2011).

The second explanation, which complements the first, comes from the psychological perspective on leadership-related choices. According to the idea, followers took comfort in leaders by granting them the authority to deal with the world's uncertainties and unknowns on their behalf (Hogg and Adelman, 2013). People need leaders who appear confident, sure, and authoritative in uncertain times (Post, 1986). They hope that these strong, sometimes tyrannical leaders are more cunning and less merciful in dealing with outsiders and hostile groups than their relations with in-group members (Haller and Hogg, 2014). Hence, whenever the uncertainties increase, such as during crises and war times, public support rates for these leaders increase (Randsley de Moura et al., 2018).

The evolutionary explanation is problematic due to three reasons. Some people might defend existing leadership cultures and claim that we should preserve those. Because they are natural selection products, they must be optimal (Salter, 1995; White, 2011). Thus, the evolutionary explanation can quickly lead to the formation of naturalistic fallacies (Frankena, 1939), which many right-wing ideologues cling to Salter (1995), claiming that what is natural in terms of authority and leadership is equal to what is right (White, 2011). Naturally, this is not the fault of the evolutionary hypothesis *per se*, but its threat is real.

Secondly, not all products of evolutionary processes are functional; there can be mismatches between today's requirements and what was useful in the past (van Vugt et al., 2008). For example, in past environments, having a body that can hold extra reserves in the form of body fat would be advantageous in terms of survival (Power, 2012). However, in today's changed conditions, it might lead to obesity. Similarly, the authoritative, dominant, and masculine leaders could be what human groups needed in the past. However, they may have become obsolete in modern conditions (van Vugt et al., 2008). Alternatively, some evidence shows that instead of evolution, these might be the products of modernity and produced by cultural evolution after the advent of agriculture and large-scale societies (Garfield et al., 2020). In one way or another, today's business and work environments are too fast-paced, uncertain, and complicated for groups to trust and depend on a few persons' abilities and goodwill (Rodriguez and Rodriguez, 2015; Bawany, 2016).

Thirdly, theoretical arguments about the existence of group selection as a natural selection mechanism are not concluded yet (Jeler, 2015). Evolutionary mechanisms are supposed to work through individuals' survival and reproductive successes, not groups (Wade, 1978). As previously discussed, leadership culture is a group dynamic; thus, validation attempts of the existing leadership cultures based on the evolutionary explanations should be approached cautiously. If group selection exists, then it becomes evident that human social evolution is the most appropriate phenomenon for this mechanism to operate (Bowles, 2006). However, the claim of group selection leading to strong authoritarian leaders requires making weak assumptions and historical arguments about past environments of evolutionary adaptiveness (van Vugt et al., 2008).

The psychological explanation must also be approached with caution. It explains people's preferences for certain types of leaders in war and conflict situations. However, it does not explain why authoritative leaders still exist even during more prosperous and peaceful times. Besides, why these leaders are still common in more micro levels like team and organization levels, where there is no large-scale violence or wars, remains unanswered. Therefore, this explanation might be useful in explaining why certain types of leaders are preferred more at certain times. However, it does not validate the current leadership culture's assumptions and nullify the apparent need to change these.

The third explanation comes from an ecological perspective. According to this perspective (Powers and Lehmann, 2014), the agricultural revolution that happened around 10–13,000 years ago introduced authoritative and dominant leaders to human societies for the first time. Before the private ownership concept, there was no mechanism to coerce individuals to obey authority except physical force. People would simply leave the area to hunt and gather resources in other areas instead of tolerating dominance efforts plaguing a place (Garfield et al., 2020). However, the agricultural revolution introduced the concept of controlled access to resources, thus rendering domination to be possible. After thousands of years of coercion, humans might have developed familiarity with and fondness for hierarchical, authoritative, dominant, and masculine leaders (O'Toole et al., 2002).

Whatever the correct answer as to why people prefer certain kinds of leaders, the author of the current paper leans toward the idea that humans take their leader selection decisions based on familiarity. Even the artificial intelligence (AI)-based recruitment tool developed by Amazon Company had to be shelved after it started to favor typical candidates for technical jobs (Amazon ditched AI recruitment tool, 2018). The algorithm was designed in such a way that it could learn characteristic features of professions on its own using data available on the internet.

Unexpectedly, learning about job occupants' typical features led the program to make recruitment choices based on demographics; thus, it became discriminatory. The next section will discuss how leadership cultures can be intentionally changed toward more desired directions to obtain leadership cultures conducive to equality and effectiveness. It starts with a discussion on alternative strategies in terms of efficiency and feasibility.

Changing the Leadership Culture

How can something as complex and deeply rooted as universal leadership culture with a perpetuating and persistent nature be changed? As mentioned in previous sections, anyone who wants to improve the leadership culture should change the leadership climate to create a misalignment between these two structures. The critical question here is, which is the best level to introduce misalignments to trigger a feasible, efficient, and sustainable change in leadership cultures at many levels most easily? Simultaneously targeting leadership cultures at all levels would, of course, be ideal. However, this strategy would not be feasible due to the massive amounts of resources required. We believe that the best option to start a full-scale change in the leadership culture at different levels is to target the organization's leadership climate and leadership culture.

Targeting only the universal-level leadership culture would not be realistic due to the massive scale of the required interventions. On the other hand, targeting national-level leadership cultures would require intervening in countries' politics. Thus, this strategy might face too much resistance from the existing political leaders like dictators, who are unwilling to give up their vast amount of power (Buchanan and Badham, 2020). Such leaders do not care about getting positive results for the people; all they care about is preserving their grasp on authority for as long as possible (Larcom et al., 2014).

For this purpose, some leaders even tend to engage in negative selection. They deliberately promote incompetent individuals to leadership positions and eliminate competent candidates to prevent contenders to their rule (Egorov and Sonin, 2011). Not all political leaders are dictators, of course, but as readers themselves may have noticed; the current political panoramas are not very promising. Most governments of today's world have started to look like "kakistocracies" (Abadjian, 2010; Okafor et al., 2014; Adams and Crosby, 2017). It is a term used for government systems controlled and ruled by the worst and least deserving, the most incompetent, and the least ethical members of society (Amorado, 2012).

On the other hand, organizational leaders are more open to changes if they know that the changes will bring in profits in the short term and sustainability in the long term (Kanter, 2003). Conveniently, change and innovation are frequently and seriously discussed topics in the business world (Dunphy et al., 2003; Arifin, 2020). Most humans living in modern societies work in various organizations. Among other mechanisms, people are mostly socialized to their societies' culture by their family members at a young age (Schein, 2004). If the organizational leadership cultures start to change, employees might socialize their children and young relatives to the new understandings of leadership that they are exposed to at work. Thus, some of the changes in the next-generation's leadership cultures on the national or even the universal level can be realized based on modifications made at today's organizational-level leadership cultures.

Leadership Culture as Bottleneck

How the leadership cultures of organizations can be changed is an important question. We propose that, unless measures are taken against it, an organization's existing leadership culture at a given time point can act as a bottleneck. Getting rid of this bottleneck might be challenging. This challenge is because of its self-feedbacking nature, which possibly perpetuates the same assumptions that limit who can desire leadership positions and become the organization's leaders.

As the first principle of the bottleneck argument, everyone, regardless of whether they are insiders or outsiders to the group, should be considered as a potential candidate for the group's leadership positions in theory. Thus, like other selection processes in organizations (Truxillo et al., 2017), the candidate pool's initial diversity levels for leadership positions in terms of various individual difference variables must be very high. In principle, everyone, both the in-group and out-group members,

can be considered as potential leaders for the group regardless of their characteristics.

However, individuals self-select themselves and become (or not become) applicants for each leadership position (Epitropaki, 2018). These choices are made based on the fitness that candidates anticipate between themselves and the leadership culture of the position that they perceive (Day et al., 2014; Lord et al., 2020). They reach some conclusions about the underlying leadership cultures by observing the leadership climates regarding these positions (Day et al., 2014). As discussed in previous sections, the most apparent leadership culture indicators are the existing leaders occupying the same or similar ranks and positions.

Candidates observe the existing leaders and, whether consciously or not, calculate an approximation of the position's leadership culture. Calculations are likely to be made based on perceived traits of the past candidates who were welcomed to the organization's leadership positions (Cantor and Mischel, 1977). The ones who feel that their characteristics are compatible should be the people who apply for the role. In contrast, others might withdraw if they think they are incompatible with the surrounding leadership culture (Day et al., 2014). Thus, possible effects on the candidates' self-nominations to leadership positions constitute why the leadership culture might act as a bottleneck that reduces the diversity in leadership positions. This part is the first stage of the bottleneck of leadership culture. In this phase, the existing organizational leadership culture acts as a bottleneck on the candidate's self-selection to compete for leadership positions.

In addition to affecting candidates' decisions to become applicants, leadership culture can also influence the authorities' decisions about which applicants to select and promote the group's available leadership positions. Like candidates, leaders, or judges who choose them, also have opinions about the group's leadership culture based on their observations on the current leaders' typical characteristics in these positions. Thus, the group's leadership culture acts as a bottleneck, affecting the group's leadership emergence processes again. This part is called the second stage of the bottleneck of leadership culture. In return, applicants appointed as the group's new leaders might, directly and indirectly, affect the leadership culture perceived by the candidates and judges in future selection scenarios. These long-term effects constitute the third stage of the bottleneck of leadership culture. In this phase, it reproduces itself through the leaders it allows to emerge and gets even tighter and more exclusive compared to its initial permeability.

Reproduction happens because the selected applicants become the new authorities who steer the group as expected from group leaders. They can now give directions, provide values, and modify the group's culture thanks to the new authority given to them. It is also possible that they would be heavily involved in selecting the group's future leaders; thus, there is always the risk of homophilic reproduction (McPherson et al., 2001). The term refers to some leaders' problematic tendencies of exclusively attracting and selecting or promoting candidates who are very similar to themselves in various individual difference variables (Samdanis and Özbilgin, 2020).

Even if they do nothing directly, by just being themselves, the existing leaders may affect the perceptions of whom and how the typical leaders of the group should be. Thus, they influence the perceived leadership climate and are considered the embodiments of the group's leadership culture. Consequently, leadership culture becomes restrictive to diversity in leadership positions not once but twice, affecting candidates' decisions to apply and leaders' decisions regarding selection or promotion. These restricting effects occur each time a leader selection procedure takes place. Over time, they accumulate and change the group's leadership culture used in future leader emergence processes; thus, it gradually gets less inclusive.

We decided to use the bottleneck metaphor to refer to how leadership culture can restrict who become leaders in a collective. The radius of its passing changes each time based on the characteristics of the individuals who could emerge as leaders. Inspiration for the metaphor came from the bottleneck and the founder effects (Templeton, 1980; Lande, 1988) from the population genetics literature (Templeton, 1980; Lande, 1988). Together, these two concepts explain evolutionary outcomes of sudden selection pressures, like natural disasters, that critically reduce a population's size between two generations and cause genetic pools to lose diversity over time (e.g., Garoff et al., 2020).

In this line of explanations, the bottleneck effect refers to sudden and arbitrary selection pressures and processes that determine who survives (or selected) and who does not. Examples of bottleneck events include earthquakes, floods, wildfires, and similar disastrous events, eliminating some of the population. The founder effect refers to the reduced genetic diversity of the next generations due to the bottleneck events. Bottlenecks and founder effects decrease the diversity of the genetic pool of population when the selection pressures, by sheer coincidence, cause only certain types of members to survive, reproduce, and form the new genetic pool. The bottleneck metaphor warns organizations that the leaders they choose today can both influence the leadership climates of today and the leadership cultures they will have in the future.

In social sciences, there were few incidents where similar metaphors refer to selection scenarios that are deemed dysfunctional because of their inability to provide desired and targeted outcomes. For example, Fishkin (2014) used the bottleneck metaphor to argue that selection procedures like current university entrance exams must be illegitimate and arbitrary. He argued that instead of achieving the intended purposes, they act as bottlenecks reinforcing the existing inequalities like underprivileged groups' lack of access to societal opportunity structures.

Just like the biological mechanisms explained previously, leadership cultures might act as bottlenecks that create the selection pressures and determine who becomes the next generation of leaders and who does not? Leadership cultures and climates on higher levels, like universal and national, constitute the luggage people carry with them to their organizations. Every person who joins an organization brings their ideas, or mental models, about how things are and how they should be in the world around them (Schein, 2004). Mental models are acquired through the socialization processes that people go through and

tend to reflect the reinforced assumptions in their families, national cultures, or previous groups (Schein, 2004). Through intensive socialization processes, mental models become deeply ingrained. Any changes in them require unlearning what people already internalized (Schein, 2004). Thus, even when there are efforts and precautions at the organizational level to increase leadership cadres' diversity and effectiveness, due to the strong influences of deeper mental models acquired through previous socializations (Hofstede, 1986; Schein, 2004), these attempts might still look like swimming against the current. Unless organizational-level leadership culture is continuously monitored and supported in the desired directions, positive effects are likely to vanish quickly (van den Brink, 2020).

The characteristics of the individuals who were able to emerge as leaders under the existing assumptions and beliefs about the organization's leadership pose the future selection pressures in the following leader selection and emergence scenarios. Thus, if they are not checked continuously and intervened in, leadership cultures tend to produce even more exclusivist versions of themselves that constitute further bottlenecks in the future. In other words, whether the current leadership culture constitutes arbitrary bottlenecks for certain groups of people must be checked. Otherwise, organizations cannot achieve maximum potential in terms of leadership diversity. This issue can pose profound fairness and effectiveness problems. Moreover, when the effects of the universal and national leadership cultures on the organizational leadership cultures through the luggage the members bring into organizations are considered, the issue becomes even more problematic. Higher-level leadership cultures might further contribute to bottlenecks that cause the persistence of unequal representation and high leadership failure rates in organizations.

On the macro levels, the gains made at the universal and national levels achieved in the past few decades in terms of leadership effectiveness, equality, and diversity should be kept under constant monitoring for their continuity due to the harmful effects of cultural bottlenecks. Similarly, organizations should consider the sustainability of the effects in the long run rather than merely implementing short-term intervention programs like diversity training with impermanent effects (van den Brink, 2020). **Figure 2** depicts how a given group's leadership culture acts as a recursive bottleneck decreasing the diversity that exists in the group's leadership positions over time.

Besides restricting diversity, which is beneficial for a group's overall performance by creating competitive advantages (Peteraf, 1993), bottlenecks can also negatively affect a group's leader effectiveness. Individuals who feel entitled to lead or see themselves over group norms are more likely to snatch available leadership positions. They are more inclined to apply and they more easily get selected than the responsible candidates who think a lot before acting (Grijalva et al., 2015).

These snatchers include individuals with dark traits (i.e., certain types of subclinical narcissism, psychopathy, and manipulativeness), high levels of risk-taking tendencies, and personality characteristics like dominance and assertiveness (Ensari et al., 2011; Wisse and Sleebos, 2016). Being bold is a critical factor in order to emerge as a leader (Nevicka

FIGURE 2 | Illustration of how a given group's leadership culture acts as a recursive bottleneck decreasing the diversity that exists in the group's leadership positions over time.
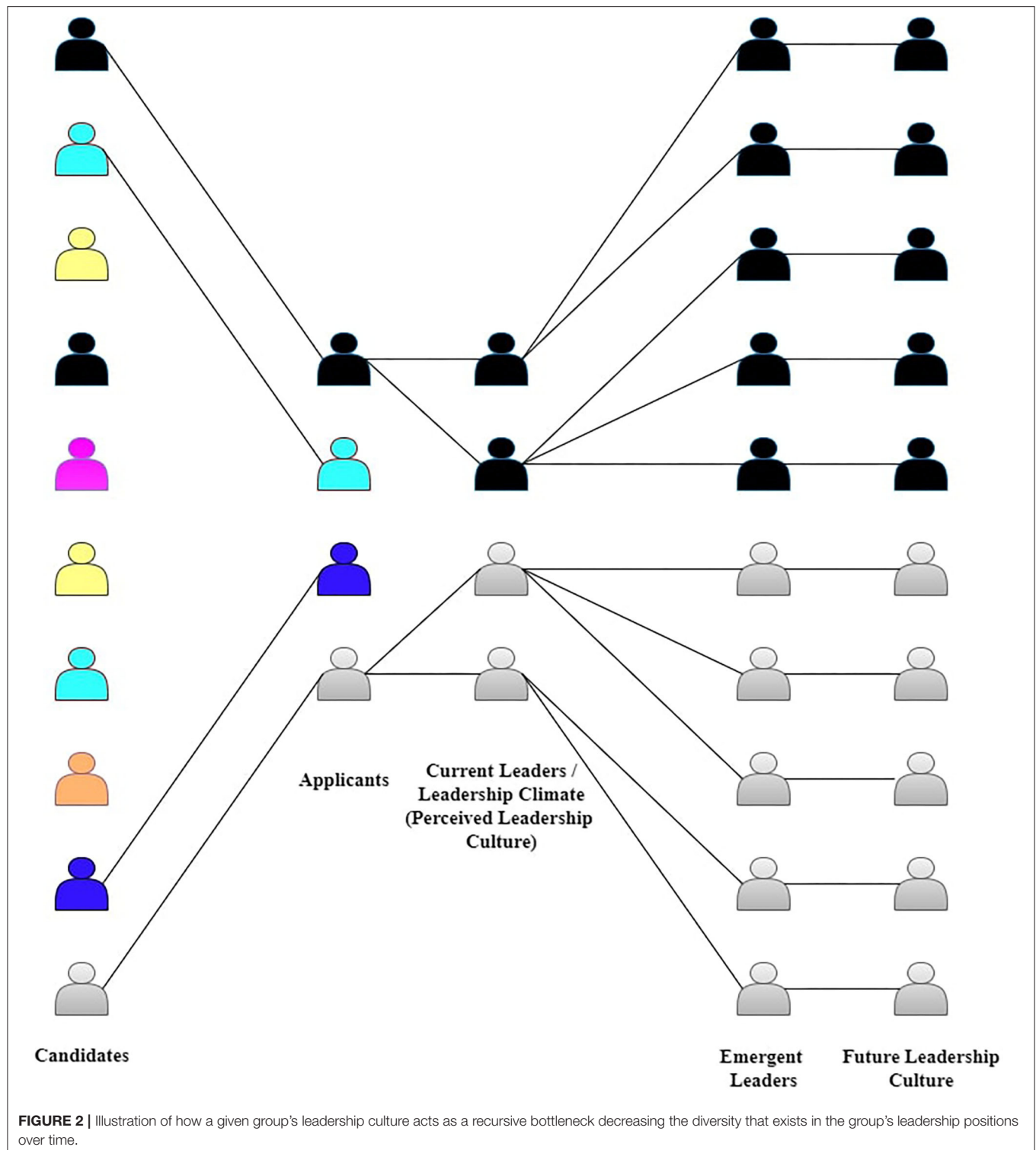
et al., 2011). Thus, some people are more likely to pass the bottleneck, although they do not deserve to lead more than the other candidates (Lanaj and Hollenbeck, 2015). These include men who feel more confident within the current leadership cultures than women (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2019), adding to

the unequal representation issue. They also encompass some of the less competent candidates who are not aware of their shortcomings as much as more competent individuals are (Dunning, 2011), contributing to the ineffectiveness problem. As previously discussed, commonly shared assumptions and

beliefs about leadership and leaders, namely, the universal- and national-level leadership cultures, are usually more encouraging and accepting of these people. Higher-level leadership cultures legitimize some people (e.g., males over females) and traits more than others (e.g., masculinity more than femininity; Ayman and Korabik, 2010). These discrepancies in legitimacy perceptions cause power and influence to be more easily given to typical rather than atypical leaders (Samdanis and Özbilgin, 2020). As legitimate power is highly required for introducing changes in organizational cultures (Clement, 1994), vicious cycles that produce unequal leadership and ineffective leaders are more likely than virtuous cycles even in organizations where these were initially in good shape.

LEADERSHIP MIRROR

Since the idea of changing a leadership culture intentionally in the desired direction is still in its early phases, we cannot provide an exact recipe for potential interventions. However, we can provide a diagnostic tool as a starting point for organizations that want to assess and change their leadership cultures. We named this method the "leadership mirror." Its basic premise is to identify groups of candidates who want and who do not want to take leadership positions in an organization in general or for a particular leadership position. These groups should then be compared to each other based on the chosen individual characteristics to see whether the existing leadership culture acts as a bottleneck that discriminates in undesired ways. These comparisons can be based on the demographics, personality traits, individuals' assumptions and beliefs about an ideal leadership, or on various amalgams. The aim is to draw an approximation of an organization's leadership culture based on the group differences between the candidates who want or who do not want to apply.

To do that, organizations can ask the same question to these people in different ways: whether they want to lead in this organization in general or in specific leadership positions. The use of available agentic constructs in the literature related to leadership selection decisions, like worries about leadership (WAL) (Aycan and Shelia, 2019) and motivation to lead (MTL) (Chan and Drasgow, 2001), might be useful in obtaining more nuanced assessments of leadership cultures.

WAL measures three different types of commonly observed worries that individuals experience when they imagine themselves being in a leadership position in the future (Aycan and Shelia, 2019). These different concerns include worries about failure, harming oneself and others, and not being able to balance work, family, and other requirements of life spheres.

MTL measures three types of motivations that people have that make them aspire and pursue leadership positions (Chan and Drasgow, 2001). The first motivation is wanting to lead because of liking the concept of leadership and seeing it as a part of the self-identity (affective-identity MTL). The second dimension is wanting to lead because of a sense of duty

and obligation felt toward the community (social-normative MTL). The third dimension is wanting to lead because of not being too calculative about the possible pros and cons related to leading.

The WAL questionnaire's referent structure is suitable for modifying the survey questions to refer to the exact leadership role that is asked of candidates to consider (Aycan and Shelia, 2019). MTL questions are, on the other hand, more about the participants' general trait-like motivational attitudes toward the idea of them becoming a leader (Chan and Drasgow, 2001; Bobbio and Rattazzi, 2006; Badura et al., 2020). Compared to the MTL, the WAL is more of a state than a trait. Thus, it might be more suitable for use as a tool within the scope of the proposed application of the leadership mirror perspective in measuring leadership culture. However, by adding one question asking whether the participant wants the leadership position in question or not, the MTL can also be a useful proxy measurement of leadership cultures.

The WAL and MTL are reported to be orthogonal, meaning they are independent of each other in terms of the variances they explain in leader selection decisions. Thus, using WAL's and MTL's constructs together as proxy measurements of leadership cultures would be the best practice of the leader mirror approach. Previous theories and findings indicate that whether they assess themselves or others, people have both avoidance and approach motives in their leadership-related judgments (Kark and Van Dijk, 2007; Van Quaquebeke et al., 2010). Moreover, such decisions have two aspects: they can simultaneously depend on value congruence and incongruence between individuals' values and those perceived to be dictated by the position (Schuh et al., 2018). Using the WAL and MTL together coincides with both types of such motives, thus capturing a more holistic picture of the leadership culture.

Furthermore, both constructs' multidimensional nature lends themselves to even more detailed assessments of leadership cultures. For example, people's scores on the subdimensions of WAL and MTL can be used in conjunction with each other to identify candidate profiles by using the latent profile analysis (LPA) method (Howard and Hoffman, 2018). This method would give a more detailed picture of the types of employees who want and who do not want a particular leadership position due to the leadership culture they perceive. Alternatively, the scores on the subdimensions of these two questionnaires can be used to compare the profiles of the existing leaders to those of the candidates and applicants (Auvinen et al., 2020).

Using the leadership mirror approach, organizations can find answers to what categories of people want or do not want to lead within them. Then they can learn the reasons behind these by applying qualitative research methods such as focus group interviews. They can use the information obtained to modify the leadership cultures or perceptions about them in desired ways. Hence, they can turn the leadership positions more alluring for the targeted candidates and drive others away, even from applying. This way, they can save time and money and increase the applicant pool's quality while monitoring future leadership culture bottlenecks.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Different parties who have roles in forming and modifying organizational leadership cultures might want to know what they can do to prevent negative leadership cultures. In this section of the paper, we will provide suggestions for each of these actors.

Individuals might think they are powerless and helpless against the larger collective structures such as leadership culture (Kossek et al., 2017). Atypical candidates must not forget that their decisions and actions impact them and the collective opinions about the groups they might represent in leadership positions (Samdanis and Özbilgin, 2020). Compared to the more typical candidates, being selected as leaders will also be much more challenging for them (Phelan et al., 2008). Suppose they ever become leaders against all the odds. In that case, their mistakes will be evaluated and judged much more harshly than the tolerance shown to more typical leaders by communities (Rudman and Glick, 2001). In addition to these, there is always the risk of turning into a somewhat typical leader who perpetuates the existing obsolete leadership culture existing in human groups (Harvey, 2018; Baykal et al., 2020).

Still, there is hope. In other words, all possible candidates for leadership positions, almost everyone besides the current leaders, should be aware of the power and influence of their decisions or the absence of them about pursuing and claiming leadership positions on the surrounding leadership cultures. In a leadership position, the presence of an individual, or lack thereof, is vital to breaking the presumptions about who typically can be and who cannot be in this role (Eagly, 2018a). Even getting selected is not necessary to shatter groundless and harmful associations in people's minds regarding who can be and who cannot be the leaders. Self-nomination and application to leadership positions are also challenging these on their own (Mariani et al., 2015). Considering the increased diversity rates in the candidate pool of the following congressional elections, Clinton might have sparked a social movement among women, youth, and other underrepresented groups by losing to Trump in 2016 (Cargile et al., 2020).

Existing leaders must be aware of their crucial direct and indirect gatekeeper roles in creating and reproducing bottlenecks of leadership culture (Broockman, 2014). It should always be kept in mind that leaders' influences within the scope of bottlenecks are not limited to what they do or whom they select and promote. These also include the things that they choose not to do and the characteristics of the candidates that they did not consider for the vacant seats. Moreover, how followers and potential candidates perceive leaders' and organizations' behaviors and decisions is essential (Jacobsen and Bøgh Andersen, 2015). Thus, current leaders should ensure that they precisely convey the messages they want to communicate regarding their organizations' leadership culture to candidates and applicants.

Organizations should acknowledge three things about the leadership culture that can impose bottlenecks for much-desired leadership diversity and effectiveness. Suppose the group's leadership culture is permitted to develop and change in its natural course. In that case, bold candidates will fill vacant positions sooner or later, despite their possible shortcomings (Nevicka et al., 2011). The leadership cultures of the organizations will increasingly become inconducive to diversity and effectiveness over time. Thus, changes in them should be continuously monitored and managed. Human resource specialists working in organizations must ensure that they always have a highly diversified group of leaders. Expecting a homogenous group of leaders to select and empower a diverse group of next-generation leaders is paradoxical (Bebbington and Özbilgin, 2013). The same warning also applies to the degree of homogeneity in leader selection committees, even for the times that these collectives consist only human resource specialists and do not include leaders (Daskalova, 2018, 2019).

Secondly, organizations should not solely focus their attention and efforts on one part of the big picture of the leadership problems (Allio, 2007). Leadership culture is developed and changed co-constructively. Thus, organizations must prioritize developing better leadership systems and cultures simultaneously while aiming for better leadership (Padilla et al., 2007; Day et al., 2014). Instead of attending only to separate parts of leadership problems, like unequal representation and lack of effectiveness, they should work on improving both individual members and organizational structures (Schein, 2004; Day et al., 2014; Kossek et al., 2017).

Thirdly, companies must acknowledge that just because they think they have a healthy leadership culture, it does not mean that candidates perceive it similarly (Schein, 2004; Day et al., 2014; Jacobsen and Bøgh Andersen, 2015). Having a conducive leadership culture in terms of diversity and leader effectiveness is not enough; candidates must be perceiving it in the same sense (Schein, 2004; Day et al., 2014). This point is critical. The order of events described in the bottleneck metaphor indicates that sustained diversity in the candidate pools is the primary condition to avoid overly exclusive leadership cultures harming organizations. Organizations should guarantee that the right 678 messages about the leadership culture are broadcast and transmitted. One rogue leader, or some baseless myths and rumors about the group's leaders and leadership structures, can contort the candidates' perceptions about the group's leadership culture in many negative ways (Foster, 2000; Popper, 2012; Day et al., 2014; Popper and Castelnovo, 2018; Wantaate, 2019).

Governments and other policy-making agencies also have their responsibilities in creating, maintaining, and developing leadership cultures. Policies like quotas can be beneficial to increasing diversity, but to reach their maximum potentials, they should be supported with the right kind of leadership cultures (Pande and Ford, 2011; Bullough and de Luque, 2015; Mölders et al., 2018).

Otherwise, the places reserved for the categories of people with specific demographics, like parliament seats allocated to women, might be filled with individuals whose other characteristics, like personalities, are compatible with the existing obsolete leadership cultures (Fitzsimmons, 2012; Harvey, 2018; Baykal et al., 2020). Solutions to leadership diversity and effectiveness problems require radical changes in the prevailing leadership cultures (Al Ariss et al., 2014). Candidates have multiple combined characteristics like gender, sexual orientation,

race, age, class, and ideology. Thus, instead of focusing on each variable in isolation, sensible intervention policies must be based on the intersectional understanding of individual differences (Kamasak et al., 2019).

Furthermore, people should stop trying to fit women and other less represented groups in leadership positions designed according to the mainstream understandings about leaders and leadership (Braun et al., 2017; Kossek et al., 2017). Existing leadership cultures have mostly produced toxic, abusive, and homogenous groups of leaders; thus, these need to change, not the other way around (Beard, 2017; Hogan et al., 2018; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2019). Besides, binary definitions of gender and sexual orientation are outdated now. Thus, using binary conceptualizations in the twenty-first century to generate solutions for gender-related inequalities is a bit self-handicapping and an inconsistent strategy (Eagly, 2018b; Bae et al., 2019).

Lastly, we want to discuss the bottleneck metaphor's implications for current and future research about leadership. The bottleneck metaphor indicates that there can be possible biases, especially in the findings of leadership effectiveness studies that sample existing leaders. Thus, such studies might be prone to various self-selection and survivorship biases (Brown et al., 1992; Epitropaki, 2018). Thus, researchers must cautiously approach these findings. The topic of reluctant leaders remains severely under-investigated in the leadership literature (Epitropaki, 2018; Aycan and Shelia, 2019). Future studies must extend the leadership emergence literature to encompass not just applicants but candidates as well.

Consequently, researchers who study leader effectiveness should acknowledge that their participants are limited to those who select themselves as leadership candidates. Thus, the results might not reflect the full picture of leader effectiveness. Current leaders might not be the best sources to investigate the negatives about companies' existing leadership cultures or the unfairness in the leader selection processes. After all, the same bottlenecks that they asked to identify and discuss are what produced them.

Naturally, discussing all the possible questions about leadership culture and its bottleneck functions in leader selection scenarios in just one conceptual paper is not an accomplishable task. Readers should treat this article as an igniter that hopes to draw attention to some of the less investigated leadership literature topics. These include the impacts of shared assumptions and beliefs about leadership, reluctant leaders, and possible biases in the findings of leadership studies. The paper will serve its purpose if it ignites further discussions and inspires new studies about leadership cultures at different levels and avenues where leadership exists.

Due to space-related concerns and lack of available findings, some issues related to the concepts and ideas presented in this paper were not covered. How leadership cultures at different collective levels form and influence leader selection decisions other than the organizational level need more discussion and research. Similarly, essential questions like how differently the bottlenecks operate in different leadership avenues, such as political leadership, business leadership, and leadership in non-governmental and voluntary organizations, remain unanswered.

The mechanisms of the bottleneck metaphor of leadership culture discussed for organizations might operate differently

in political settings since relationships between followers and leaders differ from each other in each arena. Political leaders are more distant to their followers compared to organizational leaders who closely and bidirectionally interact with their followers almost every day; thus, the symbols and meanings are much more important in political compared to organizational leadership (Popper, 2012).

Future studies can also investigate the "as is" and "should be" forms of leadership cultures at different levels to identify the differences between the existing and the desired leadership culture. This approach is the same as what the Globe Study did to measure cultural value dimensions. Unfortunately, they did not apply the same method to the measurements of leadership-related values in this very comprehensive research project (House et al., 2004).

Lastly, the factors causing the differences between the perceived and the actual leadership culture and the effects of such gaps on group outcomes promise lucrative research areas. We already suggested some mechanisms: leaders who do not act in parallel with the leadership culture that the organization wants to adhere to or the myths and rumors created by gossiping and inaccurate storytelling about leaders (Popper, 2012; Popper and Castelnovo, 2018; Wantaate, 2019). Future studies on these and other mechanisms that possibly cause differences between the perceived and the actual leadership culture are severely needed.

Some of the ideas discussed in this paper can also pave the way for a more situational understanding of leadership emergence. Leadership researchers and practitioners, for a relatively long time, are aware that leadership effectiveness depends not only on the leaders but also on the conditions and settings that they lead in Fiedler (1966), Sims et al. (2009), and Thompson and Glaso (2018). These include individual characteristics of their team members and team-level features (Swart-Opperman and April, 2018). We should also start acknowledging that leadership emergence-related judgments of individuals, when they evaluate themselves and others, are too situational and contingent to settings. Thus, human resource professionals and researchers must not be quick to assume that candidates who do not want a specific leadership position lack desire and motivation for leadership. Their discomfort might be specific to the position; in other roles or organizations, they might be in peace with the idea of them being leaders. Hence, new theories of leader emergence that better incorporate the possible contingencies must be developed.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, collective assumptions and beliefs about leaders and leadership, in other words leadership culture, might cause unequal representation in leadership positions and high leader failure rates. They might be resistant to change because they simultaneously affect both the existing and potential leaders' decisions in leader emergence processes.

Change in universal leadership culture can be accomplished most efficiently by changing the current leadership cultures existing at organizational levels. However, an organization's leadership culture acts as a bottleneck that only allows candidates who perceive themselves and are perceived by others as

compatible. Hence, these tend to reproduce themselves and the leadership cultures seen at higher levels. It is possible to change a leadership culture by introducing intentional misalignments between the leadership culture and climate. The most obvious indicators of the leadership culture underlying the leadership climate in an organization are the perceived commonalities among the existing leaders.

Organizations need to know how different groups of candidates perceive their leadership cultures. They must figure out who is or who is not attracted to their leadership positions. They can use the questionnaires of the available agentic constructs related to leadership emergence to obtain more detailed answers to these questions. Lastly, leadership cultures have their implications for many different actors on various levels. Thus, the multilevel, multi-actor nature of co-construction of change in leadership cultures must not be ignored when theories and interventions are developed.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MÖ is the sole author of this paper. Thus, MÖ completed all the tasks, including the literature review, argument generation, manuscript writing, figure drawing, and reference listing and checking.

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Drivers or Drifters? The "Who" and "Why" of Leader Role Occupancy—A Mixed-Method Study

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This study investigated the reasons that leaders have given for their leader role occupancy. By using a mixed-method approach and large leader data, we aimed to provide a more nuanced picture of how leader positions are occupied in real life. We examined how individual leadership motivation may associate with other reasons for leader role occupancy. In addition, we aimed to integrate the different reasons behind leader role occupancy into the framework of sustainable leader careers and its two indicators: leader's health (occupational well-being) and performance (measured indirectly as followers' occupational well-being). The survey data consisted of 1,031 leaders from various sectors of working life. Qualitative analysis revealed that leaders mention various factors behind their leader role occupancy, resulting 26 themes. After inductive investigation of the data, theory-driven analysis focused on the sustainable career components (person, context, time) and agency vs. non-agency. Qualitative data was quantitized based on the theory-driven categories for statistical analysis. Based on the these analysis, we found out that only Affective-Identity MTL predicted all of the studied reasons behind leader role occupancy, whereas the other motivation types (Non-calculative MTL and Social-Normative MTL) did not. All of the reasons for leader role occupancy except non-agentic ones were related to both leaders' own and their followers' occupational well-being. Leaders with more person-related and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy experienced better occupational well-being. Person- and context-related and agentic reasons behind leader role occupancy associated also with followers' occupational well-being, but the associations differed from those of leaders' well-being: person-related and agentic reasons associated with followers' exhaustion, but this association was not found among leaders. Our study provided important information for practitioners in the field of human resources and development, as it has shown that if the reasons for leader role occupancy mainly reflect circumstances or other non-person-related reasons, the experienced occupational well-being and person-career fit may remain weak. It is necessary to try to support the leadership motivation for those leaders, or to shape the job description in such a way that it can also offer the experiences of meaningfulness from aspects other than self-realization through a managerial role.

Keywords: leader emergence, leader role occupancy, motivation to lead, sustainable career, occupational well-being, person-career fit

INTRODUCTION

Despite the long research tradition on leadership, empirical and scientific research has not led to a conclusive understanding of how leadership emergence actually takes place among individuals who are acting in complex environments, such as employees and managers working in different organizations. Most of the research on leadership emergence is based on artificial, situation- and participant-specific group simulations, especially leaderless group discussions (e.g., Ensari et al., 2011). For a thorough exploration of who emerges as a leader, other techniques or perspectives in addition to leaderless group discussions are needed.

Leader emergence is not a straightforward, static phenomenon, and this makes it more difficult to capture and examine. As Acton et al. (2019) summed it up, "leadership emergence is more than a trait, an exchange, or a symbol—leadership emerges through dynamic interactions (Lichtenstein et al., 2006) at multiple levels" (p. 146). Thus, the *process* perspective of leader emergence deserves more attention than it has previously been given. The studies conducted so far have treated concepts of leadership emergence and leader role occupancy either as a predictor or as an outcome variable (Tuncdogan et al., 2017; Zaccaro et al., 2018). However, it is clear that approaching an emergent, process-like phenomenon (the question of who will eventually occupy a leader position) by reducing it to a single factor or one end result is likely to lead to the omission of relevant aspects. In addition to understanding the process of leader emergence more systematically, it is important to investigate how the leader emergence process associates with leader careers, and how these careers unfold.

Recently, the overemphasis on individual reasons and the under-emphasis on the situational or contextual factors of leader emergence has received attention in the literature (Hanna et al., 2021). Hanna et al. (2021) also called for the need for conceptual clarification and sound ways to operationalize leader (ship) emergence. As a way to address these shortcomings in the literature and to provide a more realistic and balanced view of the leadership emergence process, we adopted a mixed-methods approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the reasons the leaders gave for occupying their leadership role as a starting point for our analysis. Tashakkori and Creswell (2007) defined mixed methods research as a process "in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or a program of inquiry" (p. 4). We used a merged concurrent nested approach (Castro et al., 2010; Fetters et al., 2013) to be able to analyze the real-life experiences of leaders with accurately measured constructs (Castro et al., 2010). More specifically, we examined the leaders' qualitative descriptions about their reasons for occupying their leadership role and, after theory-driven classification, we quantitized (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009) their descriptions to investigate their associations to sustainable leader career components and personal leadership motivation. Integrating different reasons behind leader role occupancy into the wider framework of sustainable leader careers

(De Vos et al., 2020) is, to the best of our knowledge, a novel perspective in this research area. This integration of qualitative and quantitative data through data conversion enabled us to capture a richer and more detailed picture of why, how, and under what circumstances leader positions are occupied in real life and how the reasons the leaders provided are associated with the sustainability of their careers as a leader and their personal leadership motivation.

How a person's career actually unfolds over time is determined by individual choices made at a specific moment in time and affected by various factors, such as social or organizational context (Rudolph et al., 2019; Urbanaviciute et al., 2019; van der Horst and Klehe, 2019). Leader role occupancy can be viewed as one kind of choice, and it (and more broadly, the whole process of leader emergence) may therefore act as a stimulus to a further career as a leader. Thus, in addition to provide a nuanced picture of how leader positions are occupied, our specific interest is especially to investigate the *sustainability* of leader careers (De Vos et al., 2020) in relation to the reasons that have affected leader role occupancy. As indicators of career sustainability, a leader's health (occupational well-being) and performance (reflected in followers' occupational well-being) are studied. We begin by introducing the individual factors, specifically personal leadership motivation, that associate with leader emergence and how leader emergence relates to sustainable leader careers and its focal indicators.

Motivation to Lead as a Personal Factor Behind Leader Emergence

Motivation to Lead (MTL) provides one perspective to explain leader emergence (Chan and Drasgow, 2001). Chan and Drasgow (2001) have stated that MTL is "an individual-differences construct that affects a leader's or leader-to-be's decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities" (p. 482). Thus, it is a central concept of leader development, highlighting its process-like, dynamic nature. MTL is a multidimensional concept that consists of three distinct but related dimensions with different antecedents and related outcomes (Chan and Drasgow, 2001; for a meta-analysis, see Badura et al., 2020). *Affective-Identity MTL* refers to positive valence toward leadership and leading others and is considered the most intrinsic motivational dimension of leadership motivation. Those with high Affective-Identity MTL usually consider themselves natural born leaders. *Social-Normative MTL*, as a more extrinsic motivational component, is based on social norms: an individual with high Social-Normative MTL might lead out of a sense of duty or responsibility, or because they consider leader status to be normatively valued. Lastly, *Non-calculative MTL* refers to positive perceptions of leadership roles and formal positions, regardless of their potential costs or negative consequences (Badura et al., 2020). Because those with high Non-calculative MTL are likely to lead out of a general willingness, without weighing the possible costs and benefits related to leading others (Chan and Drasgow, 2001; Porter et al., 2019). Non-calculative MTL can be considered a "selfless" aspect of leadership motivation.

Some earlier studies have investigated the role of MTL in the leader emergence process (Hendricks and Payne, 2007;

Hong et al., 2011; Oh, 2012; Luria and Berson, 2013; Mohan and Carter, 2019) using individual MTL as a predictor variable, mostly in cross-sectional settings, but the perspective of leader careers has not received much research attention in the MTL literature. Also, the existing research has failed to establish how an individual's MTL associates with other factors that can affect leader role occupancy in complex environments, such as unanticipated organizational restructuring or sudden needs for personnel changes. In the original model by Chan and Drasgow (2001), only limited attention was given to the contextual factors that may shape and affect leader role occupancy in practice, in addition to MTL. Not only individual motivational factors, but also situational triggers or events in an organization may lead to one taking up the leader role.

From the broader career perspective, leader role occupancy at a certain time may (or may not) associate with future career decisions, when an individual weighs up future possibilities of pursuing leader roles. So far as we know, previous studies have not investigated MTL or reasons for leader role occupancy from a perspective that would capture future leader-career orientations. This gap in the literature needs to be addressed, as evidence shows that pursuing leader positions is not the most important career goal of the majority of students or employees (Chudzikowski, 2012; Sutela and Lehto, 2014; Torres, 2014; Crowley-Henry et al., 2019). If we are going to lack sufficient candidates for leader positions in the future, we need more information on how to make careers more lasting and how to support the construction of a sustainable career for those leaders who already occupy the position. To extend research on MTL and integrate that research into research on leader careers, we examine how individual factors, particularly individual leadership motivation, may associate with other reasons for leader role occupancy. In integrating these different perspectives in this study, we apply the conceptual model of sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020).

Sustainable Leader Career as an Outcome of Leader Emergence

The conceptual model of sustainable careers (De Vos et al., 2020) explains how careers unfold in the interplay of three dimensions: the individual, context, and time (Chudzikowski et al., 2019; De Vos et al., 2020). The individual is seen as an agentic career actor, whose career possibilities are likely to be influenced by and to interact with his or her particular context (e.g., occupation, work group, organization) and time (e.g., career stage). The conceptual model of sustainable careers includes four central concepts: agency, meaning, proactivity, and adaptation (De Vos et al., 2020). Constructing a sustainable career is a dynamic process in which the interrelationship between these four focal concepts is manifested as person-career fit. In order to create and retain a good person-career fit, the individual as an agentic subject both proactively shapes his or her environment and, on the other hand, adapts to external forces. From the perspective of person-career fit, the importance of meaning cannot be overemphasized, as knowledge of one's personal values and needs generates experience of what one understands to be

meaningful work, and provides important knowledge for one's further career decisions (De Vos et al., 2020).

Thus far, career theories have emphasized the role of individual agency in shaping a career from the vocational perspective, without paying much attention to organizational and institutional perspectives, which presume that also organizations and wider institutional forces affect individual careers (Inkson et al., 2012). In seeking to develop an understanding of how careers unfold, we need to apply the ideas of systems thinking to acknowledge the role of various factors affecting the career unfolding process. The sustainable careers framework acknowledges that individual agency and proactivity are likely to be affected by contextual demands and resources, and in addition to the individual's own active endeavors, it also highlights adaptation and adjustment to environmental factors (De Vos et al., 2020). From the perspective of leader emergence and career continuity, we are interested in investigating whether individuals deliberately drive their way toward leader roles as active agents, or if they drift toward these roles under the influence of external forces. In addition, we examine if these processes of "driving" vs. "drifting" are associated with the focal indicators of sustainable careers, to which we will now turn.

Indicators of Sustainable Leader Careers: Leader's Health and Productivity

According to De Vos et al. (2020), the sustainability of a career can be assessed through three indicators: *happiness, health,* and *productivity.* Happiness refers to one's personal satisfaction with one's career and subjective career success, health is associated with both physical and psychological health and well-being, and productivity refers to performance in one's current job, and the fit between the career and the organization's needs for human capital. These three indicators of sustainable careers reflect the dynamic person-career fit and an individual's success in adapting and/or proactively shaping contexts and dealing with environmental influences (De Vos et al., 2020). In this study, we focus on two of these career sustainability indicators, a leader's *health* and *productivity,* the second of which was not measured directly but was inferred indirectly from leader performance.

As a *health* indicator, we examined leader's occupational well-being, namely burnout and work engagement. Burnout develops in response to chronic job-related stressors, which result in experiences of emotional exhaustion (feelings of strain and fatigue), cynicism (a distal attitude toward one's work or colleagues and a general loss of interest in one's work), and reduced professional efficacy (feelings of incompetence at work) (Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001). Work engagement is a three-dimensional concept of positive well-being at work, which is described as having high mental energy while working (vigor), a sense of significance, pride and inspiration (dedication) and immersion in one's work (absorption) (Schaufeli et al., 2002, 2006). Burnout and work engagement are both known to be associated with career-relevant outcomes, such as organizational commitment, but each one in its own way: burnout is negatively associated with commitment, whereas

work engagement increases commitment to one's organization (Hakanen et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2013). In addition, burnout is associated with a growing intention of leaving the profession (Reinardy, 2011).

From the perspective of *productivity* and one of its indicators, performance, we are interested on how a leader performs his or her leadership-related duties and how this is manifested in the followers' occupational well-being. We argue that this is a central viewpoint because leaders are influential figures in organizations and their performance and behaviors are relevant to their employees' well-being and to the organization as a whole (e.g., Skakon et al., 2010; Ashford et al., 2018). Although performance can be assessed from various perspectives, we consider followers' occupational well-being (low burnout, high work engagement) to be an important output of leadership because, in general, occupational well-being is an important indication of sustainable careers. Moreover, occupational well-being is one of the values that is essential to integrate into the leadership-related debate alongside the hard performance figures that are measured in money or profit.

We propose that the link from the leader's performance to the occupational well-being of followers could be via the leader's motivational resources, which may affect actual performance as a leader and various leadership behaviors. How well a leader performs his/her role-related duties in the workplace may be manifested in several ways: for example, in the quality of social relationships, such as the quality of the leader-member exchange (LMX) (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995), and in the leader's transformational leadership skills, that is, his/her capacity to inspire, provide a clear vision, initiate structure, and support his/her followers (Bass, 1999).

The effort that leader puts into the relevant performance and leadership related behaviors might be dependent of leader's motivational resources (Auvinen et al., 2020). According to the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1998, 2001, 2011) and its principles concerning resource loss, if a leader has low (motivational) resources for leading others, these scarce resources have to be actively defended to avoid progressive resource loss. Defending initially scant resources is energy-consuming and it may result in the leader putting less effort into his or her work, that is, into leadership-related duties. There is some cross-sectional evidence that the leaders that had low or inadequate motivational resources for leadership reported more burnout symptoms and less work engagement (Auvinen et al., 2020), thus highlighting that those resources have a significant impact on the well-being of leaders. One meta-analytical review (Harms et al., 2017) examined leader stress as an antecedent of leader behaviors; they found preliminary support for the negative relationship between leader burnout and self-reported transformational leadership behaviors. This finding is also in line with the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1998, 2001).

Despite the ambiguity concerning the actual moderating mechanism, the link from leader behaviors or leadership style to followers' well-being has been strongly supported by previous research. According to a systematic literature review, positive leader behaviors and transformational leadership style were positively associated with employee affective well-being

and low stress; the opposite was found for negative leader behaviors (Skakon et al., 2010). One cross-sectional study (Auvinen et al., 2020) showed that the leader's motivational resources for leadership was associated with the followers' assessment of their leader's people- and task-oriented leadership behaviors and LMX quality: when leaders had low motivational resources, they received inferior ratings from their followers for their leadership behaviors and LMX quality. There is also meta-analytical support for leader behaviors as the cause of follower well-being. For example, Harms et al. (2017) found strong support for the association between transformational leadership style and high LMX quality and lower levels of follower burnout and stress. Specifically, poor LMX showed stronger associations to followers' inferior occupational well-being in comparison to transformational leadership; it seems that LMX could buffer follower stress better than transformational leadership. However, as these findings were based on same-source information, they should be evaluated with caution. Previous research has also supported the link between LMX and followers' occupational well-being, namely, burnout and work engagement (Ellis et al., 2019). However, although the suggested link between the leader's resources to perform in the leadership role and its consequences for followers' occupational well-being is theoretically grounded, its empirical verification lies outside the scope of the current study.

Research Questions

In this study, we aimed to answer four focal questions. First, in order to gain a wider understanding of the various reasons behind leader emergence, we wanted to explore what kinds of factors leaders themselves put forward as having affected their leader role occupancy. Thus, the first research question (RQ 1) was a qualitative investigation of the kinds of reasons that could be identified from leaders' descriptions of the reasons behind their leader role occupancy. This qualitative approach enabled us to identify the diversity of leader emergence in real world surroundings, as instead of relying on artificial simulations, qualitative research was used to analyze the actual expressions that individuals used in real contexts (Flick, 2014).

Secondly, to assess the role of individual factors and how they are related to the description of reasons for leader role occupancy, we combined quantitative analysis with the aforementioned qualitative descriptions of the reasons for leader role occupancy The qualitative data was quantitized for further analysis (data conversion; see, e.g., Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009) to enable methodological triangulation. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative data sources (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009), we aimed to leverage the strengths of both methodological approaches: we strived to accurately measure and operationalize the constructs of our interest while simultaneously examining the leaders' experiences in a way that would capture their original, real-life context (Castro et al., 2010). Using statistical analyses, we examined whether leaders' personal motivation to lead (conceptualized as Affective-Identity MTL, Non-calculative MTL, or Social-Normative MTL) predicted their reasons for leader role occupancy (RQ2).

Finally, to bring together the various reasons behind leader role occupancy and the construction of sustainable leader careers, we explored whether leaders' different reasons for their leader role occupancy associated with two career sustainability indicators, *health* and *productivity* (De Vos et al., 2020). More specifically, we explored whether the reasons behind leader role occupancy were related to the leader's health (conceptualized as work engagement and burnout; RQ3) and performance as a leader (conceptualized as followers' work engagement and burnout; RQ4). To benefit from methodological triangulation and deepen the understanding of different reasons to leader role occupancy and their associations with career sustainability, we will aim to interpret the quantitative findings in the light of the themes identified from the qualitative analysis (integration through data transformation; Fetters et al., 2013).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data Collection and Participants

We used multiple sources of data collection to gather data that would be representative of the highly educated leader population in Finland in various fields and industries. An electronic survey was sent via trade unions to gather data that would be representative of different sectors, as the trade unions are organized by industry in Finland, and most Finnish employees are unionized (Ahtiainen, 2015). The survey was composed of carefully chosen self-evaluation inventories and open-ended questions to collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. In the first phase, a link to the survey was sent to the members of four trade unions: the Finnish Union of University Professors, Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers, Finnish Business School Graduates, and Academic Architects and Engineers in Finland. An additional round of data collection was conducted to increase the number of participants. In this additional data collection phase, we used three different data collection sources. One of these was another trade union: the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (Akava), which is a confederation of trade unions for those with a university degree or other higher education. This trade union was used to target the survey at social and health care sector leaders. Participants were also recruited from an executive MBA (EMBA) program, and finally, psychology students volunteered to recruit highly educated leaders from among their acquaintances. Altogether, the data collection was conducted during a 6 month period. Participants from the EMBA program and the leaders recruited by students represented various sectors (e.g., the service sector, media and marketing, finance, and insurance, industry) and they were combined for the purposes of this study to constitute one data source. A detailed description of the data collection and response rates for each data source is presented in Auvinen et al. (2020).

Leaders

This study focused on leaders who answered the open-ended question about leader role occupancy (n = 1,219). Of these 1,219 leaders, 132 had to be omitted from the study as their answer consisted in practice of only a failure or refusal to answer (e.g., "???" or "N/A"), resulting in a study population of 1,087 leaders. Of these participants, 56 gave an answer that, could not be understood in this context (e.g., "Look at my response to the previous open-ended question"). That left a total of 1,031 individual descriptions that could be analyzed. Of the participants, 375 (36%) were professors, 99 (9%) university teachers and researchers, 186 (18%) business sector leaders, 100 (10%) academic engineers, 110 (11%) social and health care sector leaders, and 161 (16%) were "other" highly educated leaders; that is, they had been recruited by psychology students or had an eMBA degree. 51% of the studied leaders were women, the mean age in the sample was 51.4 (SD = 8.8) years, and the mean length of past leadership experience was 12.9 years (SD = 8.5). Ninety six percentages were working full-time and 99% had a permanent job. Every leader who participated was asked to recruit their followers to the survey anonymously. Leaders were given the information about data privacy and they were requested to send a link to the survey to their followers. The surveys for leaders and followers were identical regarding the focal measures related to the research project, but followers' survey also included measures to assess their leader's behaviors and performance.

Followers

To assess followers' experiences, we used hierarchical leader-follower data. Of the leaders who participated in the study, 233 were willing to recruit their followers to participate, and they forwarded an electronic link to their subordinates. The responses were collected in such a way that they were visible only to the researchers, via an electronic survey tool. The data from the leaders and followers were matched by means of code identifiers: followers' ratings were combined with the data of their closest supervisor who had recruited them to participate in the study. The hierarchical sample included altogether 987 followers of the aforementioned 233 leaders. The number of follower participants per leader ranged between 1 and 14 (M = 4.2). Of the followers studied here, 67% were women, the majority (58%) were aged 31–50 years, and the average duration of the relationship with the supervisor who had sent the invitation to take part in the survey was 3.5 years (SD = 3.4).

Measures
Reasons Behind Leader Role Occupancy

We used one open-ended question to capture the variety of personal reasons behind leaders' current leader role occupancy: "What factors have contributed to your having your present position as a leader?" This question was followed by an empty space in which the leaders could type their answers, and there was no word limit. The respondents were thus able to describe as many factors as they chose as having affected their leader role occupancy.

Motivation to Lead

We measured leaders' leadership motivation by using the Finnish translation of the Motivation to Lead Questionnaire (Chan and Drasgow, 2001). A shortened nine-item version of the scale

(MTL-9) was used, which has been found to provide a good factor structure validity (see Auvinen et al., 2020). Each sub-dimension of the MTL-9 includes three items; e.g., "I am the type of person who likes to be in charge of others" (Affective-Identity MTL), "It is appropriate for people to accept leadership roles or positions when they are asked" (Social-Normative MTL), and "I never expect to get more privileges if I agree to lead a group" (Non-calculative MTL). All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree—5 = totally agree), higher scores indicating higher motivation. All of the scale items are available on request from the first author. The Cronbach's alphas for leaders' MTL dimensions were 0.92, 0.89, and 0.74, respectively.

Work Engagement

Both leaders' and followers' work engagement were measured with the nine-item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Seppälä et al., 2009). The scale was used to measure three dimensions of work engagement: vigor, dedication and absorption. Each dimension was measured with three items; e.g., "At work, I feel that I am bursting with energy" for vigor, "I am proud of the work I do" for dedication, and "I get carried away when I'm working" for absorption. Items were answered on a frequency-based scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1 = never, 7 = daily), higher scores indicating more frequent experiences of work engagement. In the leader data, the Cronbach's alphas for work engagement dimensions were 0.87, 0.89, and 0.83 for vigor, dedication and absorption, respectively. In the follower data, the comparable figures were 0.87, 0.88, and 0.85.

Burnout

Both leaders' and followers' burnout were measured with the nine-item Bergen Burnout Inventory (BBI-9), which has shown time- and sample-invariant factor structure (Salmela-Aro et al., 2011; see also Feldt et al., 2014). It captures three dimensions of burnout: exhaustion (3 items; e.g., "I am snowed under with work"), cynicism (3 items; e.g., "I feel dispirited at work and I think of leaving my job") and inadequacy (3 items; e.g., "My expectations for my job and my performance have reduced"). All of the items were answered on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree), higher scores indicating higher burnout. In the leader data, the Cronbach's alphas for the dimensions of burnout were 0.75, 0.83, and 0.79 for exhaustion, cynicism and inadequacy, respectively, and for the follower data, the comparable figures were 0.72, 0.81, and 0.77.

Control Variables

Of leaders' demographic factors, we investigated age (continuous; in years), gender (dichotomous; 0 = male, 1 = female), past leadership experience (continuous; in years) and occupational sector (membership for each studied sector as a dummy-variable) in relation to focal outcomes. Dummy variables (0 = not a member, 1 = member) were used to following occupational sectors: professors, university teachers, and academics, business sector leaders, academic engineers, social and health care sector leaders and eMBA alumni, and others. These demographic factors were chosen based on their previously found significance

in leader role occupancy: gender differences regarding leadership still exist (Kossek et al., 2017) and, on the basis of earlier results from the current data (Auvinen et al., 2020), leaders of different ages and from different occupational sectors differ in their leadership motivation. Those demographic factors that were related to the leader outcomes studied here were controlled for in further analyses.

For the analysis of the followers' data, the following demographic factors were examined: the follower's gender (dichotomous; 1 = female, 2 = male), age (categorical; under 20 years, 21–30, 31–40, 41–50, 51–60, over 61 years) and duration of the relationship with closest supervisor (who provided the research request; continuous in years). Correlations and descriptive information about the study variables for the follower data is available from the first author on request. Those demographic variables that associated with followers' occupational well-being were controlled for in subsequent analyses.

Analysis

Qualitative Analysis: Categorization of Factors Affecting Leader Role Occupancy

We used the merged concurrent nested approach (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Castro et al., 2010), which enabled us to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the varying nature of the reasons why leaders occupy their leadership role. By choosing this approach, we were able to overcome some of the common shortcomings of the mixed-method research design and complement the existing literature on leader emergence. The possibility of simultaneously gathering qualitative and quantitative data enabled us to tackle the general limitation of the *sequential* temporal order of data collection (Bryman, 2007). In concurrent nested approaches, both data sources are collected simultaneously, but greater importance is attached to one type of data over the other (Creswell et al., 2003; Castro et al., 2010). In the present study, we quantitized the reasons the leaders named for occupying their leadership role and we statistically analyzed the associations between these reasons and the indicators of leader career sustainability and personal leader motivation. This approach enabled us to explore how leader role occupancy occurs in the real world; it also allowed us to generalize the findings to a wider population (Fetters et al., 2013). The concurrent approach enabled us to integrate both data sources in an unbiased manner as both were treated as independent entities in the data collection phase, but were brought together for analysis and interpretation (Bryman, 2007). To analyze RQ1, the first author read the leaders' open-ended answers using an inductive approach in order to identify common themes in the answers. These themes were then grouped together around similar content, resulting in 26 themes (e.g., "Leadership experience," "Personal characteristics," "Organizational factors"). After this, two independent coders (psychology students who were trained to do the coding as a part of their studies) read the open-ended answers and coded them according the different themes. Krippendorff's alpha (Krippendorff, 2004a,b) was calculated for each of the 26 themes

TABLE 1 | The coding procedure for empirical data: Citations, themes, their descriptions and theory-driven codings.

Citation	Theme label	Interpretation	Theory-driven coding
"Previous leadership experience and evidence of good performance, —." "Previous success as a team leader"	Leadership experience	Positive experiences of prior leader positions and their importance	Person; Agentic
"My own desire to make an impact, to develop and drive things forward"	Strive for impact	Striving to have an impact and develop the present situation	
"I've applied for these roles/positions myself" "My own interest in these positions."	Leadership motivation	Personal interest in leading others, one's own motivation for positions of leadership	
"(It was) My own goal and hard work to achieve that goal —"	Hardworking attitude	Descriptions of determination and stamina in relation to work	
"— the desire to change to more responsible and more demanding duties." "The desire to move on from my earlier job. I'm working in this supervisory position because I wanted a job with challenges!" "Job description."	Nature of the job itself	Highlighting the occupation or the work, increasing or maintaining its meaningfulness	Context; Agentic
"My personal characteristics, I believe I am seen as an approachable and positive person.—" "I'm a fit, experienced and reliable person for the job." "My personality and reputation. — My desire to solve matters sensibly. Courage."	Personal characteristics	Respondent's perception of his/her own qualities that are suitable for leader	Person; Non-agentic
"A sense of responsibility and duty. My desire to do my part for the administration." "I couldn't say 'no'."	Sense of duty	Accepting a leader role out of a sense of duty and responsibility.	
"Chance plays a role. I've gradually drifted towards leader positions. —" "Everyone takes it in turn." "There is no one else to appoint as leader."	Chance or circumstance	Prevailing circumstances that were described as outside of the respondent's active control	Context; Non-agentic
"The need for someone else to step in because of retirement, organizational changes."	Organizational factors	Descriptions that highlighted the needs of the organization, stemming from organizational restructuring, the size of the unit/department, filling a void, etc.	
"This is a small academic subject and I'm the only one with a professorship." "Leading research projects is a 'natural' part of being a professor–." "Leading a research project is naturally something you have to do if you do research and want to organize the work of your colleagues and postgraduate students, —."	Procedures typical of scientific organizations or academia	Factors that are typical of academia and the scientific community and affect leader role occupancy: acquiring research funding, leading one's own research projects, status (e.g., a professorship)	
"The desire to move forward career-wise" "My personal interest and desire to advance in my career"	Intentional career advancement	Descriptions that reflected an intentional advancement of one's own career up the hierarchy or towards a better position or status	Time; Agentic
"It's a natural progression in my career and the attendant increase in responsibilities." "A long career and its 'normal or typical' progression."	Career evolution	Descriptions that highlighted career progression as "evolution" and a leader position as an inevitable result of long tenure.	Time; Non-agentic

based on the work of the two independent coders. The mean level of Krippendorff's alpha was 0.52 in the whole data, ranging from −0.02 to 0.77. A negative Krippendorff's alpha indicates a skewness in the variable (Krippendorff, 2004b) and in the present data it concerned two categories that were quite minor

in frequency ("Entrepreneurial motives" and "Strive to coach"). After the examination of Krippendorff's alphas, the first author did a second, blind reading of all the responses and, working on the codings of the two psychology students, came up with a final classification of each response into the 26 themes. The

Agency vs. Non-agency / Sustainable career component	Agentic stance to pursuing leadership	Non-agentic stance to pursuing leadership
Person	Leadership motivation: 18% Strive for impact: 13% Proactive self-development: 8% Proof of good performance: 7% Managerial competencies: 7% Hardworking attitude: 4% Entrepreneurial motives: 3% Leadership skills: 3% Leadership experience: 3% Social motives: 2% Strive to coach: 1 %	Competence: 20% Personal characteristics: 17% Experience: 13% Sense of duty: 4%
Context	Nature of the job itself : 4%	Procedurestypical to scientific organization or academia: 15% Chance or circumstances: 13% Recognized potential or peer-nomination: 7% Organizational factors: 3%
Time	Intentional career advancement: 3%	Career evolution: 3%

FIGURE 1 | 3 × 2 matrix of identified themes in relation to sustainable career components and agentic or non-agentic stance towards leadership. The prevalence of the original theme (one or more mentioning) among all responses presented as %.

26 themes were then reviewed to find out whether they form a hierarchical structure and represent a broader phenomenon (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2012). After the first inductive reading, we were able to identify elements in the data that reflect the key concepts of leader emergence (agency) and sustainable careers (person, context, time), so we took a deductive, theory-driven approach (Braun and Clarke, 2012) to the data to reduce the original number of themes (26), and re-classified the original themes into four new categories: agency vs. non-agency, and the three aforementioned components of a sustainable career.

To answer the criticism of overemphasizing the role of individual agency in career construction (e.g., Inkson et al., 2012), we paid particular attention to differentiating agency from non-agency. A key distinction between agentic vs. non-agentic factors behind leader role occupancy related to whether or not the leaders' answers included an element of active pursuit or striving toward a specifically leader career. For example, one of the original, first-round content categories, "Leadership experience," was coded as agentic, as these answers reflected individual striving for a leader position by acquiring experience that would be relevant to the position. In contrast, the category "Experience" was coded as non-agentic, as the answers in this category lacked the active pursuit of a *leader* career and reflected experience other than that related to leadership.

Of the 26 content categories that were originally identified in the data, 22 could be identified in the theory-driven analysis focused on the sustainable career components (person, context, time) and agency vs. non-agency. Three of the four categories

that were omitted from the final classification lacked the element of agency—non-agency ("Other factors," "Collaborative skills" and "International experience") and the fourth one, "Lobbying" (<1% of all responses), was very marginal. Specimen answers and the final theory-driven coding that was used in subsequent statistical analyses are presented in **Table 1**. The theory-driven classification combining sustainable career components and the level of agency resulted in a 3 × 2 (*Person—Context—Time × Agency—Non-agency*) matrix, which was discussed and agreed among the research group and is presented in **Figure 1**.

Integrative Analysis: How Quantitized Reasons for Leader Role Occupancy Associates With Demographics, Leadership Motivation and Sustainable Career Indicators

After theory-driven categorization of themes, the qualitative data was quantitized for further analysis (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Fetters et al., 2013). We used the theory-driven categories of sustainable career components and the coded levels of agency as the starting point for the data conversion and coding. Instead of calculating the exact number of themes in each of the theory-driven categories for every respondent, we used dichotomous coding for each category. This decision was based on our interest in studying whether or not a leader had mentioned each of the themes, not in studying the exact number or distribution of themes within each category. The data conversion procedure resulted in one dichotomous variable (0 = leader had not mentioned this reason, 1 = leader had mentioned one or more

reasons in this category) for each of the categories, that were: *person-related, context-related, agentic,* and *non-agentic* reasons behind leader role occupancy.

All of the statistical analyses were performed in SPSS (version 24). The relationships between study variables were investigated with correlation coefficients (Pearson's *r* and Spearman's *rho*; available on request from the first author), cross-tabulation, Chi square tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the control variables for subsequent analysis (**Tables 2**, **3**). Cross-tabulation with Chi square tests was performed to determine whether occupational background and gender associated with the aforementioned four reason categories. For continuous variables (age, past leadership experience), a similar investigation was performed with ANOVA. Those demographic variables that were found to associate with reason categories were controlled for in subsequent analyses.

Logistic regression analyses were performed to examine whether a leader's personal leadership motivation predicted a specific reason category; that is, the mentioning (no/yes) of a specific reason for leader role occupancy. The logistic regression model was estimated independently for each reason category (person- and context-related, agentic and non-agentic reasons). Based on the investigation of the associations between demographic factors and reasons for leader role occupancy, professors were set as a reference group, as they differed from the other occupational groups and were also older than other leaders in the data. To investigate which reasons for leader role occupancy the leader had mentioned and whether their reasons differed in relation to both the leader's and followers' occupational well-being, we used analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

RESULTS

Descriptions of Reasons Behind Leader Role Occupancy

The complete list of themes of reasons behind leader role occupancy and descriptions of their content, together with the theory-driven categorization is provided in **Table 1**. The original themes that were recognized in the open-ended question responses were placed in a 3 × 2 matrix (**Figure 1**), which was based on the sustainable career components in relation to personal agency. Here, all the original text scripts were analyzed based on whether or not the leaders' responses reflected personal agency in their pursuit of a career as a leader. For example, responses reflecting the sustainable career component, "Context," were evaluated to determine if they reflected an active or a passive stance for pursuing a career as a leader. When the respondents described that they were "working in this supervisory position because (they) wanted a job with challenges!," they mentioned a job-related reason, which emphasized the active role they played. This response highlighted the work itself as the main reason for leader role occupancy, which is a context-related factor according to the model by De Vos et al. (2020) with active, agentic elements. Therefore, it was categorized as Context-Agentic. In contrast, the responses that included context-related themes but reflected a

TABLE 2 | Differing demographic factors (occupational group, gender) according to reasons for leader role occupancy.

	Person-related reasons			Context-related reasons			Agentic reasons			Non-agentic reasons		
	None % (adj. res.)	One or more % (adj. res.)	χ^2 (df)	None % (adj. res.)	One or more % (adj. res.)	χ^2 (df)	None % (adj. res.)	One or more % (adj. res.)	χ^2 (df)	None % (adj. res.)	One or more % (adj. res.)	χ^2 (df)
Occupational group			133.07 (5)***			141.89 (5)***			143.64 (5)***			29.20 (5)***
Professors (*n* = 375)	43.5 (10.3)	56.5 (−10.3)		39.0 (−9.9)	61.0 (9.9)		62.5 (9.9)	37.5 (−9.9)		21.5 (−3.9)	78.5 (3.9)	
University teachers and academics (*n* = 99)	34.3 (2.1)	65.7 (−2.1)		43.1 (−3.2)	56.9 (3.2)		55.9 (2.7)	44.1 (−2.7)		22.5 (−1.4)	77.5 (1.4)	
Business sector (*n* = 186)	11.3 (−5.1)	88.7 (5.1)		77.8 (6.1)	22.2 (−6.1)		32.0 (−3.5)	68.0 (3.5)		28.9 (0.2)	71.1 (−0.2)	
Academic engineers (*n* = 100)	15.6 (−2.6)	84.4 (2.6)		81.7 (5.2)	18.3 (−5.2)		38.5 (−1.0)	61.5 (1.0)		39.4 (2.7)	60.6 (−2.7)	
Social and health care (*n* = 110)	16.8 (−2.3)	83.2 (2.3)		61.9 (0.9)	38.1 (−0.9)		28.3 (−3.4)	71.7 (3.4)		29.2 (0.2)	70.8 (−0.2)	
EMBA alumni's and other (*n* = 161)	6.7 (−6.1)	93.3 (6.1)		73.2 (4.2)	26.8 (−4.2)		14.6 (−8.0)	85.4 (8.0)		40.2 (3.7)	59.8 (−3.7)	
Gender			11.15 (1)***			0.00 (1) ns			18.12 (1)***			0.43 (1) ns
Female	21.3 (−3.3)	78.7 (3.3)		58.2 (0.0)	41.8 (0.0)		36.8 (−4.3)	63.2 (4.3)		27.4 (−0.7)	72.6 (0.7)	
Male	30.1 (3.3)	69.9 (−3.3)		58.1 (0.0)	41.9 (0.0)		49.5 (4.3)	50.5 (−4.3)		29.2 (0.7)	70.8 (−0.7)	

*** *p* ≤ 0.001, adj. res. = adjusted residuals, ± 2 considered as atypical.

TABLE 3 | Differing demographic factors (age, past leadership experience) according to reasons for leader role occupancy (ANOVA).

	Person-related reasons			Context-related reasons			Agentic reasons			Non-agentic reasons		
	None M (SD)	One or more M (SD)	F (df)	None M (SD)	One or more M (SD)	F (df)	None M (SD)	One or more M (SD)	F (df)	None M (SD)	One or more M (SD)	F (df)
Age	54.4 (8.3)	50.6 (8.8)	38.89 (1)***	50.3 (8.8)	53.2 (8.6)	28.66 (1)***	54.0 (8.1)	49.7 (8.9)	65.60 (1)***	50.5 (9.0)	51.9 (8.7)	5.56 (1)*
Past leadership experience	12.3 (7.9)	13.2 (8.6)	2.46 (1) ns	13.2 (8.6)	12.7 (8.3)	1.08 (1) ns	12.4 (8.3)	13.4 (8.6)	3.19 (1) ns	13.7 (8.9)	12.7 (8.3)	3.44 (1) ns

ns, non-significant; *$p \leq 0.05$; ***$p \leq 0.001$.

more passive stance (e.g., "Chance plays a role. I've gradually drifted toward leader positions"), were categorized as Context-Non-agentic. Each theme was evaluated in a similar manner. To ensure the validity of constructing this matrix, the theme categorizations and the original text scripts were analyzed. This was done by the first author. All the authors discussed and agreed upon the procedure and the final classifications.

As shown in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**, the reasons that leaders mentioned for their leader role occupancy could be classified in terms of sustainable career components (person, context, and time) and the presence of agency (agentic vs. non-agentic). For time-related reasons for leader role occupancy, two mutually exclusive categories appeared in the data: "Intentional career advancement," which reflected an agentic stance, and "Career evolution," which reflected a non-agentic stance. Altogether, only 6% of the leaders mentioned a time-related factor (either agentic or non-agentic) that had affected their leader role occupancy. As these categories differed from the others because of their mutually exclusive nature (respondents mentioned either an agentic or a non-agentic stance in relation to time) and limited variation, they were omitted from the subsequent statistical analyses.

Of the sustainable career components, the respondents mentioned more person-related reasons (74%) than context-related reasons (42%) for leader role occupancy. Of the person-related reasons, "Competence" (descriptions of individual qualifications, knowledge, and general or field-specific competencies) was mentioned most often, in 20% of all cases. This was followed by "Leadership motivation," which reflected the respondent's personal interest in leading others (18%), and "Personal characteristics" (related to personality and other personal features that are considered suitable for a leader; 17%). Other person-related reasons were "Striving for impact" (the desire to have an impact and to develop the present situation; 13%) and "Experience" (having general experience of life and work experience, a long work history or job tenure; 13%). Person-related reasons pertaining to leadership were mentioned less often: "Managerial competencies" (related to so-called management skills and competencies, e.g., the ability to organize, make decisions, and direct administrative procedures) was mentioned in only 7% of all of the responses given. "Leadership experience" and "Leadership skills" (focusing on skills and competencies related to people management and leadership in contrast to task management, e.g., the ability to communicate vision to followers) were both mentioned in only 3% of the total responses.

Of the context-related reasons, the most typical categories were "Procedures typical of scientific organizations or academia" (15% of all reasons mentioned), "Chance or circumstance" (13%), "Recognized potential or peer nomination" (7%), "Nature of the job itself" (4%), and "Organizational factors" (3%). The category "Procedures typical of scientific organizations or academia" described situations where the position of leader was an automatic consequence of the responsibilities associated with conducting research (e.g., leading one's own research group) or having an academic position (e.g., a professorship). The category "Chance or circumstances" included answers that highlighted circumstances outside of the individual's control, such as chance, being the only one who could be appointed leader, or the result of job rotation. This differed from the category "Organizational factors," in which respondents described the specific needs of the organization and organizational changes that had affected their current leader role occupancy. The category "Recognized potential or peer nomination" included answers that highlighted occupying a leader role because of having been recommended by one's own supervisor or colleagues, or resulting from peer nomination. The answers in the category "Nature of the job itself" reflected factors related to the content of the work, the need to keep one's job or increase its meaningfulness, or one's job satisfaction.

Altogether, non-agentic reasons for leader role occupancy were mentioned more often than agentic reasons: one or more non-agentic reasons were mentioned in 92% of the responses, whereas one or more agentic reasons for leader role occupancy were mentioned in 73%. A complete list of all the identified categories, example answers, and descriptions of the categories is available from the first author on request.

Results of the Descriptive Analysis: Relationships Between Study Variables

The differing demographics among the reason categories are presented in **Tables 2**, **3**. Taken together, women mentioned more often than men many person-related and agentic reasons for their leader role occupancy. With regard to occupational background, leaders in academic settings tended to express more context- and non-agentic factors that had affected their current leader role occupancy. It was more common for those working in the business sector or

TABLE 4 | Predictors of person- and context-related reasons for current leader role occupancy (logistic regression analysis).

Person-related reasons for leader role occupancy						Context-related reasons for leader role occupancy					
				95% CI for Exp(B)						95% CI for Exp(B)	
Predictor	β	S.E β	Wald's χ^2	Exp(β) (OR)	Lower	Upper	Predictor	β	S.E β	Wald's χ^2	Exp(β) (OR)	Lower	Upper
Affective-Identity MTL	0.39***	0.12	11.41	1.48	1.18	1.87	Affective-Identity MTL	−0.20*	0.10	3.81	0.82	0.67	1.00
Non-calculative MTL	0.18†	0.10	3.40	1.20	0.99	1.45	Non-calculative MTL	−0.01ns	0.08	0.01	0.99	0.84	1.17
Social-Normative MTL	0.07ns	0.11	0.44	1.07	0.87	1.32	Social-Normative MTL	−0.07ns	0.09	0.61	0.93	0.78	1.11
Gender	0.38*	0.17	4.82	1.47	1.04	2.06							
Age	−0.01ns	0.01	0.71	0.99	0.97	1.01	Age	0.01ns	0.01	0.40	1.01	0.99	1.02
University teachers and researchers	0.24ns	0.26	0.86	1.27	0.76	2.12	University teachers and researchers	−0.18ns	0.24	0.55	0.84	0.53	1.34
Business sector	1.49***	0.28	28.75	4.44	2.58	7.67	Business sector	−1.62***	0.23	51.20	0.20	0.13	0.31
Academic engineers	1.39***	0.32	18.70	4.01	2.14	7.53	Academic engineers	−1.80***	0.29	39.40	0.17	0.10	0.29
Social and health care sector	1.25***	0.32	14.85	3.48	1.85	6.57	Social and health care sector	−0.94***	0.24	15.63	0.39	0.24	0.62
EMBA alumnis and other	1.97***	0.35	32.40	7.16	3.64	14.11	EMBA alumnis and other	−1.35***	0.23	34.08	0.26	0.17	0.41
Constant	5.32***	0.96	3.45	204.22			Constant	−4.86***	0.84	33.36	0.01		

Test			X^2	R^2	%	Test			X^2	R^2	%
Goodness-of-fit test						Goodness-of-fit test					
Hosmer and Lemeshow			6.65ns			Hosmer and Lemeshow			6.03ns		
Nagelkerke R^2				0.20		Nagelkerke R^2				0.18	
Cox and Snell R^2				0.13		Cox and Snell R^2				0.13	
Overall presentage					75.80	Overall presentage					67.90
Omnibus tests of model coefficients			142.55***			Omnibus tests of model coefficients			14.09***		

ns, non-significant; †$p \leq 0.07$; *$p \leq 0.05$; ***$p \leq 0.001$.
All df's for beta coefficients = 1. For person-related reasons, df = 8 for Hosmer-Lemeshow and df = 10 for Omnibus test. For context-related reasons, df = 8 for Hosmer-Lemeshow and df = 9 for Omnibus test.

with some kind of formal training in leadership to express person-related and agentic factors as reasons for working in a leader position. Older leaders typically mentioned many context-related reasons and no person-related reasons for their leader role occupancy, and younger leaders mentioned more agentic reasons. Past leadership experience was not related to the reasons studied for leader role occupancy. These differing demographic factors were set as covariates in subsequent analyses.

Personal Leadership Motivation and Leader Role Occupancy

Our second research question was concerned with whether leaders' personal motivation to lead predicted their reasons for leader role occupancy. The results of logistic regression analyses are presented in **Tables 4**, **5**. Based on the descriptive quantitative

analysis, professors were set as a reference group in all the logistic regression analyses as they were older than the other leaders in the study and they differed from leaders with other occupational backgrounds in the reasons for their leader role occupancy in every studied category. Taken together, various factors predicted the mention of person-related and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy, but only occupational background was associated with mentioning reasons that stemmed from contextual factors or reflected a non-agentic stance toward leadership.

Of the controlled demographic variables, gender, age and occupational group predicted the mentioning of person-related reasons (**Table 4**) and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy (**Table 5**). For context-related reasons (**Table 4**) and non-agentic reasons (**Table 5**), occupational background was the only demographic factor to predict the mentioning of these reasons for leader role occupancy.

TABLE 5 | Predictors of agentic and non-agentic reasons for current leader role occupancy (logistic regression analysis).

	Agentic reasons for leader role occupancy						**Non-agentic reasons for leader role occupancy**					
					95% CI for Exp(B)							**95% CI for Exp(B)**	
Predictor	**β**	**S.E β**	**Wald's χ^2**	**Exp(β) (OR)**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**Predictor**	**β**	**S.E β**	**Wald's χ^2**	**Exp(β) (OR)**	**Lower**	**Upper**
Affective-Identity MTL	0.62***	0.11	33.16	1.85	1.50	2.29	Affective-identity MTL	−0.31**	0.11	8.10	0.74	0.59	0.91
Non-calculative MTL	0.04ns	0.09	0.25	1.04	0.88	1.24	Non-calculative MTL	0.09ns	0.09	1.08	1.10	0.92	1.30
Social-Normative MTL	−0.17ns	0.09	3.15	0.85	0.70	1.02	Social-Normative MTL	1.00ns	1.00	1.09	1.10	0.92	1.33
Gender	0.37*	0.16	5.57	1.44	1.06	1.96							
Age	−0.02**	0.01	6.10	0.98	0.96	1.00							
University teachers and researchers	−0.06ns	0.25	0.05	0.94	0.58	1.54	University teachers and researchers	−0.09ns	0.28	1.00	0.92	0.53	1.58
Business sector	0.70***	0.21	1.70	2.02	1.33	3.07	Business sector	−0.26ns	0.22	1.45	0.77	0.51	1.18
Academic engineers	0.65**	0.25	6.74	1.91	1.17	3.12	Academic engineers	−0.75**	0.25	9.48	0.47	0.29	0.76
Social and health care sector	1.14***	0.27	17.55	3.14	1.84	5.35	Social and health care sector	−0.42ns	0.25	2.82	0.65	0.40	1.07
EMBA alumnis and other	1.79***	0.27	43.13	5.99	3.51	1.21	EMBA alumnis and other	−0.83***	0.22	15.00	0.44	0.29	0.66
Constant	3.69***	0.86	18.67	4.19			Constant	−0.65ns	0.88	0.547	0.52		
Test			X^2	R^2	%		**Test**			X^2	R^2	%	
Goodness-of-fit test							Goodness-of-fit test						
Hosmer and Lemeshow			5.57ns				Hosmer and Lemeshow			2.95ns			
Nagelkerke R^2				0.23			Nagelkerke R^2				0.06		
Cox and Snell R^2				0.17			Cox and Snell R^2				0.04		
Overall presentage					67.9		Overall presentage					71.8	
Omnibus tests of model coefficients			186.35***				Omnibus tests of model coefficients			39.78***			

ns, non-significant; *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01; ***p ≤ 0.001. All df's for beta coefficients = 1. For agentic reasons, df = 8 for Hosmer-Lemeshow and df = 10 for Omnibus test. For non-agentic reasons, df = 8 for Hosmer-Lemeshow, and df = 8 for Omnibus test.

Of the different dimensions of leadership motivation, only Affective-Identity MTL associated with the reasons behind leader role occupancy. It increased the probability of naming person-related and agentic reasons (with odds ratios greater than one) and reduced the probability of naming context-related and non-agentic reasons (with odds ratios smaller than one). Non-calculative MTL failed to reach statistical significance when predicting the mentioning of person-related reasons for leader role occupancy, but had an odds ratio greater than one, indicating increased probability of naming these reasons.

Leader Role Occupancy and Leader's Health as an Indicator of a Sustainable Career

The results of the ANCOVA analysis investigating RQ3 are presented in **Table 6**. With regard to the burnout symptoms that we examined, those leaders who had mentioned one or more person-related reasons for their leader role occupancy reported less cynicism and less inadequacy. With regard to the indicators of work engagement, they also reported more vigor compared to those leaders who had not mentioned any person-related reasons for their leader role occupancy. Conversely, those leaders who had mentioned one or more context-related reasons for their leader role occupancy reported more of all of the burnout symptoms (exhaustion, cynicism, and inadequacy) and less vigor compared to those who had not mentioned context-related reasons at all. As for the agentic reasons behind a leader's current leader role occupancy, those who had mentioned one or more agentic reasons for occupying their current role reported less cynicism and inadequacy and more vigor and dedication than those leaders who had not mentioned any of these reasons. Non-agentic reasons behind leader role occupancy did not associate with leader's own occupational well-being.

TABLE 6 | Mean differences in leader's occupational well-being according to reasons behind leader role occupancy (ANCOVA; leader's age, occupational background and gender controlled for).

	Reasons mentioned: None M (SE)	Reasons mentioned: One or more M (SE)	F	R_a^2	Partial η^2
Person-related reasons					
Burnout					
Exhaustion	3.23 (0.08)	3.14 (0.04)	1.01ns	0.09	<0.01
Cynicism	2.47 (0.08)	2.28 (0.04)	4.57*	0.02	0.01
Inadequacy	2.73 (0.08)	2.50 (0.05)	5.60*	0.02	0.01
Work engagement					
Vigor	5.50 (0.07)	5.71 (0.04)	5.70*	0.05	0.01
Dedication	5.86 (0.07)	5.94 (0.04)	0.867ns	0.02	<0.01
Absorption	5.92 (0.07)	5.88 (0.04)	0.32ns	0.02	<0.01
Context-related reasons					
Burnout					
Exhaustion	3.04 (0.05)	3.32 (0.06)	12.50***	0.10	0.01
Cynicism	2.24 (0.05)	2.45 (0.06)	7.18**	0.02	0.01
Inadequacy	2.46 (0.06)	2.68 (0.06)	6.25**	0.02	0.01
Work engagement					
Vigor	5.74 (0.05)	5.55 (0.06)	6.02**	0.05	0.01
Dedication	5.96 (0.05)	5.88 (0.05)	1.14ns	0.02	<0.01
Absorption	5.91 (0.04)	5.87 (0.05)	0.301ns	0.02	<0.01
Agentic reasons					
Burnout					
Exhaustion	3.22 (0.06)	3.12 (0.05)	1.66ns	0.09	<0.01
Cynicism	2.52 (0.06)	2.20 (0.05)	17.18***	0.03	0.02
Inadequacy	2.70 (0.07)	2.45 (0.06)	8.18**	0.03	0.01
Work engagement					
Vigor	5.50 (0.06)	5.77 (0.05)	12.70***	0.06	0.01
Dedication	5.79 (0.06)	6.02 (0.05)	8.80**	0.03	0.01
Absorption	5.83 (0.05)	5.93 (0.04)	2.04ns	0.03	<0.01
Non-agentic reasons					
Burnout					
Exhaustion	3.09 (0.07)	3.19 (0.04)	1.68ns	0.09	<0.01
Cynicism	2.25 (0.07)	2.36(0.04)	1.83ns	0.01	<0.01
Inadequacy	2.52 (0.08)	2.57 (0.05)	0.327ns	0.02	<0.01
Work engagement					
Vigor	5.69 (0.07)	5.64 (0.04)	0.41ns	0.05	<0.01
Dedication	5.98 (0.07)	5.90 (0.04)	1.07ns	0.02	<0.01
Absorption	5.89 (0.06)	5.89 (0.04)	0.01ns	0.02	<0.01

ns, non-significant; *$p \leq 0.05$; **$p \leq 0.01$; ***$p \leq 0.001$.
Mentioning of person-related reasons: none n = 232, one or more n = 687; context-related reasons: none n = 521, one or more n = 398; agentic reasons: none n = 384, one or more n = 535; non-agentic reasons: none n = 256, one or more n = 663. Burnout scores ranged from 1 to 5, work engagement scores ranged from 1 to 7. R_a^2 = Adjusted R Square.

Leader Role Occupancy, and Leader Performance as an Indicator of a Sustainable Career

The results of the ANCOVA analysis for RQ4 are presented in **Table 7**. If a leader had mentioned one or more person-related reasons for their leader role occupancy, their followers reported less exhaustion and less inadequacy with regard to the burnout symptoms than the followers of leaders who had not mentioned person-related reasons at all. On the other hand, if the leader had mentioned context-related reasons for their leader role occupancy, their followers reported less vigor than those who had not mentioned these reasons. The followers of a leader who had mentioned one or more agentic reason for their current leader role occupancy reported less exhaustion, but followers' occupational well-being was not related to a leader's non-agentic reasons for leader role occupancy.

TABLE 7 | Mean differences in follower-rated occupational well-being according to leader's reasons behind their leader role occupancy (ANCOVA; controlled variables presented in the Table notes).

	Reasons mentioned: None M (SE)	Reasons mentioned: One or more M (SE)	F	R_a^2	Partial η^2
Leader's reason for leader role occupancy: Person-related					
Follower burnout					
Exhaustion	3.12 (0.10)	2.81 (0.04)	8.27**	0.02	0.01
Cynicism	2.17 (0.10)	2.17 (0.03)	0.00ns	0.01	<0.01
Inadequacy	2.73 (0.11)	2.48 (0.04)	5.79*	0.01	<0.01
Follower work engagement					
Vigor	5.55 (0.10)	5.74(0.04)	3.09ns	<0.01	<0.01
Dedication	5.81 (0.11)	5.85 (0.04)	0.084ns	0.01	<0.01
Absorption	5.89 (0.10)	5.77 (0.04)	1.08ns	<0.01	<0.01
Leader's reason for leader role occupancy: Context-related					
Follower burnout					
Exhaustion	2.84 (0.04)	2.87 (0.06)	0.25ns	0.01	<0.01
Cynicism	2.15 (0.04)	2.21 (0.05)	0.99ns	0.01	<0.01
Inadequacy	2.52 (0.05)	2.49 (0.06)	0.10ns	0.01	<0.01
Follower work engagement					
Vigor	5.79 (0.04)	5.59 (0.06)	7.90**	0.01	0.01
Dedication	5.88 (0.05)	5.78 (0.06)	1.52ns	0.01	<0.01
Absorption	5.78 (0.04)	5.80 (0.06)	0.05ns	<0.01	<0.01
Leader's reason for leader role occupancy: Agentic					
Follower burnout					
Exhaustion	3.05 (0.07)	2.78 (0.04)	12.44***	0.02	0.01
Cynicism	2.21 (0.06)	2.16 (0.04)	0.46ns	0.01	<0.01
Inadequacy	2.63 (0.08)	2.47 (0.04)	3.33†	0.01	<0.01
Follower work engagement					
Vigor	5.63 (0.07)	5.75 (0.04)	2.39ns	<0.01	<0.01
Dedication	5.86 (0.07)	5.83 (0.04)	0.11ns	0.01	<0.01
Absorption	5.82 (0.07)	5.77 (0.04)	0.38ns	<0.01	<0.01
Leader's reason for leader role occupancy: Non-agentic					
Follower burnout					
Exhaustion	2.80 (0.06)	2.87 (0.04)	1.12ns	0.01	<0.01
Cynicism	2.16 (0.06)	2.18 (0.04)	0.03ns	0.01	<0.01
Inadequacy	2.59 (0.07)	2.47 (0.05)	1.98ns	0.01	<0.01
Follower work engagement					
Vigor	5.72 (0.06)	5.71 (0.04)	0.02ns	<0.01	<0.01
Dedication	5.79 (0.06)	5.87 (0.04)	1.05ns	0.01	<0.01
Absorption	5.72 (0.06)	5.81 (0.04)	1.58ns	<0.01	<0.01

ns, non-significant; †$p \leq 0.07$; *$p \leq 0.05$; **$p \leq 0.01$; ***$p \leq 0.001$.
Followers' responses per mentioning of person-related reasons: none n = 110, one or more n = 854; context-related reasons: none n = 605, one or more n = 359; agentic reasons: none n = 239, one or more n = 725; non-agentic reasons: none n = 302, one or more n = 662. For burnout, the length of leader-follower relationship was controlled for. For work engagement, followers' age, gender and the length of leader-follower relationship was controlled for. R_a^2 = Adjusted R Square.

DISCUSSION

We had four specific aims in this study. First, we wanted to explore the variety of reasons that leaders would mention when asked to name the factors behind their leader role occupancy. Secondly, in order to assess how individual factors predict the reasons for leader role occupancy, we used mixed method analysis strategy to examine if leaders' personal leadership motivation was one such indication. We also combined the different reasons for leader role occupancy with the model of sustainable leader careers, and explored whether different reasons behind occupying a leader role associated with career sustainability indicators. Thus, our third aim was to investigate the reasons for leader role occupancy in relation to leaders' health. Finally, our fourth aim was to explore the reasons for leader role occupancy in relation to leader performance,

that is, productivity. Let us now turn to our findings in more detail.

Drivers and Drifters—Various Reasons Affecting Leader Role Occupancy

We found that there was substantial variation in the leaders' descriptions of what had affected their current leader role occupancy, as the preliminary analysis resulted in 26 different themes. After classifying these themes based on the conceptual model of sustainable careers, we were able to identify all the three components of the model (person, context, time) in our data. We could also identify both agentic and non-agentic attitudes toward pursuing a leader role. Four of the original, data-driven categories did not fit the theory-based classification, as they lacked the level of agency or were too vague to be classified according to the components of a sustainable career. One such example was the category of "Other factors," in which we placed all those responses that did not fit into any other content categories, such as one that cited money.

Of the person-related reasons that were mentioned as having an effect on the respondent's present position as a leader, the majority reflected an agentic stance toward pursuing the position. Agency in pursuing a leader role was mentioned in 69% of the responses, while 54% of the responses reflected a non-agentic stance toward leadership. Among the agentic person-related reasons, personal leadership motivation was the one most often mentioned for current leader role occupancy (nearly one fifth of the responses). Personal motivation for leader roles acts as natural fuel for leader emergence, and from the sustainable leader career perspective, for an individual a possibility to activate or verify valued personal identities through work, it provides a sense of meaningfulness (Rosso et al., 2010).

Factors related to management or leadership skills or competencies were mentioned strikingly less often than other agentic, person-related reasons (in less than one tenth of the total responses). In addition, reasons that involved being suitable for the job (i.e., having the personal characteristics that are considered appropriate for a leader) was only the third most frequently mentioned reason (preceded by "Competence" and "Leadership motivation") among all the person-related reasons. This finding is surprising, even alarming, when we consider whether people who work as leaders are actually suitable for their role. Although having personal motivation is important, also task-related skills, competencies, and appropriate personal characteristics are necessary to succeed in the job, and for good leader performance (Van Iddekinge et al., 2009). In addition, the leaders who participated in the study gave nearly as much emphasis to having personal experience that was not related to previous leadership tasks as to having suitable personal characteristics. For example, leaders stated that they were "qualified to do so," had "acquired experience and competence in such areas (undergraduate education, research, societal interaction) that have provided the prerequisites for academic leadership positions" or generally mentioned "expertise and experience" as a reason for occupying a leader role. This raises questions about the leader's performance and the quality of his or her leadership: general experience of life and work

may be helpful when working as a leader, but is it enough to ensure that the person will perform well in a demanding position with multiple staff- and performance-related responsibilities? It has to be noted, however, that the majority of the leaders in our study came from the academic world, such as universities, so their initial career motivations may have been based more on professionalism than on leading others (see e.g., Chan et al., 2012). This might help to explain the prevalence of these reasons in the data.

Striving to make an impact or to develop the existing situation was mentioned fourth most frequently as a reason for leader role occupancy. This may indicate that despite the falling interest in leader positions (Chudzikowski, 2012; Sutela and Lehto, 2014; Torres, 2014; Crowley-Henry et al., 2019), among those who are working as leaders, the position is still seen as valuable and appreciated, offering the possibility of having an influence on a whole range of different matters, from having an impact on one's own work community to wider societal issues. Being able to have an impact via one's work gives one a sense of purposefulness, which is conceptualized as the experience that one's work serves a broader purpose and something valuable beyond oneself (Steger et al., 2012; Martela and Pessi, 2018). Making a contribution (i.e., serving a broader purpose) is an essential source of meaning (Rosso et al., 2010; Steger et al., 2012; Martela and Pessi, 2018), which is a key element in supporting career sustainability (De Vos et al., 2020). Another theme that was identified in the data as reflecting the importance of contributing as a source of meaning was the desire to coach or mentor others. Leaders told that they had an "interest in guiding people," "desire to coach and train future leaders and managers" or had an "opportunity to influence and coach subordinates to growth." Although answers that were classified under this person-related theme were reported by only about one percent of the leaders, it is an important motivational factor that includes at the same time both agentic, individual preferences for leading and more communal preferences for supporting others. In sum, leaders who mentioned person-related reasons for their leader role occupancy can be viewed as active drivers toward their leader position. They are also more likely to draw meaning from multiple sources for their current role as a leader.

The majority of the context-related reasons, as expected, reflected a non-agentic stance to pursuing leadership. The two most often mentioned context-related reasons related to conditions that were outside of one's personal control. The first related to the well-established practices or patterns within the leader's organization, which affected their job description and shaped the content of responsibilities within their specific sector. Leaders stated that "it has to be done—(leader positions) fall under the professor's job description" or that "the post is responsible for the laboratory's research." These organizational and/or institutional norms had affected the current leader role occupancy, and they were most prominent among leaders working in academia. The responses of these leaders often included descriptions of adaptation to the current situation and to their work environment. Even though they saw their leadership duties as extra work, beyond their core tasks (such as, for the academics, of conducting research), they did not question or

criticize their leader role. Rather, leader responsibilities were accepted as a matter of course. This is not surprising, as research shows that leaders in academia have varying levels of leadership motivation (see Auvinen et al., 2020). These findings raise the question of how these leaders experience meaning in their work: whether it is possible for them to derive any meaning from a leader career if their original career motivation was not leadership-related but something else (e.g., professional motivation; Chan et al., 2012). Taken together, those leaders who emphasized context-related reasons can be seen as drifters in relation to leadership. Ending up as a leader regardless of the fact that they have not themselves set leading others as a personal goal calls for adjustment and adaptation to external circumstances and contextual demands. This may associate with poorer perceived meaning (see also, De Vos et al., 2020), especially if one's work and the position offer limited openings to other sources of meaningfulness than deriving it from self-actualization or expressing own authentic self (Rosso et al., 2010).

An interesting finding was that women and younger leaders mentioned more person-related and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy than men and older leaders. This may indicate that there is still gender inequality when it comes to occupying leader positions (Kossek et al., 2017). In this study, leaders who were women felt that if they wanted to work as a leader, they had to exert themselves more and demonstrate greater proactivity than their male counterparts. The descriptive statistical analyses of the association between age and occupational background revealed that the professors were significantly older than leaders in other occupational sectors. This is not surprising, as leader positions usually come along later in the course of a university career. However, this association between age and occupational group may partly explain the finding that younger leaders mentioned more person-related and agentic reasons for their leader role occupancy. This would also be explained by the fact that younger leaders are at a different stage in their career from older leaders, and their need to consolidate their position in the labor market is more pronounced, so they are more likely to have more person-related, agentic reasons to get on in their career.

Intrinsic Leadership Motivation Associated With Leader Role Occupancy

Of the different types of leadership motivation, the intrinsic component, Affective-Identity MTL, had a significant role in predicting all of the four reasons behind leader role occupancy, whereas the other motivation types (selfless, Non-calculative MTL, and extrinsic, Social-Normative MTL) did not. Interesting light can be thrown on the different aspects of leadership motivation when we explore how MTL dimensions predicted mention of the reasons behind leader role occupancy (the odds ratios). All aspects of leadership motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic, and selfless) were related to an increased probability of naming person-related reasons behind leader role occupancy, while with context-related reasons, there was a corresponding decrease in probability. In these two reason categories, different dimensions of MTL operated in parallel, but with opposing effects.

Investigating the mention of agentic and non-agentic reasons reveals the different nature of these leadership motivation components, supporting previous research on MTL dimensionality (Badura et al., 2020). Intrinsic and selfless leadership motivations were related to an increased probability of mentioning agentic reasons for leader role occupancy, whereas extrinsic leadership motivation was related to a decreased probability. On the other hand, both selfless and extrinsic leadership motivation were related to an increased probability of mentioning non-agentic reasons, and intrinsic, identity-like leadership motivation was related to a decreased probability. This indicates that the level of agency differs between MTL dimensions: intrinsic, identity-like leadership motivation clearly associates with the agentic pursuit of leader positions whereas extrinsic leadership motivation associates with a non-agentic stance to leadership. Selfless leadership motivation differs from the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, as it included both agentic and non-agentic stances to leader positions. These findings support previous research on MTL dimensionality and highlight the importance of studying each MTL dimension separately rather than studying a composite score (Auvinen et al., 2020; Badura et al., 2020). The selfless leadership motivation component, Non-calculative MTL, needs to be studied more extensively, as it differs from the traditional intrinsic –extrinsic classification of motivational constructs.

Driving or Drifting Toward a Sustainable Leader Career?

Our aim was to connect leader role occupancy to the framework of sustainable leader careers (De Vos et al., 2020) and its key indicators. We examined leaders' own occupational well-being as an indicator of health and followers' occupational well-being as an indicator of productivity, that is, leader's performance as an output of leadership. All of the reasons for leader role occupancy except non-agentic ones were related to both leaders' own and their followers' occupational well-being, but the associations were different.

We found that leaders who had more person-related and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy experienced better occupational well-being (less cynicism and inadequacy, and more vigor). Also, leaders who had agentic reasons experienced stronger dedication. These findings suggest that leaders who have personally chosen their leader position, i.e., drivers, thrive in their current role. Their experienced occupational well-being and willingness to dedicate themselves to their work suggests that their chosen position and career provide them with a sense of meaning and offer good person-career fit. This stands in contrast to leaders who gave context-related reasons for occupying their position, who experienced all of the burnout symptoms and less vigor. Leaders who end up in a leader position largely due to external factors (such as the surrounding context; in other words in a position that they have not actively pursued, i.e., they are drifters) may end up being also "victims of circumstance" as regards their well-being. These findings suggest that for drifters, the necessary

adaptation to the demands of the surrounding context may be costly, and this will be reflected in their poorer occupational well-being and person-career mismatch. Also, deriving a sense of meaning from their career in the long run is left open to question, as it is likely that for them, the source of meaning will not stem from authenticity and self-realization through their work (Rosso et al., 2010). To support the sustainability of the drifter's leader career, it is vital to identify what gives the position meaning for them. Do they derive meaning from "unification," that is, purpose, belongingness and supporting others (Rosso et al., 2010; Martela and Pessi, 2018), and whether acting in a leader position for contextual reasons offers fulfillment of personally important aspects at work (Peterson et al., 2017) other than being in charge of other people and resources?

From the perspective of good leader performance (which we assumed would be reflected in followers' better occupational well-being), the leader's reasons behind leader role occupancy were also significant. Person- and context-related and agentic reasons behind leader role occupancy associated with followers' occupational well-being. The associations for followers' well-being, however, differed from those of leaders' well-being: for example, person-related and agentic reasons associated with followers' exhaustion, but this association was not found among leaders. It could be argued that these findings support the idea of conceptualizing followers' well-being as an indicator or a consequence of (good) leader performance. If a leader is motivated and has proactively chosen the leader position (reflecting the agentic stance), s/he would probably have sufficient and appropriate resources for leadership (see Auvinen et al., 2020) to perform well in the position. According to resource investment principles (Hobfoll, 1998, 2001, 2011), leader may then be able to invest more resources in vital leader behaviors, such as quality interaction and supporting followers, which could result in better occupational well-being for followers (Harms et al., 2017).

Theoretical and Practical Contribution

This study contributes to our understanding of the leader emergence process by acknowledging the various reasons that can bring about leader role occupancy. Our mixed-method study with over 1,000 Finnish leaders has shed light on the question of what kinds of different pathways may lead to a leader position. Theoretically, our goal was to offer another, more authentic perspective on leader emergence to complement earlier research, which has mostly been carried out in simulated settings (leaderless group discussions, see e.g., Ensari et al., 2011).

A recent review (Hanna et al., 2021) emphasized that emerging leadership is still largely attributed to individual differences. The findings of this study reiterates the message by Hanna et al. (2021, p. 88) about leader emergence research being in the need of more comprehensive review of "situational or contextual factors that are likely to influence the effects of these individual differences." To the best of our knowledge, this study was the first to connect the reasons for leader role occupancy to sustainable career indicators. To tackle the overemphasis on the role of agency in career construction (Inkson et al., 2012),

more systematic understanding that acknowledges individual, contextual and time-related factors affecting the *process* of leader emergence is needed. In addition, the question of how the process of leader emergence is tied to the construction of sustainable leader careers deserves more attention. Our findings confirm that all the perspectives related to the individual, the context, and time are relevant for leader emergence. It was beyond the scope of this paper to investigate longitudinally the process-like nature of how these different reasons for leader role occupancy may result in endurable leader careers. However, we sought to offer a starting point for such theoretical and empirical developments in the future.

The findings of this study give practitioners an important perspective on supporting sustainable careers. Overall, it was found that the reasons behind a leader's current leader role occupancy associate with focal career sustainability indicators. It seems likely that those who have actively pursued their leader position, the "drivers," will be able to build a sustainable leader career with positive consequences in terms of occupational well-being for both themselves and their followers. On the other hand, constructing a sustainable leader career seems less likely for the "drifters," who have ended up in the leader position largely due to external reasons. This should be seriously taken into account in human resource management/development processes in organizations.

To ensure the well-being and sustainable careers of "drifters," it is vital to pay attention to two issues: the potential sources of meaning in their work, and the different possible ways of supporting their agency in their current leader role. Regarding the former, it is important to take into account the meanings or needs that are important to individual and how they are fulfilled in one's current employment (task, position, role; Peterson et al., 2017). Acknowledging the possible gap between what is personally important and its realization in one's current employment may prompt a move either to establish a better balance between one's duties and their personal meaning and fulfillment or, alternatively, to make a career shift to a more fulfilling position altogether. The latter, i.e., supporting leader agency, can be done via interventions that help leaders to explore their personal leadership motivation and strengthen the intrinsic component, Affective-Identity MTL (see e.g., Stiehl et al., 2015). This is especially important when designing career practices in those fields where leaders highlighted contextual or non-agentic reasons for leader role occupancy, such as academia and other research-oriented organizations, where primary work-related motivations may stem from sources other than leading others.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Our findings were based on leaders' self-reported qualitative, retrospective descriptions of the reasons behind their current leader role occupancy. So far as we know, this was the first study to utilize this kind of qualitative data to examine leader role occupancy, and therefore the original classification of 26 themes cannot be validated against previous research. We tried to minimize any coder-dependent bias that could have occurred from different ways of interpreting the leaders'

responses by calculating inter-coder reliabilities. In addition, based on those reliabilities, the classification was reviewed and finalized by the first author. It must be noted that the classification of qualitative data reflects the sample characteristics and with a different sample, different themes could have been identified (Braun and Clarke, 2012). To develop a wider understanding of the various reasons that affect leader role occupancy, qualitative data must be collected from diverse samples in future studies. Our qualitative thematic analysis combined inductive reading and theory-driven classification with a realist ontological and epistemological stance (King and Brooks, 2018), as in this data we aimed to identify explicit semantic themes (Braun and Clarke, 2012). Future studies could dig deeper into the question of leader role occupancy and apply a relativist, constructionist stance (King and Brooks, 2018), searching for latent themes to examine how the leader emergence process is constructed in a given organizational– or private–context.

Our data collection enabled leaders to name several reasons that had affected their leader role occupancy. This limits possible inferences about the relational value and importance of each reason for a leader. On the other hand, the question was intentionally left at a quite general level because we wanted to capture leaders' experiences in the broadest sense. To extend our understanding of the most important factors in the leader emergence process, future studies could focus on the reason individuals prioritized when considering leader role occupancy. This could also help to create a more detailed theoretical model of the leader emergence process and supplement career construction theories, which have been criticized for being too focused on personal factors (see Inkson et al., 2012).

Lastly, we want to point out that due to the cross-sectional study design, no causal inferences can be made about the reasons for leader role occupancy resulting in the creation of sustainable leader careers. To investigate this process more solidly, longitudinal research designs are needed. Future studies should also pay attention to *happiness* indicators of sustainable leader, such as career subjective career success and job satisfaction (De Vos et al., 2020) which were not in the scope for the present study. In examining how to construct sustainable careers, fruitful themes in future research include the role of people's experience of the meaningfulness of work, the possible differing sources of deriving meaning from work for drivers and drifters, and the costs of adaptation to the context (i.e., working as a leader with low motivational resources or for extrinsic reasons due to the needs of context). These perspectives would both enrich the sustainable careers literature and give insights that would be of practical value in the field of human resources and development.

CONCLUSION

In order to build and support sustainable careers, it is important to understand the reasons behind people's career choices. Acting in a leadership role is one such career choice, and various explanations have been put forward to explain leader emergence. Individual agency in making career choices has

been much emphasized, but it is also important to take into account the existence of other, non-agentic or non-person-related factors affecting individual career choices. This study has shown that leader emergence and leader role occupancy can involve many factors in addition to individual agency. In order to support the building of sustainable careers, it is of paramount importance to consider how the different reasons behind career choices are linked to sustainable career indicators. In this study, person-related and agentic reasons for leader role occupancy associated with sustainable career indicators, namely leader's health (occupational well-being) and the occupational well-being experienced by their followers, which is one way of representing leader performance. The research has yielded important information for practitioners responsible for the development of human resources in organizations, because it has shown that if the reasons for leader role occupancy mainly reflect circumstances or other non-person-related reasons, the experienced meaningfulness of work and person-career fit may remain weak. In this case, it may be necessary to try to strengthen or support the leadership motivation of those in leadership positions, or to shape the job description in such a way that it can also offer the experience of meaningfulness from aspects other than self-realization through a managerial role.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets presented in this article are not readily available because: the data that support the findings of this study has been collected confidentially and is stored in accordance with GDPR at University of Jyväskylä. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions. Requests to access the datasets should be directed to EA, elina.m.e.auvinen@jyu.fi.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical review and approval was not required for the study on human participants in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s) for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

EA, MH, JR, and TF together conceptualized the article and together edited and finalized the article. EA wrote the first version of it and conducted the analysis as described in the manuscript. The submitted version was approved by all authors and all can be held accountable for the content.

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Atypical Black Leader Emergence: South African Self-Perceptions

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The research aimed to gain understanding of the self-perceptions of black professionals in relation to business leadership, and how these self-perceptions influenced their behaviors, aspirations and self-perceived abilities in leadership positions. The study was specifically focused on black South African professionals. Black professionals were found to exhibit signs of deep-rooted pain, anger and general emotional fatigue stemming from workplace-, socio-economic- and political triggers that evoked generational trauma and overall negative black lived experiences. The negative lived experiences could have led to racial identity dissonance and, in extreme cases, complete racial identity disassociation. Moreover, black professionals were found to display symptoms of 'survivor guilt,' stemming from the shared history of oppression amongst black people in South Africa. The 'survivor guilt' contributed toward a profound sense of shared responsibility and purpose to change the circumstances, experiences and overall perceptions about the capabilities of black professionals. Results showed that upbringing, determination, resilience, black support networks, and black leadership representation within organizational structures were important ingredients that positively contributed to the leadership aspirations and success of black professionals. The research discovered that, in some cases, black professionals leveraged white relationships to propel their careers forward, however, this practice reportedly resulted in the black professionals experiencing feelings of self-doubt in their own abilities. Self-doubt, also found to be a result of historical oppression, could have and have been shown to eventually lead to self-deselection, negatively impacting the aspirations and career advancement prospects of black professionals in organizational leadership. Furthermore, the research found that black leaders believed that their blackness, specifically, its unique texture of experiences and history in South Africa, provided them with superior empathetic leadership abilities toward other black employees. Black leaders frequently highlighted the distinctive values of ubuntu as the cornerstone of their leadership approach. In addition, it was found that black professionals also considered their blackness, particularly the shade of their skin, to detract from their leadership opportunities, as it reduced the odds of being authorized as natural leaders, thus fortifying a skewed self-perception of their own leadership capabilities.

Keywords: self-perceptions, atypical, leadership, psychological triggers, colorism, ubuntu, generational trauma, black – African

INTRODUCTION

Our research aimed to gain understanding of the self-perceptions of atypical black professionals in relation to business leadership and how these self-perceptions influence the emergence, or lack thereof, in terms of their behaviors, aspirations, and self-perceived abilities in leadership positions prototypically held by white, mainly male, professionals. We argue that both political- and social power continue to fail to unseat the patterns of economic power and historic practices, embedded over centuries of oppression in South Africa, that ascribes white males to positions of business leadership. Samdanis and Özbilgin (2020) point out that organizational leadership is still dominated by select white males from privileged backgrounds, despite the impetus to get more individuals from atypical backgrounds into leadership roles. As a result, black professionals either push themselves forward through purposeful, sometimes unconventional pathways, or self-sanction themselves and hinder their own career progress, due to the assumptions and opinions they hold about their own and white men's abilities.

Africa is a continent with a history of colonialism, which ingrained Western forms of knowledge and organizational structures while suppressing African identities, cultures, values and epistemologies (Nkomo, 2015). Even Africa's knowledge about leadership is largely based on theories the West has provided, starting as far back as the colonial times till today (Theimann et al., 2006). Decolonization, which can be described as economic emancipation as well as liberation from Western knowledge domination, thus remains a priority for many countries in Africa (Nkomo, 2015). According to Ibekwe, 1987, the central theme of 'decolonizing the mind' is to overthrow the stronghold, even the authority, that colonizer traditions and belief systems have over Africans. This, in his view, demands a dismantling of the beliefs and assumptions we hold as "truths" on an individual level, as families, as communities and in our organizations, and we are encouraged to critically interrogate and critique the systems which uphold them. Decolonization does not mean ignorance of colonizing ideas, notions, traditions and structures of power – it simply means a denial of their authority over African thinking and ways of being, a moving away from blind allegiance to them and, in particular, in our notions of what, and which pathways, determine competent leadership.

Our research aimed to add to intersectional leadership knowledge from a context that is under-researched, i.e., interrogating what the leadership self-perceptions and associated behavioral paths of atypical black South African professionals, living and working in the economic hub of South Africa (Gauteng) and exposed to colonization, racism and apartheid, are. Mzileni (2017) notes that only ideas, practices and concerns produced by white institutions tend to be recognized, while Theimann et al. (2006) as well as Ospina and Foldy (2009), observed that African theories are rarely captured in global organizational- and leadership literature, thus emphasizing the importance of developing theory in the African context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

We briefly draw on a number of theories that were relevant to our topic under discussion.

Atypical Leaders

An atypical leader is described as an individual that is *'rarely associated with leadership positions,'* (Samdanis and Özbilgin, 2020, p. 101). Furthermore, according to Samdanis and Özbilgin (2020), an atypical leader comes from an unprivileged, minority, under-represented, deprived or an unusual demographic environment, example; people that come from inferior socio-economic circumstances. However, Samdanis and Özbilgin (2020) also specify that not all atypical leaders have the same degree of atypicality, instead, it varies based on the mix of their unique beliefs about their social identities. In South Africa, black professionals, and the subsequent leaders that emerge are atypical because, although black people are not a minority in the country, they, however, remain underrepresented and often, stereotyped as unsuitable for leadership roles, and they have come from unprivileged conditions and poor socio-economic conditions. As an example, Méndez-Morse (2000) explains why Latina women in leadership, specifically those that held superintendent positions, were deemed atypical: Firstly, that the Hispanic women were stereotyped regarding what they were and what they could be, secondly, that historically Latina leaders were not portrayed in leadership which strengthened the stereotype and, lastly, that research rarely included minority women in leadership. Similarly, black South African leaders are stereotyped as unfit for leadership, are stereotyped in terms of what they are and could be and are rarely portrayed in leadership, and just as rarely included in leadership research, thus further fortifying the belief that black South African leadership is atypical.

The Emergence of Atypical Leaders

Acton et al. (2019, p. 8) define leadership emergence as *'the multilevel interactional process driven by deep level cognitive and perceptual processes of group members that form a collective patterning of leader and follower interactions over time,'* while Kalish and Luria (2016) define an emergent leader as one who, despite not holding any official position of leadership, is perceived as a leader by others. An emergent leader has prominence and the ability to heavily influence a group (Kalish and Luria, 2016). Samdanis and Özbilgin (2020) assert that the emergence of an atypical leader should not be viewed as an exception in companies that are committed to transformation and diversity, instead, it should only be a challenge to organizations that do not practice diversity. We argue that, in South Africa, although organizations are held to account on diversity initiatives with most of them being highly committed to these initiatives, the rise of atypical leaders remains a steep challenge in these organizations.

Nkomo (2015) shares that during the apartheid era in South Africa, black people – African, Colored and Indian - were excluded from managerial and professional positions. In South Africa, the apartheid system created a racial hierarchy in the workplace that firmly placed the white man at the

top (Nkomo, 2015). This privilege still prevails in modern society where white is often considered as the principal trait of leadership (Cranmer and Harris, 2015). According to Nkomo (2015), top and senior management positions are still dominated by white males.

Nkomo (2011) explains that colonization in Africa fostered the view that all things European were positive whilst forging the perception that all things African were negative. We argue that present day South African organizations still utilize these lenses to justify limiting leadership opportunities for black professionals and that there is a biased view to label them incompetent and unsuitable for leadership. Acton et al. (2019) state that in the process of leadership emergence, the prospective leader must possess the characteristics and behaviors of the perceivers' leadership 'prototype,' such that there is a 'match,' before the prospective leader is granted the category of 'leader' to the respective group.

Black Identity and Black Leadership
Black Identity

Pierre and Mahalik (2005) define positive racial identity as: "...the process of development by which individual members of various socio-racial groups overcome the version of internalized racism that typifies their group in order to achieve a self-affirming and realistic racial-group or collective identity" (p. 30). Lightfoot and Foster (1970) state that black identity has many stages of development and growth that reveal socio-cultural beliefs of that time and thus, identity is not fixed but evolves. Hall et al. (1972) suggest that there are four stages of black identity development, as observed in black Americans when they would discover blackness in themselves: (1) pre-encounter, (2) encounter, (3) immersion, and (4) internalization. Moreover, Hall et al. (1972) note that the result of this encounter with blackness is that the person will thereafter define themselves as being 'black, adequate and non-inferior' (p. 4).

Steve Biko, founder of the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa, positively identified 'black' with characteristics such as independence, self-reliance and assertiveness (Lloyd, 2003). Black Consciousness, developed in 1970, demanded that black South Africans rethink their identities (Heffernan, 2015), particularly in relation to taking up more powerful roles in society and in business. The term 'black' was hardly used before the Black Consciousness Movement adopted it in 1970 (Lloyd, 2003). Before this adoption, 'non-white' was the term used to describe people of a certain race by the apartheid government in South Africa (Lloyd, 2003) – signifying that the base reference for all people of color in South Africa was in relation to whiteness. Steve Biko felt that the term 'non-white' was an annulment of 'being' and felt that the term 'black' could instead be used as a positive term of affirmation (Lloyd, 2003). Paasche (2017) states that Africans can only regain their identity by claiming back what belongs to them and telling their own story themselves – which, in leadership literature and practice, is rarely done and thus the reproduction of the old leadership elite ensues, together with a dearth of stories about atypical, socio-relational pathways to leadership.

Black Leadership

Nkomo (2011) describes African management thought as one that is guided by traditional values and principles but explains that, broadly, African leadership has largely been portrayed as deficient, a view that is deeply rooted in the colonial beliefs about Africa. Furthermore, Nkomo (2011 p. 376) explains that Ubuntu - defined as 'humaneness—a pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness—that individuals and groups display for one another. Ubuntu is the foundation for the basic values that manifest themselves in the ways African people think and behave toward each other and everyone else they encounter'- is an African philosophy, and is highly connected to leadership and management in Africa. Ubuntu is believed to have originated in South Africa (Nkomo, 2011; Showunmi et al., 2016), and can be viewed as a potential competitive advantage (Nkomo, 2011).

It is noted that perceptions of leadership, either by oneself or others, are dependent on context and can vary depending on race (Festekjian et al., 2014). The experiences and life histories of leaders of color make them more likely to vicariously and compassionately experience their subordinates suffering – modeling appropriate responses to others in the organization (Kanov et al., 2004). Leigh and Melwani (2019) claim that leaders' compassion, and organizational climates of inclusion, serve to empower black employees through the noticing of distress in black employees and offering assistance (listening, counseling, and advocating). Additionally, because compassionate leaders are likely to display concern for their followers' well-being (Scott et al., 2010), this should increase self-disclosure, setting the foundation for relational bridging ties. April et al. (2000) state that the 1994 promise of the new, democratic South African context opened the possibility for multiple, equally valid realities, held by all of its diverse groups from different cultures and different walks of life, with a leadership movement toward full participation, collaboration and enriched relationships. Sadly, Ospina and Foldy (2009) state that leaders of color are at a disadvantage because they tend to be viewed as less legitimate and, because of this, they may enact their leadership differently. Kuada (2010) suggests that leadership in Africa is shaped to a large extent by culture and historic events. There is an argument that research needs to delve deeper into black leadership – particularly how African leaders behave, why they behave in the ways that they do, and the impact of those behaviors on organizations (Kuada, 2010). Bartley (2013) suggests that certain dynamics, to some extent, exist within black leaders which she refers to as 'internal defaults.' Examples of these defaults are 'not good enough,' 'silenced,' 'dis-guarded,' 'furtive,' 'black in the negative' - all of these in addition to other external behaviors that black leaders are subjected to Bartley (2013). Nkomo (2011) suggests that Africa needs to seek its own solutions and approaches to leadership and management, to reclaim the identity of its people.

Self-Perception Theory

Self-perception theory states that: "Individuals come to 'know' their own attitudes, emotions, and other internal states partially

by inferring them from observations of their own overt behavior and/or the circumstances in which this behavior occurs" (Bem, 1972, p. 2; Fazio et al., 1977; Chaiken and Baldwin, 1981). Fazio et al. (1977) further explain that self-perception theory predicts that a new attitude shall occur if a person acts out a behavior that is more extreme than is inferred by his or her attitude. There are two main dimensions of self-perception which are positively interrelated – self-esteem and personal efficacy (Hughes and Demo, 1989). An important difference of self-perception theory to dissonance theory is that, in contrast, dissonance theory predicts attitude change only occurring if the behavior is in disagreement with the attitude (Fazio et al., 1977).

Psychology – Intrapersonal Influence

Race is a huge part of how people view themselves and others and, as such, important in the role it plays in leadership perception (Festekjian et al., 2014). Psychological research shows that context can make an individual aware of the perceptions of leadership regarding his/her own race and that this can, in turn, negatively influence their own leadership ambitions (Festekjian et al., 2014). Nkomo (2015) points out that during the apartheid era in South Africa, the ambitions of Africans could only reach as far as aspiring to becoming 'boss boys.' In organizations that have initiatives such as employment equity and affirmative action (which are created to try and rectify issues of diversity), employees are frequently left feeling excluded, unaffirmed and undervalued in their own identity, making them believe that they are not deserving of promotions even if they would have previously believed themselves to be competent (April et al., 2012). Research shows that potential leaders may internalize leadership beliefs held by others (Festekjian et al., 2014). Lowe (2013) stated that the experience of projective identification, a process through which one group serves as a 'sponge' for all the negative feelings of another group, is deeper than is generally recognized because, through projective identification, many black people discount themselves as not being good enough to become leaders, and withdraw their motivations, especially as senior leaders within the organizations they work for.

Additionally, intrapersonal leadership perceptions are influenced by race and this, in turn, influences the individual's leadership aspirations (Festekjian et al., 2014).

Black Psychology

Even though some state that the science of behavior is universal, there is ample cross-cultural evidence that indicates that the data of psychology is, in actual fact, not universal (Underwood, 1972). Jamison (2018) provides a few definitions of black psychology, including: "… *the study of the behavioral patterns of black people in a social environment that is manifestly antagonistic and unhealthy… It is concerned with developing appropriate methodologies and tools required for valid analysis of the black experience*" (p. 725). Jamison (2018, p. 726) also cites the definition by Wilson (1998) which provides the following explanation: "… *it is a psychology of liberation.*" White (1970) states that traditional theories developed by white psychologists to describe white people, are not suitable to be utilized to try to comprehend the lifestyles of black people because, when these theories are applied to the lives of black people, it is

very likely that incorrect deductions are drawn. Furthermore, in South Africa, Black Consciousness highlighted and was based on the basis that apartheid or race-based oppression had crippled the ways in which black people perceived themselves and their place in their birth country, to the extent that they needed psychological freedom before they could achieve political- and economic freedom (Heffernan, 2015).

Alleyne (2004) suggests that black people carry with them persistent 'post-slavery traumatic stress syndrome' and that there is a need to investigate its precise magnitude. She firmly believes that there is a 'post-colonial, post-slavery' context whose baggage is passed from one generation to the next (Alleyne, 2004). Leigh and Melwani (2019) suggests that, because of this baggage, when black people, in general, face oppressive threats or trauma in society, black individuals in organizations experience adverse intrapsychic outcomes, viz., negative emotions and rumination – impelling their social identities to become activated, along with their already activated organizational identities, typically leading to identity conflict or psychological interference.

Notions of feeling 'less-than' are passed on from one generation to the next, shaping the relationships that black people experience with the white 'other' (Alleyne, 2004). Alleyne (2004) refers to an 'internal oppressor,' which she describes as that part of the self that carries historical and *trans*-generational pain. Bartley (2013) recounts her experience with internalized oppression where she constantly second-guessed her competence because she – a black woman – believed that she was not as good as white people. Alleyne (2004) claims that the result of internalized oppression is low self-esteem and self-hate – neither of which is particularly helpful for leader emergence. Social stereotypes – experienced by black people – additionally contribute to them not putting themselves forward for leadership positions, because they believe that it is ultimately pointless (Lowe, 2013). White (1970) emphasized the need to develop a precise and practical theory of black psychology through the use of authentic black experiences.

METHODOLOGY

This research followed an inductive approach, which is a process where qualitative data is used to build theory (Gioia et al., 2013). This approach was then layered onto the hermeneutic phenomenology research approach. A cross-sectional design was adopted for this research. Participants were chosen on the basis of having lived experiences (namely those of black professionals holding leadership positions) relevant to the focus of this research (Groenewald, 2004), as well as their willingness to share their experiences (Laverty, 2003).

The scope of the study focused only on black South African professionals within organizations in Gauteng, South Africa. This research adopted the definition of 'black' as provided by Ndinda and Okeke-Uzodike (2012), but for the purposes of this research, excluded Colored and Indian professionals and only focused on 'African' professionals as per this definition. Additionally, the study focused on employees that had a minimum of 5 years working experience and encompassed professionals in both leadership positions (8 out of 9 participants) as well as those not yet occupying positions of leadership (1 participant – P9), but

who, with these credentials, possessed the sufficient requirements to move to and aspire to a leadership role.

'Professional' in the context of this study meant employees who had a minimum of one university level bachelor's degree or equivalent. Employees who did not possess relevant qualifications were excluded from the study, even if occupying a leadership position. Since the researchers aimed to select atypical black South African professionals that were in sufficiently different industries/sectors from one another (to increase the possibility of unique organizational stories), but in the economic hub of South Africa – Gauteng Province – they chose a purposeful sample selection strategy (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007; Maxwell, 2008). See **Table 1** for a list of participants and their demographic data.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007). According to Laverty (2003), it is best to ask open questions with only a few direct questions included. The reason for this chosen approach was to allow the discussion to be led by the participants, thus allowing the interview process to remain as close and true to their lived experiences (participant voice) as opposed to getting 'simulated' accounts of what the participants thought that they had experienced (Laverty, 2003). All interviews were audio-recorded, with the permission of the participants (Whitehead, 2004). Field notes were also utilized to complement the data gathered (Groenewald, 2004).

The researchers decided to follow a hermeneutical research approach, which is similar to phenomenology, but does not require the researchers to 'bracket' or set aside their biases, but instead, the researchers utilized these biases in the interpretive process (Laverty, 2003). Thus, using the license to utilize bias, which is a fundamental part of the hermeneutic phenomenology approach, the researchers, who are both black South Africans and, thus, have insight into the lived experiences of black professionals and black people in South Africa, used these lenses in the interpretation of the results. Additionally, the reflexivity approach used during interviews acknowledges the fact that that the researchers are a part of the social world that they study, and it is a process of reflection on the role that subjectivity plays during the process of research (Palaganas et al., 2017). During this process, the researchers had to continuously reflect on their values as well as how their backgrounds, locations and assumptions may have affected their research practice (Palaganas et al., 2017). Reflexivity encouraged the relationship between the production of the interpretations and the challenging of those interpretations (Alvesson, 2003; Laverty, 2003). The reflexivity process was aided by the keeping of reflective journals to record all assumptions and to force the researchers into reflective attitudes (Laverty, 2003). Peer debriefing assisted with the robustness of the interpretations, to enhance trustworthiness of the research process (Torres and Hernandez, 2007).

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data, which was a method that allowed for first order constructs (the interpretations and constructs of the participants) to be identified and layered with second order constructs (the researchers interpretations, understandings, and constructs) (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007; Gioia et al., 2013) – unearthing themes and patterns of living and/or behaviors that were identifiable (Aronson, 1995). The first order constructs, as much as possible, kept the terms used by the participants (Gioia et al., 2013). Using transcribed data from the interviews, the patterns of experiences could then be identified (Aronson, 1995). These patterns were derived from direct quotes or through paraphrasing of common ideas (Aronson, 1995) - see **Figure 1** below for a depiction of the analysis process followed.

Coding was used to label and keep track of the interviews. In addition, the hermeneutic circle was utilized as a metaphor for interpretation and understanding (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007).

Transferability in qualitative research serves the same purpose as that of external validity or generalization in quantitative research (Riege, 2003) – thus, specific coding and analysis procedures were utilized during the data analysis stage to assist in ensuring transferability (Riege, 2003). The use of reflexivity (Laverty, 2003; Groenewald, 2004; Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007), creating texts that were reliable to the experiences of the participants, which can be understood by insiders as well as outsiders, lack of dishonesty and consistency of research conclusions that reveal the complexity of the situation were critical in achieving adequacy in the hermeneutic approach (Laverty, 2003).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Self-Perceptions

Race is a huge part of how people view themselves and others, and therefore is an important consideration in leadership perception (Festekjian et al., 2014). Acton et al. (2019) propose that how individuals behave in their roles as either leaders or followers is largely influenced by how they view themselves as leaders within a given environment.

To gain insight into the self-perceptions, the research engaged participants on their lived experiences through self-reporting which allowed perspective into their thoughts, feelings and behaviors (Schwarz, 1999) in relation to the South African organizational and historical context. This approach allowed a journey of discussion into the lives of black professionals in and outside organizations, allowing us to build a view; albeit tentatively, of the emotions, attitudes, behaviors and identities that they exhibit in the different contexts, including the triggers (circumstances) thereof.

Our research found that the self-perceptions of black South African professionals and leaders could be diagrammatically represented as follows (**Figure 2**), a conceptualization of the emotions and behaviors of black professionals and leaders as well as the circumstances under which these are triggered that was systematically built from the participants' own accounts of their lived experiences and the associated emotions and behaviors they exhibited, which were then mapped diagrammatically using self-perception theory.

These self-perceptions give insight into the behaviors and attitudes (shown in the attitudes 'box') that atypical leaders exhibit in leadership roles and the various, sometimes conflicting, emotions (shown in the emotions 'box') that are triggered as a

TABLE 1 | Participant demographics.

				Participant demographics					
Region	Participant no.	Identify as female	Identify as male	Age	Generation	Industry/sector	Years of working exp	Leadership role (Y/N)	Qualifications
Gauteng	P1	x		37	Millennial	Banking	18	Y	Master's degree
Gauteng	P2	x		43	Gen X	Transport	20	Y	Bachelor's degree
Gauteng	P3	x		34	Millennial	Financial services	10	Y	Master's degree
Gauteng	P4	x		33	Millennial	Engineering and construction	11	Y	Master's degree
Gauteng	P5	x		35	Millennial	Education	11	Y	Master's degree
Gauteng	P6	x		37	Millennial	Real Estate	14	Y	Bachelor's degree
Gauteng	P7	x		39	Millennial	Financial services	18	Y	Master's degree
Gauteng	P8		x	44	Gen X	Finance/Banking	25	Y	Master's degree
Gauteng	P9		x	45	Gen X	Government administration	15	N	Bachelor's degree

result of the various circumstances (shown in the circumstances 'box') such as intergeneration trauma, racism in the workplace, and others shown in the diagram. We delve deeper in the rest of the paper to attempt to discuss some of these themes and how they present as either barriers or enablers in the emergence of atypical black leaders.

Identity
Racial Identity and Leadership Capability
Although a few black professionals shared that their black identity was a disadvantage to how they were perceived in terms of capabilities, for instance, P8 purported: "... *[being black] takes away a lot. People see your color before they give the advantage, before you say anything. My white counterpart comes in no matter how little experience he has, but people already take him seriously upfront. Until you say something that resonates with them [white people], you will be taken as a token,*" a larger number of research participants argued that their identities contributed positively to their ability to lead. They argued that black identity allowed black leaders to relate better with their employees, the country's majority population, adding that black leaders were more considerate, understanding and more relaxed in their leadership enactment. Additionally, black identity was considered a strength on the basis of shared history, and the very unique black struggles and experiences that were part of that history. P7 stated: "*We know how it is to work hard. We know how it is to not have. I feel that we should be able to operate in unstable environments... where we can take other people's issues into consideration. If someone is having a problem... comes late to work because the taxi broke down. Even if you are driving a Mercedes Benz [these days], you know what it is like with taxis breaking down, because you have been in it.*"

Racial Identity Dissonance and Disassociation
Colonization's biggest injury against the colonized is the imposed eradication of their identities, which has been deliberately and brutally replaced by large parts of the colonizers' identities. Even more cruel was that the shedding of colonized individual's identities were 'sold' as improvements to their civilization, not unlike a plastic surgeon who sells cosmetic surgery to those in desperate psychological health deficiency. Nkomo (2011) argues that colonization dehumanized and socialized Africans to despise themselves and everything that made them who they are, including their history and their culture, making them see themselves as uncivilized. In South Africa, specifically, Hocoy (1999) proposed that the study of black racial identity was crucial to determine the extent to which discrimination experienced by black South Africans may have damaged their mental health. Bartley (2013) suggested that black leaders, like herself, could occupy a leadership position in relation to the 'other' and be competent and effective, all the while holding the white leader experience in high esteem. Our research results revealed that black leaders could distance themselves from 'other blacks' when they were in leadership positions. They disassociated themselves from the constructs of their black identities, in attempts to detach themselves from the negative stereotypes that were linked to being black, for example, being lazy and maintaining facades of conformity. Several participants associated black leadership with perceptions of being a *'better black.'* P2 remarked: "... *There's the best black syndrome: 'I am better than other blacks. I am not like them. I am different. I don't do the things that they do. I do not think like them. I am not lazy'.*" This disassociation is a form of psychological colonization, as described by McKay (2008), specifically the concepts of racial alienation and alienation from one's culture, own language and history. In addition, Nkomo (2011) explains that the work of Fanon detailed the practice of colonialism that created a sense of self-alienation and a deep need for assimilation with the dominant group. As an example, some participants shared that they did not 'see' racism, nor held any strong political opinions – although this was a significant part of their lived experiences as black South Africans. P7 purported: "... *I never experienced racism when I was growing up. Maybe it was around me and I never saw it. Even when I went to a Model C school [former whites-only, semi-private schools – subsequently mixed schools since the end of formal Apartheid in 1994], I never experienced it.*" P7 goes further by claiming: "*I feel like I have graduated to not being able to see color. I do not see color here...*". Showunmi et al. (2016) explain that early formative encounters

FIGURE 1 | A demonstration of the data analysis approach employed in this research.
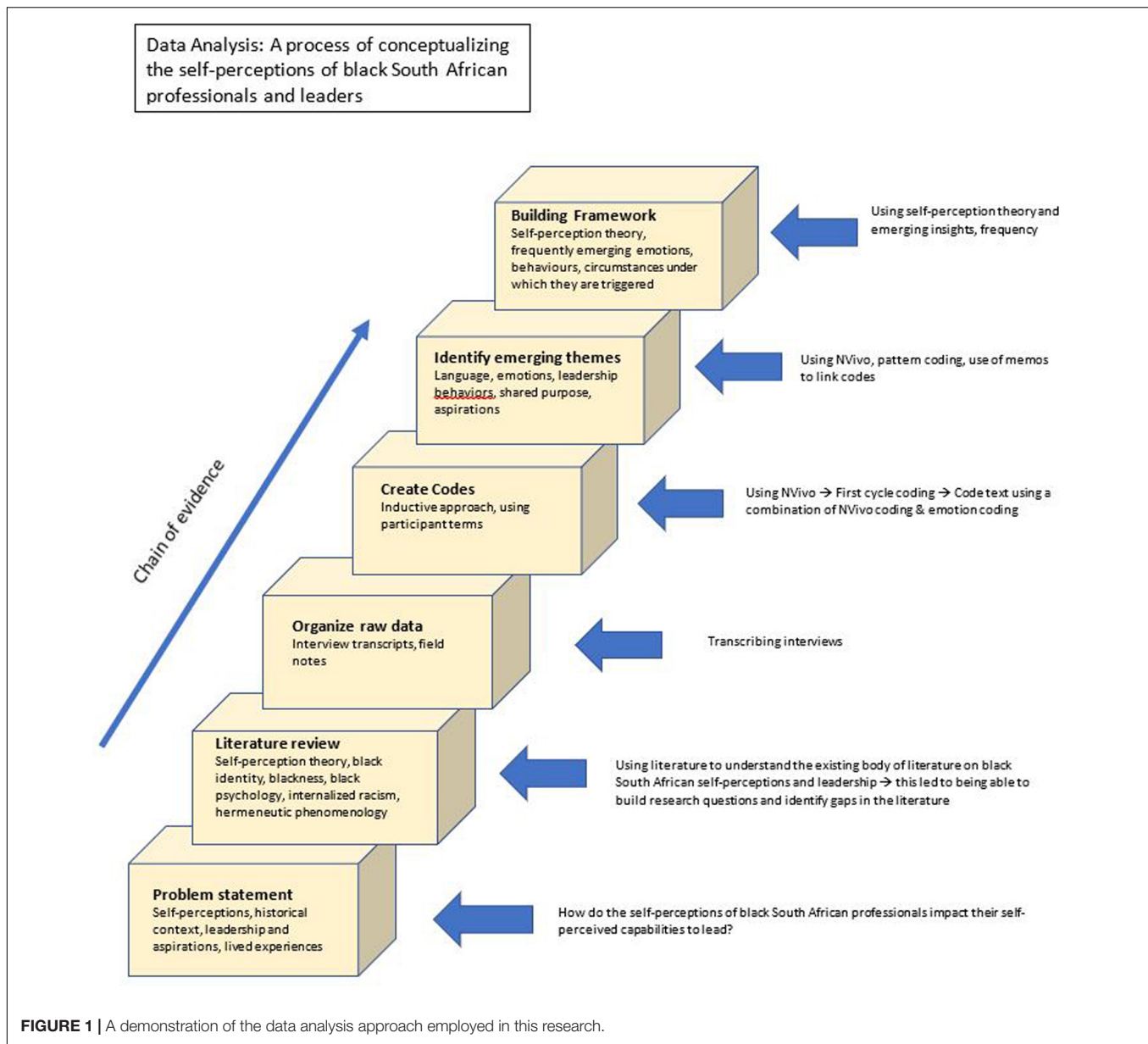
with racism coupled with social class transitions allowed middle class blacks to utilize class membership as a tool to minimize the likelihood of experiences of racial discrimination.

A respondent shared that she tried to 'fit in' with her white friends, which often resulted in uncomfortable conversations. She divulged that her white friends interacted with her because they believed her to emulate characteristics more palatable to them (a more 'civilized black'), and viewed her to be 'less black' than a 'regular black': *"... they say: 'Oh, but you aren't the same as other blacks'... that is the challenge. I am not the blackest black, and not the better black. I am just me... Sometimes I feel strongly about things that affect a lot of blacks, and maybe I am seen as black by the black people, or sometimes I see things differently and the white people may think she is not a hothead like the others..."* (P7). This example illustrates the fact that black professionals

may sometimes struggle, finding themselves moving between racial identity dissonance to complete disassociation. Racial disassociation can be adopted as a coping mechanism, to escape being drawn into the bleakness of the black experience.

Other black professional respondents exhibited signs of racial identity dissonance. One shared that she did not relate to 'black interests,' largely due to her upbringing which had isolated her from the black lived experience as it pertains to South Africa. She struggled, for instance, to communicate in ethnic African languages: *"I think my upbringing and interests have me almost at a point where I have to pick a side. I struggle in terms of black leaders. I don't fully relate to my black leaders. If we switch to 'vernac[ular],' I can only go so far. If we are talking about where I went during the weekends, I went hiking or I went to weird mushroom farming... the responses I get: 'Oh! So, you are*

FIGURE 2 | Self-perceptions of black professionals and leaders.
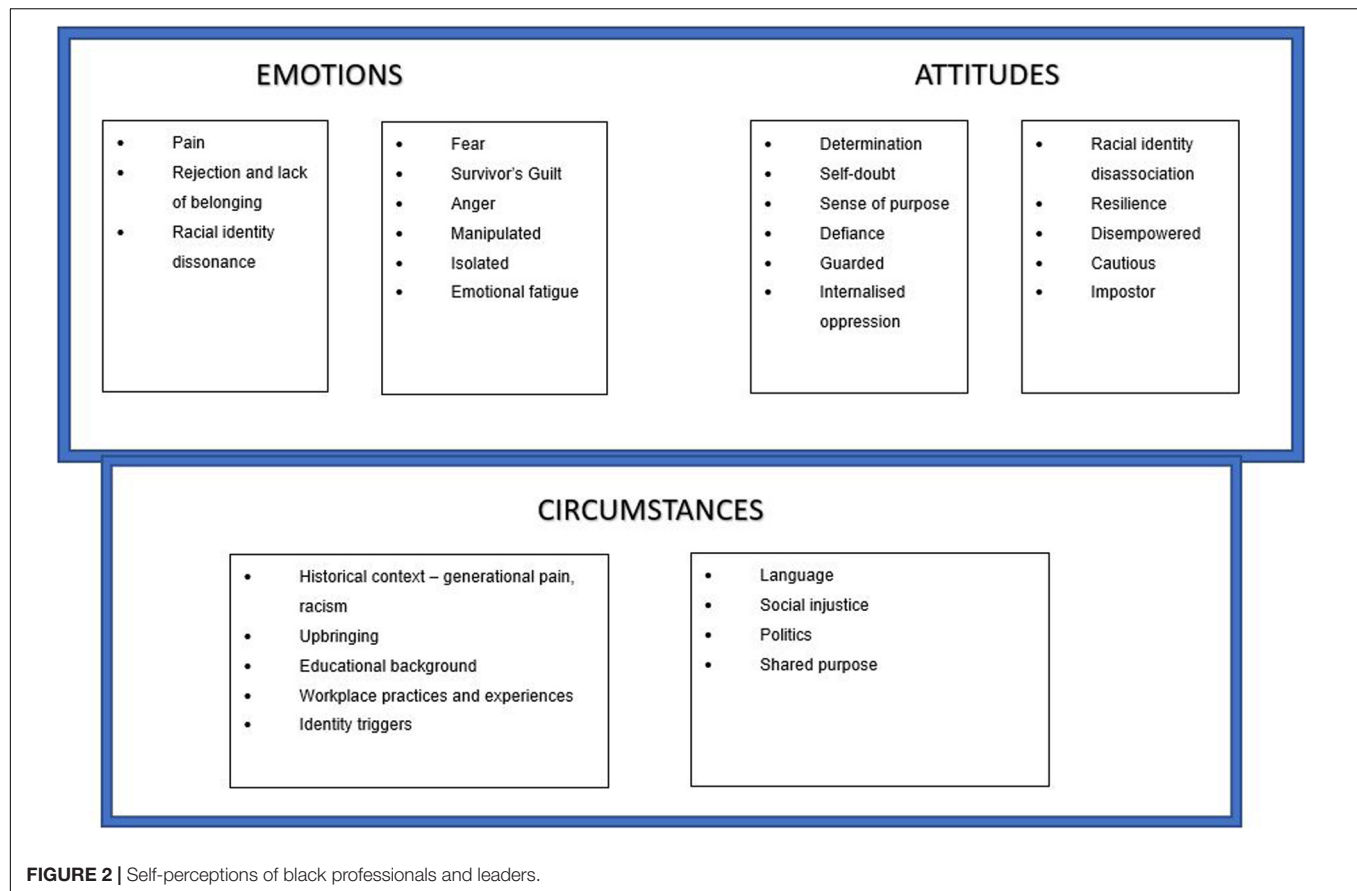
one of those Model C girls?' So, it becomes harder then to build connection points with them [other blacks or black leaders] as a collective. . ." (P1).

This is the context of some black South Africans, the select few in the emerging black middle class that experienced life in white neighborhoods and schools, resulting in the destruction of their black identities, including language, black relationships and the complete eradication of their black culture. These black South Africans form white relationships and, in some cases, these relationships lose their 'innocence' and connection when the reality of South Africa's racial segregation infiltrates their consciousness – P1 explained: *". . . I noticed race in the first year of varsity. . . where you might have been high school mates with white friends, but all of a sudden you are no longer mates. People pass you and you are like: 'Hawu besiblomile [we were hanging out] over lunch 3 weeks ago, and now all of a sudden it is as if we have never seen each other'."* Similarly, Bartley (2013) narrates a childhood story of a day when she walked hand-in-hand with her white friend who, upon seeing other white kids, quickly let go of her hand. To Bartley (2013) this was experienced as a surreptitious judgment of her blackness and, on a psychological level, made her feel inferior in relation to whiteness. Similarly, P1 was hurt and bewildered by the rejection which would continue into her adulthood. This experience made her feel alienated, as she realized that the fullness of her black identity would never be completely accepted by her white friends. In the workplace, she

also realized she could not relate with her black colleagues either – she did not speak their language, did not use the same accent when conversing in English, nor did she share the same interests – because her upbringing had been deficient in these aspects of her black identity. This feeling of being in 'limbo', reminiscent of Du Bois (1897) 'twoness' or double-consciousness, can contribute to racial identity dissonance: *". . . you can get to relate to both white and black leaders, but then it is hard for any of them to literally put you into their inner circle. . . because of the trust issues"* (P1).

Other experiences that were shared involved interactions with white colleagues, out of necessity, that contributed to black professionals feeling forcibly isolated, desperate to mingle with black colleagues, but prevented from doing so because they were generally placed in roles where they were the only black person in those groups, alienating them from other black people: *"I felt like a sell-out, to a certain extent, because then even though you wanted to mix with other black people, you also needed to sit with your fellow [white] trainees, and you ended up feeling like: 'What the hell'"* (P5). According to Utley (2016), the quality of blackness is comprised of an awareness of the conditions that resulted from colonization through poverty, disease, wretchedness, and racism. For black people that may have been removed from this experience, it could contribute to their absolute inability to relate to what 'black' means in the context of South Africa, thus contributing to their disassociation and rejection by other black people. Even though some black
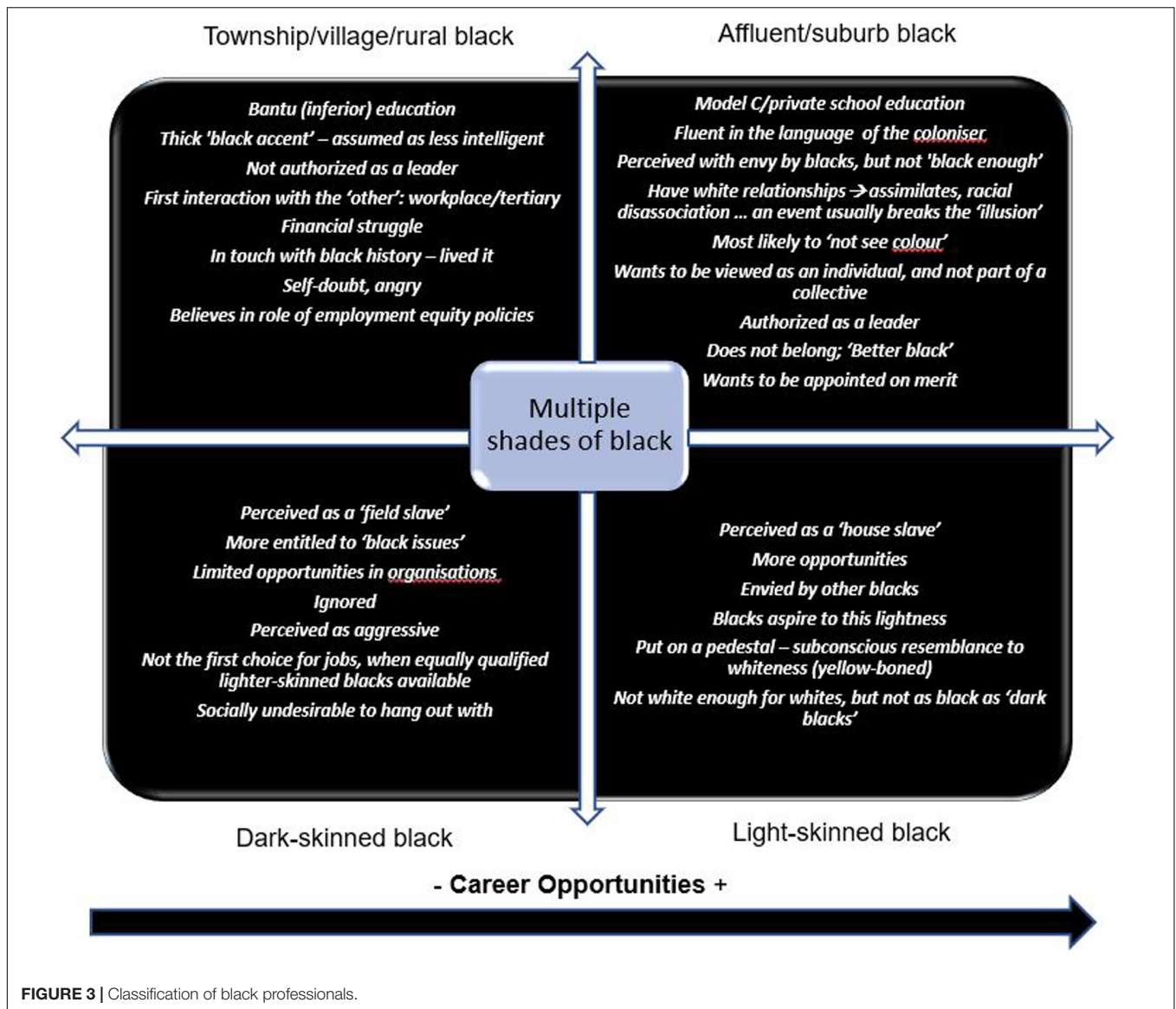
FIGURE 3 | Classification of black professionals.

professionals portrayed a lack of awareness of their blackness, through disassociation, our findings also showed that other black professionals were extremely proud and protective of their black identity and drew strength from their blackness. This research also found that many black professionals were becoming increasingly intimate with their blackness, and were indeed moving toward viewing themselves as *'black, adequate and non-inferior'* (Hall et al., 1972, p. 4), echoing the pleas of Steve Biko in his evidence given at the SASO/BPC trial in 1976 (Gwaambuka, 2017).

Historical Context

Nkomo (2011 p. 366) points out that literature has repeatedly painted Africa as a failed continent, labeled "*'irremediably corrupt'; 'hopeless'; 'criminal'; 'ungovernable' or generally in 'chaos,'*" however, she argues that there is a tendency to 'forget' and to diminish Africa's challenges to a deficiency in leadership

and management when, in fact, these challenges can be fully attributed to the continent's colonial past and its now post-colonial present. South Africa, specifically, has a history of double colonization by both the Dutch and the English (Nkomo, 2015). South Africa later experienced the establishment of the apartheid system in 1948, which resulted in complete domination of the African, Colored and Indian people (Nkomo, 2015). Despite being referred to as a postcolonial country – a term which is used to describe a nation regarded as being at the end of colonization but still experiencing the ongoing effects of colonialism on its present condition Nkomo (2015)-Hocoy (1999) points out that black people in South Africa still continue to experience racism and prejudice, even post-apartheid.

In South Africa, Nkomo (2015) noted that, from the time of colonization to the times of apartheid, the rule of the White minority firmly established a rejection of Africa and African agency.

Historical Context as a Barrier

Intergenerational trauma

Black professionals in South Africa carry the pain of their parents and grandparents as if it were their own – because intergenerational trauma is very real for them. Their children also will carry the same pain, hurt, angst and fear, as their own, and will need to be constantly reminded about how society treats them and how inferiority will be imposed on them, and so it shall continue. Apartheid laws might have changed, but the violence of race-based poverty and the belief system, and its accompanying assumptions, that black people are not only inferior, but are also less than fully human, persists. Alleyne (2004) suggested that black people carry perceptions of being 'less than,' that are passed down through generations. Our participants frequently referred to intergenerational pain as a result of experiences that were narrated to them, including how these historic events continue to affect them today: *"... whether it is how we were raised, whether you grew up without your dad in the house because he was a migrant worker or fearing Apartheid, it manifests. this memory of what happened in the 80's and 90's, of what your parents and friends have been telling you about people in exile [in opposition to Apartheid and living outside of South Africa]. And you have never really fought Apartheid, nor went into exile yourself, but there is this inbred anger..."* (P3). These narrated experiences, passed on from generation to generation, opened wounds that were triggered by the perpetual existence of oppressive practices in contemporary work and social environments. P3 further related: *"The stuff that is passed on through generations, and stuff that will be passed on for years to come, for some reason we don't break that. We don't seek healing, counseling and any of that. I am not part of the born-free generation [those born post-Apartheid and in democratic South Africa] but, as a 34-year-old, why did it bother me so much that they had voted for XX [a white political party in South Africa]?"*

In South Africa, 26 years after the establishment of democracy and the abolishment of Apartheid, black professionals still carry the memories of the past and persistent sentiments about slavery, with some respondents revealing that they associated black leadership with being a 'house slave.' It is all very much different, but still very much the same. This is due to the strong element of white control, particularly economic control, that they felt was exercised to keep black employees 'in their place' when occupying these roles. P5 asserted: *"... it is those people who are the house slaves. The ones who get invited to dinners, because they can keep you in your place.".* Furthermore, the vividness with which the respondents remembered their own first encounters with Apartheid and their experiences with racism is a testimony that their lived experiences still hold enormous power over their lives today. Most respondents shared that their earliest memories of racism were from childhood, when South Africa was still in the depths of Apartheid: *"I remember the 'no blacks allowed' signs everywhere, when we were growing up"* (P2). P6 recounted: *"I remember this one time when our parents forgot to bring along our birth certificates, so we were not allowed to go into Kokstad. So, my parents had to leave us with the Police... the first time I felt the segregation. We were not allowed to go into this town because we were black kids"*; similarly, P5 remembered: *"I heard him say: 'Bloody kaffir' [derogatory term, akin to 'nigger' in the United States]... I never even told anyone. I was in shock... He bana! [exclamation of shock] ...".*

P1 shared a telling memory, explaining that, as a child, she always wanted to sleep over at her white childhood friend's house in the white suburbs. It was closer to their school and when sleeping over there, got three more hours sleep as compared to when she would sleep at her own house in the township: *"... I used to say: 'I like sleeping at Bronwyn's house. I can wake up at 7 am'... it is a small thing, but that drove my current behavior of always wanting to live next to where I work versus waking up at half-past-five, and traveling to get to school...".* Acutely aware of the race-based spatial development of Apartheid, she innocently did not fully grasp how her definition of success was being formed through the white lens – experience and affluence. Achieving this goal, would become the ultimate validation that she had 'arrived' and become one of 'them.' Fanon explains this phenomenon: *"... for the black man, there is only one destiny. And it is white"* (Bartley, 2013, p. 170). As is evident in this story, the little black girl grew up normalizing that the majority of black people struggle for the good things in life, i.e., living in an under-resourced township, without a family car, lack of sleep due to spatial planning (keeping black people at enormous distances from city centers and where companies/work were situated), braving the cold in badly constructed dwellings and in public transport queues, having to commute to work in crowded public busses and 15-seater taxis, whereas the white experience was radically different, with very short drives or walks to schools and places of work – with coffee shops along the way, living in well-constructed homes in leafy suburbs, and even having time to meet up after work because of the proximity to homes. Sadly, the beliefs that black people are resilient, strong and built for struggle, are ingrained in the minds of society and social systems that were created to propagate it as normal. Because of this, black people are raised believing that the only way to achieve success and workplace credibility is to continuously desire to be white or becoming something close to white (to forego their black identity) – go to white schools, speak their language and in their accents, live in their suburbs, become their friends, learn and play their sports, have hair that closely resembles theirs, marry their sons and daughters, and eventually gain their approval. P5 reflects on this: *"Whether it is in the way that you were brought up in your home, society's expectations, or the way in which the media brainwashes you, blacks are always on the receiving end. We are the ones who are always being colonized."*

The workplace as a trigger

Workplace circumstances that fuel the behaviors and self-perceptions of our respondents were found to be similar to the workplace oppression findings of Alleyne (2004). Alleyne (2004, p. 4) shared the types of oppression experienced by black people in the workplace, including:

- *Having their presence ignored.*
- *Lack of eye contact from white colleagues when it mattered.*
- *Frequent incidents of being excluded.*
- *Constantly being described as aggressive, scary, angry, frightening, threatening, a problem, difficult.*

Our research uncovered similar findings, the details of which have been shared extensively in other sections of this paper. Our research also found that workplaces can be triggers for black professionals, seemingly embodying Apartheid, racist contexts, demeaning attitudes and microaggressive behavior in present form. P3 claimed: "... *we have all these societal issues that have taken place, and we are among the first or second generation who are in corporate. I don't know who lied to us and said that we are going to be coming into these spaces and that they will welcome us, and that they were going to be representative of who we are. And then we enter here and realize that this is apartheid all over again.*" (P3). She further reflected on white people's demeanor toward her at her workplace: "*It is something I have experienced in this bank over and over again. These white people look at me and they see Elizabeth [maid], who washes their underwear in their home. The only difference between Elizabeth and I is that I was appointed because of affirmative action. Otherwise, I'd still be Elizabeth. The difference between Elizabeth and I is that I have a couple of degrees and I speak better English... but they do not view you as being their equal. They don't even view you as someone that can engage them in any meaningful way: 'Why are you here? You should be at home doing what black women do... and when you challenge them, they don't like that as well because now they are forced to engage you.*" She explained that some of the things that triggered and enraged her ranged from political issues to the persistence of the master-slave relationships of the past, and to being forced to work with older, white employees. Some white people believe that black people have been given unfair advantages through employment equity policies, and they are oblivious to any privileges that being born white have given them – and so seek out political alliances to ensure the sustainability of such privilege and to challenge the new order in the country. In her view, they perpetuated the existence of the racial problems in the country through their affiliation to oppressive political parties: "... *I got in on Monday and I am sure 'yibona laba abavotele iFF Plus' [they are the ones who voted for the FF Plus – right-wing, white Afrikaans party] ... that is why you have to be radical in the workplace, because they never stop fighting. Automatically I just elevated a nothing into a massive argument for nothing. It bothered me because I felt powerless in that moment. I felt: 'How dare they?' These people, we have given them an opportunity to live and work amongst us. In fact, they must pack their bags today and leave.*" (P3). Another female respondent (P7) expressed feelings of anger and explained how she had chosen to address it in her everyday work life: "... *I have progressed from being ignorant to being angry, to take white people on at every opportunity I would get because I was so angry. To say: 'What can I do in my space that can make a difference?' I applied it to my overall life, so that I don't go home and sleep with a heavy heart. So, whenever I do my job, I do it well.*". P8 expressed anguish at the fact that, regardless of how good he was, his work environments kept reducing him down to merely a black skin: "... *regardless of the experience I come with, I still have to prove myself... part of it is because of the color that I bear. Part of it is in my name... I get evaluated first on the color of my skin versus* what I have on the table, what I deliver. A lot of people draw conclusions.".

Black leaders and authority

Bartley (2013) speaks at length about her experience when she believed that, as a black woman, she was not as good as white people. One of our respondents suggested that black people were conditioned not to question white people, and that this contributes to the difficulty to challenge white authority in the workplace. It is important to highlight that 6 out of the 9 respondents highlighted that owning and portraying authority was not their natural inclination. P5 explained: "*With a white colleague, it just makes it so difficult. They could literally come and tell you that the sky is green... because of the way that we have been trained to view them*". Cranmer and Harris (2015) confirm that, indeed, the decisions of white leaders are unlikely to be exposed to racial prejudice. Our research found that for many black leaders, authority felt unnatural because of negative leader expectations, under-representation of blacks in organizational leadership and persistent negative consequences of speaking back to white people/people in authority during Apartheid and colonization. Black people were made to believe that their rightful place was in a position of subservience and recognizing the value of being more closely aligned with those with power – what Biko termed a multifaceted situation of oppression (Hill, 2015). Moreover, this could be attributable to why some black managers were perceived to be more lenient on white employees: "*... [Black leaders] do not develop other blacks. They tend to be hard[er] on the black employees than they are on the white employees*" (P2).

Government failure

Respondents shared that they were cognizant of, and angry at, the failures of the government to ensure complete transformation, evident through the persistent under-representation of black professionals in strategic roles, while senior white males continued to hold on to senior positions and economic power in organizations. "*In a state-owned entity, you'd think we'd be spared from some things... but white management stay here until they die. You have this thinning layer of middle-aged white men, who are fifty and above, and I am cognisant of South Africa's 27% unemployment rate. And I can tell you now that the 90-odd percent of unemployed graduates are blacks. These are [white] people who started under Apartheid, so they've got special privileges, bonuses, and benefits. They were working for a good 10 years under Apartheid before black people could work here*" (P3). Furthermore, black professionals believed that their experiences of marginalization in the workplace, which continued unabated, were encouraged by government failures and corruption, which served to perpetuate white stereotypes about black leadership: "*When our black government leaders mess up, it reflects badly on us... it fuels their views about us...*" (P1). P8 stated: "*It goes back to whether our government is willing to enforce policies that it has come up with. They have nice policies, but they are not enforcing them. These things perpetuate exclusion for us at work. If you force [white] people to put a plan in place, they will.*

That will be our plan, but they will not train you, they will not skill you."

Historical Context as an Enabler
Challenging historical practices
Kuada (2010) suggests that leadership in Africa is shaped by historic events. South Africa's dark history of pain, unique to black South Africans, has had a very lasting impression and its effects are still visible and penetrate all the spheres of black lives, including their professional lives and definitely the leadership behavior of black leaders.

Collective and shared purpose
Our research found that black professionals feel group pressure and have a deep need to bring change to the black community, as well as to positively influence the circumstances of other black professionals in the workplace: *"If I fail, it does not just represent me. . . it's going to be a representation of all black people"* (P4). Black professionals, like many marginalized groups, believe themselves to be representatives of a whole, and thus believe other black professionals to be reflections of themselves. There is a shared purpose, an unspoken understanding amongst black professionals that stems from shared trauma, cemented with an unspoken pact to revolutionize the fate of black people. The responsibility to bring change in the lives of those previously underprivileged in their communities and in the workplace, and ultimately to bring change in the country, lies at the doorstep of every successful black leader: *". . .I feel a certain responsibility and my job is finding businesses that create certain job opportunities for [black] people who do not have access to what I have had access to. When I see the black leadership here, they have the same purpose as I have here. I feel strongly that we should have more South Africans who are working in these environments versus having whites, because there is the understanding of the history and goal of where we want to ultimately take the country"* (P7). Our respondents have all claimed that they have, more recently, become unapologetic about vocalizing issues relating to transformation. They assert that there is an emotional fulfillment that comes with achieving this change. Sometimes this expectation and shared purpose can feel burdensome, they claimed, but it was one that our respondents were committed to. Some of our respondents have vocalized that, as black professionals who have 'made it,' they felt a sense of 'survivor guilt' for 'leaving others behind.' The guilt has further propelled them to help others. P3 shared: *". . . the personal fulfillment that I am making a difference. Knowing that little girls can go to school, instead of fetching firewood and water, because we have put a pumping station there. . . she can study and when she's done, she can switch off the lights. Then I can say that I have done a great job on this earth."*

Management across color lines
Our black leader respondents informed us that they enforced change through deliberate and empathetic leadership toward black employees – they purposefully give black employees deserved platforms previously withheld from them. Wyatt and Silvester (2015) claim that black employees can benefit from black managers who previously navigated the labyrinth, have

the networks and can create the opportunities. Roberts et al. (2019) reiterated that creating opportunities for black people to bring their authentic selves to work boosts engagement and helps employees contribute more to the organization. Interestingly, most of our female leader respondents revealed that their leadership behavior varied across race, with most indicating that they were more supportive and understanding of black employees but less patient and tougher on white employees, mostly attributed to strong feelings about the history of the country: *"I am more lenient toward black women. They are allowed to make mistakes. They are allowed to grow. They are allowed to be late. A black woman can tell me now: 'Ukuthi uAunti azange afike' [that the helper/maid did not come in] and I'll get it. A black woman will say: 'I didn't look [did not prepare] and I'll pass her my things'. . . white people wouldn't even dare"* (P3). P7 similarly stressed: *"I may have a softer spot for younger black people. It may not come naturally for me to go to a white male of the same age and do that. I think it is a race thing. You look like me, you sound like me, I want to nurture you."*

Unconventional Pathways for Atypical Leader Emergence
Enabling Pathways
Upbringing
Leader emergence can be partly attributed to upbringing. Our research highlighted two areas as being big contributors to the determination to succeed in our sample group. The first was early parental enforcement of the importance of education, which some respondents highlighted as particularly important while raised during a time of Apartheid conflict in South Africa and which could have easily been a distraction, resulting in very different outcomes. P7 reflected: *". . . they [parents] were quite conservative when they were bringing us up. They never allowed to us be affected by the noise. They stayed away from politics, even on TV. The TV would be switched off when there was too much volatility being shown. So, I lived in my head. I read a lot of books. I was removed from the South African context."* P8 claimed: *". . . my mum always drilled in us that hard work pays off, never to take the easiest way out, and to pay our dues. We had to sit at the table, with our books open, and that has always stuck with me throughout my life.".* The second was the fact that the majority of black professionals experienced financial difficulties at home, which translated into tertiary affordability problems, and therefore they had to pay their own way through tertiary education – often by working multiple jobs in order to afford fees, boarding and meals: *"I come from a family of 12. My parents have never paid a cent toward my senior education. Everything I did was because I hustled. I tried to get scholarships. . ."* (P8).

The Apartheid policies and funding disparities in white and black schools ensured overcrowded classrooms, working class instruction with low and under-qualified teachers, little to no educational resources and materials, and therefore contrasting access to higher education. Additionally, and by law, there was no financial aid and banks did not give out loans to blacks during Apartheid (Ocampo, 2004). Post-Apartheid, even with the democratic government's attempts to equalize education,

educational inequalities persisted because of the inseparable nature of race and socio-economic status. A handful of 'lucky' black students were recipients of bursaries or government funding. Generations of black parents remained low-skilled and either had no jobs or could only get lowly jobs from which no financial security could be gained. This is the dark history and present reality of most black families.

Some black students, who are now black leaders and professionals, were part of the 'missing middle,' a phenomenon where one was not eligible for government funding because, according to qualifying criteria, they are deemed 'too well-off' for financial assistance: "... *I was one of those you know... called the missing middle... considered too rich for a bursary and too poor for a student loan...*" (P5). This is a huge challenge in South Africa, as the criteria for funding does not reach all those that need it, mostly black students. The financial challenges that confront many black families contribute to the arduous path traveled by black professionals in their journey to become actively employed and eventually into leadership. Those who do make it 'through the net' carry a huge responsibility to back-fund the educational opportunities of siblings, family and other community members, while also financially required to support families (known as 'black tax'). The political and social systems still fail to undo the economic injustices of the past that continue to haunt black South Africans today. The 'Fees Must Fall' movement of 2015, which saw black students revolt against financial exclusion from universities, particularly for the inclusion of financially disadvantaged black students, was a result of the hopelessness and anger that accompanies the ongoing injustices. Thus, for these black professionals recounting their own journeys to reach where they are is important (for others to hear), as well as being inspiring.

Leveraging white relationships

Acton et al. (2019) divulge that the leadership emergence process is part of a greater context that involves both informal relationships and formal structures within the organization. Our research revealed that, in some instances, black professionals quite deliberately leveraged white relationships to get ahead. This practice was not malicious in its intent, but was calculated and sometimes, a desperate one. P1 divulged that all of the advancements in her career had been linked to white leaders with whom she had premeditated relationships: "*A lot of my career opportunities up until this current one have been given to me by white leaders. I have always constantly leveraged white people to grow.*" She also revealed that once the relationship had achieved the intended outcome, she swiftly moved on, careful to ensure that she did not linger too long, lest she be labeled a token. In some cases, however, the relationship can grow into a long-lasting mentorship, even after it has delivered the necessary returns: "... *my biggest growth came from a manager who was white. He is the person that opened the doors for me. He is the person who taught me how to behave in corporate. He is the person that taught me not to react emotionally. Whether it is in corporate or personally, he has always been in my life*" (P8). It is evident that black professionals are still mindful of the differential power dynamics in the work environment and have found ways to

navigate this otherwise very oppressive and discouraging reality in their favor. However, the ever-present fear of being labeled an employment equity appointment is still very real, and these relationships, although useful, can overshadow the capabilities of the black professional. It is a precarious balancing act, thus making it hard for these relationships to be genuine and long lasting. It is also important to note that the white counterparts in these relationships are usually older, professionally senior and carry influence in the organization. The white leader in these relationships is more likely to be a willing participant if the power lies with him, and if he does not consider the black professional a real threat to his own current and future position in the respective company.

Pathways as Barriers
Language

On the 16th June 1976, black students in South Africa were killed and jailed by the masses across the country as they fought against the use of Afrikaans language as the medium of instruction in schools. Afrikaans was the language of the oppressive Apartheid government, and white-minority ruling government. Decades and generations after this historic demonstration, and many black lives later, the use of Afrikaans as a tool to exclude, demean and dominate continues in present day South Africa. The use of Afrikaans – one of South Africa's 11 official languages today – as a form of exclusion in educational institutions and in workplaces has negatively affected the experiences of black professionals, forcing them to find coping mechanisms in order to survive and rise. Moreover, it is important to highlight that, as a result of the dark history and the lives that were lost in the fight against the use of the language, Afrikaans represents a particularly severe psychological and emotional trauma for black South Africans. Participant P8 emotionally narrated how, as a black man from the township [under-resourced and under-developed, racially segregated urban area] who did not speak any Afrikaans, he had to find a way to succeed in a tertiary institution where he was instructed in Afrikaans. He emphasized how this experience left him with the realization that he had to learn to survive in a world that is hostile towards him: "*When I talk about resilience, it also touches on marginalization... your ability to deal with a situation where people want to exclude you, and you need to find your way to the table. Some of us grew up with marginalization from almost birth. When I was doing my engineering degree, when it was still called Universiteit van Teknologie [University of Technology], I did my maths, technology and my digital technology in Afrikaans. I will never forget that. My books were in English and my class medium was in Afrikaans. From those types of experiences, you learn to have a coping mechanism. You learn to have a thick skin. You learn that the world we live in will never give you anything on a platter. You will take these things through life with you...*". These experiences have built resentment and opened up wounds inflicted by the country's colonial past, by entrenching the same practices in the supposedly more inclusive educational institutions and workspaces. The use of Afrikaans in the workplace, contributes to the feelings of inferiority, self-doubt, isolation and many other negative outcomes for black people: "*In a meeting it happens where people will speak in*

Afrikaans, and then it is almost like they are deliberately leaving me out of the conversation. . . it is a cold war" (P5). On occasion, where black professionals would retaliate, by responding to written Afrikaans communications in an ethnic African language, it would lead to a stand-off.

Post-Apartheid, South Africa adopted 11 official languages in an attempt to give back some dignity and their identity to black South Africans. However, in white, Afrikaans-dominated workplaces, black professionals remain disempowered and subjected to the language of their colonizers: *". . . one of the first things they did was to start speaking Afrikaans in meetings. I'm sure that they spoke Afrikaans in meetings before I arrived. There were black people there who didn't speak a word of Afrikaans and they didn't speak up for themselves"* (P3). The workplace struggle with language for black professionals is expansive and, often, black employees that are subjected to this treatment do not stand up for themselves. However, to minimize exclusion from pertinent work discussions and decisions, and to stay connected to networks of power, there are instances where black professionals make an effort to learn and speak Afrikaans. It is, however, evident that younger black professionals are rebelling against this abhorrent practice of deliberate marginalization, but it remains yet another battle, another hoop to jump through that professionals from other groups do not need to contend with.

Permission seeking

Important to note is the power dynamics in these white relationships that black professionals leverage. Black professionals felt quite threatened to do the sponsors bidding, with the fear that if they did not, they would lose the benefits of sponsorship. Respondents shared that they had to be careful to ask for 'permission' from the white sponsor before considering involvement in other projects, career moves and seizing workplace opportunities: *". . . I asked my current boss, and said: 'Those people are looking for me, should I go?'"* (P1), while others stated that they were careful not to ruffle any feathers, lest the sponsor decided to soil or even sabotage their future career prospects and networks, if they became 'too big for their boots': *". . . you literally have to sit and watch what you say. Long term, you have aspirations, but you think: 'I am going to need these people'"* (P5).

Workplace Experiences

Black professionals were exposed to extraordinary and unforgiving circumstances in the workplace – they had to fight to claim legitimacy, a seat at the table, credibility, and equality.

Workplace: Barriers

Isolation

Most black professionals have, at some point in their career, been 'the only black' or 'the first black' within their organizations, especially in positions of leadership: *"The difficult thing in the space in which I work is that there are very few people of color, which means half the time I am surrounded by either white people or Indians. . . which makes it very difficult to build those relationships within the environments in which I work. . ."* (P8). Black professionals alluded to the fact that they sometimes turned

down roles and struggled in spaces where they would be 'the only black,' even if it ultimately affected or delayed their career growth: *"They offered me the job and then I told them 'no'. . . because I was going to be the only black. I don't want to be the only black. Do I even want to be in this place [where] nobody looks like me? I cannot even identify with anyone. Then [organization name] gave me a better offer. I get there on day one, and then I realize I am going to be the only black again. I want to be able to speak my own language in the workspace. I want to be able to identify with black people. Then you go to the work environment and it is like, whatever you learnt at varsity about self-identify, you have to undo. . . in order to get to certain levels on the ladder"* (P5). Samdanis and Özbilgin (2020) assert that diversity in the workplace remains a much-desired social undertaking and that atypicality in the leaders of an organization's composition can be used as a measure of the level of diversity and democracy of an organization. Yet, in a supposedly diverse context of South African organizations, black professionals questioned how it was possible that in a country that was made up of a majority of black people (79% of the population), that they would still be a minority within the management and leadership of organizations: *". . . sometimes you sit and think: 'Is it possible that in an organization this big, I am still the only black that sits in this senior management panel?'"* (P6). This and similar questions led to doubts in our respondent sample about whether they were appointed on merit and for their capabilities.

Exclusionary practices

Black professionals detailed their experiences of exclusion in the workplace, through the actions of white employees/managers, as well as those practices that were embedded into work policies: *". . . it is the little things. . . people setting up meetings at 7h00am and you start coming to work at 6h45am. . . they can't leave you out. People start creating a migration process where you work in two places, where half of Exco is in one building and you are the one left in the other building, and no-one says anything. Things like weekend dinners [that you are not invited to]. . . where people take workplace decisions at those dinners or craft certain things. . . you get to work on Monday, there is this long email that these things need to be delivered by Friday and nobody's told you the context. So, you need to find those coping mechanisms."* (P8). Policies that were meant to be equally beneficial for all workplace employees were, in fact, found to be subtly oppressive to black employees due to the unspoken differences in expectations of white and black professionals. P5 reflected: *". . . as a black female parent, I have a daughter. I have to pick her up. While you have a white colleague in the same position, same everything, and who also leaves at 12. However, for me it is viewed as general laziness because I leave at 12 . . . I find myself still worried about clocking in and clocking out, and I find myself still worried about being watched and monitored. . . put under a microscope. As a black female, you are ostracized. You are regarded as 'that group' who always complains."* This participant alludes to the topic largely viewed as the giant elephant in the room, privilege. Showunmi et al. (2016) suggest that the role, that the privileged and those in positions of power play in creating policies, prevents the full inclusion of the minorities in society (or organizations). In this

instance, black females within organizations are still the minority in those spaces.

Racism

During Apartheid, race, militarized police, and government bureaucracy were the three main devices used to inflict violence against other human beings who were not white. In post-Apartheid South Africa, black South African professionals continue to be subjected to blatant and subtle racism in the workplace, despite the establishment of democracy more than two-and-a-half decades ago: *". . . as a black woman, I was placed in branch banking. The Jewish white boys were at equities, at head office, even though we were in the same pay grade. None of the white guys and white women were in branch banking. I lived in Sandton [affluent suburb] at the time. The rationale of putting me in a branch close to Soweto [a black township] was so that I could be 'close to home,' because the assumption was that, as a black woman, I come from a township. . . but the white kids have been accommodated in the Sandton offices, because they all live in Sandton. They would never have thought to sending all those white kids to a branch close to Soweto."* (P3). Many white colleagues avoid talking about race, for fear of sounding or being seen as prejudiced, and so resort instead to strategic color-blindness (Roberts and Washington, 2020) or non-racial rhetoric as ways to continue to support white privilege (Milazzo, 2015). Their silence, complicity and material benefit during Apartheid, together with their current inaction for substantive reparations, are not easy realities for them to absorb or own. As a result, white fragility was raised by our respondents when discussing the inability of mainly white colleagues to venture into difficult conversations about differences and asymmetrical workplace experiences – typical reactions that were shared were defensiveness, physical or psychological withdrawal as a result of an inability to engage in constructive engagement, and talking about the periphery/extremes and in the language of groups when describing black behavior and action as popularized through the media. Other participants described blatant racist incidents with either their colleagues, managers or clients. P2 recounted: *". . . I did have a lot of Afrikaner clients. They would call me 'meisie' [girl]. . . you know, using such derogatory words"*. P6 shared: *". . . I had a tenant. . . when I was with another organization. They told me straight that they were not willing to talk to me. They wanted to talk to a white person."* Racism can be attributed to causing psychiatric disorders such as anxiety and depression, low self-esteem, academic degradation and generally low life satisfaction (Pierre and Mahalik, 2005). Some of our respondents shared personal stories of some, or all, of those disorders.

Rejection

According to our black professional respondents, the workplace was an environment that was not accepting of their kind: *". . . it becomes very important that, through the journey, you have the ability to continue to take punches, stand up, come back and deal with the same people who probably do not want you in those spaces."*. The workplace was described as a battlefield, and required immense mental and emotional fortitude to wake up every day, prepare to go into the office and face the battle over

and over again: *"I need to be sharp and on the ball all of the time. I must be a fighter every day. Every day you've got your guard up."* (P3). P5 described boardroom rejection and ridicule, in similar ways in which other respondents told us that sometimes it was overt and other times in the form of microaggressive behavior: *"We must have been in a boardroom somewhere. The person was giving a presentation and the person did not look at me, not once. He looked at everyone else and made eye contact, but not once did that person look at me. He was a white male. . . he was blatantly ignoring me.".* Showunmi et al. (2016, p. 14) describe microaggression as *'brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative, slights, and insults.'*

A qualified professional, female respondent P2 explained that her inputs were not accepted as credible, unless a white colleague verified its validity: *". . . I remember when I was quoting all this analysis. I drew on stats in terms of why I was proposing a certain stance in pricing this particular transaction. One lady asked a question, and I answered. She then turned to another colleague of mine who wasn't the same race as me to confirm with him if I was right. . . right in front of me. . ."*. P5 elaborated on the psychological and behavioral effects: *". . . in an environment that is Afrikaans male-dominated, they have certain ideas about black people. So, you have to censor yourself. You get home, and it is not that you might have had a hectic day, but you are exhausted. Everything that you are thinking and feeling you must analyze. How is this going to look? By saying this, is it going to be labeled as angry? If I do not say anything, am I going to be falling into the typical: 'Oh, they do not say much.'"* Our respondents shared stories of having to bite their tongues in meetings, swallowing rage, holding back their tears, and choosing not to walk out of meetings and companies even though every ounce of their being was screaming out for them to do so.

Workplace: Enablers

Coping through black support networks

The lack of representation hinders the ability of black professionals to build relationships amongst each other, and signals that not all types of identities are congruent with professional careers. When black professionals enter work environments, they can experience feelings of being overwhelmed and alone. Thus, they resort to seeking relationships with professionals that 'look like them' outside of the workplace and with whom they can share their experiences, the precarity of their positions, and about the alien workspace dynamics which they have to navigate: *"I have got a network of black professionals outside of work that are doing similar things at similar levels. We share knowledge and share challenges. We also talk about how to build resilience in terms of certain situations"* (P8). One of the respondents shared that she had joined a 'blacks only' social club that was formed by black professionals in her organization. She noted that, after having bounced from employer to employer and feeling isolated because she was 'the only black' in those environments, the 'blacks only' group had been a great source of comfort. She added that this

support structure had contributed to her prolonged stint in her current organization, versus other organizations where she lacked similar support: *"... it is a formalized group which is only us – black people in the department that belong to this group. That gave me some hope that there are some people who realize that this is a problem. It is a social group where we get together, maybe once a term or something, where we unwind... it is the first environment where I have had that... and maybe there are other factors that influenced it, but this is one job that I have been at the longest"* (P5). P5 went on to state: *"... I just had to find people who looked like me, who shared the same experiences... but I could not even articulate to them that is the reason why I wanted to associate with them."*

Aspiration
Aspiration as a Barrier
Self-sanction
According to Festekjian et al. (2014), projective identification can influence the aspirations of the affected party and, in some cases, cause them to completely bury their own aspirations and force them to not want more out of their careers in their current organizations. Our research determined that, for our sample group, black South African professionals were well aware of the perceptions held by white people regarding their workplace capabilities. Lowe (2013) assert that black professionals have internalized these beliefs and end up believing them to be true, as claimed by P8: *"There is almost no expectation. We are there to make up the numbers. We are there almost like kids. We are there to be seen and not heard."(P8).* The research revealed that some black professionals believed that their success was attributable to the fact that there were not enough black people to compete for the roles they occupied, rather than the fact that they deserved their roles based on merit or because they were exceptional: *"...a friend of mine said that I'm not special. The only reason that things are happening so quickly is because there's a lack of choice of people. So, if there were four or five of xx's, it would have been a lot harder for me to have made it"* (P1).

Self-deselection
A number of respondents deliberately did not put themselves forward for senior or leadership roles in their organizations. This was due to a combination of reasons, including the fear of being perceived as over-ambitious, the fear of being stigmatized as tokens, the fear of being promoted out of turn, of not getting support or respect from white employees, self-doubt and the fear of having to deal with racial challenges in the workplace. P1 noted: *"I have had a lot of people come up to me and say: 'Why don't you step up?' Perception-wise, it is going to look untidy. I haven't even proven myself in this role, but I'm already wanting this [higher] role because it is an executive role. So, I have said 'no' to that... I'm pulling myself back, but I'm doing it rationally."* When offered career advancement opportunities, some black professionals revealed that they had, in some cases, turned down the opportunities out of fear that they would suffer irreparable emotional damage as a result of the experiences that they would encounter: *"... This is a position that has to be black and this is a*

position that has been offered to me. It worries me. I do not want to put myself in a position where I have to work twice as hard in order to prove myself" (P5). P5 further maintained: *"I refuse, not because I don't think I'm capable, it is because... you will be dismissed, you will be ignored. It requires of you to keep building yourself, because somebody else keeps cutting away at your self-esteem. I am afraid that I might not rise to the occasion."*

Diminished leadership aspirations
Some black professionals shared that they did not have career aspirations within the organizations at which they worked, e.g., P8 remarked: *"I do not have leadership aspirations here."* Our research found that even though some black professionals may not have had leadership aspirations, they occasionally felt *obligated* to take up leadership roles because there were not enough black people in the organizations, consequently placing them in positions where they would be *expected* to step up: *"I do not have grand ideas and aspirations of leadership, however, I think because of the position that I find myself in right now... yes, there are not a lot of us... I might find myself in a position where [I am] forced to kinda do it..."* (P5). She believed such roles would be offered to her because the organization needed to achieve transformation/quota figures, and not because she was perceived as competent. For some black professionals, this knowledge had already contributed to their diminished aspirations within their organizations. The research further noted the witnessing of being directed into certain workplace disciplines, and other negative experiences of other black leaders in leadership positions, also contributed to the reluctance by black professionals to pursue career advancement, e.g., P8 shared: *"... if you are going to find a black Exco member, they are either responsible for one or two things: HR and Risk. You can go look at it... but when it comes to entities that generate revenue, that are critical, they don't play a role."*

Aspiration as an Enabler
Aspiration and racial identity
Our research revealed that black professionals wanted to see leaders that looked like them within their organizations – such representation of black leaders was seen as motivational impetus, which allowed them to visualize their own career prospects within their organizations. P1 stated: *"I look in the levels above me and see if there are any black individuals or black leaders and, if I do see black leaders, it gives me hope that there are chances for me to grow. It is important to look up to leaders that look like you, who have succeeded with the challenges that you are now experiencing. I promise you that this, kind of, also related with job movements any time that I got to a job..."*.

Intersectional Themes
The Multiple Shades of Black and Career Progression in 'Post-colonial' Organizations – Additional Barriers to Atypical Black Leadership Emergence
Intersectionality describes the relationships amongst various aspects and modalities of social interactions and subject developments (McCall, 2005). It is the *'idea that social identities such as race, class, and gender interact to form qualitatively*

different meanings and experiences' (Showunmi et al., 2016, p.3). Showunmi et al. (2016) explain that ethnic and gender identities contribute significantly to the self-concept, however, they are often incorrectly considered independently and in isolation of other identities, which limits the understanding of the fullness of an individual's experiences. It has become common that in some instances, intersectionality be used as substitute for oppression, without providing the details of what specifically is intersecting, or how (Carastathis, 2018). Showunmi et al. (2016) explains that intersectional perspectives combine feminist and multiculturalist views to better understand the nuances, specifically, of women's experiences.

Our findings highlighted the discrimination that exists in organizations toward darker skinned black professionals, placing further barriers in atypical leader emergence. Lighter skinned black professionals face slightly fewer barriers in their leadership journey as they are regarded as more 'acceptable' in organizations and, therefore, receive better career and wage opportunities (Goldsmith et al., 2007). This form of multi-layered discrimination is harsher against black female professionals. Darker black female professionals, who also have bigger physical frames, are additionally penalized. Bartley (2013) shared a narrative about how small she felt every time her white peers questioned the nappy texture of her hair, black hands and white palms – and she eventually discovered a way to hide her 'black experience' in front of white peers. Black women have experienced heavy societal discrimination over their appearance, with society promoting 'whiteness' – slender build, long straight hair – as ideal. In pursuit of this white perfection and scaling hierarchical access, black women in South Africa have, for a long time, hidden their natural, curly hair, and consequently their identity, behind long straight 'weaves' made from hair from white and Asian women and delved in skin whitening creams: *"... light skinned black women are afforded different, and even better, opportunities. Thin black women are given other opportunities than those who are short, dark and chubby... there are additional hurdles. You are black, then you are [a] woman; then you are dark; then you this, then you that...we fight"* (P3); *"... the less good-looking, darker slaves were considered less eloquent, and so their jobs were out in the field. The ones that simulated and had characteristics closer to [whites] made them more appealing to the masters. When you are lighter skinned, you seem smarter by their standards... you are 'the yes baas [boss]' kind"* (P5). Intersectionality also brings focus to the subject of whiteness, which due to its privilege is often not addressed in organizational diversity literature and discourse (Showunmi et al., 2016). Kalish and Luria (2016) argue that individuals emerge as leaders only when they possess attributes that are similar to those of the perceiver or more specifically, if they fit the 'prototype' and possess the attributes that the observer (or perceiver) associated with leadership. In this case, the 'prototype' would be that a black female leader must have 'long, straight hair, be of slim build, light skinned, and speak English fluently with a 'white' accent,' thus, as close to a white female as possible. In contrast to Bartley (2013), who felt compelled to 'hide' her black features, the findings show that black South African leaders are rebelling against this oppression of their identity with P3, a black female

leader, strongly asserting and imposing her physical appearance in the workplace, a phenomenon that is picking up momentum in black society recently. Black people have begun to proudly, and vocally, defend their identities and heritage. Black female professionals are proudly and unapologetically embracing their natural, thick and nappy locks more, as expressed by P6: *"... I deliberately want to have big hair, because I know it offends people. Black hair is not tidy, and people want you to conform in a number of different ways..."*. Black people have regained their voice and speak out loudly against multinationals that attempt to demean black racial identity, e.g., Clicks (leading pharmacy, health and beauty retailer) being the latest to experience the full might of black rage after posting a TRESemme advert insulting black hair in favor of white hair. After nationwide protests, the company was forced to take the offending brand off their shelves and to apologize to the nation.

Equally, blacks from urban backgrounds tangibly get more workplace opportunities, and in-company promotions, than those from rural backgrounds.

Language, more specifically, the 'black accent' is another 'shade' that may impact the career progression of black professionals. English is not a first language for the majority of South African black people, instead, their first languages are indigenous languages such as isiZulu, isiXhosa, sePedi, depending on tribal background. The majority of black professionals attended schools where the medium of instruction was an indigenous language. With the changes in the country, especially post-1994, access to Model C [mixed, formally white, better resourced] schools increased for black communities, especially the more affluent families: *"... you have got your model C private school blacks... it is easier for you to take that leadership position, and be assertive, [if you attended a model C school]"* (P5). The Model C schools' medium of instruction is in English and they boast a complementary racial mix. Therefore, black learners who attended these schools gained the ability to speak English fluently while also being exposed to learners and cultures of different races. However, a larger number of black South Africans could only attend schools in the under-resourced, black-only townships, limiting their exposure to spoken English, at least at pre-tertiary level. Our research found that professionals that were less fluent in English, were at an additional disadvantage and were more likely to be side-lined for upward opportunities in organizations. This is largely due to the perception that ability to eloquently communicate in English is directly linked to intelligence, an unconscious bias that has also infiltrated black communities' views that 'better blacks' are closer to being white (superiority): *"... God forbid you bring someone with a strong African accent. It is the house slave versus the field slave... the ones that will sit on boards, the ones that will be in management, that are brought in by the white superior colleagues, because they can relate to them... you are more relatable than someone who went to a typical township school."* (P5).

The above diagram (**Figure 3**) attempts to graphically represent the quadrants in which black professionals are classified by unconscious bias, creating additional hoops and barriers to overcome toward leadership emergence. These shades often overlap. At any point in time, an individual is a mix of two,

sometimes even three shades that can be brought on by a change in circumstances perhaps, as an example, social class transition (Showunmi et al., 2016), such as a relocation from the township to the suburb. However, an individual always has one dominant shade, and this is the one that others may 'see' at face value and on which an individual is judged more strongly – this is often the shade that will influence their career progression. There are other secondary shades that are not represented, e.g., physique.

Consequences of Atypical Black Leadership in the South African Context

Representation

Our findings revealed that black professionals and leaders find themselves extremely racially isolated within organizations. This circumstance leads to black professionals turning down roles to avoid being placed in positions where they will be 'only black.' This means that organizations also feel the negative impact of this lack of representation by potentially losing talent – through an inability to attract or to retain black professionals who simply refuse to be part of organizations that do not have representation. Secondly, the research found that leadership aspirations amongst black professionals could be linked to racial identity representation in the leadership structures of their organization. Thus, we can conclude that black professionals who feel represented in the leadership in their organizations are more likely to aspire and work toward leadership positions in the organization because they believe it is possible for them to attain. This could be utilized as a retention and transformation strategy for organizations. Black professionals and leaders shared that due to isolation, lack of support and lack of leaders that understand and relate to challenges that are specific to black people, they often seek support outside the organizations in the form of black networks. The consequence of having black atypical leaders in an organization is that they provide the much needed emotional and structural support for black professionals and, more specifically, provide empathetic leadership that can relate and mentor other black professionals in a way that white leaders simply cannot. Again, representation can therefore provide emotional support, create loyalty and give guidance and a sense of belonging to black employees in an organization contributing to an overall improved workplace experience for black professionals.

Policy making

Organizations that are untransformed and lack diversity are prone to practicing policies that discriminate and exclude as the policies themselves are created by the dominant group. Therefore the policies are more likely to protect the privilege of the dominant group, with little to no consideration about the inclusiveness of such policies for the marginalized group. The consequence the presence of atypical leaders is that policies can be created with the marginalized in mind, thus reducing levels of discrimination.

Management bias

Black South African leaders shared that they exhibit deliberate color bias in their leadership enactment. The color bias stems largely from negative feelings, such as resentment and pain as a result of South Africa's painful history as well as the leaders' need to balance the scales by providing black employees an increased likelihood to succeed, an opportunity they would not otherwise receive from a white leader. There is a general feeling by black leaders that the system was historically created to favor white employees, to support them and therefore they do not 'struggle' to make it. The consequence therefore of increasing the number of black atypical leaders is that this phenomenon might eventually become diluted with time, due to improved diversity and a general feeling amongst black leaders that organizations are transforming, are representative of the country's demographics, and reducing the need to take matters into their own hands through intentional acts of bias.

Ubuntu

Ubuntu, a South African, black cultural philosophy, has been cited as one that could be a competitive advantage (Nkomo, 2011). It is a philosophy that black people in South African are raised under, and one that is deeply entrenched in their attitudes. Thus, black atypical leaders would, because of their cultural background and their upbringing, possess the spirit of Ubuntu, and organizations who intentionally attract black leaders in their organizations would reap the benefits of this competitive advantage. Ubuntu could contribute toward wellness, loyalty and inclusiveness in organizations, benefits that can be realized through the leadership of atypical black leaders.

CONCLUSION

This research has added to the body of knowledge by clearly mapping the paths taken by atypical black South African leaders to occupy leadership positions within organizations, detailing the barriers and enablers that contribute to the culmination of this endeavor. Furthermore, this research has shed light into the self-perceptions of black atypical leaders that shape their emotions and behaviors in leadership roles, an area that has been rarely covered in leadership research, but nevertheless an area of research that has never mattered more in a country that is deemed to be post-colonial, free of Apartheid, and a full blown democracy. The research is even more relevant to organizations that are committed to transformation and diversity in the wake of the country's shameful history of exclusion. More than ever, it is imperative that black leaders are heard, as they begin to surface and tell their own stories, and in their own words.

The findings have shown that the paths taken to occupy leadership positions are long, arduous and atypical for black professionals. Upbringing clearly plays a big role in the chosen paths of aspiring black leaders. The early enforcement of education in times of turmoil contributed to the determination to succeed. The presence of parental figures who were successful and hardworking contributed to the motivation to do well. Financial struggle, e.g., the inability to afford education in their formative years, is a big part of the journey of black professionals.

Black professionals are highly conscious of the history of the country, and they carry deep-rooted memories of

their childhood, Apartheid experiences, and the experiences of generations before them. The generational trauma is persistent and passed on through narrated stories and experiences of marginalization and violence against black people. The pain continues to be triggered in modern day experiences – socially, in organizations and all the way through to boardrooms. Furthermore, black leaders believe that the government's policies have failed to deliver the transformation required within organizations. The history of the country, their workplace experiences, and shared trauma, all contributed to a collective purpose for black professionals – to bring change by pulling each other up.

Afrikaans as a language of oppression in educational institutions, and in the workplace, remains a large contributor to the difficulties faced by black professionals, creating additional hurdles for them to achieve and to function effectively in the workplace. Afrikaans carries a dark association for black people and being expected to 'deal with it' does nothing for the psychological healing of the black community and the so-called future, demographically representative organizational leaders of South Africa.

Furthermore, black professionals are required to work in environments that are still modeled to resemble the Apartheid era, in environments that reject them, isolate them from their own, and judges them considerably more harshly than their white counterparts. These experiences have led to feelings of pain, anger, self-doubt, fear, and guilt, while fortunately increasing their determination and sense of purpose. In these work environments, the message is clear – if you fail, you carry the burden of knowing that you have effectively blocked access for other black professionals seeking to walk the same path.

In order to climb the corporate ladder, black professionals sometimes form transactional relationships with white counterparts. These relationships do not fully serve them – but, in order to gain career advancement, they have to 'seek permission' from their white sponsors, stay just long enough to benefit, and be smart enough to know when it is time to move on for fear of being labeled a token. These relationships can be oppressive as black professional are encouraged to mind their tongue, keep their heads down, or risk being cast aside or sabotaged by the white 'sponsor', should they fail to toe the line. In extremely rare cases, these relationships can eventually become genuine, meaningful and even turn into friendship.

Racial isolation can contribute negatively to the emergence of black leaders, with black professionals choosing to turn down opportunities where they would be 'the only black.' Black professionals seek a sense of belonging and a sense of community with their own people in organizations. In order to cope with the onslaught of exclusionary and demeaning work experiences, they seek comfort within black networks. Within organizations, these networks, that are safe spaces for them, remain covert in their operation in order to protect the beneficiaries from victimization.

Black professionals are deliberate about the leadership positions they pursue, and the visibility of black leaders within organizational structures are an important motivational impetus for the aspiration of other black professionals, which is strongly linked to racial identity.

Black professionals are furtively judged on 'multiple shades' of their identities in regard to career advancement, and ultimately on whether they are 'authorized' as leaders. Being lighter skinned allows access to better opportunities as they are deemed 'better' and 'less black.' Indigenous school English creates the perception of incompetence, whilst Model C/private school English makes one sound 'whiter' and thus, a 'better black.' These seemingly minor aspects of identity all contribute toward determining the ultimate success and emergence of a leader. This holds true for blacks who had rural upbringings (a disadvantage) versus those who had urban upbringings (advantage).

This research has shown that, although black leaders are penalized for their blackness, they also perceive their 'blackness' as a strength. They believe that their 'blackness' contributes to their ability to lead, due to their unique history of struggle and accompanying resilience – a history which, in South Africa, is peculiar to black people. Steve Biko associated the term 'black' with independence and self-reliance, and the research has established that in order to emerge as a black leader in South Africa, where odds are heavily stacked against black professionals, a black professional has to be exactly that.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Inter-generational pain is a very real phenomenon that has wreaked havoc on the psychological well-being of black professionals in South Africa. It is important that black professionals and black leaders are made conscious of their condition so that they may actively seek healing through therapy, as well as sharing and telling the stories of their lived experiences to people who look like them and who relate to these experiences. Actively seeking healing will assist black professionals to deal with their feelings of inadequacy, pain, anger and affirm their identity. Organizations must boldly acknowledge the painful history linked to the Afrikaans language and decisively enforce corrective and restorative reparations to protect and restore the dignity and psychological well-being of black employees. Although organizations must be inclusive in their approach, they must put more effort into eradicating the use of the oppressive, Apartheid-era microaggressions in boardrooms and in formal work engagements – this attack on the black psyche must be swiftly eradicated through the formulation of appropriate organizational policies. Organizations must provide a safe environment, without censor, for the creation and/or existence of harmless 'black only' networks and events that celebrate, promote and bring pride to the black identity. Transforming the demographic landscape within organizations, to be more representative of the country's demographics, could contribute toward retention of black talent. Black professionals migrate toward the environments that will allow them to build relationships with other black professionals, create safe spaces where they can share experiences with people that look like them, can advise them, and are able to relate to their lived experiences. Black leaders have a

sense of purpose, to positively impact black communities and black employees that fall victim to harsh work environments. Therefore, it is important that black leaders are provided with opportunities to mentor young and disenfranchised black employees, in order to fulfill this purpose. This is a very specific need that cannot be fulfilled by white people, because they cannot fully relate to the very unique black experiences that only black people share amongst themselves. Organizations can benefit from these interactions too, as they can retain confident talent that is truly authentic and engaged in the organization.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee, Faculty of Commerce, University of Cape Town. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

KA and AM developed the research ideas and methodology together. AM did the data collection and the coding of the data. The analysis and write-up were jointly completed. Both authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Take a "Selfie": Examining How Leaders Emerge From Leader Self-Awareness, Self-Leadership, and Self-Efficacy

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It is important to understand the processes behind how and why individuals emerge as leaders, so that the best and most capable individuals may occupy leadership positions. So far, most literature in this area has focused on individual characteristics, such as personality or cognitive ability. While interactions between individuals and context do get research attention, we still lack a comprehensive understanding of how the social context at work may help individuals to emerge as leaders. Such knowledge could make an important contribution toward getting the most capable, rather than the most dominant or narcissistic individuals, into leadership positions. In the present work, we contribute toward closing this gap by testing a mediation chain linking a leader's leader self-awareness to a follower's leadership emergence with two time-lagged studies ($n_{study1} = 449$, $n_{study2} = 355$). We found that the leader's leader self-awareness was positively related to (a) the follower's leadership emergence and (b) the follower's nomination for promotion and that both relationships were serially mediated by the follower's self-leadership and the follower's leader self-efficacy. We critically discuss our findings and provide ideas for future research.

Keywords: information processing theory, leadership emergence, leader self-awareness, leader self-efficacy, self-leadership, social cognitive theory

INTRODUCTION

Who emerges as a leader and how qualified are they to lead? These questions have long been discussed in the research and practice literature on leadership, given the importance that leaders play in all aspects of society. Thus far, the literature on antecedents of leader emergence, which is the degree to which an individual is perceived by others as being a leader (Judge et al., 2002), has largely focused on individual attributes. More precisely, personality factors like agreeableness (Wyatt and Silvester, 2018) and extraversion (Reichard et al., 2011), as well as dominance (Hegstrom and Griffith, 1992) and narcissism (Nevicka et al., 2011), have been shown to be relevant to predicting leadership emergence. Moreover, knowledge and skills, in terms of emotional awareness/recognition (Walter et al., 2012) and communication (Charlier et al., 2016), as well as identity-related factors, such as leader role identity (Kwok et al., 2018), or leader self-efficacy (Liu et al., 2019), have also been shown to play vital roles in predicting the emergence of leaders.

FIGURE 1 | Theoretical model. (f), follower-related variable.
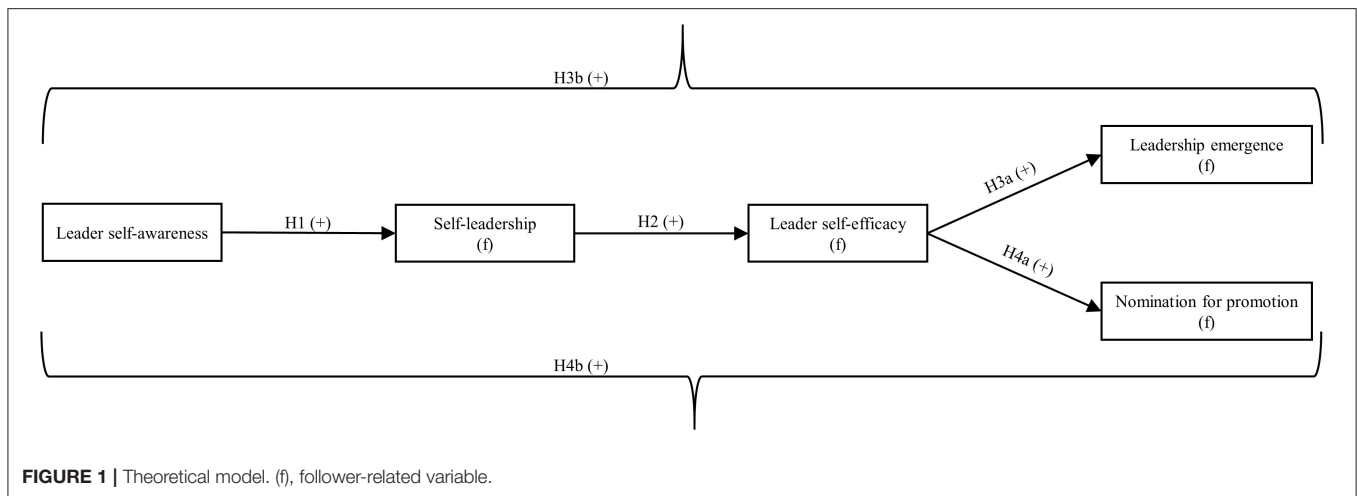
In our research, we want to shift the focus in examining leader emergence to the context, as recommended by Avolio (2007), because "one can learn most about individual behavior by studying the informational and social environment within which that behavior occurs and to which it adapts" (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978, p. 226). Recent work on the intersection of the individual and their social environment in predicting leader(ship) emergence has included a focus on the role of status (McClean et al., 2018), peer liking (Hu et al., 2019), and leader–member exchange (Zhang et al., 2012). Additional work on antecedents of leadership emergence has shown that network centrality can also play a role in predicting who emerges as a leader (Kwok et al., 2018). While prior work has provided a preliminary foundation for understanding the individual and relational antecedents for leadership emergence, this work does not yet explain how an individual's social environment at work influences their development and whether those developmental gains predict leader emergence.

Contributing toward closing this gap, and following the call from Acton et al. (2019) to understand leadership emergence as a dynamic, interactive process, we explore in two field studies how a leader's inner, self-developmental leadership process can lead to a follower's emergence as a leader through its effect on a follower's leadership development process. We theorize and test how the target leader's leader self-awareness can ultimately lead to (a) the follower's leadership emergence and (b) the follower's nomination for promotion into a leadership position. Specifically, we draw from both social information processing and social cognitive theory to propose how these relationships are both serially mediated by the follower's own self-leadership development and the follower's leader self-efficacy [1]. **Figure 1** summarizes the proposed relationships in this research.

Our main theoretical contribution to leader(ship) emergence literature lies in describing how leadership emergence can result from a developmental process involving individual as well as social context variables at the workplace. We consider this an important contribution, since (a) the leadership emergence literature thus far has largely captured a static perspective on antecedents of leadership emergence, and (b) a process-oriented perspective involving multiple components of individuals and their context is of central importance given that leadership results from interactions between individuals and context (Porter and McLaughlin, 2006; Avolio, 2007; Jepson, 2009; Oc, 2018).

Our work also contributes to practice by examining how leaders can positively influence their followers' leadership emergence. Using their influence to promote leadership emergence in their followers, leaders may actively contribute to the emergence of effective and capable leaders, rather than relying upon the most dominant (Hegstrom and Griffith, 1992) or narcissistic (Nevicka et al., 2011) individuals to emerge as leaders.

Explaining the relationship between leader self-awareness and a follower's self-leadership, we rely on *Social Informational Processing Theory* (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Following this theory, individuals adapt their attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs to their social context. This happens in two ways. First, individuals use the cues of their social environment to construct meaning regarding what are acceptable beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in the particular social context. Second, the social context heightens the salience of certain information and thereby increases its relevance to the individual. In other words, individuals develop their attitudes as a function of the social information that is available to them.

Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) further described that relevant contextual information for attitude and behavior formation at work is, among other factors, a leader's style of supervision. Hence, a leader's behavior and attitude can impact the follower's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. These relationships have already been demonstrated in several previous studies (e.g., Groves and LaRocca, 2011; Steinmann et al., 2018; Farahnak

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[1]To increase readability, we will henceforth refer to a leader's leader self-awareness as leader self-awareness when describing parts of our model. All other variables of the model are follower related and will also be referred to as self-leadership, leader self-efficacy, leadership emergence, and nomination for promotion, without necessarily always including "follower's".

et al., 2020). Thereby, the relevant source of information for attitude formation and behavior is not the leader's behavior or attitude itself but an individual's perception. This is because characteristics of an individual's social context are constructed by them, as they navigate through their daily interactions (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). In short, a leader's attitudes and behaviors as perceived by their follower can impact the follower's decisions and behavior. Building on this, we can outline the relationship between leader self-awareness and follower self-leadership.

Leader self-awareness has been defined based on previous conceptualizations of self-awareness but linking awareness specifically to how a leader views their leadership of others [see Walumbwa et al. (2008)]. More precisely, leader self-awareness refers to leaders "demonstrating an understanding of how one derives and makes meaning of the world and how that meaning making process impacts the way one views himself or herself over time" (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 95). Thereby, leader self-awareness can be observed in terms of specific leader self-awareness behaviors a person who leads exhibits, like seeking feedback to improve interactions with others (Avolio et al., 2018).

Self-leadership is defined as the process of influencing oneself to achieve goals (Houghton and Neck, 2002). Individuals influence and lead themselves by using specific sets of cognitive and behavioral strategies (Neck and Houghton, 2006). These strategies are labeled as (1) *behavior focused*, (2) *natural reward*, and (3) *constructive thought patterns*. First, behavior-focused strategies "strive to heighten an individual's self-awareness in order to facilitate behavioral management" (Neck and Houghton, 2006, p. 271). These behavioral strategies include different elements. For example, the self-leadership process may start with *self-observation*, which implies being aware of when and why one engages in specific behaviors, which may lead to the individual identifying goals for change. What may follow then is *self-goal setting*, which refers to setting and working toward specific goals. On the way toward goal achievement, it is important for self-leaders to *self-cue* or keep track of those goals in order to stay motivated, for instance by using lists, notes, or motivational posts [for more detailed descriptions of the strategies, see Houghton and Neck (2002), Neck and Houghton (2006), Stewart et al. (2011), Stewart et al. (2019)].

Having succeeded or failed at reaching a goal, individuals then engage in the second type of strategy known as *natural reward,* which refers to building pleasant and enjoyable features into one's work tasks (Houghton and Neck, 2002; Neck and Houghton, 2006; Stewart et al., 2011, 2019). The third self-leadership strategy, *constructive thought pattern*, refers to evaluating one's beliefs and assumptions, as well as using mental imagery and positive self-talk strategies. Taken together, these strategies describe how individuals gain awareness over their beliefs and behavior and then consciously work toward, and mentally track, the realization of their goals.

We suggest that leader self-awareness, as observed by the follower, may encourage the follower to engage in developing his/her own self-awareness-related aspects of self-leadership, which then motivates self-leadership development. More specifically, followers who observe their leader to be self-aware, should tag self-awareness as being an important attitude and behavior in the respective work context (cf., Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Consequentially, followers may feel inspired to heighten their self-awareness as well, which may include those elements of self-leadership that are related to leader self-awareness, such as self-observation, reflecting on and keeping track of their goal achievement and becoming aware of their self-talk and self-imagery. Previous work has provided evidence connecting observed leadership with self-leadership as well. Different from our proposition, these other studies largely focused on empowering leadership (e.g., Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014, 2015) or on the self-awareness component as part of empowering leadership (Tekleab et al., 2008). Building on this, we propose our first hypothesis:

H1: Leader's leader self-awareness is positively related to follower's self-leadership.

Beyond being impacted by one's social context, *Social Cognitive Theory* suggests that individuals influence their own attitudes and behaviors themselves (Bandura, 1991). For instance, when individuals repeatedly succeed at attaining their goals, or perform well, they develop positive self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura and Adams, 1977; Sitzmann and Yeo, 2013). Self-efficacy beliefs are defined as "people's beliefs in their capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over events in their lives" (Wood and Bandura, 1989, p. 364).

When individuals successfully perform a certain skill or behavior, this does not only increase their self-efficacy beliefs regarding the practiced skill or behavior (e.g., Talsma et al., 2018), but it may also encourage individuals to set higher standards and goals for themselves as they move forward in their work (Wood and Bandura, 1989). For instance, a leader who successfully leads a team of five may consequently feel confident enough to lead a larger team next. In other words, success in one area may expand to self-efficacy toward a more complex challenge. Since self-efficacy relates to what the individual has successfully accomplished in previous experiences, a virtuous circle of self-efficacy and performance develops.

Based on the idea of a self-efficacy/performance virtuous cycle, we suggest that successfully performing as a self-leader may strengthen one's confidence to not just lead oneself but to do so with others as well. Thereby, the confidence to lead others can be expressed in the form of leader self-efficacy. Leader self-efficacy is defined as "leaders' beliefs in their perceived capabilities to organize the psychological capabilities, motivation, (…) and courses of action required to attain effective, sustainable performance across their unique leadership roles, demands, and contexts" (Hannah et al., 2012, p. 144). Self-leadership may increase leader self-efficacy for two reasons. First, self-leadership has been defined as the equivalent of leadership, whereby self-leadership is focused on leading *oneself*, while leadership is focused on leading *others* (Furtner, 2017). Hence, self-leadership and leadership can be seen as two constructs that belong generally within the same skill domain. Second, self-leadership has often been considered a precondition for leadership. More precisely, research has argued and shown that self-leadership is a helpful skill in positively contributing to leading others successfully (cf., Drucker, 1999; Lovelace et al., 2007; Furtner et al., 2013). Based

on the above arguments, that individuals who successfully lead themselves may feel more confident to lead others, we propose our second hypothesis:

H2: Follower's self-leadership is positively related to follower's leader self-efficacy.

Building on social cognitive theory, previous work could show that individuals not only develop self-efficacy beliefs based on their prior performance but that this mechanism can work the other way around as well (Kroesen et al., 2017; Talsma et al., 2018). More precisely, individuals tend to choose those activities they feel self-efficacious about, such that they choose those activities they believe they can execute successfully (Wood and Bandura, 1989). This belief encourages them to exert more effort and direct more persistence toward that task (Bandura, 1988). For example, it has been shown that creative self-efficacy can enhance one's creativity associated with creative ideation (e.g., Yang et al., 2020).

Extending this to leader self-efficacy, followers with high leader self-efficacy should emerge as leaders. We suggest such a relationship based on previous findings showing that leader self-efficacy predicted leadership emergence (Liu et al., 2019). Hence, we propose our Hypothesis 3a:

H3a: Follower's leader self-efficacy is positively related to follower's leadership emergence.

Combining these arguments with Hypotheses 1 and 2, we propose the following sequential mediation relationship:

H3b: The indirect relationship between leader's leader self-awareness and follower's leadership emergence is mediated by follower's self-leadership and follower's self-efficacy.

Now, completing the theoretical linkages, we suggest that a follower's leadership self-efficacy will not remain unnoticed, improving their chances of being chosen for leadership roles. When individuals feel confident to lead, this may positively impact other people's evaluations of that individual's capability to lead. Such relations have been found in the area of creativity (Gong et al., 2009), whereby an individual's creative self-efficacy was positively related to the same individual's level of creativity, as rated by others.

In a similar vein, leader self-efficacy has been shown to be positively related to other-rated performance and leadership (Hannah et al., 2012). Assuming that leaders do notice their followers' feelings, and displays of confidence in their own leadership, and consider this as being a relevant criterion for promoting a follower into a leadership position, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4a: The follower's leader self-efficacy is positively related to the follower's nomination for promotion.

Combining these arguments with Hypotheses 1 and 2, we propose the following sequential mediation relationship:

H4b: The indirect relationship between leader's leader self-awareness and the follower's nomination for promotion is mediated by follower's self-leadership and follower's self-efficacy.

METHOD STUDY 1

Sample

The sample for Study 1 was recruited through the online panel provider called Kantar, which is an international organization

based in London. Kantar has access to a participant pool of several million respondents globally. Selection criteria for our study included (a) holding American citizenship, (b) being aged between 18 and 65, (c) being employed, and (d) agreeing to be recontacted for the second half of the study. Kantar elicited our invited participants for this study via an email to the panel, using a short description of our study. Participation in this study was voluntary, and participants were paid a standard fee for completing the investigation. In order to mitigate single source/common method bias, as well as social desirability effects, we used a 4-week interval between Time 1 and Time 2 data collection. At Time 2, a total of 717 participants completed our survey. After having excluded participants who did not fully answer both surveys, did not pass all attention checks (cf., Paas and Morren, 2018), or showed a particular answer pattern like giving extremely positive or negative answers throughout the survey, our sample resulted in a total number of $n = 449$ participants.

In the final sample, participants were 20–65 years old ($M = 51.33$, $SD = 11.14$), and the majority was female (72.2%). Among the participants, 1.3% did not graduate from school, 18.3% completed vocational education, and 20% held a High School degree. Another 34.5% completed their Bachelor's, 12.9% finished their Master's, and a small percentage of 2.4% held a Ph.D. degree. The majority of participants were working in organizations with up to 200 employees. The size of the organization employees worked in, varied from 2 to 2.2 million employees ($M = 28,965.01$, $SD = 174,747.66$). Some individuals had just joined their organizations a few months ago, while others were working in the same organization for up to 43 years ($M = 12.01$, $SD = 10.72$). Participants covered a broad range of industries, from health (14.5%), to the educational sector (12.9%), public services (6.9%), and IT (4.5%). While most individuals did not have leadership experience (66.6%), those who were in leadership positions had up to 10 years of leadership experience (58.4%).

Measures

In this study, we measured leader self-awareness, self-leadership, and leader self-efficacy as core variables. Thereby, leader self-awareness and self-leadership were measured at Time 1 and leader self-efficacy at Time 2. Furthermore, we included gender as a control variable. We did so because gender has been shown to significantly affect leadership emergence [for a meta-analysis, see Badura et al. (2018)]. Differences in leadership emergence between men and women can, for instance, be traced back to agentic and communal traits (Badura et al., 2018). More precisely, as shown by Badura et al. (2018), women exhibit less agentic traits and, as a consequence, participate less in group discussions, which makes them less likely to emerge as leaders, compared to their male counterparts. Gender differences were not only found with respect to leader and leadership-related variables but also regarding the use of different self-leadership strategies (Bendell et al., 2019).

We measured leader self-awareness with the 4 items from the *Leader Self-Awareness* dimension of the *Authentic Leadership Questionnaire* (Avolio et al., 2018), provided by www.mindgarden.com. A sample item is: "*My leader shows he or she understands how specific actions impact others.*" Cronbach

alpha of the scale was α = 0.91. Answers were given on a scale from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *frequently, if not always.*

Self-leadership was captured using the *Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire* (Houghton et al., 2012), which is a nine-item one-dimensional measure of self-leadership. A sample item was: "*I try to mentally evaluate the accuracy of my own beliefs about situations I am having problems with.*" Cronbach alpha was α = 0.90. Participants rated the items on a scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree.*

Leader self-efficacy was measured with a *Leader Self Efficacy Scale* (Hannah et al., 2012). More precisely, we chose the *Action* dimension of the leader self-efficacy scales because it most adequately represented the kind of leader self-efficacy we were interested in testing. This dimension has seven items, and participants rated their efficacy for exhibiting a certain behavior such as: "*I energize others to achieve their best.*" Cronbach alpha of the scale was α = 0.95. Participants chose a value for each item on a Likert scale between 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree.*

Analysis

We tested our hypotheses using structural equation modeling techniques with Mplus version 8 (Muthén and Muthén, 1998–2017). In our analysis, we let the items for each construct load on the respective latent factor and then modeled the direct and indirect paths between the latent constructs. In this study, we calculated a model testing Hypotheses 1 and 2. To control for gender, we regressed self-leadership and leader self-efficacy on gender.

We examined several indicators of model fit. The chi-square value shows exact model fit and should be insignificant to indicate good model fit (Geiser, 2011). However, the chi-square test is sensitive to large sample sizes, making it good practice to complement the chi-square test with additional goodness-of-fit indicators. First, we used the comparative fit index (CFI), capturing incremental fit with values close to 1, indicating that the model explained the data better than an independence model. Values above 0.90 are suggested to avoid accepting miss-specified models (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Second, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) indicates approximate fit, which should be 0.08 or lower (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). Third, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) provides an overall evaluation of the residuals, whereby values close to 0.08 indicate that the observed (co-)variances should be replicable (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Hu and Bentler (1998) suggested that researchers should use a two-index presentation strategy, saying that when the SRMR is close to 0.08 in combination with either CFI (close to 0.95) or RMSEA (close to 0.06), there is a relatively good fit between the model and the data.

RESULTS STUDY 1

We calculated means, standard deviations, and correlations for each scale. Results showed that all correlations between our core variables were significant at $p < 0.01$. Specifically, correlations were $r = 0.38$ between leader self-awareness and follower's self-leadership, and $r = 0.49$ for self-leadership and leader self-efficacy. Beyond this, gender correlated significantly with leader

TABLE 1 | Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for Study 1.

	Mean (SD)	1	2	3
Leader self-awareness (l)	3.06 (1.13)			
Self-leadership (f)	4.98 (1.25)	0.38**		
Leader self-efficacy (f)	4.38 (1.48)	0.28**	0.49**	
Gender[a] (f)	–	0.03	0.00	0.10*

**p < 0.01, *p < 0.05.
(l), leader-related variable; (f), follower-related variable.
[a]Female participants were coded as 1, male participants as 2.

self-efficacy ($r = 0.10$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that male participants had higher levels of self-efficacy. Yet, gender did not correlate significantly with any other variable. All results can be found in **Table 1**.

To determine whether our measures were sufficiently different from each other, we tested them for their discriminant validity. Discriminant validity can be confirmed to the degree that a latent variable explains a higher amount of variance in its indicator variables than it shares variance with other constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). This criterion is met if the average variance extracted (AVE) regarding the focal factor is higher than its R^2 with other factors (Henseler et al., 2015). Based on this criterion, we compared the AVE values of each construct in the model with its squared correlations with the remaining constructs. Results show that the AVE value for leader self-awareness was 0.79, which was higher than its squared correlations with self-leadership ($R^2 = 0.14$) and leader self-efficacy ($R^2 = 0.08$). Moreover, the AVE for self-leadership was 0.60 and was higher than its squared correlations with leader self-awareness and leader self-efficacy ($R^2 = 0.24$). Finally, the AVE for leader self-efficacy was 0.77 and was higher than the squared correlations with leader self-awareness and self-leadership. Hence, we could confirm discriminant validity for all constructs in this study.

We tested for common method variance to help mitigate any systematic bias in our data. To do so, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis, which included all variables used in the model. We can conclude that there was no evidence for common method variance bias in our results when we tested how much variance one overall method factor accounted for in terms of the covariance among all of our different measures using Harman's single factor test (see Podsakoff et al., 2003). As a result, four factors emerged, and the first method factor explained 43.15% of the variance. As several factors emerged, and the first method factor did not explain more than 50% of variance, we concluded, based on conventional standards, that common method bias was not a significant problem with our data and results.

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test for the distinctiveness of our core variables, namely, leader self-awareness, self-leadership, and leader self-efficacy. The fit indices were acceptable, although the CFI was slightly below the threshold: $\chi^2 = 3,518.27$ ($p < 0.001$), $df = 190$, CFI = 0.89, RMSEA = 0.07, and SRMR = 0.05. Overall, and as both SRMR and RMSEA were close to the suggested cutoff criteria (Hu and

Bentler, 1998), we considered the fit results to be satisfactory to continue our analyses to test our hypotheses.

Results from Model 1 largely showed acceptable model fit with $\chi^2 = 556.98$ ($p < 0.001$), $df = 185$, CFI $= 0.89$, RMSEA $= 0.07$, and SRMR $= 0.05$. Moreover, all paths were related to each other as we had predicted. First, confirming Hypothesis 1, leader self-awareness was positively and significantly related to self-leadership with $\beta = 0.40$ ($SE = 0.05$), 95% CI (0.31; 0.49). Second, confirming Hypothesis 2, self-leadership positively related to leader self-efficacy of followers [$\beta = 0.47$ ($SE = 0.05$), 95% CI (0.37; 0.56)]. Concerning our control variable, gender did not relate to self-leadership significantly but did with leader self-efficacy [$\beta = 0.09$ ($SE = 0.04$), 95% CI (0.02; 0.17)], indicating that male participants felt higher levels of leader self-efficacy.

METHOD STUDY 2

Sample

We recruited the second sample via Amazon Mechanical Turk. We contacted participants about 2 weeks after they had finished the first survey to invite them to complete the second part. A total of $n = 600$ participants participated in the first survey, and a total of $n = 411$ completed both of our surveys. Another 56 individuals did not pass our attention checks, resulting in our final sample of $n = 355$ participants.

Participants in the second study had an age range between 22 and 75 years ($M = 39.33$, $SD = 11.21$). Most of our participants were male (57.7%). Only one person did not graduate from High School (0.3%), while another 4.8% stated that they did graduate from High School. Among those who went to College, 28 people (7.9%) stated that they had "some college" experience, while 31 (8.7%) had a 2-year degree, and as much as 193 people (54.4%) had a 4-year college degree. In addition to that, 21.1% had a professional degree and 2.5% a doctorate degree.

About a quarter of the participants worked up to 36 h (26.6%) a week, while another 50.5% worked between 36 and 40 h/week, and 12% worked between 40 and 45 h. The remaining 38 people worked up to 75 h/week. Participants worked in a broad range of industries, i.e., 56.3% worked in business or services, 11.8% in healthcare, 10.1% in education, and another 4.8% did labor work. Only 3.7% of the participants worked less than a year in their current organization, another 27.9% worked between 1 and 3 years, and 24.5% between 3 and 5 years. Another 22.8% had stayed with their company for more than 5 years ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.56$). In terms of the followers' tenure with their current leader, 9.3% worked with their leader less than a year, while 67.8% had worked between 1 and 5 years, and another 22.9% worked with their current leader for more than 5 years ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.71$).

Measures and Analysis

Like in Study 1, we measured leader self-awareness, self-leadership, and leader self-efficacy. Additionally, we measured leadership emergence and nomination for promotion. Leader self-awareness and self-leadership were measured at Time 1, and leader self-efficacy, leadership emergence, and nomination for promotion were measured at Time 2. Again, we included gender as control variable. Additionally, we added a coronavirus disease

(COVID)-related control variable, which will be described in more detail below.

We used the same measures for leader self-awareness (Avolio et al., 2018; $\alpha = 0.87$), self-leadership (Houghton et al., 2012; $\alpha = 0.86$), and leader self-efficacy (Hannah et al., 2012; $\alpha = 0.90$) as in Study 1. Moreover, we measured leadership emergence with 4 items that were used by Lanaj and Hollenbeck (2015). We changed the wording from other ratings to self-ratings. A sample item is: "I exhibit leadership." The scale had a Cronbach alpha of $\alpha = 0.93$. Participants rated on a scale from 1 = almost never to 5 = almost always. Nomination for promotion was measured with 3 items. We used 2 items from Hoobler et al. (2009), adding the word "current:" "My current manager would encourage me to apply for a promotion" and "My current manager has encouraged me to apply for a promotion." We added a third item, "My previous manager encouraged me to apply for a promotion to a leadership position," to ensure we had a wider perspective on nomination for promotion, rather than just referring to the current manager. The scale was reliable with $\alpha = 0.86$. Participants rated the items on a scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

In this study, we included a COVID-19-related control variable in addition to gender. We did so because we collected the data during the ongoing pandemic in summer 2020, while Study 1 was collected approximately 1 year earlier. The pandemic pushed many organizations and individuals in the US into a crisis situation (cf., Rotblut and Hageman, 2020), which we were concerned could bias data related to ratings of leadership and efficacy. Prior research has shown that an organizational performance crisis can impact the selection of leaders (Rink et al., 2013), in which women are more likely to be selected for leadership positions than men. In order to account for the pandemic and its associated disruptions impact on our study, we controlled for the COVID-related event disruption. We measured event disruption based on items developed by Morgeson (2005), which we adapted to fit the specific COVID context. A sample item is: "To what extent has the coronavirus disrupted your ability to get your work done?" The scale was reliable ($\alpha = 0.86$). Answers were given on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = to a limited extent, 3 = to a moderate extent, 4 = to a large extent, and 5 = to a very large extent. Event disruption was measured at Time 1.

Like in Study 1, we tested our hypotheses using structural equation modeling techniques with Mplus version 8 (Muthén and Muthén, 1998–2017). In this study, we tested all proposed hypotheses in one model simultaneously, including the two control variables. More precisely, we regressed both mediators and outcome variables on gender as well as on the latent COVID-disruption factor. We refer to the same fit indicators as described for Study 1 above.

RESULTS STUDY 2

Calculating means, standard deviations, and correlations for each scale construct, we found that all correlations between core

variables were significant at $p < 0.01$, showing that leader self-awareness and self-leadership correlated with $r = 0.26$, self-leadership and leader self-efficacy with $r = 0.53$, leader self-efficacy and leadership emergence with $r = 0.71$, and finally, leader self-efficacy and nomination for promotion with $r = 0.57$. Exploring correlations with control variables, we found that gender correlated with leader self-efficacy ($r = -0.11$, $p < 0.05$), and leader emergence ($r = -0.16$, $p < 0.01$), such that male participants indicated higher levels of both leader self-efficacy and leadership emergence. COVID disruption positively related to all core variables at $p < 0.01$, varying between $r = 0.15$ and $r = 0.30$. All results can be found in **Table 2**.

Results for discriminant validity testing can be found in **Table 3**. Our findings confirm that the constructs within our model were sufficiently different from each other in that for all AVE/R^2 comparisons, the AVE value was larger than the respective R^2 value.

Like in Study 1, we tested for common method bias, using Harman's single factor test (see Podsakoff et al., 2003). In this study, six factors emerged, and the first method factor explained 37.24% of variance, indicating that common method bias did not necessarily impact the interpretation of our results. Next, we conducted a CFA to test for the distinctiveness of our core variables, namely, leader self-awareness, self-leadership, leader self-efficacy, leadership emergence, and nomination for promotion. Results provided an acceptable fit with $\chi^2 = 2,848.08$

($p < 0.001$), $df = 351$, CFI $= 0.90$, RMSEA $= 0.05$, and SRMR $= 0.08$, so we continued with hypotheses tests.

The fit for the model testing the hypotheses was acceptable: $\chi^2 = 667.08$ ($p < 0.001$), $df = 446$, CFI $= 0.92$, RMSEA $= 0.04$, SRMR $= 0.05$. All direct paths were significant at the $p \leq 0.001$ level. More precisely, leader self-awareness positively related to self-leadership with $\beta = 0.25$ ($SE = 0.06$), 95% CI (0.12; 0.37), and self-leadership positively related to leader self-efficacy with $\beta = 0.50$ ($SE = 0.05$), 95% CI (0.39; 0.60). Furthermore, leader self-efficacy was related to leadership emergence [$\beta = 0.76$ ($SE = 0.05$), 95% CI (0.66; 0.85)] and nomination for promotion [$\beta = 0.49$ ($SE = 0.06$), 95% CI (0.37; 0.60)]. Lastly, leader self-awareness was related to leadership emergence through self-leadership and leader self-efficacy with $\beta = 0.09$ ($SE = 0.03$), 95% CI (0.04; 0.15), and nomination for promotion through the same mediators with $\beta = 0.06$ ($SE = 0.03$), 95% CI (0.02; 0.10). As the direct relationship between leader self-awareness and leadership emergence [$\beta = 0.08$ ($SE = 0.04$), 95% CI (-0.001; 0.17)] was insignificant, but the direct relationship between leader self-awareness and nomination for promotion [$\beta = 0.42$ ($SE = 0.06$), 95% CI (0.31; 0.54)] remained significant, when all mediators and control variables were in the model, we confirmed Hypothesis 3b but only partially confirmed Hypothesis 4b. Furthermore, we reconfirmed Hypotheses 1 and 2 and additionally accepted Hypotheses 3a and 4a. An overview of all results can be found in **Figure 2**.

TABLE 2 | Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for Study 2.

	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leader self-awareness (l)	3.51 (0.96)						
Self-leadership (f)	3.97 (0.66)	0.26**					
Leader self-efficacy (f)	5.35 (0.97)	0.34**	0.53**				
Leadership emergence (f)	4.85 (1.53)	0.33**	0.36**	0.71**			
Nomination for promotion (f)	3.52 (0.97)	0.53**	0.35**	0.57**	0.53**		
COVID-disruption (f)	3.05 (0.98)	0.17**	0.15**	0.30**	0.26**	0.20**	
Gender[a] (f)	–	-0.10	0.05	-0.11*	-16**	-0.07	-0.06

**p < 0.01, *p < 0.05.
(l), leader-related variable; (f), follower-related variable.
[a] Male participants were coded as 1, female participants as 2.

TABLE 3 | Discriminant validity in Study 2.

		Self-leadership	Leader self-efficacy	Leader emergence	Nomination for promotion
	AVE	R^2	R^2	R^2	R^2
Leader self-awareness	0.72	0.07	0.12	0.11	0.53
Self-leadership	0.48	–	0.28	0.13	0.12
Leader self-efficacy	0.64	0.28	–	0.50	0.32
Leader emergence	0.82	0.13	0.50	–	0.28
Nomination for promotion	0.79	0.12	0.32	0.28	–

AVE, average variance extracted.

Considering control variables, we first found that gender was related to leader self-efficacy [β = −0.11, SE = 0.04, 95% CI (−0.19; −0.02)], such that male participants experienced higher levels of leader self-efficacy, while gender did not relate to self-leadership, leadership emergence, or nomination for promotion. Second, event disruption was significantly related to leader self-efficacy [with β = 0.23 (SE = 0.05), 95% CI (0.13; 0.32)] but not to any of the other variables in the model. Interestingly, the more disruption participants experienced, the higher they rated their leader self-efficacy. This may be due in part to the timing of our study, in that for most participants, they were 3–4 months into the pandemic, where they may have developed specific strategies to mitigate the risks of the pandemic, for instance by working from home, reducing interactions outside one's so-called "bubble," more available testing, and having a clearer sense of how the virus is transmitted. All of these factors could contribute to greater agency (Bandura, 2006). We address this finding in our future research and limitations section below.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to explore the role of a leader's level of leader self-awareness in triggering the follower's internal processes preceding the emergence of their leadership. Our findings confirmed a positive relationship between a leader's leader self-awareness and a follower's (a) leadership emergence and (b) nomination for promotion into a leadership position. Both relationships were shown to be serially mediated by the follower's self-leadership and the follower's leader self-efficacy, even after including controls for gender and COVID-disruption.

Contribution to Research

We contribute to the leader(ship) emergence literature by providing evidence of how leaders can foster leadership emergence in their followers by developing their own level of leader self-awareness. Unlike previous work on antecedents of leadership emergence that primarily focused on follower attributes (Walter et al., 2012; Charlier et al., 2016; Kwok et al.,

2018; Wyatt and Silvester, 2018), here, we include a mixture of internal and external variables to explain how leaders can emerge in response to their social context, namely, their leader's behavior. Thereby, we aimed to describe how leadership emergence may unfold over time, starting with leader self-awareness that triggers the follower's internal development processes toward self-leadership. This then guides the way toward the follower's own leadership emergence.

Doing so, we make an important contribution to the leader(ship) emergence literature, since to our best knowledge, most research in this area holds a rather static perspective on factors that determine leader and leadership emergence, and only a few studies (e.g., Reichard et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2019) have explored the pathways toward leader emergence. Yet, such process-oriented research is needed in order to gain a better understanding of how organizations and leaders can support the emergence of capable leaders. Therefore, a strength of our study is that by including leader self-awareness as a context variable, while combining it with self-leadership and leader self-efficacy as individual difference variables, we provided a more comprehensive model that encompasses the relationship between external and internal variables preceding leadership emergence. We consider this a strength of our research because it reflects that leadership emergence, just like most other phenomena in leadership, is an interactive process between individuals and context (e.g., Porter and McLaughlin, 2006; Avolio, 2007; Jepson, 2009; Oc, 2018), rather than solely determined by an individual's personal characteristics.

Furthermore, we contribute to the leadership literature by underscoring the importance leaders have for follower leadership development and emergence. Work on leadership has pointed out that the main task for leaders is to develop their followers into leaders themselves (Burns, 2012). Yet, despite the literature showing positive relations between positive forms of leadership and follower leadership (e.g., Schaubroeck et al., 2012), the process of how this unfolds largely remains untested (see also Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). While we did not intend to uncover the full transformation process from being a follower

FIGURE 2 | Model results of Study 2. All displayed relationships were significant at $p \leq 0.001$.
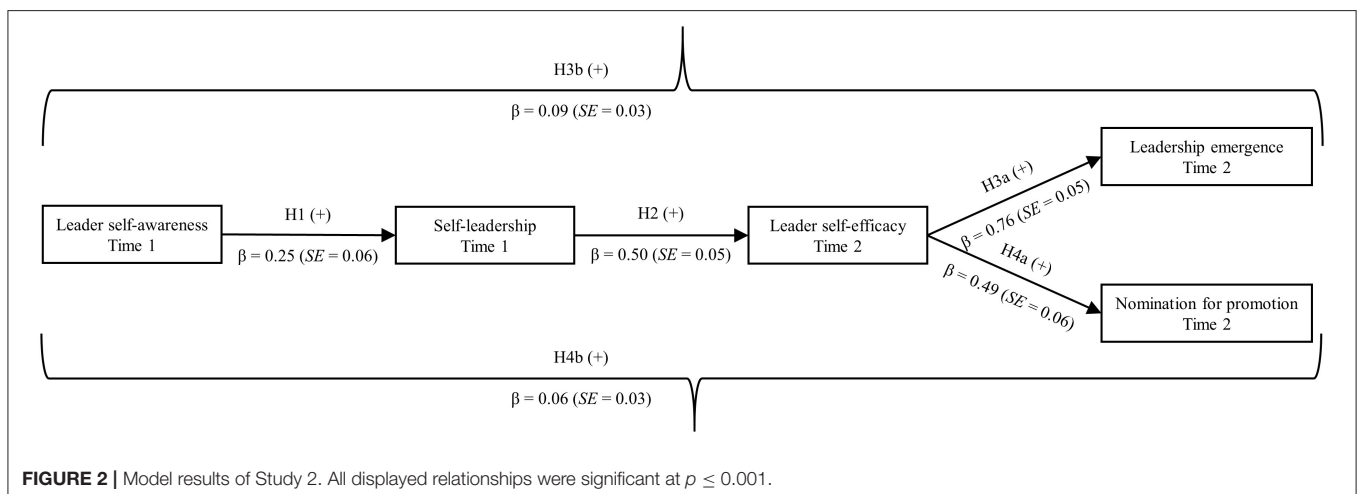
to becoming and emerging as a leader, we do contribute a small piece to understanding which dynamics may lie between a leader's behavior and a follower's internal processes toward becoming a leader.

Prior leader development research has also primarily examined the development of individual knowledge, skills, and ability (e.g., Mumford et al., 2007). Although the leadership field does recognize that development of leadership includes deeper transformative change, as well as a collective or shared process that evolves over time (DeRue and Myers, 2014), there has been very little empirical evidence provided on this transformation process. We call for future leadership research to seek greater clarity in terms of what could be developed based on understanding the dynamics between the social context, including one's leader, and how followers learn in that context to emerge as leaders.

Third, we contribute to the self-leadership literature by showing that leader self-awareness is a relevant antecedent for self-leadership. This adds to previous work, as other studies connecting leadership and follower self-leadership were largely focused on empowering leadership (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014, 2015). Empowering leadership is "the process of influencing subordinates through power sharing, motivation support, and development support with intent to promote their experience of self-reliance, motivation, and capability to work autonomously within the boundaries of overall organizational goals and strategies" (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014, p. 489). From this definition, we can see that empowering leadership has the goal to foster follower's autonomy and, hence, does relate to self-leadership in a very direct and explicit way. Leader self-awareness, however, taps into more implicit elements of self-leadership, which are inherent in some of the self-leadership strategies (Houghton and Neck, 2002). Thus, our findings contribute to broadening the understanding of how leadership can encourage followers' self-leadership emergence and development.

Lastly, an empirical strength of our study is that we tested parts of the mediation chain twice. The replication of our results underscores the relevance of our findings in the midst of the replication crisis emerging in psychology research (e.g., Lilienfeld, 2017; Shrout and Rodgers, 2018). Specifically, oftentimes an original study shows certain significant effects or relationships, while a second replication study does not confirm the same significant effects (Maxwell et al., 2015). Hence, by showing the same effects in two independent studies, we at least provide first evidence that the effects were not specific to one selected sample, which increases the level of robustness of our findings.

Practical Implications

Our findings provide organizational leaders and developers with a strategy to examine how leaders can help their followers develop as leaders, which is by showing their own level of leader self-awareness and supporting their follower's successful self-leadership enactment. This is an important implication for organizations because it provides a pathway for organizations and leaders to prepare those individuals for leadership, who are

potentially highly effective but otherwise may not have had the opportunity to emerge as leaders because of their more dominant (Hegstrom and Griffith, 1992) and narcissistic (Nevicka et al., 2011) counterparts who might squeeze them out of leadership roles in their organizations.

Our findings also provide implications for individuals who strive toward becoming a leader. These individuals may benefit from working on their own self-leadership first and then building on this competency and confidence to then take the next step to not just lead themselves but also actively seek roles to lead others (cf., Drucker, 1999; Lovelace et al., 2007; Furtner et al., 2013). On this journey, they may see their leader as an inspiration for self-awareness and a relevant supporter of their own self-leadership development.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the time-lagged design of our study can be considered a strength compared to a cross-sectional study, it is also a clear limitation. Specifically, we theoretically focused on examining a longitudinal developmental process but then tested that process within a time span of only a few weeks. Hence, using the present study designs, we did not actually focus on, nor capture, the actual developmental process that ensued between the leader and their follower. Yet, as we theoretically derived the mediation chain, and included participants who were already leaders, we can see our findings as being a preliminary confirmation that such a developmental process might have occurred, resulting in higher levels of a follower's self-leadership and a follower's nomination for leadership promotion. In addition, although the approach certainly has its flaws, it is not unusual to test leadership-related interactive developmental processes with a comparable design (Fischer et al., 2017). Hence, building on our initial findings, future work may explore the mediation chain, or parts of it, within a longitudinal data set, capturing the changes and focusing on development as it unfolds over time.

A second limitation of our present research concerns the leader self-awareness—follower's self-leadership link. As described in the present research, there is significant overlap between self-awareness and self-leadership. Yet, while leader self-awareness is certainly important for followers to develop self-leadership, we can assume that it is not necessarily sufficient. Rather, a number of factors may come into play that determine if self-leadership can actually be practiced, such as urgency, need for creativity and innovation, as well as the degrees of interdependence, and complexity (Pearce and Manz, 2005). As our findings generally supported the positive relationship between leader self-awareness and follower's self-leadership, we suggest that future research may dive deeper into exploring this relationship as it unfolds over time. Thereby, we encourage the use of contextual moderators, which may shed more light on understanding under which conditions leader self-awareness might be especially strong, or less strongly related to follower's self-leadership, such as in climates where there is a higher degree of psychological safety and voice.

While we did measure nomination for promotion and leadership emergence as outcome variables, we captured them as self-ratings and did not include other-rated measures of

the emerging leader or in the form of leadership effectiveness (e.g., Wang et al., 2018). These might be important variables to finally determine whether self-leadership and leader self-efficacy actually lead to the emergence of better and more effective leaders. Therefore, while we can theoretically assume such a positive connection, future work should explore not just *if* leaders can emerge from the process described in this work but also *how* these leaders behave, for instance by measuring their leadership behavior and performance with a range of different leadership measures (Northouse, 2018).

Building on our finding that leaders can encourage their follower's leadership emergence, future work might focus on other forms and elements of leadership, as well as followership, and how they relate to leadership emergence. For example, empowering leadership (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014), a form of leadership that actively encourages the follower to act autonomously and take on responsibility, as well as transformational leadership (Avolio and Bass, 2004), which aims to develop followers into leaders (Burns, 2012), may serve as interesting starting point for such future research.

In terms of the potential impact of the pandemic on our participants in Study 2, Bandura (1971, 1986) suggests that when individuals take on more challenging tasks early in the learning process, in our case, the early stages of the pandemic unfolding, they are more likely to be build a greater sense of efficacy if successful than when they engage in less challenging tasks. This might partially explain why the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic related positively to a follower's level of leader self-efficacy.

Future research should also now consider exploring not only when individuals take on these types of consequential challenges but also the type and/or characteristics of the consequential event/crisis. For example, some consequential events/crises may have more of an impact on financial or reputational losses, as opposed to the pandemic impact on mortality rates. Thus, the nature of the consequential event/crisis may matter to how the leader's effectiveness is viewed. Moreover, other research on the COVID 19 pandemic has found that there may also be gender differences in terms of how leaders interact with their key stakeholders/constituents when responding to this crisis. For example, Sergent and Stajkovic (2020) reported in their investigation of governors in the US responding to the COVID 19 pandemic that women vs. male governors had fewer COVID 19 deaths in their states. Moreover, based on a qualitative analysis of the governor's speeches during the pandemic, the authors concluded that women governors expressed more empathy and confidence to their constituents, as they navigated through this crisis. Examining gender differences in how leaders respond to different consequential events seems like a fruitful area for future leadership research.

Conclusion

In the present work, we showed that leader self-awareness was positively associated with the follower's leadership emergence through the follower's self-leadership and leader self-efficacy. These findings are encouraging in that they underline the idea that there are positive pathways to leadership emergence in the form of stepwise development toward leadership emergence. This gives us hope that when leaders and organizations recognize such alternative pathways to leadership emergence and actively work on supporting them, they can create more opportunities for individuals with diverse educational, gender, race, and ethnicity backgrounds to emerge as leaders based on their capability to lead well and do good for their respective organizations.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Institutional Review Board (IRB-2020-04-004). The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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The Emergence of Value-Based Leadership Behavior at the Frontline of Management: A Role Theory Perspective and Future Research Agenda

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The importance of value-based leadership such as authentic, ethical, and servant leadership is inconspicuous. However, the benefits of these leadership approaches are often only explained through the behaviors of their followers. As such, limited research has communicated the leader's motivation for pursuing such leadership behavior, resulting in such discourse to escape theorizing. We draw upon role theory and paid attention to the role of higher-level management (leadership) through the trickle-down model to underline their importance in the organization. We then expand this role theory framework by synthesizing research to explain the emergence of value-based leadership behavior at the frontline of management. In doing so, we aim to provide a stronger explanation of the emergence of value-based leadership in organizations. We conclude this analysis by guiding future research in the form of propositions to investigate the psychological process and organizational factors to empirically examine the proposed role framework.

Keywords: ethical leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, role theory, frontline manager

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the most studied social phenomena that have spanned over more than a century (Rindova and Starbuck, 1997). It is suggested that leadership is a universal activity evident in humankind and animal akin (Bass and Bass, 2008). The attention on value-based leadership (VBL) behavior began to emerge in literature at the height of the numerous corporate scandals at the beginning of the present millennia. Commonly known as the emerging leadership forms, this VBL comprising authentic, ethical, and servant leadership aims to address the question about providing value (i.e., ethical, moral, responsible, serving, and authenticity) in management (Lemoine et al., 2019). The definition of all three VBL forms has made explicit references to the manager's impact on the wider organization. For example, managers who demonstrate servant leadership must acknowledge his/her moral responsibility toward the organization, follower, customer, and stakeholders (Ehrhart, 2004). In current times, this VBL is again gaining attention because businesses needs to continuously strive to serve and promote a positive outcome for their stakeholders. Despite the importance of these leadership, the concepts remain poorly understood from a behavioral lens and are often characterized in ways that only describe their importance for

stakeholders (Hoch et al., 2018). A review on the literature also shows that two of these VBL (i.e., servant and authentic leadership) have multiple definitions. The widely shared concepts across all three leadership behaviors thus presented several critical issues. As such, this paper aims to answer the call of the special issue by discussing a new theoretical framework that influences the emergence of a VBL role, particularly, at the frontline of management.

First and foremost, VBL faced concept redundancy, given the existence of a plethora of commonalities that their definition shared. To illustrate, **Table 1** highlights the different patterns of behavior that is embodied by the respective leadership theory. It shows that both authentic leadership and servant leadership have multiple definitions and that the prior conceptual definition of authentic leadership has continued to emphasize the role of the leader through their central attributes, for example, (a) the role of the leader as the central component to their self-concept, (b) achieved a high level of self-resolution or self-concept clarity, (c) their goals are self-concordant, and (d) their behavior is self-expressive (Shamir and Eilam, 2005, p. 399). In recent times, Eva et al. (2019) have attempted to redefine servant leadership by linking the leadership behavior to its outcome. As a result, the authors have emphasized on a greater self-sacrificing behavior and downplaying antecedents like personality to simplify the concept through its motive, mode, and mindset.

Ethical leadership, on the other hand, was strongly influenced by the research of several scholars (see Treviño et al., 1998; Treviño et al., 2000, 2003; Den Hartog, 2015). This gave ethical leadership a stronger synthesis in its normative appropriateness definition, which focuses on the manager's conduct when promoting its benefit to stakeholders. Meta-analytic paper has also show that ethical leadership is link to follower's normative conduct even after accounting for job satisfaction (Peng and Kim, 2020). Therefore, ethical leadership was shown to benefits an organization by increasing and decreasing follower's normative and counter normative conduct accordingly. However, ethical leadership normative stance has invited question about what norms the leader might refer to when choosing to promote them to followers. For example, favoring profit generation at the expenses of sustainability and fairness "would mean breaking the norm, rather upholding it" (Eisenbeiss, 2012, p. 793).

Furthermore, a recent work has argued that ethical leadership behavior is prone to retrospective bias (Banks et al., 2020, in press). However, we argue that such an issue is not limited to ethical leadership. Instead, all three VBL behaviors will face similar an issue of being simplified through follower's evaluation. According to Epitropaki et al. (2013), followers will rely on cognitive simplification to cope with complex information processing. This is especially prevalent for these VBL because it is well associated with a top-down processing that often requires followers to interpret the presented value of their leaders, given that VBL circles around the concept of morality to address questions like sustainability, responsibilities, and justices. The ability of followers to interpret these shared believe about leadership behavior is critical to embedding the respective value in a social organization. To illustrate, work has shown that ethical leadership influence comes from the top and

affect multiple levels of a formal organizational system through a cascading effect (Kuenzi et al., 2020). However, a top-down process faces constrains from factors such as the knowledge of past and concurrent behaviors to serve as an interpretation of the respective value behavior (Lord et al., 2020). For these reasons, scholars have called for research to define a set of normative reference point and conceive the meaning through an organization-wide phenomenon if value is indeed embedded in a social organization (Kahn, 1990; Klein, 2002).

Second, a review of existing literature shows that managers with a strong moral devotion will tend to do better in promoting positive organizational behavior through their moral image (see Jennings et al., 2015). Yet most research to date has mainly focused on the importance of VBL through their consequences rather than explaining the manager's motivation for demonstrating and promoting these behaviors. Although all managers must demonstrate and promote moral values to entice their follower's ethical behavior (Weaver et al., 2005), the overarching focus on positive consequences does not always explain why they will always emerge in a complex organization. As a result, consequential research has not adequately explained the conflation between the manager's behaviors and their values, traits, and behaviors (Alvesson and Einola, 2019). Given that leadership is a two-way process that requires followers to appraise the leadership behavior to legitimize their influence, as well as if their behavior met the objective of the organization. Lord et al. (2017) argued that a collective identity (see DeRue and Ashford, 2010), in some part, must be made available within and between all levels of an organizational leadership system. Thus, how managers coordinate their thoughts and actions repertoire to meet the demand of an organization to demonstrate and promote VBL continues to highlight a limitation in literature.

Third, the emergence of a VBL behavior swells into the wider discourse and challenges faced by an organization. For this reason, a higher-level VBL behavior has been shown to trickle-down the organization (Mayer et al., 2009; Schaubroeck et al., 2012; Hirst et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2018a,b; Stollberger et al., 2019). The trickle-down model argues that higher-level management leadership (the source) is transferred to the lower-level management (the recipient) through the middle-level managers (the transmitter). In other words, "the perceptions, attitudes or behaviors of one individual can influence the perceptions, attitudes, or behavior of a second individual, which then influence the perceptions, attitudes, or behavior of a third individual" (Wo et al., 2015, p. 1848). Accordingly, the model aims to argue the role of higher-level leadership from one individual to another (i.e., A → B → C) and has primarily focused on the indirect influence (Bass et al., 1987).

The trickle-down model shows that management at different levels must display similar attributes for value to be transferred across an organization (De Cremer et al., 2018; Wo et al., 2019). Therefore, most research has leaned heavily on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) to explain this cascading phenomenon. It is suggested that a role-modeling process will occur across different management levels, whereby "followers" (which refer to any employee that answers to a higher authority) will role model after their superior, in turn, allowing the value to "flow

	Conceptual definitions
Authentic leadership	"A process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in bot greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development" (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, p. 243).
	"a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. Note that this definition reflects several assumptions that underlie our perspective of authentic leadership" (Walumbwa et al., 2008).
Ethical leadership	"The demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through a two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown et al., 2005, p. 120).
Servant leadership	"The servant-leader is servant first. . . the differences manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other people's highest-priority needs are being served. . . do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit or, at least, not be further deprived?" (Greenleaf, 1977, pp. 13-14).
	"Servant leadership is an (1) other-oriented approach to leadership (2) manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of follower individual needs and interests, (3) and outward reorienting of their concern for self toward concern for others within the organization and the larger community" (Eva et al., 2019).

(or cascade) down" the organization (Mayer et al., 2009). Yet recent organizational scandals, such as the Kobe Steel (see Aizawa, 2018) and British Petroleum (see Amernic and Craig, 2017) and among many others have revealed a fragmented connection between top management's (i.e., chief executive office, top-management team, and board leadership) ethos and lower line management behaviors. Especially, in very large and complex organizations, the image of the top management is often outwardly portrayed (see Peloza et al., 2012) to set the branding image of the organization for stakeholder. Thus, the reputation of organizations through its top management may fail to portray the reality of its internal organizational behavior, in particular, at the lowest level of management.

We have highlighted these issues to draw attention to the poorly understood emerging nature of VBL, in particular through this trickle-down model, although VBL would emerge in a social organization when the values are well communicated and shared. The influence of the wider organizational context in spiraling its emergence, as well as its effectiveness, remains limited (Lord and Maher, 1990; Liden and Antonakis, 2009; Day, 2012). For example, followers' felt responsibilities under an ethical leader is found to have weakened when followers' shared perception of moral awareness is high (Kalshoven et al., 2013). Such findings then question the merit of VBL behaviors as the sole contributor to positive organization behavior if the shared perception of ownership toward the organization can hinder its effectiveness. Furthermore, a manager's behavior must also match the agentic prototype that is subscribed by the organization (see Gerpott et al., 2019), before they can shape the discourse of the wider organizational behavior. Based on such observations, we believe a comprehensive literature analysis utilizing that the role theory will help to address the aforementioned questions and to clarify the conditions that would support their emergence.

Accordingly, our paper aims to advance knowledge about VBL behavior emergence through three questions: First, why are VBL behaviors relevant at the frontline of management? Second, how

are VBL behaviors sustained in a complex organization? Third, what is the framework that supports the development of frontline management VBL behavior? We draw on the role theory (Kahn et al., 1964) to underpin our analysis and argue that role is held in an organization that influences an individual's attitude and behavior through the process of socializing (Sluss et al., 2011). The general perspective of role theory provides a foundation for role-related behaviors; for example, the role is defined as a set of interdependent behavior expectations (Katz and Kahn, 1978). As such, individuals who answer to the prescribed role of an organization will set up their own identity, which then influences their self-concept and their working relationship (Sluss and Ashforth, 2008). This suggested that an individual will develop the behavior expectation that is associated with the position that (s)he occupies (Burke, 1991).

A role theory perspective further extends social learning theory that has, in the past, been used to explain the interactional relationship that transpires the emergence of VBL behaviors through the trickle-down model. The social learning perspective suggests that leadership behavior is learned by role modeling after their direct managers demonstrate and promote VBL behaviors (Bass et al., 1987; Mayer et al., 2009). However, organizations often have informal groups, which are guided by different values or norms that are formally implemented in the organization (Schein, 2010). Lower-level employee may hence perceive and respond to these values differently due to their proximity from top management. Therefore, lower-level management plays an important role at instilling these policies, as well as influencing the moral emphasis of lower-level employee's behaviors and decisions. Accordingly, Ruiz et al. (2011) suggested that formal authority of an individual will affect his or her attitude and behavior, making them aware of their role requirements that are set forward by top management. For this reason, management at different hierarchical levels understands their own role requirement (Bass et al., 1987) and plays a role in instilling the value from above and shape bottom-line perspective. Our current focused review thus contributes to theory in two ways.

First, we underline why and how VBL behaviors will emerge, particularly at the frontline managers' level in an organization (Day, 2000; Gagnon and Collinson, 2014). Meta-analyses of ethical and servant leadership often approach frontline managers' VBL behaviors to explain their positive effect on bottom-line follower's behaviors (see Ng and Feldman, 2015; Bedi et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2020). Trickle-down research also suggested and found evidence that higher and middle management values will flow down and instill the value at the frontline of management. Therefore, the frontline managers will demonstrate VBL behaviors, as it is likely to inspire positive organizational behavior of their followers (Peng and Kim, 2020). Second, we provide a new theoretical framework to highlight the formal and informal processes that would allow VBL behaviors to emerge through the interaction between leaders and those who report to them. The proposed framework thus helps to understand how a frontline manager develops VBL behaviors. This allows future researchers to embrace the complexity of strategic management and the inherent role that managers have to perform in an organization (Georgakakis et al., 2019). Thus, as Antonakis (2017) stated, "finding different ways to study leadership is what will take our knowledge base to the next level" (p. 16).

In highlighting the aforementioned perspective, this paper will first explain the trickle-down model through the role theory perspective. We will then draw upon recent works of VBL to underline the processes, as well as the boundary conditions that are found to have strengthened VBL behaviors. We will conclude our review by highlighting future directions in the form of research propositions.

LITERATURE SEARCH AND INCLUSION OF RELEVANT STUDIES OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS

We conducted a thorough literature search to identify published research that has examined the trickle-down model of VBL behaviors, as well as research that has examined VBL behaviors by drawing a role theory perspective. We searched for research that has been published in English between 2000 and 2020. We focused our review over the last 20 years because preliminary search across three databases only yields four papers between 1970 and 1999 that discussed about servant leadership (3) and authentic leadership (1). The papers are also much more abstract in nature rather than empirically testing the construct to provide evidence about the importance of VBL behaviors. In addition to servant and authentic leadership, the first white paper about ethical leadership only emerges in 2000, where it discussed the concept of a moral person and moral manager, that set the foundation pillars for ethical leadership (see Treviño et al., 2000). Nonetheless, we acknowledge that the concept of a trickle-down model of leadership has emerged in literature as early as 1978.

To ensure completeness, we used three electronic databases, which are EBSCOHost-Business Source Complete, Web of Science, and Scopus. We included the search terms "servant leader*, ethic* leader*, authentic leader*, trickle*, trickle-down, cascade*" for publications related to the trickle-down framework

in the title, keywords, and abstract. A total of 41 studies were returned, including journal articles, dissertations, and books. We excluded dissertations and books, as well as review journals to only focus on journal articles that have empirically examined the trickle-down model. As such, 29 returns were removed from our final selection and resulted in a total of 12 papers.

As for research on VBL behaviors and role theory, there are several known roles related or specific variants, such as role ambiguity, role clarity, follower role, role identity, and role identification, that researchers have used to categorize role theory (Zhao and Li, 2019). For the sake of parsimony, we excluded organizational identification and moral identity to enumerate characteristics that shape the role development of frontline managers' VBL behaviors. The latter, moral identity has received widespread attention in many VBL behavior publications (see Aquino and Reed, 2002), underlining its importance as a moral antecedent that supports the development of VBL behaviors (see Jennings et al., 2015). We also excluded organizational identification to focus on role identities. Although Sluss and Ashforth (2008) argued that organizational identification can prime others to elicit similar responses, research has found it to inform unethical pro-organizational behavior at the expense of ethical leadership in financial institutions (Kalshoven et al., 2016). Furthermore, organizational identification has been well underscored by past research (see Mostafa, 2018) as an antecedent and/or consequences of role performance (see Riketta, 2005). Thus, we only focused on research that helps to strengthen the role expected behaviors to explain how the increasingly visible VBL behaviors are more likely to emerge in organizations through a role perspective.

We applied the search term "role theory, role perspective*, role identity theory, servant leader*, ethic* leader*, authentic leader*." Our initial return yields a total of 380 research studies across all three electronic databases (i.e., EBSCOHost, Scopus, and Web of Science). In reviewing the research, many studies draw on social role theory and role congruity theory, which mainly focused on gendered leadership behavior. Because our current review aims to draw attention about the development of VBL behaviors through a role theory perspective, we decided to remove these research studies. Similarly, we filtered out dissertations and books to focus on journal articles that have empirically examined VBL behaviors through a role theory perspective or tested role mechanism (i.e., role ambiguity). As such, our final results were only 15 papers. Overall, this review frames our argument through the intersection of 27 research studies to pay attention to role theory and its implication on the trickle-down model of VBL.

ROLE THEORY

Since its inception, role theory has been used to highlight the phenomenon in complex organizations. Accordingly, role theory has been used to describe the role-making process that unfolds in dyads (Graen, 1976). Leaders are expected to communicate expectations, while their next level of staff will respond via an enhanced mutual exchange, trust, respect, and obligation

(Matta et al., 2015). A role becomes more stable and routine when it is well communicated to develop shared perceptions (Graen and Scandura, 1987). Therefore, members of an organization must interpret their role expectations because a disagreement of own role expectation with those put forward by higher-level managers can result in competing role identities. As a result, members will enact different role behaviors (Farmer and Aguinis, 2005), going against the resources that were initially provided by the leader.

This differing role expectation can accentuate as a result of further social interaction, given that organizational members are often required to assume a set of patterned behaviors when they join the organizations (Biddle, 1979). Role theory argues that members who inhabit these social roles in an organization will align themselves with the expected rules and norms. The notion of role-taking behaviors hence suggests that organizational members, in particular, frontline managers, will attempt to maintain order due to the defining characteristic of the organizations (Mead, 1934; Katz and Kahn, 1978). This shows that role is often closely linked to the expectations set forward by higher management and will influence the views and behaviors of the role occupants. Nonetheless, the social expectations of the role will carry a moral value expectation, and this is widely accepted that job should be characterized with some ethical components (Downie, 1968). Thus, the role value cannot be divorced entirely from the role expectation as well as the behaviors of the role holder.

Role theory also differs from social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly et al., 2000), which tends to classify the role played by the leader and the situation that clusters around gender and politics to accentuate social exchange obligation (Kacmar et al., 2011). In contrast to social role theory, frontline managers who participate in a social structure (i.e., joining the organization as an employee) must develop shared expectations, or they might face a conflict in their prescribed role expectation. Accordingly, a functional approach toward role theory suggests that "role" is conceived through shared normative expectations to explain behaviors within a social structure and system (Biddle, 1986). For this reason, Mead (1934) argued that roles will evolve through social interaction and allow the role occupier to interpret their own and other's conducts through informal interaction. This in turn fosters role conformity through increase associated with the organization's value and belief.

We argue that VBL behaviors will emerge through an interpersonal relationship that provides them with the opportunity to focus on developing skill and motivation, as well as targeting the welfare of the collective. Although leadership role is espoused through being in a formal and legitimate position, frontline managers' interaction across the network of relationship can influence their self-concept and the way they behave (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Their knowledge of this self-concept can be elaborated through an informal and interpersonal relationship that serves as a strong indicator about their expected role. For example, research has found that employees enhance their conscientious personality when transitioning toward a managerial role to manifest the job demands of their new role (Li et al., 2020). This suggests that

organizations have an equal role to play by ensuring that an employee's contractual obligation is upholding to the highest standard when transitioning to a managerial role. For this reason, frontline managers become much more satisfied with their new role and much more willing to develop the role expected behavior. This is also known as a role choice behavior that is affected by the structural factor, such as legitimate position and status (Sluss et al., 2011). The informal relationship that develops at work could thus explain why frontline managers are willing to undertake extra-role responsibility such as challenging the organizational processes (see Venkataramani et al., 2016).

A ROLE PERSPECTIVE ON THE TRICKLE-DOWN PROCESS OF VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

Attention on VBL behaviors has continued to grow due to increased interest in positive leadership that facilitates moral behaviors in organizations. Although there has been a rise in interest, many scholars have adopted an individual (or micro) perspective when arguing about the importance of the VBL behaviors (Lemoine et al., 2019). Hoch et al. (2018) stated that these emerging VBL behaviors often focus on the interpersonal dynamics that increase follower's positive prosocial behaviors. Central to this approach is then directed through role modeling after higher-level VBL behaviors to promote socially acceptable and extra-role behaviors (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Brown et al., 2005; Hu and Liden, 2013). However, this does not always explain the organizational condition, as well as why VBL behaviors will emerge in an organization (Solinger et al., 2020 in press). In stating the aforementioned perspective, we thus pay attention to the emergence of frontline managers' VBL behaviors because these managers tend to be the focal point when augmenting moral behaviors (Peng and Kim, 2020), through the trickle-down model (Wo et al., 2019).

Table 2 provides a summary of the research that has examined the trickle-down effect of VBL behaviors. We apply role theory on the trickle-down effect because it extends the social learning model and strengthens our understanding about frontline managers' role. The cascading process is also important in the field of VBL behaviors because frontline managers are not always well aware of the expectation that goes beyond their formal role responsibilities in the organization. For example, the social structure where these managers are organized can affect their perception of VBL behaviors, in particular, if there is any inconsistency in their legitimate status and role (Stryker and Serpe, 1982). Therefore, organizations often emphasize the importance of frontline managers when strengthening role value behaviors in an organization. Thus, Peng and Kim (2020) stated that frontline managers tend to have fewer resources due to the lower quality of social relationship with their higher-level managers (p. 361).

We further argue that the frontline managers will reflect on the norms, attitudes, and contextual demands to carry out the definition of their prescribed role. However, their perception can sometimes be misaligned due to idiosyncratic

TABLE 2 | Cascading research and its outcome.

Authors	Theory	Mediator	Condition	Core findings
(8) Authentic leadership				
Hirst et al. (2016)	Social learning/social exchange/relational helping behavior			Team leaders' authentic leadership mediates the relationship between departmental authentic leadership and individual-level leader–member exchange (LMX). The result also shows that intra-team trust completely mediates the influence of team authentic leadership on both team helping behaviors and individual-level supervisor-directed helping behavior. The results reveal that self-concordance mediates the influence of team authentic leadership on individual-level supervisor helping behaviors as well as the influence of individual-level LMX on individual-level supervisor-directed helping behavior.
(8) Ethical leadership				
Mayer et al. (2009)	Social learning/social exchange			The results show a direct negative relationship between both top management and supervisory ethical leadership and group-level deviance, and a positive relationship with group-level organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The effects of top management ethical leadership will trickle-down on group-level deviance and OCB, mediated by supervisory ethical leadership.
Schaubroeck et al. (2012)	Social learning	Unit ethical culture		Ethical leaders embed shared understandings through their influence on the unit ethical culture at various levels and, in turn, influence followers' ethical cognitions and behavior. Ethical leadership will occur directly among immediate followers within a unit and indirectly across hierarchical levels through the cascading of ethical culture and senior leaders' influences on follower leader behavior.
Hansen et al. (2013)	Social exchange	Employee relationship with organization; LMX		Different types of social exchange relationships would mediate these relationships; the within-foci effects (e.g., the relationship between organizational ethical leadership and commitment to the organization) are stronger than cross-foci effects (e.g., the relationship between supervisory ethical leadership and commitment to the organization). In contrast to the "trickle-down" model of ethical leadership, the results suggested that organizational ethical leadership is both directly and indirectly related to employee outcomes.

(Continued)

TABLE 2 | Continued

Authors	Theory	Mediator	Condition	Core findings
Ruiz et al. (2011)	Social exchange/role-set/resource-based			Top manager ethics will partially trickle-down to influence follower positive job response (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, and organizational citizenship) via the immediate supervisor. However, the effect of immediate supervisor is stronger for job satisfaction.
Byun et al. (2018)	Social exchange/social learning		Lower-level leader's self-enhancement motives	High-level ethical leaders will trickle-down and reduce employee social loafing while increasing their task performance via lower-level ethical leader. Self-enhancement motives of low-level leaders were also found to moderate the relationship, strengthening this relationship when the motives are low rather than high.
Wang et al. (2018b)	Social learning/social exchange	Supervisor's ethical efficacy expectation; supervisor's ethical outcome expectation		Middle-level supervisor's ethical efficacy expectation and unethical behavior–punishment expectation accounted for the trickle-down effect, while middle-level supervisors' ethical behavior–reward expectation was not supported.
O'Keefe et al. (2019)	Social learning		Organizational ethical climate, organizational justice	Negative perceptions of organizational climate and justice increased the trickle-down effect of ethical leadership. The counterintuitive finding may be due to differences in situational strength between higher- and lower-level leaders; for example, less consensus at lower levels leads to unclear norms around ethics and justice and greater reliance of leadership for guidance.
Mozumder (2018)	Social learning/social exchange	Management trust (top management; middle management; supervisor)		The results show both downward and upward roles, where trust in leaders and ethical leadership were found to cascade across hierarchical levels and affect employee well-being and satisfaction. The results further showed that such positive effect can contribute to group OCB and organizational performance.
(8) Servant leadership				
Ling et al. (2016)	Service profit chain theory			Top-level servant leadership will trickle-down and enhance frontline employee service-oriented behaviors and service quality via middle-level servant leadership. This relationship is also moderate by the group service climate, strengthening the influence of middle-level servant leadership.
Wang et al. (2018a)	Social learning		Manager and supervisor organizational embodiment	Manager servant leadership will promote employees in-role and extra-role service performance via supervisor's servant leadership. The relationship between (a) manager and supervisor servant leadership and (b) supervisor servant leadership and employee in-role and extra-role service performance is strengthened when their respective organizational embodiment is high.
Stollberger et al. (2019)	Role motivational/prosociality at work		Supervisor family motivation	The results show that manager servant leadership will trickle down and inspire supervisor servant leadership, in turn increasing employee prosocial motivation and subsequent work performance. However, supervisor family motivation buffers the trickle-down mechanism, such that the effect on employee work performance is weaker for supervisors with high levels of family motivation.

interpretations (Merton, 1957; Katz and Kahn, 1978; Zohar and Polachek, 2014). For example, research on idiosyncratic deals (or I-deals) is often context-specific through a voluntary agreement and non-negotiated nature of both parties (Rousseau, 2005; Rosen et al., 2013). We highlight this particular attribute because research has shown that higher-level manager's servant leadership attributes will enhance this development and shape frontline managers' perception by disentangling information from the wider organization (Rofcanin et al., 2018). It shows that a well-communicated role expectation from higher-level management is thus capable of strengthening frontline managers' VBL behaviors because they see themselves as being a member of the organization (Ashforth, 2001).

Indeed, Bordia et al. (2010) stated that the trickle-down effect will uncover the role of higher-level managers as an antecedent to pattern similar behaviors to another manager who responds to their VBL behaviors. We extend this perspective by suggesting that role theory helps to underline a social structure in an organization to inform the behavioral expectation (Mead, 1934). For example, frontline managers' repeated interaction with the environment helps to define their attitude and behaviors through vis-à-vis social interaction with other occupants of similar roles (Biddle, 1986; Reay et al., 2006). In other words, having a well-defined role will help an organization to embed VBL behaviors and allow them to emerge as a result of responding to the higher-level VBL behaviors (Eisenbeiss and Giessner, 2012). To illustrate such perspective, authentic leadership is found to enact authentic fellowship by satisfying basic needs and improving work role performance (Leroy et al., 2015). This shows that frontline managers can and will rely on the informal relationship, guided by VBL behaviors at work to improve understanding of their leadership role.

According to research that has examined the trickle-down effect of VBL behaviors, higher-level management is the antecedent that set the value tone on top to attract next-level management to develop similar VBL behaviors. Ethical leadership has by far received the largest attention because the seminal ethical leadership theory has highlighted the higher-level management role when embedding the values in an organization (Treviño et al., 2000, 2003), as well as spurring the development of frontline managerial behaviors (Mayer et al., 2009). For example, ethical leadership at the top and, in turn, ethical leadership in the middle are suggested to shape frontline managers' ethical leadership behavior (Schaubroeck et al., 2012). More importantly, this cascading down effect will deter misconduct at the frontline of an organization (Mayer et al., 2009). This shows that ethical leaders are more likely to emerge at the frontline when the role expectation of managers is well defined across every level of the organization (Kuenzi et al., 2020).

Servant leadership at the top also appears to shape frontline managers' servant leadership behavior (Liden et al., 2014) and influences employees' prosocial motivation (Stollberger et al., 2019), as well as in-role and extra-role service performance (Wang et al., 2018a). The premise of servant leadership suggests that such leader behaviors will inspire stewardship toward a community (Greenleaf, 1977, 2002), and their commitment toward establishing next-level empowerment and growth to

show that serving attributes and behaviors can transpire across multiple levels to enable fulfillment and personal ambition (Liden et al., 2008). This shows that servant leaders at the top of an organization will inspire serving behaviors of frontline managers and allow them to focus on addressing follower's needs (Lee et al., 2020). For these reasons, servant leadership trickle-down research has found servant leadership behavior to trickle-down and strongly affect frontline service behaviors and performance (Ling et al., 2016).

However, authentic leadership trickle-down has only so far shown that a departmental authentic leader can affect team authentic leadership, leading to an increase in leader–member exchange via an intra-team trust and self-concordance (Hirst et al., 2016). Nonetheless, self-concordance is the extent where an individual is willing to pursue a goal that is consistent with their value and beliefs (Sheldon and Elliot, 1999; Sheldon and Houser-Marko, 2001). More often, enacting personal values and beliefs are associated with the perception of own role responsibilities, believing in its importance (Shamir and Eilam, 2005). For this reason, it shows that having an authentic leader higher up the hierarchy would signal role expectation about transparency, giving the frontline managers a purpose at work (Hirst et al., 2016). This descriptive attribute would thus inform role expected behaviors through a shared understanding of the value depicted by higher-level management (Katz and Kahn, 1978).

We argued that role theory will compliment social learning theory and, in turn, will promote VBL behaviors at the forefront of management (Bass et al., 1987; Mayer et al., 2009), because informal groups exist in organization and will impact the value of these bottom-line employees (see Schein, 2010). Management at the lowest level may perceive these values lesser than in their counterpart at the higher level (Treviño et al., 2008). The formal authority of an individual is also capable of affecting their role requirement awareness set forward by top management. Therefore, although role theory is often used in leadership research, our current review draws upon a role theory perspective and present the following proposition:

Proposition 1: Higher-level manager's VBL behaviors will affect frontline managers' value-providing roles. This in turn is expected to increase frontline managers' willingness to demonstrate and promote VBL behaviors in an organization.

Further, research that examines the cascading trickle-down effect of VBL behaviors has continued to adopt the social learning perspective, which limits our understanding about employee's responsibility toward the organization (Oldham et al., 1976), while attention is given to research that has linked the salience and activation of the role occupant to provide an understanding of how to particularize this relationship (Sluss et al., 2011). The trickle-down effect approaches the notion of providing the frontline managers with an understanding of own role expectation through higher-level VBL behaviors. However, the assumption that frontline managers are aware of their role obligations through a static contract that lays out their responsibilities and the behaviors to conduct the role (Kerr, 1978) does not always consider how arrays of other non-work behaviors

can change the perception of their role behaviors (Wickham and Parker, 2007). Frontline managers who experience unfairness about their contract may become less willing to develop VBL behaviors, and this perspective centers around how frontline managers view organizational support (see Taylor et al., 009). Thus, in the next section, we will first synthesize the research that has examined VBL behaviors through a role theory to draw attention to the mechanism and boundary conditions that will shape the frontline managers' role in the organization. Lastly, we will provide discussion about psychological contract breach and the role of human resource (HR) practices as future research avenues.

VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND ROLE THEORY

According to Paterson and Huang (2019), ethical leaders that demonstrate ethical voice will enhance the understanding of the next-level ethical role requirements, incorporating behavioral repertoires in an organizational setting. As such, an ethical leader is seen as the primary resource in providing an ethical basis for the role expectation. Such a perspective is consistent with organizational theories that focus on understanding how members of an organization will socially construct reality at work (Klieman et al., 2000). This perspective is also shared by research that found that managers who communicated ethical guidelines to reduce non-normative behaviors shaped the organizational norms and standards about ethical conduct (Hassan et al., 2020). It is suggested that individual beliefs about how others expect them to behave in a particular role will have the strongest influence on their judgment and decision-making capacity. The fear of social disapproval will, therefore, drive the needs for frontline managers to develop VBL to fuel the expectation of the social norm (Hassan et al., 2014). This suggests that members are perhaps more likely to report behaviors that go against the norm when other members of their group also demonstrate similar patterned behaviors (Mayer et al., 2013).

However, research has found that group competition climate tends to strengthen the indirect influence of servant leadership on service performance via self-efficacy, but not identification (Chen et al., 2015). Through role theory, it is suggested that the presence of a competitive climate will interfere with the frontline managers' identification through an increasing need to compete (Friedkin and Simpson, 1985). This, in turn, will make it difficult for them to balance their interaction with colleagues due to the need to perform better despite answering to higher-level servant leaders (Chen et al., 2015). This aforementioned role perspective is also absent in authentic leadership literature. As an authentic leader is often distinguished through being (in)authentic, the degree where the individual and role would merge provides a salience expectation of the leadership role (Shamir and Eilam, 2005). As a consequence, research has made leader centrism as the heart of organizational functioning debate (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2013). Organizational membership could play a significant role in legitimizing VBL behaviors

(see Steffens et al., 2016), furthering our understanding about the mechanism that allows frontline managers' behaviors to emerge in an organization. For this reason, the psychological interdependence between a focal colleague and the role occupant warrants attention, as it may help explain why the frontline managers would develop VBL behaviors and how competition can hinder their role identification.

Similarly, authentic leadership literature has focused on the authenticity of the leader's behaviors via self-monitoring behaviors (Gardner and Cogliser, 2008). In contrast, the servant and ethical leadership focus on serving and ethical role, respectively (see Hoch et al., 2018). Authentic leaders must first perceive an authentic self-image before they can commit to role values (Quick et al., 2007). However, Neubert et al. (2013) argued that both authentic and ethical leaders share a common feature. For example, authentic leaders will equally present themselves with high moral standards to influence the next level of leaders and their respective role responsibilities (May et al., 2003). Their immoral behaviors also do not mean that they are inauthentic, but rather the issue of the role values tends to vary across an individual or contextual situation (Resick et al., 2011). Although this perspective reinstated the synonymity between both authentic and ethical leadership, the absence of a contextual influence on this VBL behavior has illustrated a paradoxical relationship between their authenticity and the role value (Sidani and Rowe, 2018). Hence, more research is needed to identify the boundary conditions where authentic leader's role would emerge.

Research on role clarity, on the other hand, has shown to improve helping behaviors and reduce deviant behaviors under ethical leadership (Newman et al., 2015). While research evidence explains such relationship through social exchange theory, recent research suggests that exchanging relationship has roots in role theory (Matta et al., 2015). It is hypothesized that the interplay between leader and follower will provide proximal motivation, leading to an increase in quality engagement. For this reason, role clarity will increase salient behaviors and the willingness to respond to role values such as the investment of personal, physical, cognitive, and emotional energy (Rich et al., 2010). Indeed, when the frontline managers lack clarity about their role, it can affect their willingness to dedicate resources to a particular outcome like developing VBL behaviors. The limited resource also makes it difficult for the frontline managers to understand discretionary behavior, as well as their role responsibilities (Newman et al., 2015). Hence, the context as an impinging force can cause the frontline managers to deviate from the expected role and engage in behaviors that will not benefit the organization (Johns, 2006).

Accordingly, authentic leadership has been found to prevent role ambiguity and role conflict through an increase in affective commitment. It is suggested that when higher-level managers are transparent and trustworthy, categorized through their authentic nature, members are less likely to develop ambiguity and conflict in their role (Kalay et al., 2018). Likewise, servant leadership is shown to enhance both role and process clarity that increase team potency beliefs and enhance team performance and organizational citizenship (Hu and Liden, 2011). This implies

that both types of leaderships will promote quality interaction, allowing shared beliefs about efficacy to emerge in a group to achieve general effectiveness (Guzzo et al., 1993). However, the findings of such research are not without limitations. For example, commitment and motivation toward developing expected role behaviors can increase the stress that discourages VBL behaviors. Thus, further attention is needed to better explain how role ambiguity or role clarity can increase (or decrease) strain that leads to reduced performance in a complex organization (Rizzo et al., 1970; Diebig et al., 2016). Based on the above analysis, we propose that:

> **Proposition 2:** Role ambiguity and role conflict will affect the emergence of frontline managers' VBL behaviors.

Overall, research that applied role theory to VBL behaviors has found leaders to influence moral concordance and compliance with the normative standards (Lemoine et al., 2019), while all three VBL behaviors tend to be categorized as homogenous to their approach (Dinh et al., 2014). The absence of boundary conditions further underscores the importance of understanding how both organizational and individual conditions can interact to inform role and influence VBL behaviors. Therefore, reviewing VBL behavior distinction and the boundary conditions will help underline the different foci to understand how the frontline managers will develop role expectancy behavior.

BOUNDARY CONDITIONS THAT STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

Boundary conditions are paramount to our knowledge about why certain individuals are more likely to develop a stronger understanding of their role expectations. Accordingly, authentic followership is found to satisfy this basic need, translating to an increase in work role performance under the condition of authentic leadership (Leroy et al., 2015). Value-based followership is presumed to emerge as a result of the interaction between the leader and follower (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Specifically, the influence of a VBL behavior aims to develop next-level authenticity, promoting the same component that is present in their higher-level leader behaviors (Gardner et al., 2005). This then increases self-awareness, internal regulatory process, and relational transparency (Deci and Ryan, 2000), hence becoming an active recipient of a higher VBL behavior influence (Shamir, 2007).

The pessimistic nature of leadership behavior is also observed in research on ethical leadership and role. Although ethical leadership will improve role clarity, having a passive nature will decrease its influence on role clarity (Vullinghs et al., 2018). It shows that the recipient of VBL behaviors requires active participation. Besides, the nature of VBL behaviors would entail concern and responsibility for those who they lead (Lemoine et al., 2019). Being passive is then a contrasting effect in an emerging own role as a future leader. Servant leadership research has echoed the argument about an individual's passive nature. For example, a high level of employee avoidance-oriented motivation

is shown to reduce their felt responsibility for constructive changes, making them more likely to demonstrate prohibitive voice (Arain et al., 2019). This in turn makes them less motivated to develop role responsibility like voicing for the sake of the organization.

Choosing to voice to challenge the *status quo* is an extra-role behavior that is distinct from other forms of citizenship behaviors (Morrison, 2014). Particularly, this behavior is associated with having risk when attempting to challenge the existing organizational norms, the behaviors of colleagues, and other associative attitudes and behaviors. For this reason, leaving those who enact such behaviors is open to criticism and accusation of disloyalty (Wei et al., 2015). Yet most VBL behavior literature often aims to justify their importance by directing the increase of positive (or decrease if negative) organizational behavior. Indeed, not much research has considered passivism to explain why some frontline managers might fail to develop value behaviors despite the existence of higher-level VBL behaviors. This has limited the perspective in current scholarship (Eisenbeiss and Brodbeck, 2014), whereby more research is needed to understand how the passivist nature of frontline managers can deter their development of patterned VBL behaviors.

The co-producing influence through a two-way process has also largely been absent in the existing research (Brown et al., 2005), often depicting next level as a passive recipient of VBL behaviors (Oc and Bashshur, 2013). Although management status will challenge VBL behaviors, at the same time, it will inform frontline managers' role. Frontline managers' status is an important boundary condition; in particular, frontline managers who experience status threat are more likely to augment their behaviors to increase their influence (Zhang et al., 2020). For example, frontline managers who perceive a stronger status in the organization may be more willing to speak up without the fear of retaliation (Paterson and Huang, 2019). We need to examine this boundary condition and its influence on role expectancy behaviors because emerging research is starting to reshape how we approach the framing process of VBL behaviors (see Derfler-Rozin et al., 2016; Desai and Kouchaki, 2017; Yam et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2020). Thus, frontline managers' willingness to voice and give voice is important to maintain their status and influence (Bienefeld and Grote, 2014), because the existence of VBL behaviors is meant to foster an increase in similar patterned behaviors (Kakkar et al., 2016).

On the other hand, in discussing the active nature of VBL behaviors, we must pay attention to identification mechanism. In this regard, Sluss et al. (2011) argued that role identification will steer the development of role expected behavior. Role identification emerges as a result of the role occupant identity interacting with personal position and interpersonal relationship with those whom they share the same role (Sluss and Ashforth, 2007). Role identification differs from organizational identification in the way it facilitates role identity and role choice behaviors and is not bounded by competition (Chen et al., 2016). Because organizational identification is bounded by the responsibility and loyalty toward the organization, hence, having stronger organizational identification can result in pro-organizational motive to the degree of being unethical

(Umphress et al., 2010; Thau et al., 2015). For this reason, the identification mechanism should gravitate toward the respective role value (i.e., social responsibilities, moral value, and serving value) that an organization intends to promote.

According to May et al. (2015), moral identification, which is the moral value depicted by the organization, can increase commitment and reduce turnover intention, especially in an organization that fulfills its legal compliance. It shows that employees who strongly associate with the moral value of an organization are more likely to carry themselves morally and strive to develop role expected behaviors by putting their thoughts and actions into practice. As a result, having a decree of moral identification would embed the expected role values through social stratification (Graham et al., 2011). This attribute is also important when explaining why the frontline managers would develop VBL behaviors when answering to higher-level VBL behaviors. However, no known paper to date has examined this perspective. Thus, research is needed to understand the employee's value-based identification mechanism to explain how role expectancy behaviors can be promoted at the workplace (May et al., 2015).

The authentic leadership literature would narrate the influence of identification mechanism differently. It is suggested that an authentic leader will develop stronger relational identification based on their role identity and that this relationship is strengthened when their leader–member exchange is high (Niu et al., 2018). This further implies that relational identification is a precondition that shapes organizational identification rather than vice versa, which provides a salient view of the organization. The increase in the leader and member interaction would further bond their attribution, allowing them to develop role expectancy behaviors by answering to an authentic leader. More importantly, it underlines how the frontline managers' role can be developed when they identify with higher-level manager's value, making role conflict less likely (see Floyd and Lane, 2000).

To further our understanding of role identification influence, recent research examining environmental-specific servant leadership has provided an interesting understanding of green role identity. Green role identity is related to the concern about green-related resources, whereby exposure to environmental-specific servant leadership will fashion their environmental behaviors (Tuan, 2020). It is suggested that those who answer to this green VBL behaviors will find an alignment between their prosocial identity and the activity that reinforces their desire to display similar behaviors (see Gould-Williams et al., 2015). Their green role identity hence becomes a vital part of how they define themselves, and the nexus of both green role crafting and green role identity would be explained regarding how both cognitive and motivational resources would interact to inform role behaviors. Therefore, when the frontline managers perceive their role as befitting of their identity, they are more likely to advocate green communication (Tuan, 2020).

Last but not least, the role expectation of frontline managers can also shift according to the priority and benefits of the organization (Biddle, 1979). For example, the perception of moral ownership has a contagion effect that restrains creativity (Liu et al., 2020). Having such ownership is hence commonly associated with the desire to maintain the role value for the benefit of the organization (Treviño et al., 2014). Although ethical leaders will buffer role responsibility, they also reduce those with an inflated level of ownership from the burden of being monitored (Liu et al., 2020). This finding further highlighted the importance of role choice behaviors when explaining why VBL behaviors will emerge in an organization. Thus, Solinger et al., 2020 (in press) stated that delving into the role expectation will provide us with better clarity about how we can sustain the emergence of VBL behaviors in an organization.

The perspective of role theory is approached through several boundary conditions to depict personal resources. It mainly shows that passive behaviors can hinder the leader's ability to pattern the leadership role from both authentic and ethical leadership (Leroy et al., 2015; Vullinghs et al., 2018). Likewise, having a high degree of avoidance motivation can diminish the effect of servant leadership on felt responsibility (Arain et al., 2019). Combining these different perspectives based on role theory allowed us to see how individual attributes can enhance the emergence of VBL behaviors. We also highlighted and argued that organizational identification is not always well associated with positive role expectation (Chen et al., 2016). This implies that frontline managers' role and its myriad of (in)formal responsibilities must be well associated with the wider appraisal of the organizational context, as well as the interaction with own personal resource. In laying out the arguments, we would thus underline some key areas that future research could advance knowledge through this theoretical framework.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT BREACH AS A DETERMINANT OF THE MANAGER'S ROLE AND VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

In synthesizing the review through role theory, we underlined areas that need more attention, in particular, the capacity of the individual to interpret and display VBL behaviors (Liu et al., 2020). Emanating behaviors from the wider social environment require the frontline managers to associate their belief with the role value that is promoted/expected by the organization (Schepers and Van der Borgh, 2020). Negotiating and defining their role also require clarity and consensus. Therefore, when the role expectations are not congruent, the frontline managers may struggle to provide value while maintaining role expectations (Kahn et al., 1964; Katz and Kahn, 1978; Biddle, 1979; Quick, 1979). Soliciting the established role expectation is detrimental to the unwritten elements of the relationship between the frontline managers and the obligations of the organization (Rousseau, 1995), because role in organizations emerges through formal contractual negotiation that is of particular value to the role relationship (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Frontline managers will interpret this contract when establishing their understanding of the role expectation behaviors in accordance to the rules, norms, and procedures (Johnson et al., 2014; Lin and Johnson, 2015). Thus, when the set of agreements breach the role

expectation, cognitive dissonance will emerge, resulting in adverse role behaviors.

Rusbult et al. (2005) argued that individuals, at some given point, will behave in a manner that goes against the role expectation by violating the norms that govern the role relationship. For example, the ethical leader has been shown to develop abusive tendency after crediting own moral behaviors from the previous day (Lin et al., 2016). The ability to balance the myriad of afforded resources to behave in accord to the role expectation in an organization is thus a reflection of line-managers' ability to meet (or challenge) the role demands (Schepers and Van der Borgh, 2020). For example, an organization must fulfill its end of the contractual obligations to avoid discrepancies between the role holder and the role expectancy behaviors (Thomas et al., 2003). However, this interactional process often paints an incomplete picture by taking the perspective of the organization rather than the perspective of sole role occupant. This has limited our understanding of the motivation of the frontline managers to develop and provide VBL behaviors.

Indeed, organizations are often required to fulfill their end of the obligations by providing empowerment through their legitimate role. Psychological contract breach is a transactional relationship with varying levels of interpretation between the role holder and the organization (Thomas et al., 2003). The ability to behave in accordance to the role expectation can be defined through a set of agreements about the expectation of the organization and the role holder (Robinson and Wolfe Morrison, 2000). These expectations can also supersede role expectations such as promotion, training, and job security (Turnley and Feldman, 2000). Therefore, this dynamic relationship would govern how frontline managers execute their role and stresses the importance of psychological ownership as a result of their contractual role (Park et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2020).

Having psychological ownership toward the organization allows an individual to act as a value-providing agent (Hannah et al., 2011). Together with the support from the organization, Dutton et al. (2010) argued that such resources will strengthen their capacity at work by allowing them to deal with greater adversity and take advantage of newer opportunities. The ascription of role responsibility will further facilitate value-based decision-making (Treviño et al., 2014). For this reason, we theorize that the frontline managers would act beyond their agreed parameter (Rousseau, 1995; Morrison and Robinson, 1997) to provide extra-role behaviors, which allow VBL behaviors to emerge. Nonetheless, if frontline managers feel that their psychological contract has been breached, it will affect their role expectancy behaviors (Bordia et al., 2010). This may then translate to a decrease in wanting to display VBL behaviors. Thus, we propose the following proposition for future research.

Proposition 3: Psychological contract breach is negatively associated with lower frontline managers' role value, which affects their ability to display VBL behaviors.

The expansive view of the psychological contract is also limited by our understanding of the boundary condition that could maintain the frontline managers' role expectation. For example, we argued that role identity will inform frontline managers' role choice behavior, as well as why they are more likely to be influenced by VBL behaviors (Zhu et al., 2016). However, critiques have argued that role value is often subjective to the social context (Resick et al., 2011). Accordingly, recent research has shown that a higher level of moral disengagement can shape the perception of the social context, sending problematic signals about the VBL behaviors and shaping next-level moral disengagement (Fehr et al., 2020). Although this process can be prevented by the existence of frontline managers' moral identity, research has argued that VBL behaviors can either dampen the propensity of those with weaker moral identity or take on a corporative role for those with higher moral identity (Moore et al., 2019). For these reasons, research needs to pay attention to stable conditions like organizational resources to highlight the boundary conditions that allow VBL behaviors to emerge. Accordingly, we present the following research proposition.

Proposition 4: Frontline managers will display value leadership behavior when their moral engagement is strong. However, this relationship can be hindered when their perception of psychological contract breach is high.

THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Leader centrism has often been approached as the heart of an organizational functioning (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2013). However, emerging research is starting to underline the role of the organization when supporting the development of frontline manager. It is suggested that adequate organizational support has been approached through many definitions, to name a few, supporting climate (Schepers et al., 2012), organizational participation (Rubel et al., 2018), and high-performing work system (Shen et al., 2014). However, the particular implication is placed on the HR management (HRM) practice, where scholars have argued that developing VBL behaviors should be a critical role for these practices (Blakeley and Higgs, 2014; Park et al., 2015).

We argue that these practices are pivotal to understanding the process and system that shape frontline managers' VBL behaviors in the organization. However, so far, only a handful of research has examined its interactive influence. Therefore, scholars have often attempted to promote HRM practices as the condition that either accentuate or substitute the leader's influence rather than provide an argument about its synergy (Kalshoven and Boon, 2012). Thus, we will take a broader approach in these areas to guide the development of the frontline managers' role. Our call is partly synonymous with Leroy et al. (2018), suggesting that more research is needed to determine the nexus of HRM practices and VBL behaviors. However, our review differs by focusing on the emergence of VBL rather than the conditions that accentuate their influence, because those who struggle to be true to themselves as a result of the cultural and structural barriers are more likely to exit the organization when their role

value fail to fit the expectation of the organization (Mayer et al., 2009; Gardiner, 2015; May et al., 2015). Hence, we stress on the importance of the organizational HRM practices and argue that policy and practices must provide a cohesive environment that affords frontline managers with the safety to express themselves in the workplace (Gardiner, 2017).

Yet within the discussion of leadership development, HRM practice tends to be confined to providing training (see Den Hartog, 2015), despite playing an important role in the fulfillment of the psychological contract (Kutaula et al., 2019) and managing psychological capital (Youssef and Luthans, 2012). The latter also underlines that attitudes such as hope, resilience, optimism, and efficacy are imperative for role expectation behaviors (Luthans et al., 2007; Peterson et al., 2011). Thus, it pays to lay the foundation where an organization can provide the space for the frontline managers to develop VBL behaviors. HRM is found to improve employee well-being and helping behaviors under ethical leadership when the perception of its practices is high (Kalshoven and Boon, 2012). Research on green HRM has also shown that such practice can interact with VBL behaviors and affect the organization's environmental performance (Ren et al., 2020) and sustainability (Srivastava et al., 2020) and improve citizenship behaviors for the environment at both team and individual levels (Luu, 2019).

However, a major limitation in research is understanding how HRM practice could improve role alignment, specifically, how it can accentuate the frontline managers' role expectation and their role choice behaviors through a systematic process (Leroy et al., 2018). For example, both ambidexterity and ethical leadership were highlighted as critical factors for knowledge sharing and team development competition (Liu et al., 2019). In building a service-oriented culture, the flexibility of HRM practices is also found to improve authentic leadership and job crafting behaviors (Luu, 2020). More importantly, the ethical leader is shown to complement HRM practices, improving affective commitment and reducing the intention to resist changes (Neves et al., 2018). As such, an organization's HRM strategies concerning training and development can trigger a long-term trust, knowing that organizations will not diverge from their responsibility.

However, not all HRM practices will enforce ethical behaviors on equal footing. For example, research has found a negative interaction between high-commitment HRM and servant leadership on affective commitment and psychological empowerment (Stein and Min, 2019). A high-performing system that supports VBL behaviors is thus controversial (Boxall and Macky, 2009). This is in part because the extensive implementation of a high-performing system can increase work demand and is more likely to induce stress as a result of increasing work intensity (Godard, 2001). In line with our argument about the psychological contract breach, we argue that frontline managers must be afforded with the right condition to sustain their role expected behaviors (see Alfes et al., 2017).

Taking stock on this perspective, we argue that alignment between HRM practices and VBL behaviors can strengthen the relationship, reinforcing frontline managers' willingness to reciprocate role expectation. HRM and VBL must develop a synergistic perspective to complement one another (Argyris,

1998). For example, research has shown that HRM systems that compromise ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO)-enhancing practices can influence ethical work climate (Guerci et al., 2015). Accordingly, the AMO that portrays the HRM system as an additive index through three dimensions (Jiang et al., 2012) can help develop values-oriented programs to advance the organization value goals. These value-oriented programs tend to be successful when they help the organization to establish new values and ensure that members adhere to these values regularly (Weaver and Treviño, 2001). Therefore, the combinations of all three HR practices will thus affect the employees' general satisfaction and underline the effectiveness of an organization (Katz et al., 1985).

The AMO model will also have a broader impact on the organization and influence the way members conduct their behaviors in a moral manner (Way and Johnson, 2005). Although the AMO model will not align the members toward specific value behaviors (Werbel and Balkin, 2010), it will affect the overarching value of the organization in which members are embedded (Guerci et al., 2015). In the context of VBL behaviors, the AMO model could offer us an understanding of how such practices can create the context for role expected behaviors to emerge. Individuals with the ability and motivation to carry out the role value are more likely to value the opportunity provided by the organization (see Weaver and Treviño, 2001). This relationship across three dimensions is also approached as a form of mutual exchange of investment on members who will benefit the organization's frontline behaviors (Choi, 2014). Based on such assumptions, the following proposition is presented.

Proposition 5: Organizational HRM practices will diminish the frontline managers' perception of psychological contract breach. This then mitigates the negative associations with lower frontline managers' role value and their ability to display VBL behaviors.

THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR

Each HRM practices can also impact value role behaviors differently (Guerci et al., 2015). The focus on work characteristics like work enrichment, autonomy, complexity, and control is important to tease out the potential HRM practices that would increase the willingness to participate through a two-way process role development process (Lee et al., 2019). Indeed, the HRM practice that provides the autonomy and opportunity must be closely associated with the human capital policy to underline its effectiveness of Den Hartog et al. (2013). HRM activities that are purely administrative are also unlikely to affect behaviors if they are not deemed effective (Choi, 2014). Therefore, the AMO model, specifically, opportunity-enhancing HR practices, can develop a unique relationship with frontline managers' role expectation by encouraging them to develop VBL behaviors and can provide the opportunity for knowledge to flow across the organization (Chuang et al., 2016).

The intrinsic motivation for active involvement, flexible job design, teamwork, and information sharing (Jiang et al., 2012) will enthuse the frontline managers to enact their role expectation. Research has shown that opportunity-enhancing practices alone can help develop higher commitment (Gong et al., 2009), lower turnover intentions (Jensen et al., 2013), higher productivity and quality (MacDuffie, 1995), better service performance (Chaung and Liao, 2010), enhanced safety performance (Zacharatos et al., 2005), and better financial performance (Huselid, 1995). We argue that such an attribute is important for the frontline managers because these managers do not always have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. Often, frontline managers have to rely on their abilities to interact with environmental constraints and influence the expected organizational outcomes (López-Cotarelo, 2018).

The frontline managers also tend to avoid prescribing to a certain policy that contradicts the aim of higher policymakers to carve out a space of their own. This approach can then lead to a devolution of HRM practices due to centralized decision-making that emphasis procedural consistency due to association with day-to-day business management, because HRM practitioners do not always intervene due to the labor cost, especially in an industry segment where cost outweighs components of an organizational strategy (Boxall and Purcell, 2016). Therefore, different HRM practices might affect value role expected behaviors differently. For example, ability and opportunity-enhancing practices are found to influence benevolent and principle organizational ethical climates (Guerci et al., 2015). More importantly, both ability and opportunity practices were related to value and compliance-oriented programs (Weaver and Treviño, 2001). For this reason, the use of incentive rewards and rule expectation would signal the organization's commitment to provides social norm and infrastructures to communicate value role behaviors.

However, research has also found that motivation-enhancing practices contrast the effort of both ability and opportunity-enhancing practices. Instead of developing conditions that enhance value behavior, motivational-enhancing practices are found to nurture self-interest (Guerci et al., 2015). Indeed, Weaver and Treviño (2001) argued that practices that develop based on punishment and reward cannot always guarantee to provide the condition for the emergence of value-providing behaviors. Individuals who are motivated by the rewards can develop self-interest behaviors rather than be motivated to conduct ethical behaviors. It is also important to note that some scholars have argued against such a proposition and highlighted the importance of motivational practices for organizational moral behaviors (see Winstanley and Woodall, 2006).

We argue that the opportunity to engage with other role occupants that share the same social space will provide clarities about their role expected behaviors (Sluss et al., 2011). This, in turn, creates a meaningful work experience that enhances their skills and motivation (Oppenauer and Van De Voorde, 2018) and the ability to cope with the role demands. The opportunity to share information can further develop complex learning behaviors that are important for the emergence of a specific phenomenon (Ployhart and Moliterno, 2011). For this reason, we

propose that frontline managers' perception of a psychological breach is more likely to decrease when an organization's HRM practice provided opportunities (see Prieto and Pilar Pérez Santana, 2012; Patel et al., 2013; Park et al., 2019) that broaden their expertise to meet their end of the agreement. Hence, while it is important to approach HRM practices as one single entity through the AMO model, the particular contribution of each dimension (i.e., AMO) can impact value-oriented behaviors differently. Nevertheless, more research is needed to understand the role of HRM practices and how each dimension will affect the value-oriented behaviors of management (Boxall and Macky, 2009; Guerci et al., 2015). Hence, we propose that:

Proposition 6a: Ability-enhancing practices will diminish the frontline managers' perception of psychological contract breach. This then mitigates the negatively associated lower frontline managers' role value and their ability to display VBL behaviors.

Proposition 6b: Motivational-enhancing HRM practices will diminish the frontline managers' perception of psychological contract breach. This then mitigates the negatively associated lower frontline managers' role value and their ability to display VBL behaviors.

Proposition 6c: Opportunity-enhancing practices will diminish the frontline managers' perception of psychological contract breach. This then mitigates the negatively associated lower frontline managers' role value and their ability to display VBL behaviors.

In sum, we have paid attention to the AMO model; specifically, we underlined the implication for future research to better provide an insight into the relationship between HRM practices and the wider organizational behavior (Wood et al., 2012; Jensen et al., 2013). Although the majority of research tends to examine the AMO model as a whole rather than decomposing the system (see Vermeeren, 2017), providing knowledge about work autonomy and involvement in decision-making almost always pointed toward opportunity-enhancing HR practices (Boselie, 2010), because elements of an organization that accentuate role expectation and penalize it they failed to meet them (Lepak et al., 2006) will accentuate the frontline managers' VBL behaviors. This inherited resource will also endow a higher-level VBL behavior as a strategic resource that is important for organizations that want to embed VBL behaviors (Wooldridge et al., 2008). Thus, we believe that the opportunity offered to frontline managers may very well support the emergence of the VBL behaviors and empowers them psychologically and diminish their perception of psychological contract breach.

DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH ON VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR AND ROLE THEORY

Our above literature analysis shows that most trickle-down research on VBL behaviors has mainly focused on understanding this effect through a social learning perspective (Wo et al., 2019). Although the frontline managers may not always

have the opportunity to socialize with management up the hierarchy due to the distance between higher-level management (Antonakis and Atwater, 2002), numerous recent corporate scandals have highlighted a fragmented connection between upper management and frontline managers' practices (see Amernic and Craig, 2017; Aizawa, 2018). Most literature continues to emphasize that VBL behaviors can be socially learned from managers up the hierarchy despite the existence of contingent role with the frontline managers and higher management being spread across distance and time (Yang et al., 2010). Thus, our review contributes to theory by highlighting how frontline managers' VBL behaviors will emerge through a role perspective. In this regard, we have argued that the frontline managers' VBL behaviors will emerge because of their role understanding in an organization. This in turn shapes their attitude and makes them more likely to display VBL behaviors.

We also contribute to the theory about the development of frontline VBL behaviors to explain their positive effect on follower's behaviors (Day, 2000; Gagnon and Collinson, 2014).

As such, we argue that a frontline manager who demonstrates VBL behaviors will inspire next-level positive organizational behavior (Peng and Kim, 2020). In doing so, we offer a role theoretical framework to highlight the formal and informal processes that would allow VBL behaviors to emerge through the interaction between the leader and those who report to them. A role theory perspective is important because it helps us to understand how the frontline managers would define their role in an organization. It also offers practitioners an understanding of strategic management and the inherent role that frontline managers have to perform in an organization (Georgakakis et al., 2019).

The ongoing development at work has also significantly changed the relationship between employees and the organization. In acknowledging these implications, we argued that frontline managers' perception of a psychological breach can affect their VBL behaviors, given that enacting VBL behaviors must be consistent and draws heavily on personal resources (Lin et al., 2016). In a situation when fairness is not reciprocated, it can impact frontline managers' willingness to develop VBL behaviors and can hamper commitment and trust toward the higher-level managers and the organization (Alcover et al., 2017). Because psychological contract would play an important role and a crucial aspect in organizational life, we further argue about the role of HRM practices to provide an integration of the organizational support. Indeed, formal conditions as a result of policy and practice can facilitate the increase of role commitment when they are deemed fair by the frontline managers (Taylor et al., 2009).

However, as not all HRM practices will impact the role equally, especially when it involves value-providing behaviors (Guerci et al., 2015), hence, we call for future research to disseminate the ability and opportunity and motivation-enhancing practices to determine each practice strength on frontline managers' perception of psychological contract breach.

Nevertheless, from a practitioner perspective, it shows that organizations need to strategically allocate their resources to develop managers to inspire next-level (or future) leadership role at the frontline. VBL behaviors are often far more demanding than demonstrating managerial competency. To sustain the emergence of VBL behaviors across the organization, practitioners must develop a culture that promotes value role behaviors. Frontline managers are also more likely to be inspired to achieve value role behaviors when they feel that the organization properly communicates their role expectations. This review thus recommends that organizations should adopt training activities that develop VBL behaviors across multiple levels of management and, at the same time, develop policy and practices that enforce the understanding of these value norms. Organizations could also implement incentive and reward systems to ensure that frontline managers understand their role responsibility. For this reason, we contribute to knowledge by presenting future research directions where researchers can investigate the process that drive the emergence of frontline managers' VBL behaviors.

CONCLUSION

In closing, our current review calls for future research to examine the cascading model through a role theory perspective. In doing so, we discussed research that has examined VBL behaviors through role theory and synthesized the boundary conditions that could further our knowledge in understanding why frontline managers will develop VBL behaviors in an organization. We also presented directions for future research. Overall, we have argued that a role theory perspective warrants further investigation as VBL behaviors will not emerge in a vacuum. Thus, further attention must be paid to understand the organizational process and the boundary conditions that supported these leaders' emergence.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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The Emergence of Creative Leaders Within Social Networks: The Case of Andy Warhol in the Art World of New York

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The creative leadership literature has identified personality traits, skills, states, and behaviours which are effective within creative contexts and organisations, but it is yet to address how creative leaders emerge from social networks. This conceptual paper delineates the processes of creative leader emergence within the context of contemporary visual arts. Using a relational view of creative leader emergence, this paper incorporates the leader emergence processes of achievement and ascription, and then adjusts them to the context of the art world. We argue that both competence and identity contribute to the status construction of creative leaders by enabling their emergence within social networks. In addition to the processes of leader prototypicality through which leaders emerge within groups, we also identify processes of leader atypicality through which creative leaders emerge within network structures. Finally, our conceptual analysis is illustrated by the case of Pop artist Andy Warhol, focusing on his emergence as a creative leader within the art world of New York and his art studio, the factory.

Keywords: creative leader emergence, art world, achievement, ascription, social networks, atypicality

INTRODUCTION

The literature on creative leadership highlights personality traits, skills, states, behaviours, and styles of effective creative leaders (Mainemelis et al., 2015; Epitropaki et al., 2018), but it does not address how creative leaders emerge. The term leader emergence refers to "whether (or to what degree) an individual is viewed as a leader by others" (Judge et al., 2002, p. 67). Leader emergence and creativity are similar constructs, as they are both rely on the perceptions and beliefs of others (Epitropaki et al., 2018): Leader emergence is endorsed by followers (Lee and Farh, 2019), and creative outcomes are recognised by experts and audiences (Bourdieu, 1993).

This paper provides a conceptual analysis of creative leader emergence in the context of contemporary visual arts, responding to recent calls in the literature on creative leadership for context-specific investigations of individual creative leaders (Epitropaki et al., 2018; Randel and Jaussi, 2019). This research aims to address how creative leaders emerge in social networks. The creative leadership literature mainly scrutinises the role of traits, perceptions, skills, behaviours and creative contexts in leadership effectiveness within groups, networks and organisations (Mumford et al., 2003; Mainemelis et al., 2015; Abecassis-Moedas and Gilson, 2018; Epitropaki et al., 2018). Creative leadership emergence has attracted interest recently, as Randel and Jaussi (2019) identify its contextual enablers and redundancies within organisations. In this paper, we aim to complement current research by shifting the context of analysis from organisations to social networks, focusing

explicitly on the processes of creative leader emergence. Artists emerge as creative leaders from social networks or art worlds (Becker, 1982). According to Becker (1982), the creation of art is a collective action that takes place in an art world, which consists of a social network of interrelated agents, including artists, their assistants, peers, experts, and audiences. Although art is created collectively, artists have a leading role in this process (Becker, 1982), which we aim to explore in this paper.

To address how creative leaders emerge from social networks, we synthesise the literature on leader emergence (Paunova, 2015) and the sociology of art (Becker, 1982; Bourdieu, 1993). Creative leader emergence is conceptualised as an emergent, multilevel and relational process, which is determined by the interactions of creative leaders and others (e.g., followers, peers, partners, experts) within social networks (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Acton et al., 2019). These interactions produce perceptions, status, beliefs, identities and discourses that shape the meaning of emergence within a social context (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Paunova, 2015; Oc, 2018).

Paunova (2015) identifies two leader emergence processes, achievement and ascription, which are incorporated in our analysis and adjusted to the context of the art world (Becker, 1982). Both processes are based on the premise that leaders emerge because followers acknowledge their status, which is defined as "the respect, admiration, and voluntary deference individuals are afforded by others" (Anderson et al., 2015, p. 574). Achievement is the process of emergence through which a leader's status is endorsed by followers, due to their competence, functional behaviours and differentiation (DeRue et al., 2015; Paunova, 2015). Ascription is the process of leader emergence through which a leader's status derives from their nominal characteristics and social identities, such as gender, race, class or sexual identity (Paunova, 2015). We claim that both processes are required for the emergence of a creative leader; however, the two processes need adjustment before they can be applied to the context of the art world. The achievement mechanism can only partly explain the emergence of creative leaders in the art world. Leader emergence has mostly been studied within existing groups (Judge et al., 2002; DeRue et al., 2015; Paunova, 2015) or leaderless groups (Ensari et al., 2011; Lee and Farh, 2019). In this research, emergence, is addressed in terms of leader prototypicality, as a leader's traits, states, skills and behaviours match the image of them that their followers have in their minds (Epitropaki et al., 2018). In the visual arts, achievement for creative leaders often refers to receiving recognition for their deviations from aesthetic conventions (Stamkou et al., 2018). However, creative leaders do not necessarily emerge within existing groups, but within networks in the art world which consist of peers, experts and audiences who endorse their artistic deviance (Becker, 1982). Current views, such as that of Paunova (2015), according to which leaders emerge because they can behave in ways that better serve the needs of a group; or because their traits match the image that their followers have in their minds, are not sufficient to explain creative leader emergence.

The emergence of creative leaders depends on their competence in a creative field, but also on their social identities (Mainemelis et al., 2015). Ascription processes focus on the role played by the social identities of leaders in constructing their status (Paunova, 2015). Ascription processes alone can lead to the reproduction of stereotypes that associate higher status with particular demographics, such as white, male, heterosexual or upper-class leaders in the Western context (Samdanis and Özbilgin, 2020). The ascription process can have a different meaning in the art world, as artists often develop atypical identities that diverge to varying degrees from established norms within a social context. Once these identities are endorsed by their followers, creative leaders can enact a creative context, as new cooperative links emerge based on a shared lifestyle, ideology or friendship (Becker, 1982; Kwok et al., 2018).

Overall, we argue that both competence and identity contribute to the status construction of creative leaders, and that they are essential enablers for their emergence within social networks. In this paper, our conceptual analysis is illustrated by a historical case study of Andy Warhol's emergence as a creative leader in his art organisation the Factory, and as a leading figure in the American Pop Art movement in the 1960s. Warhol received significant recognition in New York's art world, nurtured an underground artistic milieu at the Factory, and manifested his atypical identity through the construction of his artistic persona (Bockris, 2003; Gopnik, 2020).

THE EMERGENCE OF CREATIVE LEADERS

The creative leader is the primary source of creative thinking and behaviour within a creative context, aiming to lead others to the attainment of a creative outcome (Mainemelis et al., 2015). Creative leaders are conceptualised as effectively managing a group or team throughout a creative process, being involved at the stages of idea generation, structuring, implementation and promotion (Conger, 1995; Mumford et al., 2003; Oliver and Ashley, 2012; Mainemelis et al., 2015; Lee and Farh, 2019). Creative leaders are often portrayed as charismatic, possessing a unique set of personality traits, as well as creative problem-solving and technical skills that enable them to manage emergent, complex and multilevel processes of creativity and innovation within organisations (Anderson et al., 2014; Epitropaki et al., 2018).

However, those personality traits that enable leader emergence diverge from the traits of successful creative individuals. By reviewing implicit theories of leadership and creativity[1], Epitropaki et al. (2018) compare the traits and attributes of leader prototypicality (i.e., the degree to which a leader's traits match the image their followers have in their minds) with the traits and attributes of creative individuals. Traits such as being intelligent, honest, understanding, determined and decisive are prototypical in leaders, but differ significantly from the traits of creative individuals, which include being open-minded, open to new experiences, imaginative, intelligent, curious and resourceful. Apart from intelligence, which is a common trait, participants seem to appreciate different traits and attributes in leaders and

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[1]Implicit theories of leadership and creativity focus on mental representations of leaders and creative individuals (i.e., how leader and creatives *should* be) in the minds of others (Epitropaki et al., 2018).

creative individuals. Epitropaki et al. (2013, p. 873) point out that in implicit leadership theory (Lord et al., 1984) "the trait 'creative' was included in the non-leader attributes list which clearly indicates that creativity is not viewed as a core characteristic of leadership."

Creative leaders are appreciated by others both within and beyond an organisational setting for their ability to respond to dynamic, innovation-driven environments (Conger, 1995; Anderson et al., 2014; Randel and Jaussi, 2019). As a result, the personality traits that followers appreciate in their creative leaders may vary according to the creative environment. As Epitropaki et al. (2018) claim, the traits of creative individuals emerge as salient in the minds of followers on the fly, as influenced by situated leader-follower interactions, task characteristics and the context of creativity.

The current literature on creative leadership situates the study of creative leaders within creative contexts (Mainemelis et al., 2015, 2018). One of the most influential studies conducted by Mainemelis et al. (2015) introduces a multi-context framework of creative leadership. This framework identifies the creative-leadership contexts of directing, facilitating and integrating, based on the extent to which creative leaders combine their creative contributions with those of their followers. More specifically, directing is the context in which creative leaders are the main source of creative contributions, while the work of followers is restricted to materialising the creative visions of leaders; in the facilitating context, followers are the main source of creative contributions, and creative leaders foster the creativity of followers; and in the integrating context, a creative outcome relies on the creative contributions of both leaders and followers, and thus creative leaders aim to synthesise heterogeneous creative work and inputs (Mainemelis et al., 2015).

The multi-context framework of creative leadership has been widely applied across various creative fields, including choreography (Abecassis-Moedas and Gilson, 2018), filmmaking (Flocco et al., 2018), TV production (Dovey et al., 2017), and haute cuisine (Mainemelis et al., 2015). For instance, in managing the creation of advertising, creative leaders are often responsible for attracting highly motivated, curious, and creative individuals, while also creating an environment which nurtures innovation by being fun, energy-charged and supportive of risk-taking (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). In this context, the creative leader facilitates the creativity of others by finding new and improved ways of working, managing conflict within and across teams, and preventing the burnout of creative individuals (Oliver and Ashley, 2012; Anderson et al., 2014).

In addition, Abecassis-Moedas and Gilson (2018) argue that within collective artistic contexts, leaders are usually creatives, and are thus more inclined to behave in a directive and integrative way, and less in a facilitative way. This is likely to happen because the "identity of the leader is often closely tied to the outcome" (Abecassis-Moedas and Gilson, 2018, p. 125). Based on 20 case studies of choreographers, the authors found that creative leaders employ directive or integrative behaviour, depending on the nature of each project, their general perspective on

the role of followers and their personal preferences (Abecassis-Moedas and Gilson, 2018). An important finding of this research, consistent with prior research on creativity and leadership (Mumford et al., 2003; Anderson et al., 2014), is that effective creative leaders should provide both autonomy and guidance to followers (Abecassis-Moedas and Gilson, 2018). In filmmaking, creative production relies on integrating heterogeneous skills and labour, while film directors as creative leaders are responsible for integrating diverse inputs and work into the final cut (Flocco et al., 2018).

The multi-context framework (Mainemelis et al., 2015) is a powerful analytical tool used for identifying patterns of creative-leader behaviour based on the characteristics of creative tasks and the physical, social, organisational, industrial and temporal contexts in which creative leaders operate (Mainemelis, 2018; Oc, 2018). However, this approach does not fully or directly address the ways in which creative leaders emerge. Mainemelis (2018) later argued that leadership behaviours that are considered prototypical are all constrained by their contexts. This view explains the emergence of creative leaders, based on their competence and functional behaviours, which are perceived as prototypical within a creative context.

However, the emergence of leaders may depend not only on their functional behaviours within a particular context, but also on their social identities, which are perceived as valuable by their followers (Paunova, 2015). Paunova (2015) delineates two enactment mechanisms for leader emergence: achievement and ascription. The achievement mechanism explains how leaders emerge based on their functional behaviours, which are perceived as the antecedents of leadership perceptions within a group ("i.e., trait → state → behaviour → perception") (Paunova, 2015, p. 938). Mental states, such as an individual's self-motivation (Paunova, 2015), creative self-efficacy (Huang et al., 2016), creative problem-solving and social skills (Mumford et al., 2003), derive from personality traits, and influence behaviours, which are perceived and evaluated by others to be leader-like. Sirén et al. (2020) studied leadership in nascent venture teams, and found that trait dispositions, such as regulating emotion, have a positive effect on leader emergence. The quality of talk or speaking up promotively are both associated with higher peer-rated status, which enables leader emergence (Paunova, 2015; McClean et al., 2018). The behaviours of leaders are functional once they are required for a group to function properly, and a member of a group who displays functional behaviour is likely to be rewarded with higher leadership status (Paunova, 2015). Certain creative-leader behaviours support the emergence of creative leaders because they show the followers that those individuals are both competent and a good fit with the purposes of the group.

The ascription mechanism emphasises the importance of traits and nominal demographics, such as gender or race, as antecedents of leadership perceptions ("i.e., trait → perception → state → behaviour") (Paunova, 2015:938). According to the ascription mechanism, leaders emerge as their observable characteristics and social identities (e.g., gender, race, class) shape the perceptions of their followers (Paunova, 2015; Samdanis and Özbilgin, 2020). Key to the ascription mechanism is the concept of status beliefs, which lead people to "associate greater

status and general competence with people in one social category than another, while granting those in each category some specialised skills" (Ridgeway, 2011, p. 60). In addition to the social identities of leaders, their appearance, sexual orientation, self-efficacy, and style also influence the perceptions of followers. The ascription mechanism relies on implicit theories of leadership and creativity, because certain traits, such as being insightful, quirky, disobedient or impulsive, are perceived by followers as those of creative individuals (Epitropaki et al., 2018).

Based on Paunova (2015), we develop the achievement- and ascription-based pathways to explain the emergence of creative leaders. The achievement pathway is usually based on in-group processes of leader prototypicality. Prototypical leaders do not only comply with the norms and expectations of a group, but also demonstrate and sustain their differentiation and competence over time (Halevy et al., 2011; DeRue et al., 2015). This process of creative leader emergence is rooted in the idiosyncrasy credit theory, according to which leaders emerge by first exhibiting competence and conformity to a group to accumulate credit, then redeeming this credit by deviating from established practises (Hollander, 1958). The ascription pathway offers an alternative process for creative leader emergence, based on atypicality instead of prototypicality (Samdanis and Özbilgin, 2020). Atypicality is the degree to which a leader's social identity deviates from those of typical and prototypical leaders within a social context. Leaders may emerge by manifesting their atypical identities through discourses, dispositions and performative acts, while followers may endorse a creative leader because they subscribe to similar values, styles, lifestyles and ideologies, which are interwoven with the atypical identity of the creative leader. As a result, a network of followers can be created, as they endorse the identity of a creative leader in addition to their competence.

THE EMERGENCE OF CREATIVE LEADERS IN THE ART WORLD: A CONCEPTUAL REFINEMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT AND ASCRIPTION

Current research mainly regards creative leadership as an in-group organisational phenomenon (Mumford et al., 2003; Abecassis-Moedas and Gilson, 2018; Epitropaki et al., 2018; Randel and Jaussi, 2019). Research within the sociology of art suggests that cultural production and consumption take place within social networks (Becker, 1982; Bourdieu, 1993; Jones, 2010). The emergence of creative leaders in contemporary visual arts is situated within the context of the art world. According to Becker (1982), the creation of art does not result from the work of an isolated creative genius, but is the outcome of collective action that takes place within an art world. Becker defines the term art world as a "network of people whose cooperative activity" is "organised via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things," producing "the kind of artworks that the art world is noted for" (Becker, 1982, p. X). An art world is a social organisation or a creative network of interrelated agents, including artists and their assistants, art dealers, critics, curators,

collectors and the audience that share similar tastes and aesthetic conventions (Becker, 1982).

The creation of art as a collective action requires a certain division of labour within the art world, as well as processes of coordination through which heterogeneous resources are integrated (Becker, 1982; Mainemelis et al., 2015). Its conventions rely on the knowledge, expertise and experience of artists, experts and audiences, and facilitate the appreciation of art as shared mental representations of taste and aesthetics, which emerge in relation to the conceptual, stylistic and technical aspects of an artwork. These conventions are cognitive mechanisms that coordinate agents in the art world, once creative individuals have emerged as leaders (Bastardoz and Van Vugt, 2019). However, Becker (1982) does not make it clear whether such conventions are appreciated by followers solely on the basis of artistic merit, supporting the achievement process of creative leader emergence, or whether they also refer to the social identities shared by leaders and followers in the art world, a view aligned with the ascription process of creative leader emergence.

In the following sections, we extend the creative leader emergence processes of achievement and ascription, adjusting them to the context of the art world. Artistic deviance and recognition are identified as key enablers for achievement-based processes of creative leader emergence; while networking and atypicality are identified as key enablers for ascription-based processes of creative leader emergence.

Achievement-Based Processes of Creative Leader Emergence
Artistic Deviance

The emergence of creative leaders in contemporary visual arts relies on processes through which creative individuals gain status, recognition as artistic innovators and followers in the art world (Stamkou et al., 2018; Svejenova, 2018). Creative outcomes are considered novel when artists deviate from "their own previous style (intrapersonal deviance) and other artists' styles (interpersonal deviance)" and "deviance is directed toward a progressive style" (Stamkou et al., 2018, p. 276). More broadly, the term social deviance describes a "phenomenon which is perceived... as violating expectations held by participants in an event" (Hawkins and Tiedeman, 1975, p. 59), often referring to criminal behaviour when "individuals fall below the legally prescribed norms of moral conduct" (Sorokin, 1950, p. 81). However, social deviance can also refer to "variations from social norms in desirable and enviable directions" (Lemert, 1951, p. 23–24), which are observed in the cases of outstanding athletes, scientists or artists (Heckert, 1989). In this paper, we focus on artistic deviance as an act of violating established aesthetic norms and conventions (Stamkou et al., 2018). Heckert (1989) notes that artists such as the Impressionists in Paris were initially designated as negative deviants by the artistic establishment and received criticism for violating aesthetic conventions, but later, once they received recognition, their status elevated to positive deviance.

Artistic deviance and convention appear to be contrasting terms. On the one hand, conventions enable artists to gain access to resources, but producing work that is too conventional

may result in few rewards (Becker, 1982). On the other hand, when individuals deviate too much too early, this is unlikely to receive the support of others which is necessary for their emergence as leaders (Stone and Cooper, 2009). This paradox was identified by Hollander (1958), who tried to explain how leaders emerge in groups: "One must conform to group norms in order to be accepted as a member of a group, but one has to deviate from group norms to lead the group" (Stone and Cooper, 2009, p. 787). This is the premise of Hollander's (1958) idiosyncrasy credit theory, which states that leaders emerge by first exhibiting competence and conformity to a group in order to accumulate credit, and then redeem their credit by deviating from established practises (Hollander, 1958, xbib1960). The achievement approach to leader emergence supports the theory that creative leaders build their status, esteem and influence on the foundation of their perceived competence (Stone and Cooper, 2009; DeRue et al., 2015).

The emergence of creative leaders in the contemporary art world is due to their competence in introducing new conventions and sustaining their progressive style over time (Becker, 1982; Stamkou et al., 2018). The ultimate acceptance of new conventions also legitimises the context and behaviour of creative leaders (Mainemelis et al., 2015). Such an achievement-based mechanism explains how creative leaders emerge over time by first building their status and then deviating. However, this transactional approach to creative leader emergence should address not only how a creative leader emerges, but also why others acknowledge the new conventions introduced by him or her.

Recognition

Creative leaders emerge within social networks, when their aesthetic conventions receive recognition from powerful intermediaries and experts (Bourdieu, 1993; Delacour and Leca, 2017). Although artists create new conventions in the art world, they cannot themselves make legitimate claims about the aesthetic novelty and value of their art. Instead, their achievement must be acknowledged by experts and intermediaries who use their power, position, knowledge and recognition (their *cultural, symbolic, and social capital*) to consecrate and promote legitimately distinctive art (Bourdieu, 1984). Intermediaries can also be creative leaders. In the field of music production, producers act as creative leaders and brokers, connecting previously dispersed artists, artists' managers and record labels (Lingo and O'Mahony, 2010; Lingo, 2018). Art dealers can act as creative leaders and brokers, introducing the work of artists to curators or art collectors (Bourdieu, 1993).

Artists emerge as creative leaders once experts within social networks have legitimised their status and justified their competence (Cattani et al., 2015). Firstly, experts play an important role in the emergence of creative leaders, as they justify the cultural importance of their work, using discourses; while, in some cases, they can even construct the identity of artists, labelling their work (Bourdieu, 1984). Secondly, processes of art legitimisation may result in a shift in the position of creative leaders from the periphery of an art world (i.e., an avant-garde position) into the mainstream (Alvarez et al., 2005;

Patriotta and Hirsch, 2016). This shift in the position-taking of a creative leader can also be seen as a process of emergence, based on the recognition of their conventions by experts and broader audiences.

Ascription-Based Processes of Creative Leader Emergence
Networking

The ascription approach to creative leader emergence focuses on the role of leaders' observable characteristics (e.g., age, appearances, and styles) and social identities (e.g., gender, race, sexual orientation, and class) as antecedents of leadership perceptions (Paunova, 2015). The ascription mechanism emphasises the role of affection and social identity—in addition to competence—in the emergence of creative leaders (DeRue et al., 2015; Paunova, 2015). Put simply, creative leaders may network with others in the art world not just because they create innovative, progressive work (Stamkou et al., 2018), but also because of their personality traits, such as warmth, benevolence, likeability, and trustworthiness (DeRue et al., 2015). Traits, such as being friendly and approachable, are identified in the leadership literature in explaining how leaders emerge by gaining the support of followers through building friendship ties, kinship and acquaintance (Uzzi and Gillespie, 2002; Kwok et al., 2018).

Creative leaders also emerge in the art world as a result of their ascription, as their social identities are perceived as creative-like by others (Epitropaki et al., 2018). Firstly, the definition of conventions in this ascriptive approach is broader than that of aesthetic conventions, as it includes social identities, appearances, discourses and styles which can be shared between creative leaders and others within the art world. Becker (1963) in his earlier work analysed the language of jazz musicians, claiming that their use of slang unites a group and differentiates it from others (Cluley, 2012). Secondly, unlike the achievement processes of creative leader emergence, in which the status of leaders is validated by an existing art world, ascriptive processes are likely to enact a new art world based on identity work as "individuals co-create reciprocal and mutually reinforcing identities as leaders and followers and, through this process, develop a leader-follower relationship" (DeRue and Ashford, 2010, p. 628).

Atypicality

In ascription processes, creative leaders emerge by consciously engaging with self-stylisation, self-exposure and self-display to influence the perceptions of others (Finkelstein, 2007). A new mode of artist-personality emerges by blending art, image and celebrity (Stallabrass, 2006). This form of ascription is based on the assumption that artists can actively construct their identities, which in turn can attract endorsement from others. This cultural tactic is known as the creation of an artistic persona, defined as "a trajectory of contemporary art in the post-industrial art world in which artists' activities increasingly include non-art services such as networking and mass media publicity" (Lee, 2015, p. 27).

The artist duo Gilbert and George is known for their formal appearance and manner, as persona is "all-important, and inseparable from the art in which they appear" (Stallabrass, 2006,

p. 47). The feminist artist Tracey Emin has engaged with self-exposure, using "her art for a process of transferring her life and memories into a public artwork" (Remes, 2009, p. 560). Having its conceptual origins in Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical framework and Jung's (1953) persona, artists, and creative leaders can manipulate their public image through discourses, dispositions and performances to construct an atypical identity to influence the perceptions of others (Fawkes, 2015; Samdanis and Özbilgin, 2020).

The emergence of creative leaders relies on both achievement and ascription processes, which are closely interlinked. Our conceptual analysis of achievement and ascription in the art world leads to four propositions (**Figure 1**). Firstly, art is created as a collective action (Becker, 1982), so that creative outcomes perceived as competent are influenced by social networks formed on the basis of aesthetic and identity conventions. Secondly, the recognition of a creative leader relies on subjective processes of consecration by powerful experts, who are often influenced by the access of a creative leader to networks of mutual respect, friendship and identification (Bourdieu, 1993). Thirdly, a creative leader's positive artistic deviance can also lead to the legitimisation of their identity, including atypical identities (Samdanis and Özbilgin, 2020). Fourthly, the recognition of a creative leader also depends on their ability to engage with identity work and construct an identity that is optimally distinctive (Alvarez et al., 2005): atypical, in terms of differentiating from established conventions; yet culturally relevant, so that they are able to relate and connect with peers, experts and audiences within the art world.

AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE EMERGENCE OF ANDY WARHOL AS A CREATIVE LEADER

The achievement and ascription mechanisms of creative leader emergence are illustrated by the case of Andy Warhol (1928–1987), the leading pioneer of the Pop Art movement in New York and creative leader of his art organisation, the Factory (Bockris, 2003). In this paper, we provide an instrumental, qualitative, embedded case study of a creative leader within an art world to illustrate creative leader emergence, based on the processes of achievement and ascription within a historical context (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017).

We consider achievement and ascription to be socially constructed processes (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Paunova, 2015), which are based on interpretations and shared meanings produced and reproduced by agents within an art world (Becker, 1982; Bourdieu, 1993; Svejenova, 2018). Although quantitative methods are commonly used in the study of leader emergence (e.g., Judge et al., 2002; Huang et al., 2016; Kwok et al., 2018), the case study method is an established research strategy in the creative leadership literature (e.g., Mumford et al., 2003; Dovey et al., 2017; Abecassis-Moedas and Gilson, 2018; Flocco et al., 2018).

Considering the creative leader as the primary unit of analysis, this paper provides a qualitative historical case study of Andy Warhol and his emergence as a creative leader in the context

of the New York art world (Yin, 2017). Our analysis focuses on social processes that enable the construction of the leader instead of leadership, following the distinction made by Paunova (2015, p. 936): "Unlike leader emergence, leadership emergence does not necessarily imply the emergence of a single leader." Andy Warhol is considered as a leading figure in the Pop Art movement in New York, and he is recognised for his multidisciplinary artistic innovations, and his cultural tactic of constructing an artistic persona to elevate his status in New York's art world (Gopnik, 2020). This is an ideal case with which to test both the achievement and ascription processes of creative leader emergence. We chose to study the emergence of Warhol, because his art studio, the Factory, was a site of social innovation, connectivity and collective creativity which Becker (1982) "would later view as the collective activity of making art worlds" (Hewer et al., 2013, p. 185).
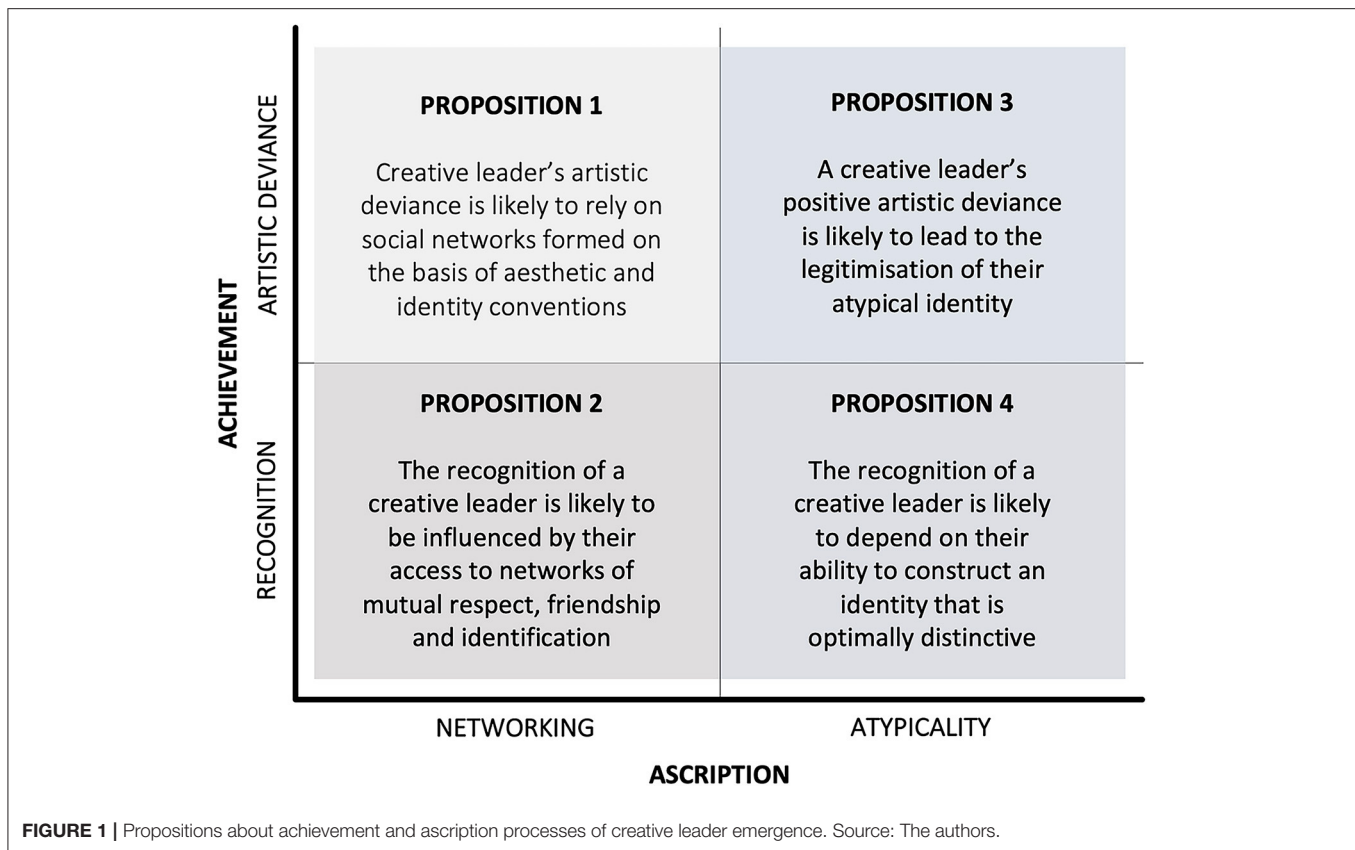
This historical case study is based on secondary data from multiple sources that document the life and work of Andy Warhol, the Factory and the Pop Art period in New York (**Table 1**). In addition, archival data about the exhibitions of Andy Warhol in New York was sourced online by Leo Castelli Gallery exhibitions archive (https://www.castelligallery.com/exhibitions) and the online archive of the exhibition history of the Museum of Modern Art in New York (https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/history/).

Leader emergence is considered to be a within-group phenomenon, while leader effectiveness is seen as a between-group phenomenon (Côté et al., 2010). Within-case analysis is the method used to analyse secondary data, applying our theoretical framework to organise data (Yin, 2017). Data analysis took place by constructing a temporal case narrative, matching evidence about the processes through which Warhol emerged as a creative leader in the art world of New York and the Factory with the mechanisms of achievement and ascription. Our aim in this paper is to illustrate the achievement and ascription processes of creative leader emergence in the art world. The analysis does not aim for generalisations, but for theory development as supported by a force of example (Flyvbjerg, 2006), as the analysis presented here can be conducted for any other creative leaders within the visual arts sector in particular, and the creative industries in general.

Andy Warhol Before the Factory

Andy Warhol is known as the leading pioneer of the Pop Art movement in the 1960s in the United States, a movement that originality emerged in the UK in the late 1950s (Bockris, 2003). Born in Pittsburgh in 1928, Warhol moved to New York in 1949 after graduating with a Fine Art degree from Carnegie Institute of Technology. In the 1950s, Warhol launched a successful career in magazine illustration, design and advertising.

The early 1960s was a time of prosperity and euphoria for American society, and a period of growth for the art market of New York (Crane, 1987). Art galleries in New York and Los Angeles introduced Pop Art to American audiences in the 1960s, featuring a new generation of artists, including Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, together with the former Abstract Expressionists Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, among others (Gopnik, 2020). The Pop Art movement did not display

FIGURE 1 | Propositions about achievement and ascription processes of creative leader emergence. Source: The authors.

the features of historical avant-gardes as collectives of artists sharing ideological conventions. It was an artistic idiom that reflected the spirit of the times, using popular images, humour and irony to criticise the complacent consumer society.

Andy Warhol was a creative leader in his art studio, the Factory, in New York between 1964 and 1984 (Gopnik, 2020). The Factory was a place of artistic experimentation, where creativity was approached as a collective and multidisciplinary practise. Warhol was the indisputable leader in his art studio, but his status in the art world had been established in the years before the Factory opened its doors to the underground artists and celebrities of New York who frequented the place. Warhol had his first exhibition as an artist at the Hugo Gallery New York in 1952, at a time when he primarily worked as an illustrator. The blooming of the advertising industry in the 1950s played a significant role in Warhol's career, as the technical expertise, resources and reputation acquired from his work as an illustrator were used later in his artistic production.

In 1959, Warhol created his first Pop Art exhibition, Wild Raspberries, at the Bodley Gallery (Bastian, 2001). He realised early in this career that he had to develop a unique style, which would make him easily recognised in the art world (De Duve, 1989). During a visit to the Leo Castelli Gallery, Warhol saw a Lichtenstein painting of a comic strip, a style that he was also experimenting with at the time (Ketner, 2013). This revelation made him abandon this convention and seek a new style. Warhol was observing conventions introduced by artists such as Robert

Rauschenberg and the Greek-born Chryssa, who experimented with transferring ta printed image into canvas (Gopnik, 2020). In the early 1960s, Warhol was searching not only for his artistic style but also for gallery representation.

The following year, 1962, was a turning point in Warhol's career. He discovered the photo-silkscreen technique, a method that became his artistic signature, portraying celebrities such as Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe (Bastian, 2001). Experimenting with this silkscreen technique, Warhol created art which was aligned with contemporary technical conventions in the art world. In 1962, Warhol exhibited three of his most recognised artworks. Gold Marilyn Monroe was exhibited at the Stable Gallery, and then acquired by MoMA in 1963; the iconic 200 One Dollar Bills was displayed at the Green Gallery, and Campbell's Soup Cans appeared at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles (Gopnik, 2020). By the spring of that year, Warhol appeared in the New Talent issue of *Art in America* magazine, one of the most influential contemporary art magazines in the USA (Gopnik, 2020). The New Realists exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery was a defining moment for Warhol, as his work was exhibited next to that of his contemporary Roy Lichtenstein and European legends such as Yves Klein (Hess, 2005). In the autumn of 1962, Warhol exhibited his Elvis paintings at Blum Gallery in Los Angeles, where he also visited an exhibition of Marcel Duchamp at the Pasadena Museum of Art. His meeting with Duchamp deeply influenced his conceptual art installations, notably the 1964 Brillo Box sculpture (Ketner, 2013).

TABLE 1 | The sources of secondary data used in the case study of Andy Warhol.

References	Main focus	Type
Sources for Andy Warhol		
Bastian (2001)	The art and life of Andy Warhol	Exhibition catalogue
Bockris (2003)	The art and life of Andy Warhol	Book
Campbell (2015)	Magazine article about Warhol's Polaroids	Magazine article
Crimp (1999)	Contribution of Andy Warhol to Pop Art	Academic article
De Duve (1989)	Contribution of Andy Warhol to Pop Art	Academic article
Gopnik (2020)	The art and life of Andy Warhol	Book
Honnef (2000)	The art of Andy Warhol	Art book
Ketner II, (2013)	The art and identity of Andy Warhol	Art book
Wollen (1997)	The art and life of Andy Warhol	Book chapter
Sources for the Factory and the New York art world		
Crane (1987)	The pop art movement in New York	Book
Currid (2008)	The pop art movement in New York	Book
Graw (2009)	Includes information about the factory	Book
Hewer et al. (2013)	The factory as an emergent art world	Academic article
Joseph (2002)	Innovations at exploding plastic inevitable	Academic article
Polsky (2003)	The art market of Andy Warhol	Book
Saltarelli (2018)	A description of Warhol by his contemporaries	Film/Documentary
Schroeder (1997)	The portraits, identity and persona of Warhol	Academic article
Wood (2004)	The pop art movement and the factory	Book
Woronov (1997)	A description of Warhol by his contemporaries	Book chapter

The themes of achievement and ascription are evident in all sources.
Source: The authors.

From the early 1960s, Warhol made important connexions with art dealers in New York, Los Angeles and Paris, and established friendships with Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, who he met through the filmmaker and art aficionado Emile de Antonio (Honnef, 2000). There is "good evidence of close ties between Warhol and Rauschenberg. They traded studio visits and Rauschenberg actually went to Warhol for advice on the new art of the photo silkscreen" (Gopnik, 2020, p. 244). Warhol became friends with Henry Geldzahler, curator of contemporary art at the Metropolitan Museum, and "began working with Ivan Karp, director of the Castelli Gallery" (Honnef, 2000, p. 36).

Geldzahler encouraged Warhol to paint the headline 129 Die in Jet! This launched Warhol's Death and Disasters series that also included works including Electric Chair and Race Riot (Bastian, 2001; Ketner, 2013; **Image 1**). In contrast to the light-hearted commodity theme of his previous work, "this strand of artistic experimentation exposed "the dark underside of celebrity, society and wealth, confronting the stark reality of death in America" (Ketner, 2013, p. 33). While Death and Disasters is among Warhol's most powerful works, it was first exhibited in Paris by Ileana Sonnabend in a gallery which was acting almost as Castelli Europe (Gopnik, 2020). The limited commercial interest in this series in New York strained Warhol's relationship with Eleanor Ward of the Stable Gallery, Warhol's main representatives. 1964 found Warhol not only in his new art studio, the Factory, but also under the roof of the Leo Castelli Gallery (Gopnik, 2020).
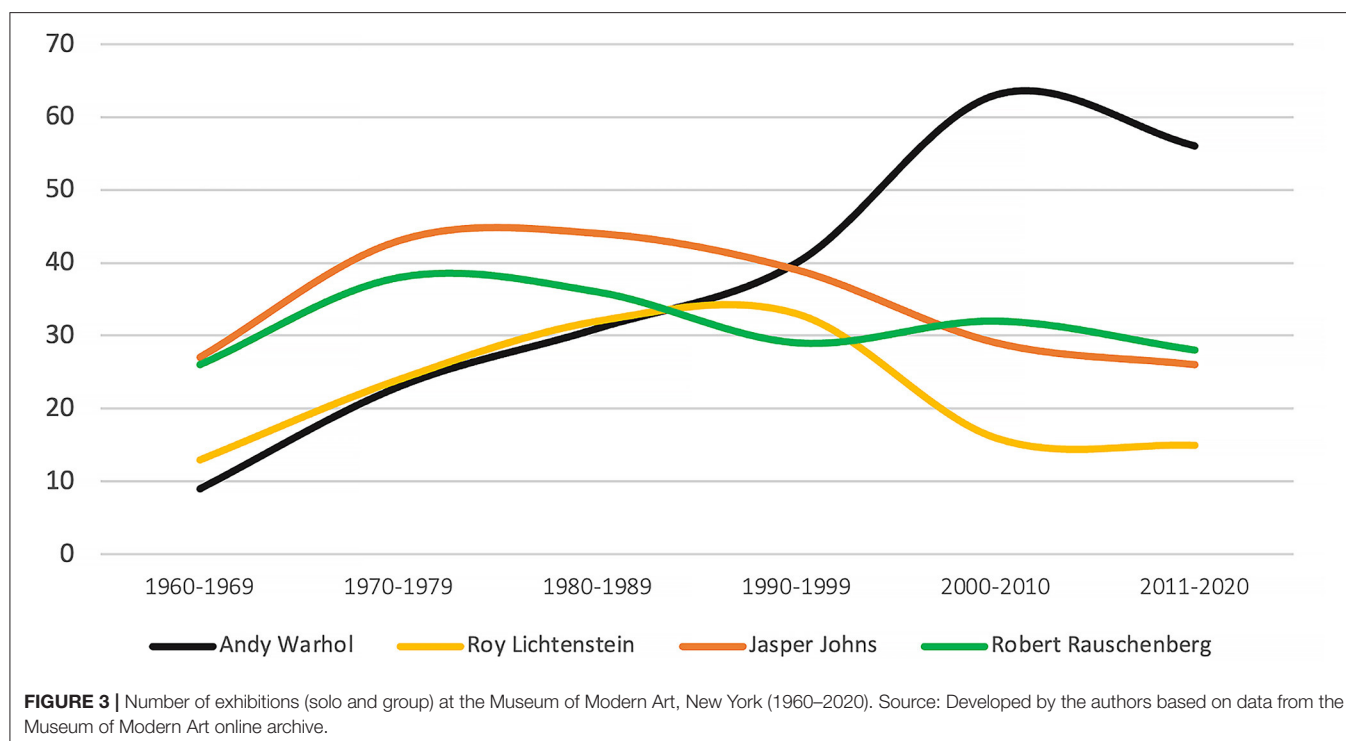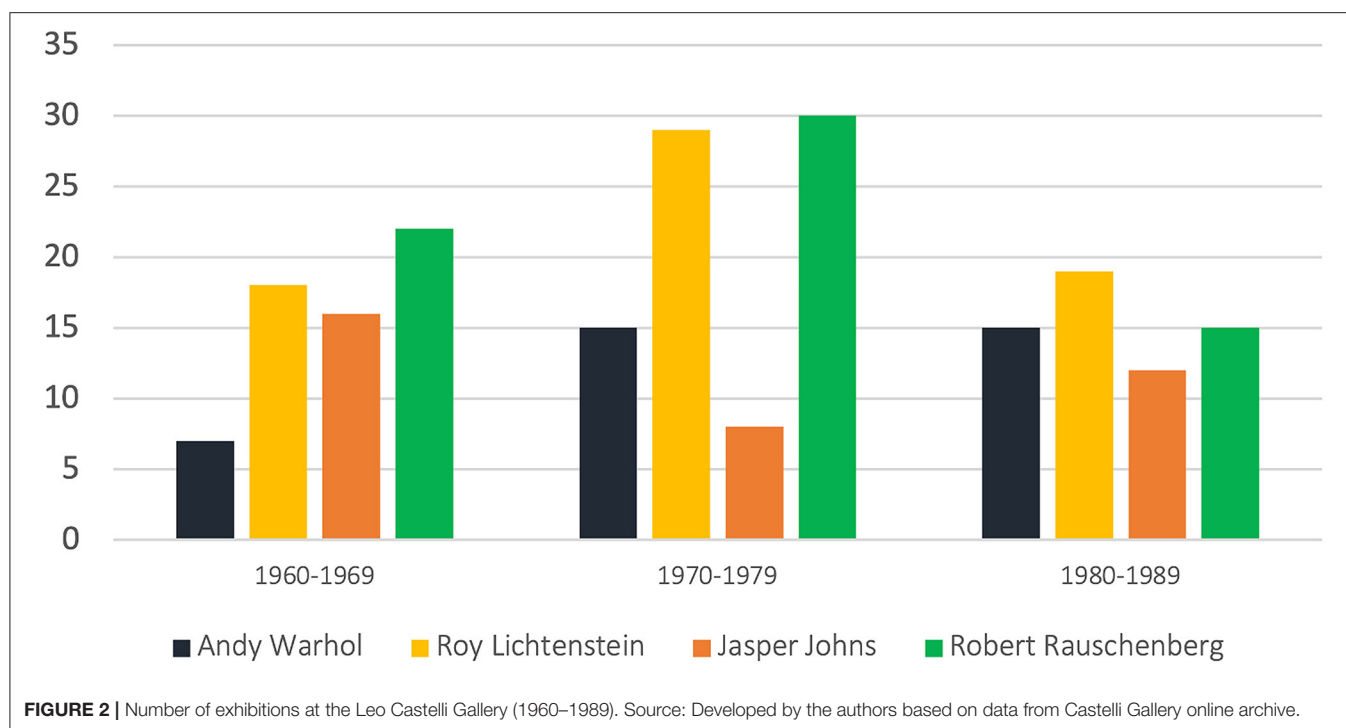
Castelli was crucial in framing and establishing the Pop Art movement in the 1960s. Compared to his contemporaries in the Pop Art movement, such as Roy Lichtenstein (1923–1997), Jasper Johns (b.1930), and Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), Warhol was the least exhibited and recognised artist in the 1960s (**Figures 2**, **3**). **Figure 2** shows the number of exhibitions—both solo and group—of these four artists at the Leo Castelli Gallery throughout Warhol's career until 1987, a few years after his death. Of these four artists, Warhol was the least exhibited in the 1960s, and also less exhibited than Roy Lichtenstein in the 1970s and 80s. It is important to note, however, that all four artists, and Warhol and Lichtenstein in particular, contributed to many group exhibitions at the Leo Castelli Gallery, which led to the framing and establishment of the Pop Art movement.

The highest point of consecration for artists is when their work is displayed within—or acquired by—prominent art institutions (Putnam, 2009). **Figure 3** shows the number of exhibitions in which each of these four artists participated at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), one of the most prominent art institutions for the display of modern art in New York. It should be noted that Pop Art was approached with great scepticism and resistance in the early 1960s by both art critics and art institutions, including MoMA (Gopnik, 2020). Warhol was the least exhibited artist among the four from the 1960s until his death in 1987. Since the mid-1990s, however, Warhol has become the most exhibited Pop artist at MoMA. This has contributed to the establishment of his legacy as the leader of the Pop Art movement (Crimp, 1999).

The Rise of Andy Warhol as a Pop Persona

Pop Art was the first art movement in which attention shifted from collective grouping and labelling to the individual, or

FIGURE 2 | Number of exhibitions at the Leo Castelli Gallery (1960–1989). Source: Developed by the authors based on data from Castelli Gallery online archive.

FIGURE 3 | Number of exhibitions (solo and group) at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1960–2020). Source: Developed by the authors based on data from the Museum of Modern Art online archive.

more accurately, to transforming the image of the individual artist into a brand (Finkelstein, 2007). Andy Warhol underwent a major makeover of his appearance in 1962 and stylized his attitudes to become the epitome of cool: "The essential ingredient of the new Andy Warhol persona was Andy the machine, Andy the android, Andy the asexual creature" (Lee, 2015, p. 29). Warhol's friend and art critic David Bourdon (in Gopnik, 2020, p. 234) noted that Warhol's "metamorphosis into a pop persona" was a calculated and deliberate move.

In the following years, Warhol constructed an atypical image of artist-personality which converged with his artistic oeuvre (Stallabrass, 2006). Geldzahler, a friend and sponsor of his early days claimed that Warhol's appearance and persona influenced the public to identify him with the Pop movement (Honnef, 2000, p. 8):

"Warhol's transformation into a Pop person was thought-out and well-considered. He put his dandified airs behind him when he gradually changed from a worldly-wise person with a subscription to the Metropolitan Opera into a gum-chewing, seemingly naïve teeny-bopper who submitted to the lowest forms of Pop culture."

The artistic persona that Warhol fabricated was an embodied version of the Pop Art idiom and a real-life manifestation of his artistic intentions (Bockris, 2003). Interestingly, there are two interpretations of Warhol's motive for the creation of his new public identity. On the one hand, the construction of the persona is interpreted as Warhol's attempt to establish himself as a celebrity, or what is known nowadays as a celebrity brand (Preece, 2015). Fashion played a central role in the creation of Warhol as an artist-personality (Wollen, 1997, p. 13):

"Warhol followed English fashion from 1963 when he first met Nicky Haslam, who had come to New York as an art director for Vogue... Magazine art directors were the key figures in Warhol's career, essentially acting as patrons. Gallery owners and directors played a similar role for Warhol in the art world."

On the other hand, the creation of the artistic persona was a necessity for Warhol due to his social origins, as the son of working-class immigrants, and sexual identity. As Gopnik (2020, p. 477) notes: "being a successful New York artist who was both Pop and gay didn't only put you onstage in the '60s, it left you forever in costume." Within a heteronormative context, Warhol would face similar barriers to those experienced by earlier female artists:

"Beginning already with Georgia O'Keeffe and Frida Kahlo, modern artists who were women had no choice but to build unusual personas for themselves, since Western society didn't offer models for how to be a woman who made art. As a visibly gay man, Warhol found himself pretty much in the same boat as these women" (Gopnik, 2020, p. 473).

Before the creation of the Factory, Andy Warhol had established his status in New York's art world. This status as a celebrity artist was increasing, based on both the new conventions introduced by his art, and his identity that captured the public's imagination as a performance of the spirit of Pop.

The Emergence of Andy Warhol as a Creative Leader at the Factory

In 1964, Warhol created his famous studio the *Factory*, an art organisation and collective that included his personal assistants, creative associates, visual and performing artists, stylists, musicians, actors, filmmakers and other celebrities (Bockris, 2003). Warhol and the Factory played a leading role in the production of Pop Art by creating "a social cycle whose members were linked to one another through indirect as well as direct ties, which permitted information and ideas to spread through the entire group" (Crane, 1987, p. 30). Warhol was perceived in the art world as a magnet and an individual with extraordinary charisma (Mead, in Schoor, 2008), who had the ability "to select and elect the chosen ones" (Hewer et al., 2013, p. 188). The art historian Klaus Honnef (2000, p. 72) describes Warhol's relationship with his followers: "Warhol fascinated and stimulated this group of strange characters and they in turn served him as recipients and mediums of something which, for lack of better term, can be defined as the spirit of the times."

The Factory can be described as a directing creative context, since "nothing went out of the studio door that had not received the master's explicit seal of approval" (Honnef, 2000, p. 72). Warhol would select themes, images and colours. His associates such as Gerard Malanga would then produce the silkscreen printings for his final approval. If openness to experimentation was one of Warhol's key personality traits, his spirit of research and his unique gaze on people, places and things were most frequently mentioned as his main creative skills (Gopnik, 2020). Warhol is often portrayed as always carrying his Polaroid: whichever social occasion he attended, "he'd record it—and the people he met—for his 'visual diary'… Out would come the Polaroid which accompanied him everywhere Snap" (Campbell, 2015). Many of these Polaroids were used in silkscreens, especially to make portraits.

The Factory can also be described as an integrative creative context. During the Factory years, Warhol encapsulated in his work the collective nature of creativity, as art, fashion, music, film, performance, and design were constantly engaging each other, facilitating the sharing of ideas and resources across creative sectors (Currid, 2008, p. 15). The Factory was an open social space in the underground scene, which attracted different kinds of audiences and followers: ambitious but resourceless emerging artists; marginalised figures, transvestites and gay people, some of whom would become Warhol superstars, emerging celebrities like Edie Sedgwick, and established artists, actors, writers, musicians such as Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Dennis Hopper, Barnett Newman, Judy Garland, and the Rolling Stones (Bockris, 2003).

Warhol "had been trained as a commercial artist," but during the Factory years "had created a completely new type of artist, which irritated, shocked and changed the world of art" (Honnef, 2000, p. 7). The Factory was a "place of social inclusion, of play, performativity and the feminine deflation of heroic male imposture [which] distanced Warhol's project from the aggressive masculine topos of the Abstract Expressionists" (Wood, 2004, p. 180). The new conventions at the Factory that shocked the art world were not just aesthetic, but also transformed into atypical identities, and the bohemian and transgressive lifestyles shared by this artistic milieu: "The Factory of the early 1960s can be understood as a machine that not only staged transgressive ways of life, but also profited from people's willingness to perform them" (Graw, 2009, p. 174).

Although Warhol's involvement with film started before the Factory, this creative context was an ideal space for documenting New York's underground scene. Films such as Chelsea Girls (1966), created by Warhol and his associate Paul Morrisey,

were spontaneous documentations of happenings at the Factory (Bockris, 2003), which was the social and creative context in which "different concepts of sexual identity" were captured by Warhol's films (Graw, 2009, p. 174). In 1964, Warhol won a Film Culture award at the New York Film Festival for his short films Eat, Sleep, Kiss and Haircut, but film critics sidelined his films as avant-garde art or Pop films which would barely reach the mainstream. Warhol acted as producer of his films and referred to his filmmaking activities as "a 'frightfully expensive' hobby that brought in no cash to speak of: 'All my painting money goes into it'" (Gopnik, 2020, p. 416).

Warhol also acted as manager for the rock music band The Velvet Underground and Nico, which acted as a house band at the Factory in the mid-1960s (Gopnik, 2020). The German singer, model, actress and superstar Nico was introduced as a vocalist at Warhol's suggestion. Warhol also played a major role in the production of the band's first album in 1967, and designed their legendary banana album cover. In 1966 and 1967, Warhol organised a multimedia series of events called Exploding Plastic Inevitable (E.P.I.). The media theorist Marshall McLuhan (1967, in Joseph, 2002) described E.P.I. as an original, multidirectional, synaesthetic, and interactive audiovisual experience. E.P.I. included a projection of Warhol films, live music by The Velvet Underground and Nico, dance by Gerard Malanga and superstars Mary Woronov and Ingrid Superstar, and the innovative lighting design of Danny Williams (Woronov, 1997; Joseph, 2002; Hewer et al., 2013; Gopnik, 2020).

Despite the artistic novelty generated at the Factory, its cultural production relied on precarious creative labour (McRobbie, 2016; Samdanis and Lee, 2019). Graw (2009, p. 174) claims that "there was in fact a great deal of literal exploitation in Warhol's film production: The actors were not paid. One might argue that the Factory profited from a willingness to work without pay that grew in direct proportion to the symbolic capital and fame that could expected in return." However, members of the Factory hold different views. For instance, in a recent documentary about the life of Warhol (Saltarelli, 2018), the superstar Cherry Vanilla explained that, although they were paid little or nothing at the Factory, emerging performing artists in the 1960s otherwise had very limited access to resources and opportunities to perform, which is what Warhol offered to them. Gopnik (2020) portrays Warhol as caring for his superstars, attempting—where possible—to provide advice and guidance. This is in line with the claim of Bockris (in Hewer et al., 2013, p. 191) that Lou Reed, the singer of The Velvet Underground, is "a very good example of someone whose life was changed just like that after meeting Andy."

Although Warhol's identity and lifestyle energised the Factory's artistic milieu, they made it more difficult for him to reach the higher levels of institutional validation. Henry Geldzahler excluded Warhol from the roster of artists who would represent the USA at the 1966 Venice Biennale, on the basis that including him would put Geldzahler's status at the Metropolitan Museum of Art at risk: "The trustees were very edgy about me," Geldzahler said (Gopnik, 2020, p. 513), adding that "Andy then had the Velvet Underground and was starting the film thing." While Geldzahler was allegedly looking for post-Pop art,

he included Roy Lichtenstein, "Warhol's rival as King of Pop" (Gopnik, 2020, p. 513). According to Gopnik (2020, p. 513):

"The real problem with Warhol seems to have been less with his Pop Art per se than his increasingly unserious pop-cultural profile. Geldzahler's more conservative model of art would include a 'straight' Pop painter like Lichtenstein but couldn't expand to include a Pop—or pop—figure like Warhol."

The Factory enabled Warhol to be both an insider and outsider in the art world, as he maintained autonomy while forming strong connexions with the prominent art dealers, creatives and celebrities of the time. In 1968, an unexpected incident changed his life forever. Valerie Solanas, a member of the Factory, attempted to assassinate Warhol, claiming that he had too much control of her life (Harding, 2012). Although Warhol was initially pronounced clinically dead, he survived the attack, leaving hospital a month later. After this near-death experience, Warhol re-emerged in the persona of the CEO of Andy Warhol Enterprises Inc., becoming more entrepreneurial as portraitist, publisher, celebrity and salesman (Gopnik, 2020).

In 1969, Warhol launched Interview magazine, which became "an instrument to connect with elite celebrities like Yoko Ono, John Lennon, Mick and Bianca Jagger," and to source portrait work and revenue for the Factory (Gopnik, 2020, p. 766). Warhol was often criticised as being too commercial, a criticism he deflected with irony or apathy (Schroeder, 1997; Graw, 2009). In fact, he launched a new era for the art world, an era in which the art and business are intertwined. After 1968, Warhol started using popular patrons, such as Mick Jagger, Liza Minnelli, John Lennon and Mao Zedong, which also indicates a shift toward more mainstream themes, contributing to Warhol's commercial success in the art market (Polsky, 2003). In his book The Philosophy of Andy Warhol, Warhol (1975, in Bastian, 2001) claimed that "making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art." During the 1980s, Warhol enjoyed the status of art celebrity, being recognised as a pioneer of Pop Art while also collaborating with the new generation of avant-garde artists, such as Jean-Michel Basquiat (Bockris, 2003). He died in New York at the age of 59 from cardiac arrhythmia. Warhol was a multidisciplinary artist, a celebrity, businessman and performer who "fused high art, low culture, high society and the avant-garde into a distinctive amalgamation that attracted the attention of millions and influenced generations of artists" (Ketner, 2013, p. 7).

DISCUSSION

This paper addresses a theoretical gap in the creative leadership literature: how do creative leaders emerge within social networks? The creative leader is the primary source of creative thinking and behaviour within a creative context, such as an art world (Becker, 1982; Mainemelis et al., 2015). The literature on creative leadership outlines the key personality traits of creative leaders, such as being open-minded, open to new experiences, imaginative, intelligent, curious and resourceful (Epitropaki et al., 2018); the key skills, such as creative thinking and problem-solving (McClean et al., 2018); the key states, such as

creative self-efficacy (Huang et al., 2016); and the key behaviours which are contingent on the creative contexts of facilitating, directing and integrating the creative contributions of leaders and followers (Mainemelis et al., 2015; Mainemelis, 2018).

Although many of these traits, states and behaviours are typical of creative leaders, very few creative leaders have influenced a creative context or art world as much as Andy Warhol did in the art world of New York and the Pop Art movement. Pop Art in the USA would never be the same without Andy Warhol, but the question arises: did Warhol emerge as a creative leader only because of his charisma or genius? Asserting this would result in missing important lessons about the ways in which creative leaders emerge within an art world. In this paper, we do not attempt to explain the emergence of creative leaders based on the causal relationship between traits, states, behaviours and leader emergence. Instead, we follow a relational view (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), according to which the emergence of a creative leader results from context-specific interactions and relationships between leaders and followers. In the art world, these interactions and relationships are shaped by conventions, which are similar to perceptions of aesthetics and taste that are shared by creative leaders and others (e.g., assistants, peers, experts, and audience). Based on this relational view, we argue that creative leaders emerge once their interactions and relationships with others in the art world result in the elevation of their status. **Figure 4** depicts our conceptual analysis of creative leader emergence, and way in which this framework is exemplified by Andy Warhol.

The contemporary art world is a challenging context as the status, and therefore the emergence, of creative leaders both depend on the acceptance of new conventions by others (Stamkou et al., 2018). Becker (1982) suggests that artists innovate or introduce new conventions when the demand for current conventions declines in the art world. Although this process points out the motivation of artists when they engage with artistic innovation, it does not explain how artists emerge as creative leaders by introducing new conventions. Stamkou et al. (2018) argue that new conventions are introduced based on processes similar to leader emergence, as described by Hollander's (1958) idiosyncrasy credit theory. Leaders initially build their status by producing conventional work to prove their competence to in-group followers. Once established, they use their credit to produce novel work that deviates from conventions. This process explains how leaders emerge and new conventions are introduced, as leaders become prototypical within a group by proving their competence and differentiation to followers.
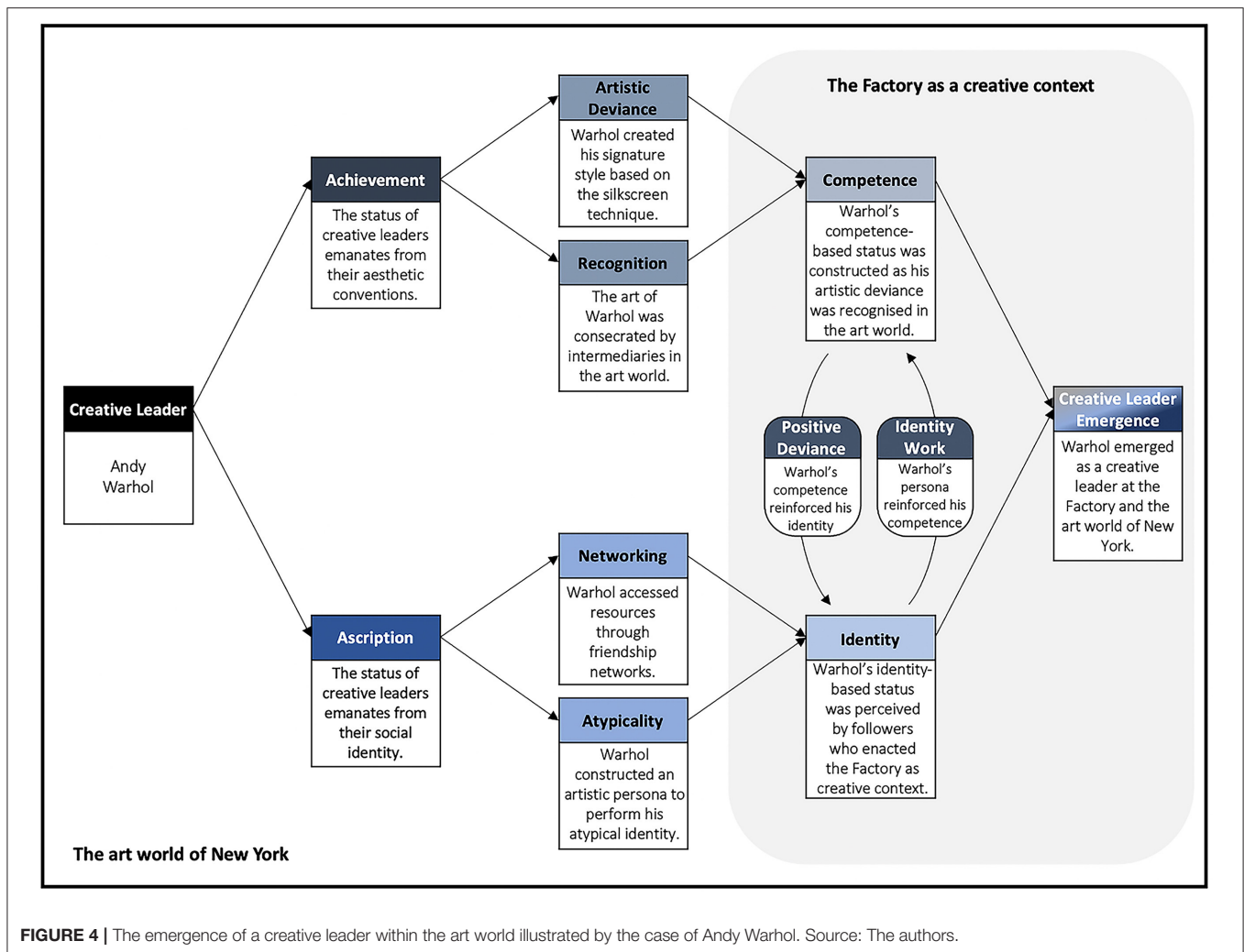
The idiosyncrasy credit theory can partly explain how Warhol emerged as a creative leader. He deviated from existing conventions at the beginning of his career, when he used the comic strip style featured in the work of Roy Lichtenstein, but engaged with emerging conventions in printmaking, alongside Chryssa and Robert Rauschenberg, which resulted in the pioneering of his own silkscreen printing technique. This technique enabled him to produce his first iconic portraits of Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley, and Marilyn Monroe. Therefore, the idiosyncrasy credit theory is partly applicable to Warhol, as he first established his status in the art world in the

early 1960s as a Pop artist, and then deviated in his Factory period by introducing new conventions based on his collective multidisciplinary work. However, the idiosyncrasy credit theory cannot fully explain the emergence of creative leaders from social networks, because the construction of their status within social networks is not necessarily based on leader prototypicality. Instead, their competence and status are often determined by peers, experts and audiences that share their conventions within the art world (Becker, 1982).

Warhol acquired his status as a leading Pop artist in the art world, when his work was featured in prominent galleries and art institutions. This suggests that creative leader emergence in the visual arts relies not only on the perceptions of followers within a group, but also on formal organisations and institutions, as well as informal networks (Bourdieu, 1993; Patriotta and Hirsch, 2016). The achievement mechanism is implicitly based on the idea that a leader emerges when the majority of followers perceive their competences and functional behaviours to be leader-like (Mainemelis et al., 2015; Paunova, 2015). However, this view dismisses the role of powerful intermediaries in consecrating new conventions as legitimately distinctive (Bourdieu, 1993). In the visual arts, the creative context shifts from the organisation to the art world. As a result, we argue that creative leader emergence and creative behaviour are contingent not only on organisational creative contexts (Mainemelis, 2018), but also on the power structures and selection mechanisms that exist within an art world. More broadly, it is implicit in the leader emergence literature (Paunova, 2015; Acton et al., 2019), and also in Becker (1982), that leaders and artists receive recognition based on a consensus within groups or the art world, respectively. However, this view will be limited if the impact of power structures on leader emergence is not taken into account.

Following Paunova (2015), we developed a second mechanism of creative leader emergence that emphasises ascription. The rationale for this mechanism is that the nominal characteristics and social identities of creative leaders can also determine their status and emergence within an art world. Becker's (1982) concept of conventions refers mainly to the aesthetic conventions of an artwork. An extended version of conventions can also include the identities, vocabulary, storeys, styles, and lifestyles shared between leaders and followers, which enact connexions, relationships, and communities within an art world (Cluley, 2012).

The identity of a creative leader can be a source of recognition and status construction in the art world. This is aligned with Mainemelis et al. (2015, p. 434–35) who focus on the context of haute cuisine and state that "becoming a top chef" is "not a question of being creative in mixing ingredients and crafting recipes, but a question of doing so in a way that leads up to the formation of an authentic identity which challenges or/and replaces ideas and practises in the field." The formation and communication of authentic identities by creative leaders are ways of branding their authenticity (Preece, 2015), signalling their conventions, and attracting the kind of followers who identify with them. The status that emanates from the identity of a creative leader can therefore attract followers and generate cooperative links in the art world (Becker, 1982).

FIGURE 4 | The emergence of a creative leader within the art world illustrated by the case of Andy Warhol. Source: The authors.

Such a generative dimension of creativity within social networks (Cattani et al., 2015) is described by Hewer et al. (2013) as "art worlding," denoting the enactment of an art world based on new cooperative links.

Warhol notoriously transformed his appearance and changed his public attitude, manifesting and performing an atypical identity through his artistic persona. The term atypical seems more appropriate than authentic to describe an artist who literally embraced reproduction in his work, in terms of using ready-made objects and images in his artistic production. Authenticity in business contexts has received attention, as Sparrowe (2005, p. 420) states: "In Authentic Leadership (2003, p. 11), Bill George argues that 'being yourself; being the person you were created to be' rather than 'developing the image or a persona of a leader' is the way to restore confidence in business organisations after Enron and Arthur Andersen." However, it would have been problematic for Warhol, a queer man, to be authentic in a heteronormative context such as the USA in the 1960s (Gopnik, 2020). Warhol's status and identity played a vital role in assembling the milieu at the Factory. He used his friendship networks and connexions to source key associates for his creative projects, while many of his associates, including his superstars, expected symbolic returns, such as fame by participating in his projects for little or no pay (Graw, 2009).

The case of Warhol demonstrates that achievement and ascription processes are not mutually exclusive mechanisms, but interact with and reinforce each other. Warhol's artistic oeuvre cannot be separated from his atypical identity as performed through his artistic persona. The recognition of a creative leader's positive artistic deviance can also lead to the legitimisation of their atypical identity. In the case of Warhol, the recognition of his artistic deviance by an influential part of New York's art world also led to the legitimisation of his persona identity.

Through his persona, Warhol was distinctive yet popular, being both an insider and an outsider to the New York's art world. As an insider to the art world, Andy Warhol networked with powerful art dealers, and formed relationships with art professionals and creatives, which influenced his recognition and achievement. However, Warhol maintained his capacity to innovate for more than two decades by also being an outsider, as the work produced within the Factory was based on the collective action of an artistic milieu that shared both aesthetic and identity

conventions. His persona identity allowed Warhol to perform a balancing act between the mainstream and the avant-garde. This balancing act, which of course was not lacking in criticism, allowed him to attract further followers and audiences, and build his fame as a pioneer of Pop Art in New York. By engaging with identity work, Warhol maintained his artistic deviance over time, a point that demonstrates that the achievement of a creative leader cannot be distinguished from their identity.

CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper addresses the ways in which creative leaders emerge within social networks, a topic which has previously received limited attention in the literature on creative leadership. Based on a relational perspective on creative leader emergence (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014), we have blended the literature on sociology of art (Becker, 1982) and leader emergence (Paunova, 2015), to introduce two processes for creative leader emergence in the context of the art world.

As illustrated by the historical case of Andy Warhol, achievement shows creative leader emergence to be a status-construction process through which the conventions of a creative leader are recognised by peers, intermediaries and audiences, while ascription explains creative leader emergence as a process of status construction in which followers endorse the identity of a creative leader. When the achievement and ascription processes are combined, creative leader emergence is likely to introduce innovations in the form of new conventions, and enact structures, as new cooperative links are formed. Our conceptual analysis leads to two theoretical implications. Firstly, competence and identity reinforce each other in the process of creative leader emergence. The recognition of a creative leader's artistic deviance within an art world can result in the legitimisation of their atypical identity. Secondly, through identity work, creative leaders can be both insiders and outsiders in the art world, maintaining their artistic deviance while accessing resources from the core of the art world.

This conceptual paper also contributes to the wider literature on leader emergence. More specifically, we complement the existing literature that scrutinises leader emergence within groups (e.g., DeRue et al., 2015) and leaderless groups (e.g., Ensari et al., 2011), based on mechanisms of leader prototypicality, by demonstrating that leaders can also emerge while they enact groups, networks and communities of followers based on mechanisms of atypicality. While leader prototypicality explains leader emergence, as followers perceive the leader as being one of them (Steffens et al., 2013), leader atypicality explains leader emergence as followers are inspired by the legitimately distinctive identity of a leader. However, leader prototypicality and atypicality are not either/or phenomena. While optimal distinctiveness is a deliberate strategy or cultural

tactic, according to which leaders aim for both assimilation and differentiation from others (Brewer, 1991; Alvarez et al., 2005), leader atypicality is a leader emergence mechanism through which followers endorse the atypical identity of a leader. However, an atypical creative leader, like Warhol, can engage with identity work and aim for optimal distinctiveness.

This paper is subject to limitations which could be addressed in future research. Firstly, prior research explores the relationship between the role identity of leaders and leader emergence (Kwok et al., 2018). As Kwok et al. (2018) suggest, networks of friendship can affect leader emergence, a point which we have incorporated into our conceptual development. However, it is not certain whether creative leaders within social networks develop a leader role identity (Kwok et al., 2018), or a motivation to lead (Randel and Jaussi, 2019), as may be the case for creative leaders within existing groups and formal organisations. Thus, empirical research focusing on the identities of creative leaders and their relationships with their followers is required to understand whether creative leaders develop the role identity of a leader, and how this identity is integrated with other social identities.

Secondly, based on the ascription mechanism of creative leader emergence, future research could more explicitly analyse the role of social identities, such as gender, social class, race, religion and intersectional identities in creative leader emergence and effectiveness (Rosette et al., 2016). Andy Warhol, through the creation of his artistic persona, managed to overcome some of the social barriers associated with his queer identity (Gopnik, 2020). As these barriers are associated with the 1960s American context, so more research is required to understand the barriers and enablers for atypical creative leaders in more recent and current creative contexts.

Thirdly, in this paper we have used the emergence of Andy Warhol as a creative leader as a case study to illustrate our conceptual analysis. As part of this, we also mentioned an important incident later in his career and life—the assassination attempt by Valerie Solanas in 1968—while stressing that Warhol then re-emerged as a more corporate leader. Future research could focus on the process of inside-out transformation following psychological and physical trauma, examining how they affect leader emergence, development and efficiency. Finally, in the context of increasing digitalisation of creative industries (Khaire, 2015), it will be interesting to investigate collective and distributed modes of creative leader emergence in sectors such as art, architecture and fashion, which have changed significantly in recent decades due to digital transformation.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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Distinctions and Affinities Between Leadership Emergence and Leadership Effectiveness

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There is a growing understanding that the foundations of followership are the key to deciphering the nature of leadership. (Shamir et al., 2007; Lapierre and Carston, 2014; Popper, 2014; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Popper and Castelnovo, 2018).

This claim is central in the article's attempt to understand processes underlying leaders' emergence and the evaluation of leaders' effectiveness.

Two questions are addressed prior to presenting propositions that deal with the distinctions and affinities of both notions.

(A) Why are leaders so important to followers?

(B) How do the factors that determine leaders' centrality for followers affect their reference to leadership effectiveness?

WHY ARE LEADERS SO IMPORTANT TO FOLLOWERS?

Three major explanations are suggested to explain the importance of leaders to followers: (1) the evolutionary explanation; (2) the psychodynamic explanation; and (3) the social-psychological explanation.

The Evolutionary Explanation

According to the *evolutionary perspective*, most species are equipped with an innate, pre-learned tendency to be attracted to figures sensed as being "wise and strong" (Mayseless and Popper, 2019). Evolutionarily, this tendency enables the preservation of the human infant's survival during the prolonged period in which he is totally dependent on other care-taking figures. (Bowlby, 1973). The relationship between the "small figure" (who needs protection and adaptive knowledge) and the "large figure" (e.g., a care-giver in infancy and various authority figures later) is partly accomplished through informative signals (Antonakis et al., 2016). For example, among animals, certain signs express power which may lend their subjects leadership status. This is also the case with humans—with one crucial difference: humans are uniquely sensitive to symbolic signals, such as language (Csibra and Gergely, 2006, 2009; Tomasello, 2014).

The important evolutionary signals of leadership stem from two complementary groups: signals of competence and signals of care (Castelnovo et al., 2017); meaning, signals sensed as reflecting the ability to deal with adaptive challenges (Todorov et al., 2005; van Vugt et al., 2008; van Vugt and Grabo, 2015; Grabo et al., 2017), along with the sense that this competence is aimed at the followers' needs (Fiske et al., 2007; Csibra and Gergely, 2009). For example, the leader in ancient times was not only sensed as one who knew where to find water, but also as someone who would make sure the water was shared (Boehm, 1999). These two phylogenetic signals are major antecedents of leadership emergence (Grabo et al., 2017; Popper and Castelnovo, 2018).

The Psychodynamic Explanation

According to the psychodynamic explanation, the sources of attraction to a leader are unconsciously formed in early childhood during the period of total impotence. Hence, the yearning for a leader is simply a longing for parental figures who can provide us with protection and care (Freud, 1939; Bowlby, 1973; Hill, 1984).

According to such explanations, leadership is a *projection*—if the "appropriate signals" of strength and care are sensed as being associated with a certain figure, s/he will be accepted as a leader—as the right response to followers' anxieties and desires.

The Social-Psychological Explanation

The reality in which people live is also replete with meanings represented by symbols (Charon, 1979). Leaders in this context can also be symbolic representations of a cultural and/or social category that assist in defining the followers' social self (Shamir et al., 1993; Hofstede, 1997; Allison and Goethals, 2011). Leaders are a sort of narrative through which group identity can be crystalized (e.g., Shamir et al., 1993; Hogg, 2001).

Some scholars claim. that humans' advantages in the face of adaptive challenges stem from the ability to work in a group. The more coordinated group functions were, the more effective the group was (Tomasello, 2014; van Vugt and Grabo, 2015). Leaders were those individuals who coordinated the group's activities when facing challenges (van Vugt and Grabo, 2015). Arguably, with the advancement of symbolic forms, leaders, through symbolic means, were able to enhance functions that had existed in less sophisticated forms at the beginning of human evolution (Harari, 2015; Popper and Castelnovo, 2018).

The conceptual framework presented thus far allows us to analyze the impact of the most significant factors that affect leadership emergence.

The Feasibility and Intensity of Leadership Emergence

As can be seen from the above explanations, there is a conceptual hierarchy underpinning the yearning for a leader. The most fundamental, is the evolutionary explanation, which is at the base of the inherent longing for competent, and caring figures alongside the constant seeking of mechanisms that preserve the collective entity. This understanding sheds light on key aspects that accelerate leadership emergence. The most prominent among them are discussed below.

Psychological Distance

From the followers' perspective, two psychological phenomena, which are unique to humans, serve to intensify the longing for leaders. One, as mentioned, is the human ability to *project,* which during times of crisis magnifies leadership (e.g., Popper, 2001; Volkan, 2004; Lipman-Blumen, 2007). The other is humans' typical *attribution patterns*. Both phenomena are largely affected by psychological distance.

Psychological distance is defined by Liberman et al. (2007) as a mental construal: "…on a single starting point (zero distance point) which is a *direct experience* of the here and now. Anything

else—other times, other places, experiences of other people, and hypothetical alternatives to reality, is a mental construal" (p. 353).

Construal Level Theory (CLT) (Liberman and Trope, 1998) suggests two levels of construal and proposes that more distal entities are construed on a higher level, that is, involve more construal. The reason for this is that as we move away from our direct experience of things, we have less information about those things.

Abstract representations are simpler and more prototypical than concrete representations (Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Smith, 1998). In feature-based theories of categorization, more inclusive categories have fewer features and are therefore simpler than concrete categories (Rosch and Lloyd, 1978). In the same way, abstract traits are less detailed about the behaviors and circumstances, they involve (Hampson et al., 1986).

This argument was reflected in Shamir's study (Shamir, 1995). The participants were asked to describe two types of leaders: a *close leader* with whom they had direct contact, and a *distant leader* with whom they had never had direct contact. A comparative analysis of the frequency and contents of the adjectives used to describe the two types of leaders revealed that distant leaders were described by more general traits, and were characterized by fewer adjectives and less daily behaviors than close leaders.

The relevance of the arguments and research on psychological distance with regard to the emergence of leaders is clear. The ability of followers to validate leadership signals in close leaders is greater, as it is easier to attribute causality to close leaders when there are many observed behaviors and concrete outcomes (Erickson and Krull, 1999). Hence, the distance from the leader does not necessarily lead to a valid completion of the interpretation known in the literature as *correspondence inference* (Erickson and Krull, 1999). As a result, there are more perceptual limitations with regard to the congruence between behaviors, traits, and outcomes in terms of attribution theories (Hamilton, 1988; Lopez and Ensari, 2014). Hence, the options for manipulating the choice of "false leaders" are more feasible in the context of distant leaders.

Cultural Differences

Studies in the context of leadership and culture indicate differences in leadership imagery among different cultures (Gestner and Day, 1994; Dorfman, 1996; Hofstede, 1997; Den Hartog et al., 1999). For example, Gestner and Day, 1994 compared leadership perceptions among students in eight countries. They presented the subjects with 59 leadership characteristics and found that their level of agreement was small.

Uncertainty

Uncertain situations intensify the inherent yearning for a "large, competent figure." The more acute one's sense of uncertainty is, the more intensive his/her yearning for a (strong) leader to emerge, will be (Hertzler, 1940; Pillai, 1996; Popper, 2001).

To summarize this section, it is argued that leadership emerges in different magnitudes and ways; at different distances from the leader (Shamir, 1995; Popper, 2013); according to the weight the culture ascribes to authority figures (Hofstede, 1997; Den

Hartog et al., 1999); and at different levels of change, and crisis (van Vugt and Grabo, 2015; Castelnovo et al., 2017). The common denominator of all the discussed claims is that leadership emergence is, in many circumstances, an emotionally-biased phenomenon (Popper and Castelnovo, 2018).

Following this premise, we suggest several propositions that may illuminate the distinctions as well as the affinities existing between leadership emergence and leadership effectiveness.

Proposition 1-The Central Heuristics Used by Followers to Assess Leadership Effectiveness Are Based on Results

In a study conducted by Lipshitz (1991), officers evaluated four versions of the same decision-making case. In two versions, the decision-maker obeys orders, while in the other two versions he disobeys them. One out of each decision is successful; one out of each decision fails. Although the cases are identical successful decision-makers are perceived more favorably than their unsuccessful counterparts. The study shows that successful outcomes overshadow the decision-making process, even if the success was reached by contradicting the rules or ignoring important data. This link between success and leadership has been explained as an expression of two cognitive biases:

1. *Fundamental attribution error*—the tendency to ascribe greater weight to "actors" than to circumstances (Ross et al., 1977). Leadership is a clear manifestation of this bias. Success is often overly attributed to leaders. For example, Meindl et al. (1985) provided participants with vignettes of organizational events, and measured the extent to which participants attributed the event either to leaders or to other causes. All other causes were equally likely and plausible, but the results indicated that participants were more inclined to explain the event in terms of the leader compared to all other explanations.

2. *Availability bias*—the general tendency to assess events by the ease with which occurrences come to mind (Kahneman, 2011). Leaders provide particularly "salient and accessible information" (Popper, 2012, p. 32), when it comes to evaluating informatively complex situations (Lord et al., 1984). Such biases lead to overemphasizing leaders' contributions to successful organizational results. Moreover, sometimes successful outcomes glorify a person who happened to be in in a formal leadership position, even though the outcomes did not necessarily stem from his/her decisions, (e, Spector, 2014)

These general heuristics linking leadership to results vary due to the factors discussed above.

Proposition 2-Leadership Effectiveness and Distance
The closer the leader is, the more the effectiveness of his/her leadership will be assessed on the basis of the actual results of his/her organizational unit. The farther away the leader is, the more the assessment of his/her effectiveness will be based

on generalized and abstract informative categories ("strong," "determined",) (Shamir, 1995; Liberman and Trope, 1998; Liberman et al., 2007; Popper, 2013).

The following propositions are anchored in a different paradigm according to which the reference toward leadership is largely inherent in cultural attributes or primordial elements that create different categories of evaluating leadership effectiveness.

Proposition 3-The More Culturally Prototypical the Leader Is Perceived in a Given Group, the More s/he Will Be Attributed With Effectiveness

The common argument suggested in many works (e.g., Gestner and Day, 1994; Dorfman, 1996; Hofstede, 1997; Den Hartog et al., 1999; Popper and Khatib, 2001) is that intercultural differences affect both: a) the centrality ascribed to a leader. b) the type of outcomes linked to the leader. For example, in collectivistic cultures, there is less inclination to attribute organizational effectiveness to leaders compared to individualistic societies. The success of organizations like Toyota is more attributed to variables such as the system's design and work methods (Liker, 2004). In contrast, the success of organizations in the US (an individualistic culture), such as General Electric and Chrysler, was attributed more to individual leaders (Popper, 2012; Spector, 2014).

Proposition 4-In Stressful Situations the Leader's Effectiveness Will Be Determined by Feelings of Security Sensed by the Followers as Radiating From the Leader's Speeches and Behavior

This proposition is anchored in works conducted on leadership during times of crisis and change (Hertzler, 1940; Conger and Kanungo, 1987; Pillai, 1996; Popper, 2012). Common to all these studies is the conclusion that crisis situations highlight primary emotions (e.g., Kets de Vries, 1988) in relation to leaders. The effectiveness of leaders in such circumstances is essentially affected by the degree of confidence experienced by the followers from the leaders' public appearances. (Burns, 2002).

The main indicator of a leader's effectiveness in these situations is a sense of anxiety reduction (Kets de Vries, 1988), which often has nothing to do with the end results of the crisis (e.g., Lindholm, 1990; Kershaw, 1998, 2001).

In conclusion, it is argued that the evaluation of leadership effectiveness is affected by consequential thinking and is largely biased by outcomes, whereas leadership emergence is grounded in cultural biases and primordial feelings and is not necessarily associated with evaluable parameters. In this sense, although, as discussed, antecedents of leadership emergence can influence the evaluation of leadership effectiveness. Thus, we should keep in mind that the very essence of leadership emergence goes beyond common categories such as "successful"/"unsuccessful."

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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Motivation to Lead as Mediator of Relations Between the Dark Triad, Big Five, and Leadership Intention

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This study seeks to enhance the distal-proximal modeling of personality trait–leader emergence relationships by (1) distinguishing between the motivation to lead (i.e., the reasons why a person seeks leadership roles) and leadership intention (i.e., one's expressed desire to claim a leadership role) and by (2) examining how the Dark Triad traits add to the Big Five personality factors in predicting three motivation to lead factors and leadership intentions. Using personality and careers aspiration data collected from 750 university students, we found that affective-identity and social-normative motivation to lead mediate the effects of distal traits on intentions. In contrast, non-calculative motivation to lead does not contribute to leadership intentions, which has important implications for organizations seeking selfless leaders. Narcissism explains variance in leadership intentions over and above that explained by extraversion; this contrasts with the studies of leader emergence, where the effect of narcissism disappears once extraversion is controlled. Overall, our findings validate the three-factor conceptualization of motivation to lead and illuminate the roles of both bright and dark personality factors in understanding individual desire to attain leadership roles.

Keywords: leader emergence, Dark Triad, motivation to lead, leadership intention, Big Five

INTRODUCTION

Since the bivariate meta-analyses of Judge et al. (2002) linking the Big Five and leadership criteria, various theorists (e.g., Ng et al., 2008; Van Idekkinge et al., 2009; DeRue et al., 2011) have proposed distal-proximal models to explain how personality traits relate to leadership outcomes like emergence and effectiveness *via* various mediators. One important mediator is an individual's self-reported motivation to lead (MTL). Luria and Berson (2013), for example, demonstrated that individuals with higher levels of MTL were more likely to engage in teamwork behaviors, which resulted in them being assessed as leader-like by their peers. In addition to this influence on leader emergence, MTL also predicted subsequent formal appointment into leader roles.

In their recent meta-analysis, Badura et al. (2020) confirmed the importance of MTL as a mediator in their Distal-Proximal Model of Motivation and Leadership. They also argued that MTL is best treated as three separate factors rather than as a general single factor. Unfortunately, there

has been a tendency among researchers to treat MTL as a single factor representing one's desire to seek leadership roles, either by using second-order factor modeling or by only using affective-identity MTL as a substitute for MTL (see section "Motivation to Lead Is Multidimensional").

DeRue and Ashford (2010) describe the process of leader emergence as involving an identity construction process, whereby individuals claim leader roles and others grant such roles. In this paper, we suggest that leadership intentions precede the claiming action and are therefore a more proximal predictor of leader emergence (being accepted by others as a leader) than MTL factors (which concern the reasons why an individual may seek leadership roles). In this view, leadership outcomes only emerge after this motivation has transformed into an intention to lead – when motivational processes have given rise to volitional processes (Achtziger and Gollwitzer, 2018). In doing so, we refine Badura et al.'s distal-proximal modeling of personality traits, leader motivation, and leadership outcomes by distinguishing leadership intention as a more proximal construct to leader emergence than MTL.

As an outcome or dependent variable in the study of leadership that is often contrasted with effectiveness, leader emergence is typically operationalized either perceptually in terms of how a person is perceived by others to be leader-like (e.g., Judge et al., 2002) or behaviorally in terms of assuming leadership roles in leaderless group contexts (Ensari et al., 2011; see also Hanna et al., 2021 for more comprehensive discussion of variations in definition and operationalization of this construct). Some researchers have used self-reports of "leadership aspirations" to predict emergence using such criteria as career attainment (Schoon and Polek, 2011), occupational status (Schoon et al., 2007) and hierarchical advancement (Tharenou, 2001). Leadership aspirations have been operationalized in various ways from the single item of Singer (1989) "How much would you like to be in a leadership position?" to scales developed by Van Vianen and Keizer (1996) and Gray and O'Brien (2007). Recently, for example, Lechner et al. (2018) defined leadership aspirations as "the intention to become a leader in a business context," but operationalized it using a measure of leadership motivation. In this paper, we build on the meta-analysis of Badura et al. (Badura et al., 2020; which showed that MTL is best conceptualized multidimensionally as a mediator between traits and emergence) to argue that leadership intentions are more proximal to leader emergence than MTL. Whereas MTL concerns the reasons for wanting to lead, leadership intention concerns the volition preceding "the actions people take to assert their identity as…a leader" (DeRue and Ashford, 2010, p. 631).

Research into links between personality and leadership has been broadened over recent years by the inclusion of "dark side" traits (such as the Dark Triad of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism) in addition to "bright side" Big Five factors. Studies have demonstrated negative effects at both individual and organizational levels (e.g., Chatterjee and Hambrick, 2007; Volmer et al., 2016; Braun, 2017). The dark side traits of a leader may shape an organization's culture, resulting in ongoing harm extending beyond the leader's tenure

(O'Reilly and Chatman, 2020). Narcissism has been linked to a desire for power (Macenczak et al., 2016), leader emergence (Brunell et al., 2008; Grijalva et al., 2015), and all three MTL factors (Badura et al., 2020). Beyond this, we have very little knowledge of how all three Dark Triad traits shape each of the three MTL factors and leadership intentions. Given the clear evidence of harm resulting from dark side leaders in positions of power, we need a better understanding of how Dark Triad traits relate to MTL factors in the formation of leadership intentions.

This paper focuses on refining Badura et al.'s model of leader emergence rather than effectiveness. We have two specific aims: (1) to distinguish between MTL (the reasons why a person seeks leadership roles) and leadership intention (i.e., one's expressed desire to claim a leadership role) and (2) to examine how the Dark Triad of personality adds to the Big Five in predicting MTL facets and leadership intention. In doing so, we address the current gap in understanding regarding the role of Dark Triad traits in leader emergence while adding more rigor to distal-proximal models of leadership by showing the value of the multidimensional MTL construct in describing the "whys" or "motives" that explain individuals' intentions to take up leadership roles, responsibilities, and training. By examining how the three MTL factors differentially mediate relationships between personality factors (Dark Triad and Big Five) and leadership intention, we reinforce the importance of viewing MTL as a multidimensional construct, and a mediator between personality traits and leadership intention – a better proxy (more proximal indicator) for leadership emergence.

Motivation to Lead Is Multidimensional

Chan and Drasgow (2001) defined MTL as "an individual-differences construct that affects a leader's or leader-to-be's decisions to assume leadership training, roles, and responsibilities and that affect his or her intensity of effort at leading and persistence as a leader" (p. 482). They conceptualized MTL as a general, second-order factor with three factors: affective-identity (the extent one enjoys leading others and identifies as a leader), social-normative (the extent one treats leadership as a responsibility and duty), and non-calculative (the extent that one views leadership opportunities positively despite the potential costs and/or minimal personal benefits of leading). They showed empirically that the three MTL factors have different patterns of antecedents in both the Big Five personality traits and socio-cultural values.

Concerned that leader motivation had "not been more fully integrated into efforts aimed at understanding the nuanced nomological network of leadership processes" (p. 331; i.e., linking distal traits to leader emergence), Badura et al. (2020) highlighted the need to clarify the conceptualization and measurement of MTL. In a meta-analytic review based on 1,154 effect sizes from 100 primary studies, they confirmed different antecedents for the factors, as well as their low intercorrelations. Their meta-analysis presented path-analytic evidence that supporting MTL as an important mediator in their distal-proximal model linking traits with leader emergence and effectiveness.

Noting MTL's importance for leadership emergence and effectiveness, they argued for the operationalization of MTL "as three separate motivational constructs instead of as one overarching construct" (p. 331). They noted that 40% of studies in their review, which used the Chan and Drasgow MTL measure used only a subset of the three factors. In some cases, affective-identity MTL is characterized as an intention to lead (e.g., Bergner et al., 2019), a usage which is inconsistent with the conceptualization of Chan and Drasgow (2001).

The Need to Distinguish Leadership Intention From MTL in Distal-Proximal Models

Motivation and intentions are distinct constructs – Kanfer (1990) argued that motivational constructs "subsume the determinants and processes underlying the development of intentions" (p. 80). In building up their distal-proximal model of leader performance, Van Iddekinge et al. (2009) also made the point that motivational constructs are precursors of intentions to act. Research in entrepreneurship incorporates intentions as an important stage between traits and action (e.g., Zhao et al., 2010), there is no comparable construct in leadership research.

Intentions are important because they are the transition stage, whereby competing motivational tendencies are transformed into planning and action (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2018). Motivation to undertake a certain behavior does not automatically produce the behavior in the absence of volition, the active intention to pursue one goal over another (Achtziger and Gollwitzer, 2018).

In the distal-proximal model of leader emergence, MTL should precede the leader's intention to lead. A person acting on such an intention is more likely to assert their identity as a leader (DeRue and Ashford, 2010) and to seek out opportunities to lead, to emerge as a leader in a group, or to pursue leadership training (Stiehl et al., 2015). There is a difference between wishful thinking (liking the idea of being a leader) and intention to act (i.e., translating a desire for leadership into specific actions). Distinguishing motivation from intention in the distal-proximal process therefore provides a more fine-grained framework for the analysis of trait-leadership emergence relationships.

Studies of leader emergence typically rely on perceptions of others, on assessments as to whether the observed person has characteristics consistent with being a leader (Judge et al., 2002), or, *via* the objective emergence of leaders in leaderless groups (e.g., Ensari et al., 2011). Much less attention has been given to individual self-nominations or intentional actions aimed at emergence into leadership roles. This contrasts with other fields, such as entrepreneurship research, where intentions are seen as an important stage linking distal predictors to emergence as an entrepreneur. Intentions represent a "conscious plan or decision to exert effort to enact the behavior" (Conner and Armitage, 1998, p. 1430) and have been shown to predict behavior in many applied fields (for a meta-analytic review, see Armitage and Conner, 2001). For these reasons, we include leader intentions as the final (most proximal) stage in our model.

The Dark Triad and Leader Emergence

While the Big Five is the most common organizing framework for personality research, the Dark Triad is the most frequently studied cluster of dark personality features (Zeigler-Hill and Marcus, 2016). Paulhus and Williams (2002) introduced the Dark Triad label to describe three interrelated, overlapping yet distinct "offensive yet non-pathological" (p. 556) personality constructs – Machiavellianism, subclinical narcissism, and subclinical psychopathy. Paulhus (2014) suggested these dark traits may be facets of a second-order global factor for the dark side of personality on account of their inter-correlations. Acknowledging the overlap among the traits, Paulhus and Williams suggest that all three should be used when seeking to identify which has the strongest relationship with a given outcome, a position supported by Furnham et al. (2014).

Narcissism, Machiavellianism and, to a lesser extent, psychopathy have been studied in relation to leadership (see Furtner et al., 2017 for a recent review), but there is less known about the role of these traits in leader emergence. Narcissism is clearly associated with emergence (Grijalva et al., 2015) and MTL (Badura et al., 2020), and scholars have speculated that Machiavellianism (e.g., Judge et al., 2009) and psychopathy (e.g., Mathieu et al., 2015) may contribute to leader emergence. A recent meta-analysis by Landay et al. (2019) found a positive correlation between psychopathy and some indicators of leader emergence (e.g., number of leadership positions held) but not with other indicators (e.g., peer ratings of informal leadership).

In a literature review relating the Dark Triad to outcomes like leader effectiveness, managerial derailment, and abusive supervision, Spain et al. (2016) concluded that complex relationships exist between Dark Triad and leadership outcomes and called for careful attention to variables that may moderate or mediate such relationships. We thus focus our attention on understanding the relationship between the Dark Triad and the three MTL factors, and how these relate to leadership intention to deepen our understanding of leader emergence.

Of the three Dark Triad traits, narcissism is most intuitively associated with leader emergence. Narcissists are more likely to emerge as leaders in leaderless group discussions regardless of their individual performance on team tasks, and they tend to be given high ratings of leadership potential (Brunell et al., 2008; Nevicka et al., 2011). The link with leadership emergence was confirmed in the meta-analysis of Grijalva et al. (2015). Narcissists are also likely to seek leadership opportunities (Braun, 2017), suggesting a positive link to leader intentions.

Empirical relationships have also been established between the Dark Triad and MTL factors with the meta-analysis of Badura et al. (2020), reporting narcissism correlating positively with affective-identity MTL ($r = 0.51$) and social-normative MTL ($r = 0.31$) and negatively with non-calculative MTL ($r = -0.17$). Based on the above discussion, we hypothesize:

H1a: Narcissism correlates positively with leadership intention.

H1b: Narcissism correlates positively with affective-identity MTL.

H1c: Narcissism correlates positively with social-normative MTL.

H1d: Narcissism correlates negatively with non-calculative MTL.

We know of no studies reporting empirical relationships between psychopathy and Machiavellianism with the three MTL factors, which is a concern in view of speculations linking these dark traits with MTL factors. Citing Judge et al. (2009) and Furtner et al. (2017) wrote: "Machiavellian leaders are strongly manipulative and dishonest. They exhibit an extrinsic (calculative) form of MTL which reduce intrinsic work motivation of followers" (p. 87). This makes sense because Machiavellianism is intuitively associated with being calculative. We thus hypothesize:

H2: Machiavellianism correlates negatively with non-calculative MTL.

Landay et al. (2019) found a small but positive relationship between psychopathy and leader emergence (as indicated by rank, rate of promotion, or number of leadership positions held) in a meta-analysis of the limited number of empirical studies available. In contrast, there was a non-significant (weakly negative) relationship between peer ratings of leadership potential and psychopathy. Furtner et al. (2017) also suggested a specific link between psychopathy and low-social-normative MTL writing that they "exhibit a non-altruistic/antisocial MTL" (p. 92). We thus hypothesize:

H3a: Psychopathy correlates positively with leadership intention.

H3b: Psychopathy correlates negatively with social-normative MTL.

We do not state hypotheses regarding the possible direct effect of Machiavellianism on leader intentions. Some authors have speculated that personalized power motives may encourage those high on this trait to seek leadership positions, but there is no supporting empirical evidence. Furtner et al. (2017) suggest that psychopathic and Machiavellian leaders "are not interested in leadership *per se*" (p. 92) even though they may value some of the outcomes open to them from positions of leadership responsibility.

The conceptualization of MTL by Chan and Drasgow (2001) acknowledges its role in shaping decisions around the assumption of leadership responsibilities and roles. We therefore expect MTL to influence leader intentions, thus acting as a mediator between more distal Dark Triad personality traits and leader intentions. We thus hypothesize broadly:

H4: The relationship between Dark Triad traits and leader intentions is mediated by MTL factors.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

Seven hundred sixty university students were recruited from a wide range of disciplines in a large comprehensive university in Singapore. All volunteered to participate in a follow-up survey conducted about 2 months after an annual university-wide survey of students' career motivations and intention. Both surveys were conducted with the Institutional Review Board approval and with informed consent. All participants were administered the follow-up survey online in a computer laboratory and compensated S$10. After screening the data, 10 cases were discarded as they failed our attention checks resulting in a final sample of 750 useable cases (45% males, 55% females; mean age = 23.2 years, SD = 1.51 years).

Measures
MTL Factors

MTL factors were measured using the nine-item scale described in detail in Chan et al. (2012) comprising three-item subscales measuring affective-identity (e.g., "I am the kind of person who likes influencing and managing people more than doing anything else"), non-calculative (e.g., "I do not expect to get any privileges if I agree to lead or be responsible for a project"), and social-normative (e.g., "I feel that I have a duty to lead others if I am asked") motivation. Confirmatory factor analyses showed that there was very little difference in the fit of a second-order factor model [with global and facet-level MTL; $\chi^2 = 304.628$, $df = 120$, $p < 0.001$, root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.045, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.94] from that of a first-order factor (or three factors only) model ($\chi^2 = 340.06$, $df = 128$, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.047, CFI = 0.93), which justified examining these constructs at both second and first-order factor levels. Reliability coefficients for global and facet-level MTL scales were above 0.7.

Leadership Intention

Leadership intention was also measured *via* the scale of Chan et al. (2012). Participants were asked for their agreement/disagreement on a five-point scale on three statements reflecting leadership intention (e.g., "I plan to become a general leader or manager in the near future"). Scale reliability was good at 0.74. Combining leadership intention items with MTL items in a single factor confirmatory factor analysis provided very poor model fit ($\chi^2 = 906.267$, $df = 54$, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.145, CFI = 0.66). A second-order factor model (with global and facet-level MTL) and separate leadership intentions factor had good fit ($\chi^2 = 137.81$, $df = 50$, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.048, CFI = 0.97), indicating appropriate discriminant validity between MTL and leadership intentions.

Big Five

Big Five factors were measured using 35 bipolar adjective markers from the scale of Goldberg (1992) that was administered in the follow-up survey. Participants were asked to indicate how each pair of adjectives described them on a 1–9-point scale (e.g., "silent-talkative" for extraversion, "disorganized-organized"

for conscientiousness, "unkind-kind" for agreeableness, "angry-calm" for emotional stability, and "uninquisitive-curious" for openness to experience). Reliability coefficients for all seven-item Big Five scales were good, between 0.84 and 0.87.

Dark Triad

The 12-item "Dirty Dozen" measure of Jonason and Webster (Jonason and Webster, 2010; three four-item subscales) was also administered in the follow-up survey. Participants were asked how much they agreed (1 = not at all, 5 = very much) with statements like: "I have used deceit or lied to get my way" for Machiavellianism; "I tend to want others to admire me" for narcissism; "I tend to lack remorse" for psychopathy. Considering the short subscale lengths, reliability coefficients were acceptable for Machiavellianism (four-items) $\alpha = 0.72$ and narcissism (four-items) $\alpha = 0.77$. The reliability of the psychopathy subscale (four-items) $\alpha = 0.60$ was somewhat lower. However, positive inter-item correlations (averaging 0.27) and low to moderate correlations with the other two subscales support its retention. Due to model saturation, we could not compare the fit of a second-order factor model with that of the first-order factor only model. However, since the three DT scales were correlated from 0.21 to 0.51 and $\alpha = 0.80$ for global DT items, we examined the DT at both second- and first-order factor levels.

Analysis

Our analysis began with a review of scale descriptives and intercorrelations enabling us to address H1–H3. Moving beyond bivariate correlations, we then used hierarchical regression to assess the ability of Dark Triad traits to account for variance in leader intentions, over and above that explained by the Big Five and MTL. Finally, H4 was tested using mediation analysis.

FINDINGS

General-Factor and Facet-Level Dark Triad Relationships With MTL and Leadership Intention

Table 1 summarizes scale statistics and correlations in this study. At the global level, MTL correlates with leadership intention at $r = 0.51$ but this pattern masks differences at the first-order factor level. Of the three MTL factors, only two (affective-identity and social-normative MTL) are correlated with leadership intention ($r = 0.59$ and $r = 0.45$ respectively). Similarly (as discussed below), the lack of correlation between global Dark Triad and MTL also masks important relationships at the factor level. These findings justify the treatment of MTL as three first order factors rather than as a global, second order factor.

Global Dark Triad is significantly correlated with leadership intention ($r = 0.19$). When we examine the three Dark Triad traits separately, narcissism has the strongest correlation with leadership intention ($r = 0.27$; supporting *H1a*). We had insufficient grounds on which to state a hypothesis regarding

Machiavellianism, but it also correlates significantly with leadership intention ($r = 0.17$). The correlation with psychopathy is not significant, thereby rejecting H3a. Global Dark Triad is unrelated to MTL; but at the trait level, we note that psychopathy is weakly negatively correlated with global MTL ($r = -0.12$).

When considering the MTL factors, a more differentiated pattern emerges. Affective-identity MTL is positively correlated with narcissism ($r = 0.24$, supporting *H1b*) and with Machiavellianism ($r = 0.27$). Social-normative MTL correlates with narcissism ($r = 0.17$, supporting *H1c*) but is uncorrelated with psychopathy (i.e., *H3b* is not supported). Non-calculative MTL correlates negatively with all three Dark Triad traits – narcissism ($r = -0.31$ supporting *H1d*), Machiavellianism ($r = -0.26$ supporting *H2*), and psychopathy ($r = -0.22$).

It is thus meaningful to study the relationships between the Dark Triad and MTL constructs at the lower-order factor-level because all three Dark Triad traits have different relationships with MTL factors. Interestingly, low non-calculative MTL (reflecting calculativeness or a lack of motivation to make personal sacrifices when leading) appears to be a common MTL factor that relates to all three Dark Triad traits.

Hierarchical Modeling to Examine Incremental Validity of Dark Triad Over Big Five

Table 2 summarizes various hierarchical regression models examining the incremental validity of Dark Triad over Big Five in predicting leadership intention. Model A includes age and gender as control variables. Controlling for gender and age, we observe from Models B1 and B2 that significant amounts of variance in leadership intention are accounted for by the Big Five ($R^2 = 0.24$) and the Dark Triad ($R^2 = 0.12$). Models B1, B2, and C reveal that the Dark Triad adds incremental validity to predicting leadership intention with extraversion ($\beta = 0.33$), narcissism ($\beta = 0.20$), and conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.17$) as significant predictors.

Model E adds the three MTL factors to the model. Narcissism continues to provide significant incremental validity ($\beta = 0.14$) in explaining variance in leadership intention beyond the Big Five and MTL factors. Comparing models C (Dark Triad and Big Five) and E (with the addition of MTL), the MTL factors contribute a significant increment in variance accounted for in leadership intentions ($\Delta R^2 = 0.41 - 0.28 = 0.13$). Taken together, models D1, D2, and E indicate that affective-identity and social-normative (but not non-calculative) MTL explain significant amounts of variance in leadership intention even when Big Five and Dark Triad traits are included as predictors. This supports treating MTL and leadership intention as separate concepts while also reinforcing the call of Badura et al. (2020) to operationalize MTL factors as three separate constructs.

Direct and Indirect Effects of Personality on Leadership Intentions Mediated by MTL

Mediation was analyzed with Mplus using maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors (MLR). Gender and age (controls) along with Big Five and Dark Triad traits were

TABLE 1 | Scale descriptive statistics, reliabilities (in diagonals), and inter-scale correlations.

Variable		N items	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Demographic variables																				
1	Gender	n.a.	n.a.	n.a	n.a.															
2	Age	n.a.	23.2	1.5	−0.49**	n.a														
Leadership variables																				
3	Leadership Intention	3	11.9	2.1	−0.21**	0.12**	(0.74)													
4	Overall MTL	9	31.7	4.7	−0.16**	0.11**	0.51**	(0.75)												
5	AI-MTL	3	9.8	2.5	−0.21**	0.11**	0.59**	0.78**	(0.78)											
6	NC-MTL	3	10.1	2.3	−0.01	0.05	0.06	0.62**	0.11**	(0.73)										
7	SN-MTL	3	11.9	1.8	−0.11**	0.07	0.45**	0.75**	0.52**	0.20**	(0.71)									
The Dark Triad																				
8	Overall Dark Triad	12	33.3	6.4	−0.22**	0.00	0.19**	−0.01	0.25**	−0.35**	0.08*	(0.80)								
9	Machiavellianism	4	10.3	3.0	−0.16**	0.04	0.17**	0.04	0.27**	−0.26**	0.07*	0.85**	(0.72)							
10	Narcissism	4	13.4	2.9	−0.17**	−0.02	0.27**	0.04	0.24**	−0.31**	0.17**	0.73**	0.40**	(0.77)						
11	Psychopathy	4	9.6	2.4	−0.16**	−0.01	−0.02	−0.12**	0.03	−0.22**	−0.08	0.71**	0.51**	0.21**	(0.60)					
The Big Five																				
12	Extraversion	7	41.2	9.5	−0.10**	0.06	0.43**	0.50**	0.60**	0.08*	0.37**	0.19**	0.22**	0.16**	0.03	(0.87)				
13	Agreeableness	7	48.3	7.0	0.05	0.01	0.14**	0.31**	0.17**	0.26**	0.25**	−0.22**	−0.20**	−0.03	−0.30**	0.38**	(0.84)			
14	Conscientiousness	7	48.9	7.9	0.04	0.02	0.23**	0.26**	0.22**	0.12**	0.24**	−0.19**	−0.15**	−0.07	−0.25**	0.23**	0.44**	(0.85)		
15	Emotional Stability	7	41.9	8.8	−0.05	0.04	0.15**	0.29**	0.20**	0.24**	0.16**	−0.20**	−0.13**	−0.23**	−0.10**	0.35**	0.40**	0.35**	(0.85)	
16	Openness to Experience	7	48.3	7.3	−0.12**	0.01	0.29**	0.38**	0.41**	0.09*	0.32**	0.12**	0.16**	0.11**	−0.02	0.49**	0.33**	0.34**	0.31**	(0.85)

N = 750; MTL = motivation to lead; AI-MTL = affective-identity MTL; NC-MTL = non-calculative MTL; SN-MTL = social-normative MTL; and n.a. = not applicable.

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01.

TABLE 2 | Hierarchical regression of Leadership Intention on the Dark Triad, Big Five factors, and respective motivation factors.

Dependent variable				Leadership intention			
Model	A	B1	B2	C	D1	D2	E
Gender	-0.19**	-0.16**	-0.17**	-0.13**	-0.09**	-0.08*	-0.08*
Age	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.02
Machiavellianism		0.13**		0.04		-0.01	-0.01
Subclinical Narcissism		0.22**		0.20**		0.13**	0.14**
Subclinical Psychopathy		-0.16**		-0.09*		-0.05	-0.04
Affective Motivation					0.47**	0.45**	0.38**
(Non-)Calculative Motivation					-0.04	0.00	0.00
Social-normative Motivation					0.20**	0.18**	0.16**
Extraversion			0.38**	0.33**			0.11
Agreeableness			-0.08*	-0.10*			-0.07
Conscientiousness			0.18**	0.17**			0.11**
Emotional Stability			-0.04	0.03			0.03
Openness to Experience			0.06	0.04			-0.02
R^2	0.05**	0.12**	0.24**	0.28**	0.38**	0.40**	0.41**
Adj R^2	0.05	0.11	0.23	0.27	0.38	0.40	0.40

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.

entered as independent variables. The three MTL factors were included as mediators, with leadership intentions as the dependent variable. The model also allowed for direct effects of controls and personality traits on leadership intentions.

Table 3 summarizes the results of the mediation analysis, showing values for (and significance of) direct and indirect paths. The indirect path coefficients shown in **Table 3** are the product of the two paths X → M (e.g., Extraversion → affective-identity MTL) and M → Y (e.g., affective-identity MTL → leadership intentions). **Figure 1** shows the separate X → M and M → Y path coefficients for all significant indirect paths ($p < 0.01$).

This analysis indicates the extent to which the effect of distal personality traits on leadership intentions is mediated by MTL factors. As non-calculative MTL was unrelated to intentions, the following discussion focuses on the mediation *via* affective-identity and social-normative MTL.

Considering Big Five traits first, affective-identity MTL mediated the effects of three traits on leadership intentions – extraversion (fully mediated, indirect path estimate = 0.192), conscientiousness (partially mediated, 0.043), and openness (fully mediated, 0.041). In addition to its indirect effect *via* affective-identity MTL, conscientiousness also had a direct effect on leadership intentions (0.114). Only extraversion affected intentions *via* social-normative MTL (0.040), and its effect was fully mediated.

With respect to the Dark Triad, all three traits showed indirect effects on leadership intentions *via* affective-identity MTL – Machiavellianism (fully mediated, indirect path estimate = 0.050), narcissism (partially mediated, 0.040), and psychopathy (fully mediated, −0.036). None of the paths *via* social-normative MTL reached significance at $p < 0.01$. However, narcissism also had a direct effect on leadership intentions (0.146).

These findings partially support H4. With Big Five traits included in the model, affective-identity MTL mediated the effect of Dark Triad traits on leader intentions. As narcissism also had a direct effect, the mediation for this trait is partial.

DISCUSSION

Understanding relationships between the Dark Triad and leader emergence requires careful disentangling of the influence of variables, such as motivations and intentions, and attention to the level of measurement of both Dark Triad and MTL constructs. The global Dark Triad correlates significantly with leadership intentions but not with global MTL. It is only at the individual Dark Triad trait level that links between these dark-side personality traits and leadership motivation become clear.

Higher levels of narcissism and Machiavellianism are associated with higher levels of affective-identity MTL, suggesting an enjoyment of leadership roles and a degree of self-identification as leaders. However, these traits also correlate negatively with non-calculative MTL. This implies that increased levels of narcissism and Machiavellianism underlie a more calculative motivation for taking on leadership roles – a desire to benefit

TABLE 3 | Standardized Indirect and Direct Effects of Personality Traits on Leadership Intentions.

| | Indirect effects of personality traits on leadership intention *via* MTL factors | | | | | | | | | Direct effect | | |
| | Affective-Identity | | | Non-Calculative | | | Social-Normative | | | Leadership Intention | | |
	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p
Extraversion	0.192	0.026	<0.000	0.000	0.001	0.901	0.040	0.012	0.001	0.108	0.046	0.019
Agreeableness	−0.040	0.016	0.013	0.001	0.006	0.899	0.009	0.008	0.239	−0.069	0.040	0.084
Conscientiousness	0.043	0.015	0.005	0.000	0.002	0.900	0.019	0.008	0.021	0.114	0.038	0.002
Emotional Stability	0.008	0.015	0.608	0.000	0.003	0.899	−0.001	0.006	0.848	0.028	0.038	0.472
Openness	0.041	0.015	0.005	0.000	0.001	0.900	0.020	0.010	0.039	−0.018	0.040	0.657
Machiavellianism	0.050	0.016	0.002	−0.001	0.004	0.900	0.002	0.007	0.762	−0.011	0.036	0.765
Narcissism	0.040	0.015	0.009	−0.001	0.008	0.899	0.021	0.009	0.015	0.146	0.040	<0.001
Psychopathy	−0.036	0.014	0.010	0.000	0.003	0.900	−0.014	0.008	0.073	−0.045	0.035	0.201
Age	0.007	0.013	0.590	0.000	0.000	0.920	0.004	0.007	0.510	0.020	0.034	0.560
Gender	−0.041	0.013	0.001	0.000	0.003	0.900	−0.009	0.007	0.194	−0.084	0.036	0.021

R² values for observed variables: Affective-Identity MTL = 0.436 (p < 0.001); Non-Calculative MTL = 0.190 (p < 0.001); Social-Normative MTL = 0.206 (p < 0.001); and Leadership Intention = 0.395 (p < 0.001). Age and gender were included as control variables; for correlations with gender, negative correlations indicate that men scored higher than women.
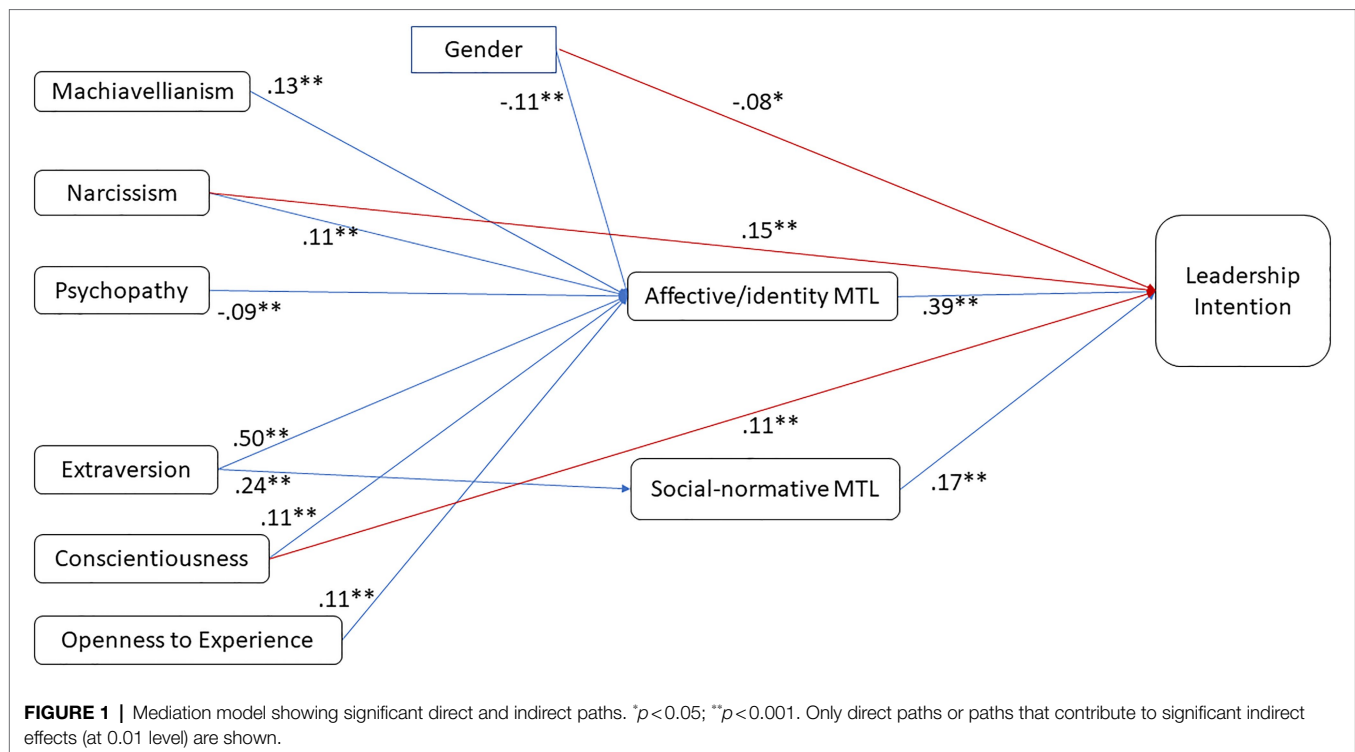
personally and a reduced willingness to make personal sacrifices in the fulfillment of leadership responsibilities. Thus, while Narcissism and Machiavellianism predict leadership intentions, those intentions appear to have a strong self-serving element. Higher levels of psychopathy are also associated with a reduced willingness to accept the costs of leadership but seem to have no bearing on leadership intentions.

These findings further validate the three-factor conceptualization of MTL by Chan and Drasgow (2001) and reinforce the call of Badura et al. (2020) for further research to understand the three MTL factors. By exploring the role of personality (both Dark Triad and Big Five traits) in shaping MTL and leadership intention, we also respond to the call of Judge et al. (2009) for more empirical research on the Dark Triad alongside the "brighter" Big Five personality factors with leader emergence.

Our findings regarding the relationship between narcissism and leadership intentions are particularly interesting. Grijalva et al. (2015) found that the positive effect of narcissism on leader emergence became non-significant when extraversion was included in their meta-analytic regression analysis. They concluded that while "narcissistic individuals were more likely to become leaders…this positive relationship was completely explained by the overlap between narcissism and extraversion" (p. 27). While this may make sense in the case of leader emergence based on peer observations of visible behavioral cues to assess leadership potential, our mediation analysis shows that links with leadership intentions are more complex. With all Big Five traits included, narcissism explained additional variance in leadership intentions both directly and indirectly (*via* affective-identity MTL). There is something about narcissism, which contributes to active intentions to pursue leadership opportunities over and above the effect of extraversion. This finding highlights the value of considering intentions as a proximal predictor of leader emergence in distal-proximal models of leadership.

Our finding that leadership intentions are related to affective-identity and social-normative MTL, but not to non-calculative MTL, provides a more nuanced understanding of the role of MTL in becoming a leader. Non-calculative motivation is based on a recognition of the potential costs of leading, and individuals high on this motivation can be viewed as selfless (or even reluctant) leaders. From this perspective, the lack of correlation between non-calculative MTL and leadership intentions is unsurprising. In contrast, Badura et al. (2020) found that non-calculative MTL was positively related to leadership emergence. This is consistent with the point of DeRue and Ashford (2010) that individuals may be endorsed as leaders in a social context even if they do not perceive themselves as possessing relevant leader attributes. Emergence and intentions are not the same, and it is important to maintain the distinction.

Developing a deeper understanding of non-calculative MTL is likely to be important in contexts, where organizations or society rely on people being willing to take on leadership roles despite costs incurred. Such costs could be financial or come in the form of reduced work-life balance, loss of

FIGURE 1 | Mediation model showing significant direct and indirect paths. *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.001$. Only direct paths or paths that contribute to significant indirect effects (at 0.01 level) are shown.

privacy, reputational risk, and the like. Our finding (that people willing to accept these costs are not necessarily going to put their hand up for leadership roles) highlights the need for active recruitment and development of non-calculative leaders.

Our findings regarding non-calculative MTL also suggest value in future research exploring the emergence of servant (Van Dierendonck, 2011) or even self-sacrificial leadership (De Cremer et al., 2009). Maurer et al. (2017) have shown how an error management culture in an organization can contribute to employees leading out of a sense of duty and responsibility (social-normative MTL). What are the ways in which organizations (and organization cultures) vary in the extent to which they encourage or support the transition of employees high on non-calculative MTL into leadership roles?

Our mediation results are consistent with the finding of Badura et al. (2020) that only two MTL factors (affective-identity and social-normative) act as mediators between distal traits and leadership outcomes. According to Badura et al. leadership motives originating from pure enjoyment (affective-identity MTL) and being prompted to lead out of obligation (social-normative MTL) partially explained links between Big Five traits and leader emergence; however, there was no evidence that being motivated to lead out of selflessness (non-calculative MTL) promoted leader emergence. Our study extends this finding to Dark Triad traits.

While narcissism has received considerable research attention, there is a paucity of research into the role of Machiavellianism and psychopathy in leadership emergence or intentions. We confirmed the positive relationship of narcissism to leadership intentions and provide the initial evidence that Machiavellianism

also contributes positively to intentions to lead. We found no relationship between leader intentions and psychopathy, which contrasts with the finding of Landay et al. (2019) regarding leader emergence. This may reflect the difference between intentions and the measures of emergence used in the studies analyzed by Landay et al., or just be further evidence that the relationship between psychopathy and becoming a leader is relatively weak.

Research and Practical Implications

Future research could examine the processes by which personality traits influence MTL factors. For example, Guillén et al. (2015) demonstrate that self-comparisons by a person in respect to leadership models influence that individual's leader self-efficacy and MTL. To what extent do personality traits (e.g., narcissism vs. conscientiousness) influence the choice of leader exemplars, and how do these choices subsequently influence MTL factors and leader emergence?

Similarly, Schyns et al. (2020) have found that congruence between implicit self and leadership theories influence affective MTL. Interestingly, congruence with respect to the negative component of self and leadership theories included in the study (manipulation) had no effect on MTL; they speculated that this may have resulted from roughly equal numbers of participants viewing this as positive vs. negative for leadership. Dark Triad trait levels are likely to influence the extent to which a potential leader views such behaviors as consistent with effective leadership and to thus influence their intentions regarding assuming leadership roles in different contexts.

Our study highlights the importance of distinguishing between the contribution of MTL and leadership intentions to leader emergence. Organizations require talented people who are willing to take on leadership roles and are capable of performing them effectively. While MTL represents an interest in becoming a leader, it requires intention for this desire to be translated into action. All Dark Triad traits had significant negative correlations with non-calculative MTL, but this factor of MTL had no correlation with intentions. Thus, the negative relationship with Dark Triad traits did not act to reduce leadership intentions. Those people motivated to accept the costs of leadership, to take on responsibility without seeking personal benefit, are no more likely to actively seek leadership roles than those low on non-calculative MTL. We therefore encourage organizations to take active steps to encourage and support non-calculative leaders to consider leadership roles, rather than rely on them to be proactive.

Our findings raise important practical considerations regarding the development and promotion of leaders. Given that increased levels of narcissism and Machiavellianism contribute to higher MTL and leadership intentions, organizations who wish to avoid promoting such people into leadership roles will need to have effective screening processes. These could include psychometric assessments of Dark Triad traits, together with sufficient observer data (e.g., from upward or peer assessments) to identify the dysfunctional narcissistic or Machiavellian behaviors. Grijalva et al. (2015) note that narcissism increases the likelihood that a person will be seen as leader-like, especially among people who have spent limited time together. As they point out, "the ugly side of narcissism takes time to emerge" (p. 28), suggesting that firms need to gather more comprehensive information on candidates than is provided by interviews or a typical assessment center.

Limitations

Some limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. This study is based on cross-sectional self-report data from a large sample of university students with an abbreviated nine-item MTL scale. Future research should use longitudinal designs to test our mediation model. Use of short scales like the Dirty Dozen to measure the Dark Triad is recognized to thread a "fine line" between construct accuracy vs. efficiency (Jonason and Luévano, 2013), but

likely contributed to the relatively low reliability of our psychopathy measure. The 27-item MTL measure of Chan and Drasgow (2001) and longer measures of the Dark Triad (e.g., Hogan and Hogan, 1997) should also be used in future studies where possible. While we have tried to mitigate the possible effect of common method variance (e.g., by measuring personality 2 months after measuring MTL and intentions), future research should obtain objective indicators beyond self-reports where available. The generalizability of our findings should be further verified with samples from other cultural and employment settings.

Finally, this paper focuses on understanding the role of the Dark Triad and MTL in the leader emergence process (Acton et al., 2019). We do not address leader effectiveness, but hope that our findings are timely when considered alongside the recent empirical evidence of Auvinen et al. (2020) showing how leader motivation profiles (conceptualized *via* the three MTL factors) relate to important outcomes at work (e.g., quality of leader-member exchange and well-being at work) and in recent attempts to understand leadership development in terms of the linkages between emergence and effectiveness (cf. Luria et al., 2019).

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board, Nanyang Technological University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

KC, M-HH, MU, and OC contributed to the design of the study. JK and KC wrote the manuscript. M-HH carried out data analysis. All authors contributed to manuscript revision, read, and approved the submitted version.

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Worrying About Leadership: Is It a Liability or an Advantage for Leadership of Women and Men?

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Worries about leadership (WAL) is a new construct tapping worries an individual may feel about possible negative consequences of accepting a leadership role. Three studies investigate how WAL is associated with men's and women's willingness for leadership and their perceived leadership potential rated by others. The first is a laboratory study on 328 participants, which shows that WAL is negatively associated with women's willingness for leadership, while it is not related to that of men. The second study, which is a field study with multilevel-nested data from 429 employees and 101 supervisors, reveals that male subordinates are more likely to receive a favorable judgment of leadership potential by their supervisors when their WAL increases, while female subordinates' WAL is irrelevant to this judgment. The final study, which is an experimental study on 122 supervisors, shows that supervisors view hypothetical male leadership candidates with high WAL as having higher warmth and lower competence (than those with low WAL), which both mediate the effect of WAL on judgments of their leadership potential made by the supervisors. Even though supervisors also view female candidates with high WAL as warmer, this does not evoke higher perceptions of leadership potential. Implications for increasing gender parity in leadership are discussed.

Keywords: gender, leadership, stereotype threat, warmth and competence, worries about leadership

INTRODUCTION

Although women-led organizations are as successful as those led by men (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014; Lanaj and Hollenbeck, 2015; Faccio et al., 2016), the gender gap or glass ceiling (Hymowitz and Schellhardt, 1986) prevails in managerial positions (e.g., Lawless and Fox, 2012; Center for American Women and Politics, 2020). Women are still severely underrepresented in high managerial positions, despite their potential for effective leadership. Indeed, only 31 of the Fortune 500 companies are currently led by women CEOs (Catalyst, 2022). Employees, who may be the most suitable for leadership do not always emerge or are selected for this role (Lanaj and Hollenbeck, 2015). Both leadership over emergence (i.e., individuals with little potential to emerge or be selected as leaders) and under emergence (i.e., individuals with high potential to not emerge or not being selected as leaders) may account for women's underrepresentation in leadership roles; yet extant leadership literature provides insufficient attention to these mechanisms (Hanna et al., 2021). The present research examines the role that worries related to assuming a leadership role may take in the process of leadership under emergence, with particular focus on that of women.

Kossek et al. (2017) reviewed three perspectives on women's under emergence as leaders and proposed an integrative multilevel model of women's career equality to lay out "opt-out" and "pushed-out" factors. The three perspectives included in their model are career preferences (i.e., the interaction of women's interests, values, and goals with work environments and jobs), gender biases and stereotypes (i.e., explicit and implicit gender biases that affect both women's self-assessments as potential leaders and their perceptions by others), and work-family dynamics (i.e., incompatibility of work and family roles for women). Authors argue that, while studying these perspectives, the literature remains fragmented and fails to integrate the opt-out and pushed-out approaches, which are ". . .not in conflict but coexist" (Kossek et al., 2017, p. 244).

Traditional leadership research fails to address the opt-out mechanisms and overlooked the role of self-selection mechanisms for leadership (Epitropaki, 2018). Instead, the field has narrowly focused on examining factors that are associated with being perceived as leader-like (Hogan et al., 1994) or examined evaluations about leadership candidates' potential to emerge as a leader (e.g., Luria and Berson, 2013; Joseph et al., 2015). The individual's decision to pursue or stay away from leadership roles received little attention (for an exception, see, Chan and Drasgow, 2001). The newly introduced concept of Worries About Leadership (WAL; Aycan and Shelia, 2019) addresses this shortcoming and views leader emergence as an agentic process. WAL is defined as "the worries people have about the possible negative consequences of assuming a leadership role" (Aycan and Shelia, 2019, p. 23). It represents a construct that encounters both leaderships opt-out and pushed-out processes, and maps onto the gender bias and stereotypes perspective proposed by Kossek et al. (2017).

Stereotypes and biases in the domain of leadership favor men and discriminate against women (Schein and Mueller, 1992; Koenig et al., 2011; Powell and Butterfield, 2015). The stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002) postulates that stereotypical perceptions of individuals and groups are formed along two universal dimensions, namely warmth (i.e., likability, trustworthiness) and competence (i.e., efficiency, respect) (Fiske et al., 2007). Both leaders and men have traditionally been stereotyped as being high on competence and low on warmth (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2011; Mayseless and Popper, 2019), while women are stereotyped in the opposite way as low on competence and high on warmth (Dardenne et al., 2007). Hence, the stereotypical view of men aligns with that of leaders, while that of women diverges from it (see also Eagly and Karau, 2002).

We assert that leadership stereotypes discriminating against women create a context where the effect of WAL may become more influential on women's willingness for leadership and their perceived leadership potential whereas stereotypes favoring men may weaken the same for men. We first investigated whether women's WAL decreases the willingness to accept a leadership role (i.e., opt-out of leadership) more strongly than that of men (Study 1). We further explored whether women's WAL is more influential than men's WAL to lower their perceived leadership potential by others (i.e., being pushed-out) (Study 2). Finally, we examined how men's and women's WAL reflects differently

on their perceived leadership potential *via* gender-stereotypical attributes (i.e., warmth and competence) (Study 3). We tested our hypotheses in three studies using different methodologies, including a laboratory study with a student sample, a field study with a matched sample of supervisors and employees in an organization, and an experimental study with supervisors of the same organization. In all studies, a male-female comparison is drawn to explore the role of gender more comprehensively *vis-à-vis* WAL.

With these studies, we aim to make three contributions: First, we aim to contribute to the burgeoning discussion on self-selection biases (i.e., opt-out processes) in the leader emergence literature (cf., Epitropaki, 2018). There is a growing recognition of the agentic perspectives in leadership research to suggest that not everyone wants to assume a leadership role when the opportunity arises (cf. Chan and Drasgow, 2001; DeRue and Ashford, 2010). Previous research that acknowledged the role of agentic mechanisms mainly studied women's reluctance for leadership roles as a matter of lacking leadership motivation (Maurya and Agarwal, 2013), having lower career aspirations (e.g., Maurya and Agarwal, 2013; Elprana et al., 2015), and holding weaker desires for attaining powerful leadership positions than men (Gino et al., 2015). Women's reluctance for leadership may be rooted not only in lack of *wanting* to become a leader but also in perceiving these positions more threatening (Hoyt and Murphy, 2016; Alan et al., 2020). The newly introduced construct of worries about leadership (WAL; Aycan and Shelia, 2019) tackles the perceived threat of holding a leadership position and the associated emotion (i.e., worry) as an obstacle for leadership.

Second, the current study investigates the opt-out and pushed-out processes simultaneously through the lens of WAL. Aycan and Shelia (2019) demonstrated that WAL reduced the likelihood of individuals' self-nomination for leadership (opt-out) as well as others' nomination of them for leadership (pushed-out). However, the authors have not explored WAL in relation to gender differences in opt-out and pushed-out processes. In line with the call of Kossek et al. (2017) to study leadership opt-out and push-out processes in an integrated fashion, this paper utilizes WAL and examines how it associates with both willingness for leadership and perceived leadership potential of women and men.

Third, although there have been attempts to investigate the role of emotions in leadership (e.g., emotional contagion between leaders and followers, emotional regulation of leaders; Connelly and Gooty, 2015), we explicitly explored the role of emotions (i.e., worries) to explain the gender divide in the candidacy for leadership. **Figure 1** depicts the overview of the three studies reported in this manuscript and how they are integrated.

WORRIES ABOUT LEADERSHIP

The concept of WAL is grounded in three theoretical perspectives: (1) the anticipation of threatening outcomes creates anxiety (appraisal theory of motivation, Lazarus, 1991), (2) especially when these outcomes pose a threat to the

FIGURE 1 | Research overview.
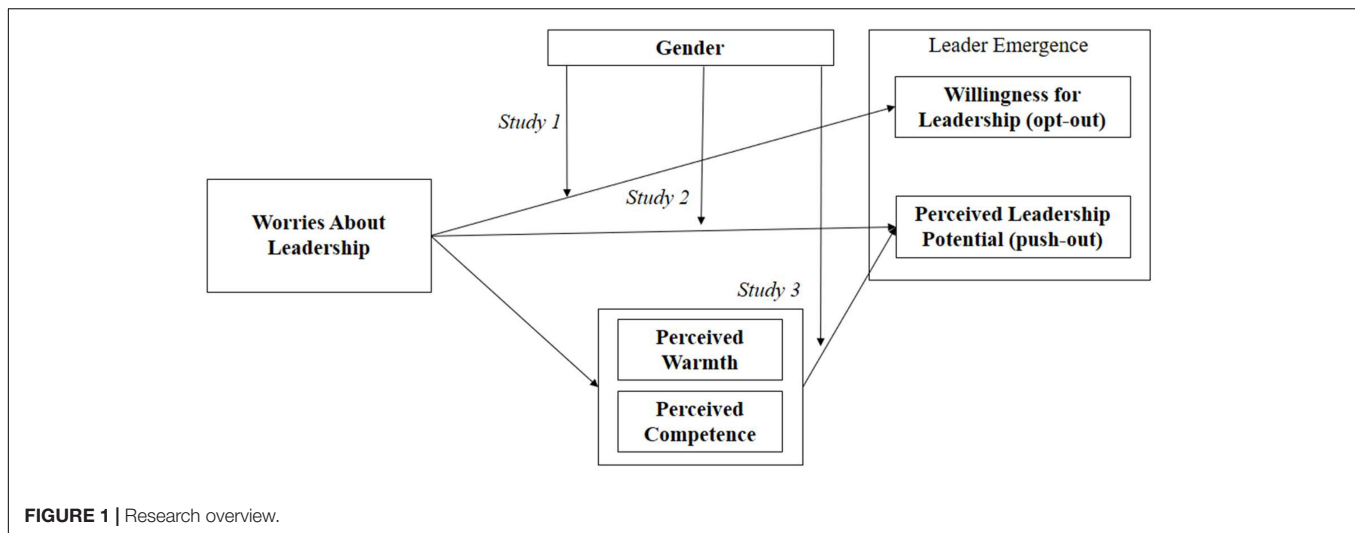
satisfaction of a person's basic needs (self-determination theory, Deci and Ryan, 1985), (3) resulting in avoidance or withdrawal behavior (self-handicapping theory of regulation, Jones and Berglas, 1978). Anticipated negative consequences of accepting a leadership role may involve failure (i.e., being unsuccessful as a leader), harm (i.e., causing damage to others and oneself), and work-life imbalance (i.e., being unable to meet personal and familial demands) (Aycan and Shelia, 2019). Anticipating failure, harm, and work-life imbalance threatens fulfillment of the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy, respectively, elevates worries, and results in self-handicapping behavior.

Aycan and Shelia (2019) found empirical support for the WAL construct and its measure based on different study settings and populations. With employee samples in Europe and the United States, WAL was found to tap into a different construct domain than motivation to lead (Chan and Drasgow, 2001) and neuroticism. In the laboratory study of Aycan and Shelia, a lower level of WAL was found to predict self-nomination for the leadership position above and beyond motivation to lead. In their naturalistic field experiment with a longitudinal design, WAL predicted who was elected as a leader by others. Furthermore, in their psychophysiological laboratory study, the correlations between WAL scores and electrodermal and cardiovascular activities were in the expected directions. Thus, WAL may prevent individuals from opting in for leadership and reflect on others by evoking negative impressions regarding leadership potential. In this paper, we extend the research by Aycan and Shelia (2019) and assert that the negative effect of WAL on opt-out and pushed-out processes is moderated by gender.

As stated earlier, implicit and explicit gender stereotypes and biases may create an obstacle for women's leadership. The reason for this is that leadership stereotypes generally align with the traditional stereotype of men as being high on competence and low on warmth (Cuddy et al., 2011; Mayseless and Popper, 2019) and contrast with the traditional stereotype of women who are typically viewed as being low in competence and high in warmth (Dardenne et al., 2007). On the other hand, the WAL concept

seems stereotypically more aligned with women and less with men. The reason is high WAL implies being worried about failing in the leadership role, which is likely to come across as being incompetent. High WAL also implies being worried about harming others and losing work-life balance, which is likely to come across as being warm (e.g., trustworthy, sincere, humane) (Diekman and Eagly, 2008; Cuddy et al., 2011). The divergence in stereotype content between women and leaders likely results in worries related to performing a leadership task being more salient for women compared to men. This aligns with the notion of *stereotype threat* that women experience when facing leadership (Steele, 1997; Spencer et al., 1999). Stereotype threat describes a state of increased physiological stress and self-monitoring that arises when individuals are asked to perform in domains where they expect to be judged or treated according to negative stereotypes (Hoyt and Murphy, 2016). Experience of stereotype threat triggers concerns about performing well (Spencer et al., 1999), leads to stress responses including anxiety (O'Brien and Crandall, 2003), negatively affects performance (Davies et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2015), and promotes withdrawal from tasks and situations associated with the negative stereotype (Elliot and Church, 2003; Schmader et al., 2008). When women are asked to perform a leadership task, the stereotype threat may be activated (Schein et al., 1996), and worries related to leadership may become a stronger barrier for women's compared to men's leadership. Eventually, women's leadership is likely to be guided more strongly by WAL than that of men.

STUDY 1: DOES WORRIES ABOUT LEADERSHIP OPERATE DIFFERENTLY IN WOMEN'S AND MEN'S WILLINGNESS FOR LEADERSHIP?

Biases and negative stereotypes against women as leaders not only affect how others perceive women's leadership potential but also "lead to self-directed bias in women's self-evaluation

of their fit with male gender-typed jobs (Heilman, 2012) [. . . and. . .] shape the development of gender-normative traits (Brown and Diekman, 2010)" (Kossek et al., 2017; p. 234). Women internalize negative stereotypes and regulate their self-perceptions and behaviors accordingly: They feel and perceive themselves as unsuitable for leadership, which makes them eventually withdraw from tasks and activities associated with leadership (see Wood and Eagly, 2002; Kossek et al., 2017). There is evidence showing that biases and negative expectations may drain women's aspirations for managerial positions (Coffman and Neuenfeldt, 2014) and make them adopt a strategy of "intentional invisibility" (Ballakrishnen et al., 2018, p. 24) so that they become more likely to opt themselves out of leadership. In a situation where the opportunity for leadership arises, women are likely to experience stereotype threat, which promotes a mental state where decisions and behaviors are more strongly guided by fears and worries (Spencer et al., 1999; Elliot and Church, 2003; O'Brien and Crandall, 2003; Schmader et al., 2008). Hence, women's WAL will likely become more influential on their willingness for leadership than that of men who will find themselves in a situation that is compatible with their gender stereotype, and thus not threatening.

Hypothesis 1

Gender will moderate the negative effect of WAL on the willingness for leadership in such a way that this relationship is stronger for women than it is for men.

Study 1 Method
Participants and Procedure

We recruited voluntary student participants through the subject pool of a private university located in Turkey[1]. The participants who completed the two-part group decision-making experiment received course credit. The study featured a betting game adapted from an experiment of behavioral economics (Ertac and Gurdal, 2012), in which teams earned $0 to $25 and then divided the winnings evenly among the five team members. In the first part of the study, the participants reported their level of WAL *via* an online survey. After 1 to 3 weeks, the participants came to the laboratory to complete a group decision-making task involving financial risk for the participants. When the participants arrived at the laboratory, they were randomly assigned to groups of five. We ensured that the five group members were strangers. The experimenter explained the procedures and then sent each group to another room where they were seated in circles and asked to *not* interact. Each participant was required to make a private money allocation decision on behalf of his or her group. A group budget of $10 had to be divided between a safe and risky option. The amount put into the safe option would be maintained, but the money earned from the risky option would be multiplied by the factor 2.5 or entirely lost, depending on the outcome of

the coin tossing. Hence, each group could earn between $0 and $25. After the participants made their allocation decisions, they were asked to indicate their willingness to be their group's final decision makers, which served as the dependent variable of this study. The participants were informed that the allocation decision of only *one* group member would be implemented. The name of the decision-maker was randomly drawn among all the members who answered affirmatively to becoming the group's leader, or among all the five group members if all answered negatively. We had assessed WAL before the decision-making sessions to avoid priming effects. We merged data from both parts of the study according to individual codes that each participant generated at the beginning of both sessions.

The final sample included 328 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology course (59% women, M_{age} = 19.8 years), forming in total 71 groups[2]. Data were collected across four semesters.

Measures
Participant Gender

The participants indicated their gender (i.e., biologically determined sex) on a paper and pencil questionnaire, which we used to identify participant gender (0 = man; 1 = woman).

Worries About Leadership

We used the 16-item measure developed by Aycan and Shelia (2019). We asked the participants to imagine that they were offered a leadership role in one of the major student clubs and to indicate the extent of their worries about "being exposed to more criticism," or "losing self-esteem in case of failure" (i.e., worries about failure); "being unable to balance work and family," or "having less time for myself (e.g., hobbies)" (i.e., worries about work-life imbalance); and "hurting others' feelings in the work context by the decisions I make," or "treating employees unfairly" (i.e., worries about harm) on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 = *to a very little extent* to 5 = *to a very large extent*. Cronbach's α internal consistency was 0.85.

Willingness for Leadership

To measure this construct, we adopted the measure of Ertac and Gurdal (2012) and asked the respondents to report their willingness to be the decision-makers for their groups, on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*[3].

Study 1 Results

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and correlations of the study variables for the total sample, men and women. To test whether the prediction effect of WAL differs by gender, a moderation analysis using Model 1 of the Hayes (2012) PROCESS macro with

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[1]The participants in Study 1 and Study 2 and 3 do not necessarily represent the values of the typical Turkish culture. The private university whose students participated in Study 1 is a world-ranked research university with an American education system. The company whose supervisors and employees participated in Studies 2 and 3 is a multinational corporation with a strong Western organizational culture.

[2]All 71 groups consisted of five members. However, when participants did not show up to their laboratory session, they were replaced by confederates who acted as participants.

[3]We are aware that leadership, in practice, describes a multi-faceted concept that extends beyond being willing to be a group's decision-maker for a single risk-involving task. However, readiness for making risky decisions represents a core component of executive decision-making and leadership (see also Ertac and Gurdal, 2012).

TABLE 1 | Study 1 descriptive statistics and correlations.

Total Sample (*N* = 328)	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1 Participant's Gender	0.61	0.49	1	−0.23***	0.07
2 Willingness for Leadership	3.58	0.80		1	-0.15**
3 WAL	3.12	0.61			1
Women (*N* = 198)	Mean	SD	1	2	3
2 Willingness for Leadership	3.41	0.80	−	1	−0.20**
3 WAL	3.16	0.64	−		1
Men (*N* = 129)	Mean	SD	1	2	3
2 Willingness for Leadership	3.84	0.74	−	1	0.05
3 WAL	3.06	0.55	−		1

**p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001, gender coded as 0 = men, 1 = women.

TABLE 2 | Study 1 regression results.

|	Unstandardized beta *(SE)*	*t*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.84 *(0.87)*	55.99	0.000	3.71	3.98
Participant's Gender	−0.42 *(0.88)*	−4.82	0.000	−0.60	−0.25
WAL	0.07 *(0.13)*	0.53	0.594	−0.18	0.32
Participant's Gender × WAL	−0.31 *(0.15)*	−2.06	0.040	−0.61	−0.01

Gender coded as 0 = men, 1 = women.

a bootstrapping procedure of 5,000 resamples was performed. The centered score of WAL was entered as a predictor, and the gender was entered as a moderator to predict the willingness for leadership. Our analysis revealed that the regression model was significant [$R^2 = 0.09$, F_{change} (3, 320) = 10.83, $p < 0.001$]. In this model, willingness for leadership was significantly predicted by gender (β = −0.42, t(323) = −4.82, $p < 0.001$), and by the interaction between gender and WAL (β = −0.31, t(323) = −2.06, $p < 0.05$) (see **Table 2**). Exploration of WAL's prediction effect by gender revealed that WAL did not predict men's

willingness for leadership [β = 0.07, t(127) = 0.53, $p = 0.60$), but it negatively predicted women's willingness for leadership (β = −0.25, t(195) = −2.88, $p < 0.01$; **Figure 2**], providing support to Hypothesis 1.

Study 1 Discussion

The first study was a laboratory study examining whether WAL had a stronger negative effect on women than men to predict willingness for leadership. Our analyses revealed that the effect of WAL operated differently on women's and men's willingness for leadership. WAL had a negative effect for women but not for men in reducing the willingness for leadership, as predicted by Hypothesis 1. As such, women who reported higher WAL were more likely to opt themselves out of leadership than women with low WAL, while men's WAL was found unrelated to their willingness for leadership. One possible explanation for the absence of WAL's effect on men's willingness for leadership could be that the task of making a risky decision on behalf of a group may have been too weak to evoke men's worries about leading the group. Such decisions (i.e., those involving risk and money) may be perceived as naturally falling in the domain of responsibility for males (Byrnes et al., 1999). Therefore, the WAL level may be irrelevant when volunteering for a task seen almost like a natural duty for males. In contrast, the task was sufficient to evoke women's worry and to impair their willingness for leadership. Making a risky decision involving money on behalf of the group is likely to induce stereotype threat for women (Hoyt and Murphy, 2016) so that WAL becomes a self-set barrier. It should be noted that gender moderated WAL's effect despite equal levels of self-reported WAL among men and women. While we did not hypothesize for any gender differences in regard to the level of WAL, we acknowledge that the absence of such gender difference may also be related to our study design, and caused by the fact that WAL was assessed independent from and prior to the leadership

FIGURE 2 | Worries about leadership's effect to predict women's and men's willingness for leadership in Study 1.
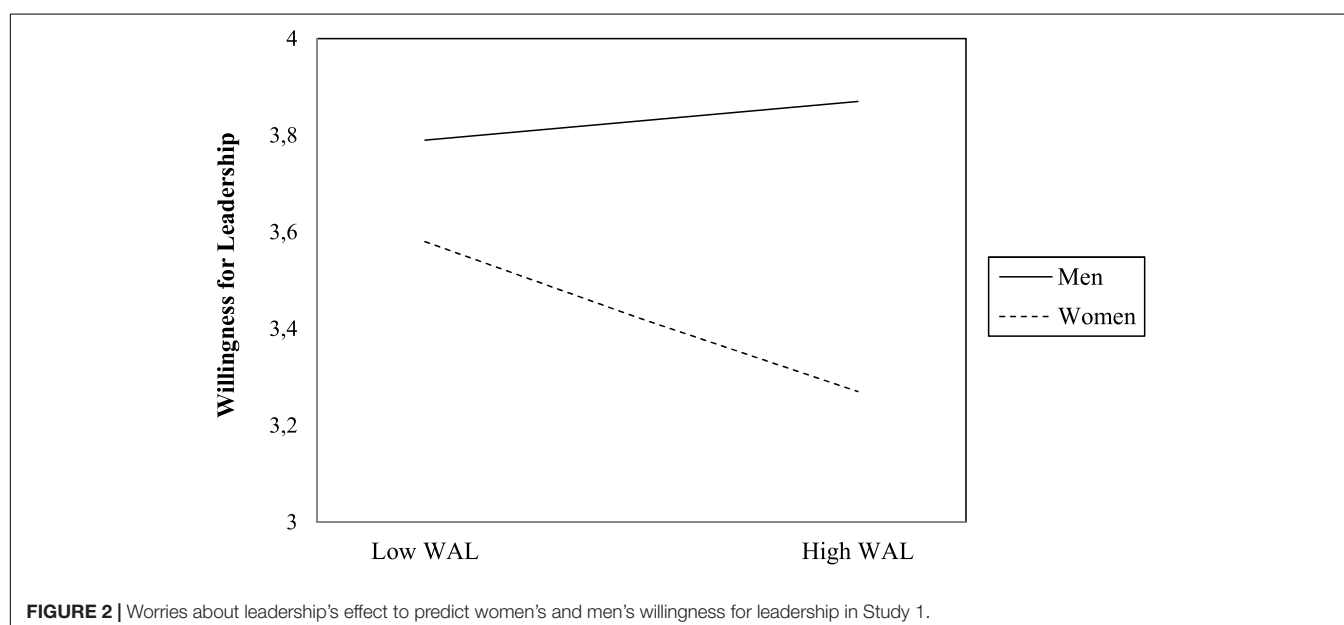
task. It is thus likely that the level of self-reported WAL of women would have been higher than that of men, if WAL was assessed right at the leadership situation.

Overall, results obtained from the first study support the notion that bias and stereotypes in the leadership domain affect women's self-evaluation as leaders *via* the experience of WAL (Kossek et al., 2017). While men with high WAL did not abstain from assuming leadership, women with high WAL preferred to opt themselves out of leadership. Due to the laboratory nature of the study, our sample consisted of university students, and leadership had to be limited to one of the key tasks of leadership, namely, making a risky decision that impacts the group members (Yukl, 2012; Ertac et al., 2020). While this may be seen as limiting the external validity of the present research, the fact that our findings align with previous laboratory studies finding that women reported less willingness for leadership than men (e.g., Ertac and Gurdal, 2012; Ho et al., 2012; Lanaj and Hollenbeck, 2015; Born et al., 2020; Ertac et al., 2020) strengthens the validity of the present results. Moreover, evidence from meta-analytical reviews suggests that differences between student and non-student samples in regard to organizational research findings seem rather minimal (Wheeler et al., 2014, p. 10). In addition, even though it may seem that leadership is a topic of little concern to university students, research shows that leadership roles beyond the occupational domain (e.g., in family, schools or extracurricular activities) seem to predict leadership in the professional domain (Arvey et al., 2007), suggesting that WAL may well be relevant for students too. By using the same research paradigm, Alan et al. (2020) found that, while there were no gender differences in willingness for leadership among children, with entering adolescence the proportion of girls who volunteer for leadership dropped by 39%, suggesting that processes of opting out from leadership may start from adolescence. Still, further research that moves beyond a laboratory setting and utilizes samples other than university students, as we conducted in our second study, seems advisable to further test the robustness of the present results.

STUDY 2: DOES WORRIES ABOUT LEADERSHIP MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HOW OTHERS PERCEIVE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL?

In line with Kossek et al. (2017) conceptualization of leadership to encounter both opt-out and pushed-out processes, Study 2 shifts the focus away from the role of WAL in opting out of the leadership to its role in being pushed out of the leadership domain, operationalized as supervisors' judgment of leadership potential (cf., Luria and Berson, 2013).

Aycan and Shelia (2019) argued that WAL may inform others about leadership potential *via* two channels. First, high WAL may be sensed by others through embodied worries (Melina et al., 2013). For instance, those with salient worries may experience higher physiological arousal while discussing the possibility of becoming a leader, shown as nervousness in speaking, increased

sweating, increased respiratory activity, shaky hands, and a flushing face (Boiten et al., 1994; Cacioppo et al., 2000). Second, high WAL may provoke self-handicapping behavior, making people less likely to appear on the radar searching candidates for leadership. Those with higher worries would withdraw from leadership-related activities (e.g., trainings, self-promoting activities), signaling a lack of interest and low potential for leadership to others.

Such WAL-reflective physiological reactions and withdrawal behaviors are likely to be interpreted differently for men and women. Evidence shows that, even if men and women show the same behavior at work, they are still perceived and treated differently (e.g., Rudman and Glick, 1999; Turban et al., 2017); namely in a way that is affected by gender stereotypes. Thus, we argue that women with high WAL would experience a double bind (due to their gender and WAL levels) and be pushed out of leadership (i.e., receive the least favorable judgment of leadership potential) more strongly than men with high WAL. When women's WAL is sensed by others, the stereotypical perception that women lack leadership potential may be further strengthened. However, when men's WAL is sensed by others, stereotypes favoring men for leadership (Powell and Butterfield, 2015) may buffer against the negative effect of WAL on perceived leadership potential. Consequently, we argue that women's WAL will play a more detrimental role for their perceived leadership potential than men's WAL.

Hypothesis 2

Gender will moderate the negative effect of WAL on perceived leadership potential in such a way that this relationship is stronger for women than it is for men.

Study 2 Method

To test our hypothesis, we collected multilevel nested data from 429 employees and their 101 department supervisors working for 23 different shops of a retail company located in Turkey, producing textile goods[1]. The response rate for employees was 35%; the response rate for supervisors was 62%. Employees averaged 25.4 years old and 3 years in the organization; 62.4% were women. Department supervisors averaged 29 years old and 6.36 years in the organization; 64.7% were men. The multisource nature of our data reduced risks of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The employees provided self-reported data on WAL and gender; the supervisors reported ratings of leadership potential for each employee who responded to the WAL survey. All data were collected *via* paper-and-pen surveys.

Measures
Worries About Leadership
We used the same 16-item WAL scale (Aycan and Shelia, 2019) used in Study 1. Cronbach's alpha for this sample was 0.90.

Gender
Employees reported their gender (i.e., biologically determined sex) in the employee survey (0 = woman; 1 = man). To control for the effect of departmental supervisors' gender, the supervisors were also asked to indicate their gender in the supervisor survey.

Perceived Leadership Potential

The supervisors had an average of four subordinates. Adopting the approach of General Leadership Index (Lord et al., 1984), we asked the supervisors to evaluate each subordinate's leadership potential after rating them on several performance indicators using a single item: "I believe this employee has what it takes to be promoted" 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. In the organizational context of this study, promotion implied a mid-level managerial position in which leadership responsibilities involved managing teams and giving strategic and operational decisions in a semi-autonomous way.

Study 2 Results

The department supervisors rated their employees nested within their departments. To analyze this data set, we used HLM 7.02 to test our nested data and hypothesis (Raudenbush et al., 2011). To evaluate the multilevel data, we first ran a null model with perceived leadership potential as the only criterion variable, without predictors (Hofmann et al., 2000). According to this model, the ICC (1) for the criterion variable was 0.16, suggesting that 16% of the variance of this variable existed between the department supervisors who rated their employees. Therefore, it was appropriate to take a multilevel approach to take the between-level variance into account. We performed a hierarchical multilevel linear regression model with employee gender, WAL, and their interaction to predict perceived leadership potential. We lacked a theoretical rationale to expect that slopes would vary among departments. Because of the low between-group variance for WAL [i.e., ICC (1) = 0.002], our model did not specify random slopes. In addition, we compared the deviance scores (calculated as -2*loglikelihood) of the random coefficient and random slopes models to see whether the data fit with one or the other significantly better than the other (Campbell and Kashy, 2002). The deviance score of the random coefficient model was 1230.50. The deviance score of the random slopes model was smaller (deviance = 1219.25). However, the chi-square test suggests that the difference between the deviance of the random slopes model and the random coefficients model was not significant [χ^2 (9, N = 428) = 11.25, $p > 0.05$], indicating that the random slopes model was not statistically better than the random coefficients model. As the models were not statistically different, for the sake of parsimony, and considering the low between-group variance for WAL, we decided that continuing with the random coefficients model was more appropriate (Snijders and Bosker, 1999). As grand-mean centering creates inappropriate Level-1 estimators by generating regression slopes that are a mixture of within and between variations (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002; Enders and Tofighi, 2007), Level-1 variables were group mean centered. **Table 3** shows descriptive statistics and correlations. As **Table 4** shows, we found a significant interaction effect (γ = 0.40, $p < 0.01$) between the employees' gender and their WAL to predict their leadership potential rated by their supervisors, whereas employees' WAL had a marginally significant negative effect ($\gamma = -0.14$, $p = 0.09$), and their gender (0 = woman, 1 = man) had a positive and significant main effect (γ = 0.32, $p < 0.01$). Specifically, **Figure 3** shows that

TABLE 3 | Study 2 descriptive statistics and correlations.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1 Perceived Leadership Potential	3.16	1.04	1			
2 Candidate's WAL	3.52	0.83	−0.03	1		
3 Candidate's Gender	0.38	0.49	0.13**	−0.08	1	
4 Supervisor's Gender	0.64	0.48	−0.02	−0.01	0.17**	1

N = 428, **$p < 0.01$, gender coded as 0 = women, 1 = men.

TABLE 4 | Study 2 multilevel regression results.

|	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Level 2 Controls			
Supervisor's Gender	−0.02 (0.13)	−0.02 (0.13)	−0.02 (0.13)
Level 1 Independent Variables			
Employee's WAL		−0.001 (0.07)	−0.14 (0.08)[†]
Employee's Gender		0.32 (0.13)	0.32 (0.12)**
Interaction Variables			
Employee's WAL × Employee's Gender			0.40 (0.14)**
Deviance	1238.92	1237.92	1230.50

γ values and standard errors are reported for N (individuals/employees) = 429, N (departments/supervisors) = 101; gender coded as 0 = woman, 1 = men; **$p < 0.01$; [†]$p < 0.10$; deviance is calculated as −2 * loglikelihood.

WAL had a positive and significant relationship with perceived leadership potential for men (γ = 0.31, $p < 0.05$). For women, the relationship was negative but non-significant ($\gamma = -0.14$, $p = 0.098$). Therefore, our findings did not support Hypothesis 2.

Study 2 Discussion

Our analysis showed that gender moderated WAL's effect on perceived leadership potential but in a different way than what we hypothesized. Specifically, although WAL had a non-significant effect on the perceived leadership potential for women, it positively affected that of men. Taken together, our results obtained from the first two studies indicate that WAL plays out differently for leadership candidacy of men and women: WAL was positively related to men's leadership potential rated by their supervisors and was not related to their willingness for leadership, whereas WAL was unrelated to women's leadership potential rated by their supervisors and negatively related to their willingness for leadership. The absence of a WAL effect for women, together with the main effect of a candidate's gender, suggests that women's leadership potential seems to be evaluated independently from their WAL levels and their leadership qualities but based on their gender only. For men, on the other hand, perceptions of their leadership seem to be associated both with the stereotypical perception that men are naturally competent leaders (Cuddy et al., 2011; Katila and Eriksson, 2013), and their personal leadership qualities. Men were generally rated as having higher leadership potential than women, and men with high WAL were rated more favorable in terms of leadership potential than those with low WAL.

The asymmetry between WAL's effect on men's versus women's leadership potential suggests that WAL may not directly but rather indirectly influences the perception of leadership

FIGURE 3 | Interaction effect between WAL and gender on perceived leadership potential in Study 2.
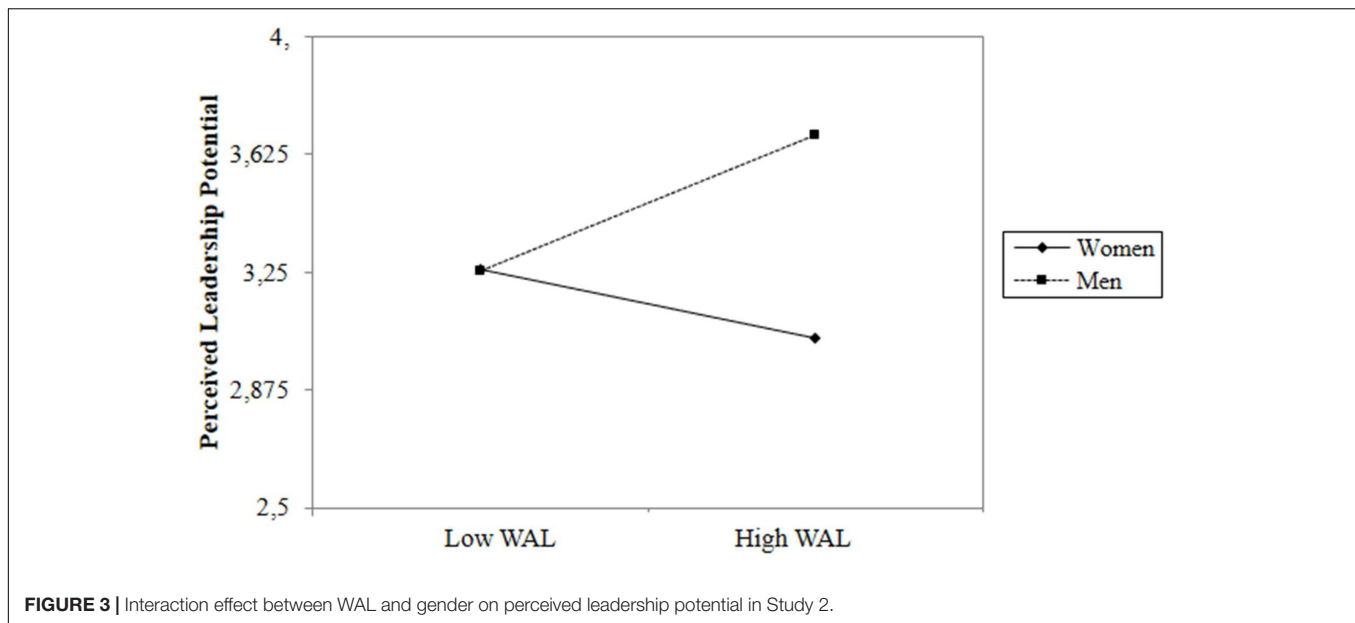
potential. A first explanation may be that WAL manifests itself differently for men versus women. The same level of WAL may transform into different behaviors (i.e., embodied worries, withdrawal behaviors) among men versus women, and thereby differently affect the perception of leadership potential. High WAL in men may be externalized in a different way than high WAL in women so that the behaviors men show would not reflect that they are worried. Additionally, men with high WAL may exhibit higher levels of performance and devote more effort in self-promoting behaviors as they do not consider WAL as a barrier to leadership, while women with high WAL would perform self-handicapping behaviors. Supervisors that judge leadership potential of their subordinates may base their evaluations on such observable reflections of WAL (Aycan and Shelia, 2019). This argument aligns with previous research, which showed that people seem to perceive others more strongly on the basis of external inputs, such as their observable behaviors and actions, while self-perception is more strongly tied to internal inputs such as emotions and feelings (Pronin et al., 2001; Pronin, 2008).

Yet, a second explanation could be that men's versus women's expressions of WAL may be perceived differently despite the equally reflected worries, namely in a way governed by gender stereotypes. As stated, there is evidence showing that women and men are treated differently at work despite showing the same behaviors and communication patterns at work (e.g., Turban et al., 2017).

Building on the stereotypes and bias perspective that is put forward by Kossek et al. (2017), we draw on the second interpretation explained above and assert that WAL could transform into judgment of leadership potential of men versus women (despite equal expressions of WAL) *via* stereotypes. A good way of testing this claim would be to assess the WAL of employees and to contrast that with the assessments

of WAL made by the supervisors. Another possibility for testing this claim would be to make the WAL levels of male and female leadership candidates explicitly visible to those who judge leadership potential and to examine how low versus high levels of WAL is stereotypically perceived, and how these perceptions transform into ratings of perceived leadership potential of men versus women. We adopted the latter strategy in our third study. The third study aims at resolving the seemingly paradoxical (i.e., positive) effect of men's WAL on their perceived leadership potential through an experimental study where WAL and gender are manipulated, and perceptions of warmth, competence, and perceived leadership potential are assessed.

STUDY 3: DO PERCEPTIONS OF WARMTH AND COMPETENCE MEDIATE THE LINK BETWEEN WORRIES ABOUT LEADERSHIP AND PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL OF WOMEN AND MEN?

Social perception research suggests that the two dimensions of the stereotype content model, warmth, and competence account for more than 80% of the variance in perception of groups and individuals, as well as abstract categories such as leaders (Fiske et al., 2007). Warmth and competence underlie impression formation and represent fundamental attributes for mapping stereotypical perceptions. It is possible that individuals' WAL may also affect the extent to which they are perceived to be warm and competent.

People who have high WAL tend to worry that leadership demands may cause them to harm others, to damage work-life balance, and to fail as leaders (Aycan and Shelia, 2019).

Such worries may be associated with good naturedness, sincerity, humaneness, the qualities that signal warmth (Fiske et al., 2007; Cuddy et al., 2011). High WAL people may signal concern for employees (i.e., harming subordinates *via* critical decisions such as discharge), concern for social relationships (i.e., hurting others in close relationships by not being able to balance work and life), and concern for the organization (harming the organizational bottom line due to poor performance in leadership). Indeed, research has confirmed that individuals who reject causing harm to others are judged as more trustworthy (i.e., warm) (Everett et al., 2016). Yet, these worries may also imply a lack of aptitude or confidence to handle these challenges, and thus may be inversely associated with confidence, competitiveness, and intelligence - qualities that reflect competence (Fiske et al., 2007; Cuddy et al., 2011). Thus, high WAL likely suggests being viewed incompetent but warm, which converges with the stereotypical perception of women (Rudman and Glick, 1999; Williams et al., 1999) and diverges from the stereotypical perception of men. As such, we first predicted that high WAL is associated with the perception of high warmth and low competence.

Hypothesis 3

Higher WAL will lead to higher perceptions of warmth and lower perceptions of competence.

Stereotypical perceptions of warmth and competence are likely to be associated with the judgment of leadership potential. Even though leaders have traditionally been stereotyped as being high on competence and low on warmth (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2011; Mayseless and Popper, 2019), research found that both warmth (also known as communion) and competence (also known as agency) were instrumental to judging leadership potential and effectiveness (Dardenne et al., 2007; Cuddy et al., 2011). Warmth is an attribute that is required and desired in today's leadership environment. For instance, the recent research by Laustsen and Bor (2017) found that warmth was more influential than competence for the evaluation of political candidates. Bor (2020) found that both warmth and competence serve as mediators between economic perceptions and voting for a political leader. As such, we propose that WAL may indirectly reflect on perceptions of leadership potential *via* the two core dimensions of social perception, warmth, and competence. We expect perceptions of warmth and competence to mediate the relationship between WAL and perceived leadership potential: Higher WAL increases perceptions of warmth and decreases perceptions of competence (as per Hypothesis 3), which is, in turn, positively associated with judgment of leadership potential.

We further expect that, due to prevailing gender biases (Kossek et al., 2017) the way WAL transforms into perceptions of warmth and competence, and how these eventually affect perceived leadership potential may be moderated by gender. Expectation violation theory (EVT; Jussim et al., 1987) posits that individuals judge others more strongly based on behaviors that violate rather than confirm stereotypes. The perception of high warmth and low competence (evoked by high WAL) may be perceived as an expectation violation for men. As such, we propose that the WAL manipulation will have a stronger effect on men's as opposed to women's perceived leadership potential.

Hypothesis 4

Gender will moderate the indirect relationship between WAL and perceived leadership potential through perceptions of warmth and competence, such that this relationship would be stronger for men than for women.

Study 3 Method
Participants

Different organizational settings may evoke varying evaluations and perceptions of leadership qualities (Eagly and Karau, 2002), so, for Study 3, we held the organizational setting constant by recruiting the same supervisors recruited in Study 2. We re-contacted 122 supervisors (M_{age} = 31.2, 73% men) to answer a brief online questionnaire about their impressions regarding fictitious cases of candidates for a leadership position (response rate, 75%). Seventeen supervisors were excluded for failing to answer our attention check question correctly. We ended up with a final sample of 105 supervisors (M_{age} = 31.2, 72% men).

Procedure and Experimental Manipulation

We used a $2- \times -2$ between-subjects experimental design, with gender (male vs. female) and a WAL level (low vs. high) of a fictitious candidate for a leadership position as independent variables. The supervisors were randomly assigned to view one of the four profiles of a candidate with a common male or female name, identified as having low or high WAL. More specifically, the supervisors were asked to judge this candidate's leadership potential based on the candidate's WAL profile presented to them. The profile included a subset of the WAL measure used in Studies 2 and 3. We selected four of the original 16 items representing worries about failure, work-life imbalance, and harm. The supervisors assigned to the low WAL condition viewed a profile in which the candidate ostensibly gave low scores to these items (either 1 or 2 out of a 5-point scale). The supervisors assigned to the high WAL condition viewed a profile in which the candidate gave high scores to the same WAL items (either 4 or 5 out of a 5-point scale). The supervisors were told that the candidate had consistently high job performance. We added this information to prevent the supervisors from being affected by stereotypical, often implicit, beliefs about job performance according to gender. The supervisors indicated their perceptions of the warmth and competence of the candidate and rated the candidate's leadership potential for the same type of position used in Study 2.

Measures
Manipulation Check

We asked the participants to indicate how much they agreed that the candidate whose profile (i.e., responses to WAL item) they had seen was worried on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*.

Warmth and Competence

To assess perceptions of warmth and competence, we used the 9-item measure by Fiske et al. (2002), which assesses warmth by asking the participants to rate whether they perceive subjects as *tolerant, warm, good-natured,* and *sincere,* and competence by

asking whether they perceive subjects as *competent, confident, independent, competitive,* and *intelligent.* Answer options ranged from *1 = totally disagree* to *5 = totally agree.* The mean score obtained from the four items was the measure of warmth; the mean score obtained from the five items was the measure of competence; higher scores indicated higher warmth and competence. Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency was 0.78 for warmth and 0.74 for competence.

Perceived Leadership Potential

Leadership potential of the fictitious candidate was evaluated by the same item used in Study 2 ("I believe this employee has what it takes to be promoted in my store") with answer options ranging from *1 = strongly disagree* to *5 = strongly agree.*

Study 3 Results

We first checked whether our manipulation of WAL evoked the respondents' perceptions of worries about the leadership of the fictitious candidate. Results of the univariate ANCOVA with candidate gender and WAL condition as independent variables, the respondent's gender as a covariate, and perceptions of being worried as the dependent variable confirmed the intended effect [$F(1,100) = 24.76$, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.20$]. The respondents in the low WAL condition rated the candidate as less worried ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.26$, $SE = 0.17$) than the respondents in the high WAL condition ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.10$, $SE = 0.15$), regardless of the gender manipulation.

To examine whether the WAL level influenced the perception of warmth and competence (Hypothesis 3), we carried out an independent samples t-test with the WAL level as independent variable and warmth and competence ratings as dependent variables. Descriptive statistics and correlations are presented in **Table 5**. Our analyses showed that the manipulation of WAL significantly affected perceptions of the candidates' warmth, $t(103) = -2.70$, $p < 0.01$, Cohen's $d = 0.53$ but remained irrelevant for ratings of competence, $t(103) = 0.48$, $p = 0.63$.

To test whether perceptions of warmth and competence had different mediating effects on the relationship between WAL and perceived leadership potential of male versus female candidates,

we performed multi-group structural equation modeling using AMOS. We tested whether a mediation model that linked the WAL manipulation to ratings of perceived leadership potential *via* perceptions of warmth and competence was operating differently for the male versus the female candidate. Additionally, we controlled for possible effects of the supervisor's gender on ratings of perceived leadership potential (see **Figure 4**). Results revealed an excellent model fit for the unconstrained model with χ^2 (4, $N = 105$) = 3.91, $p = 0.418$, RMSEA = 0.00, CFI = 1.00, while the structural weights solution was fitting the data significantly worse (CFI = 0.93, ΔCFI = 0.07). Hence, while the structure of the model seemed to be appropriate to describe the indirect relations between WAL and perceived leadership potential, the strength and/or directions of these relationships were significantly different for the male versus the female candidate. Examination of the standardized regression weights per candidate gender group under the unconstrained model suggests that, while both the perceptions of warmth and competence were conducive for judging men's and women's leadership potential (i.e., they both positively related to ratings of leadership potential), the WAL manipulation for the female candidate did not inform the respondents about their warmth and competence. For the male candidate, the high WAL manipulation both decreased the competency ratings and increased the warmth ratings of the candidate, which confirms Hypothesis 4 (**Figure 4**).

Study 3 Discussion

The goal of the third study was to examine how high and low levels of WAL are stereotypically perceived along the two universal dimensions of social perception, warmth, and competence (Fiske et al., 2002) and to test whether these perceptions exert a mediator effect between WAL and perceived leadership potential for the male and the female leader candidates. Moreover, we were interested in examining whether potential mediating effects *via* warmth and competence were different for the male versus the female candidate. Specifically, Study 3 was also conducted to shed light on the seemingly paradoxical positive effect of high WAL on men's perceived leadership potential. The experimental investigation revealed that the WAL manipulation affected ratings of warmth in the hypothesized direction, while it seemed unrelated to the rating of the candidates' competence. However, results obtained by the moderated mediation analysis revealed the WAL manipulation operated differently for male and female candidates. We found that high WAL increased warmth perceptions and decreased competence perceptions of the male candidate, but not the female candidate (**Figure 4**). While such a result partly confirms the third hypothesis, stating that higher WAL is associated with higher perceptions of warmth and lower perceptions of competence, it also aligns with the premises of EVT (Jussim et al., 1987). Men who have high WAL would violate gender expectations and thus appear especially high in warmth and low in competence. Women with high WAL, however, seem to be evaluated no differently than women with low WAL. As, in Study 2, women's WAL turned out to be irrelevant for how they are perceived from outside, which implies that gender stereotypes are more prevalent

TABLE 5 | Study 3 descriptive statistics and correlations.

		WAL	Warmth	Competence	PLP
Male Candidate $n = 54$	M *(SD)*	–	3.56 *(0.67)*	3.28 *(0.84)*	3.02 *(0.96)*
	(1)	1	0.29*	−0.27†	−0.25†
	(2)		1	0.21	0.32*
	(3)			1	0.69***
	(4)				1
Female Candidate $n = 51$	M *(SD)*	–	3.41 *(0.69)*	3.26 *(0.75)*	3.04 *(1.10)*
	(1)	1	0.23	0.21	0.22
	(2)		1	0.24†	0.42**
	(3)			1	0.46**
	(4)				1

WAL = worries about leadership; PLP = perceived leadership potential; *p < 0.05;
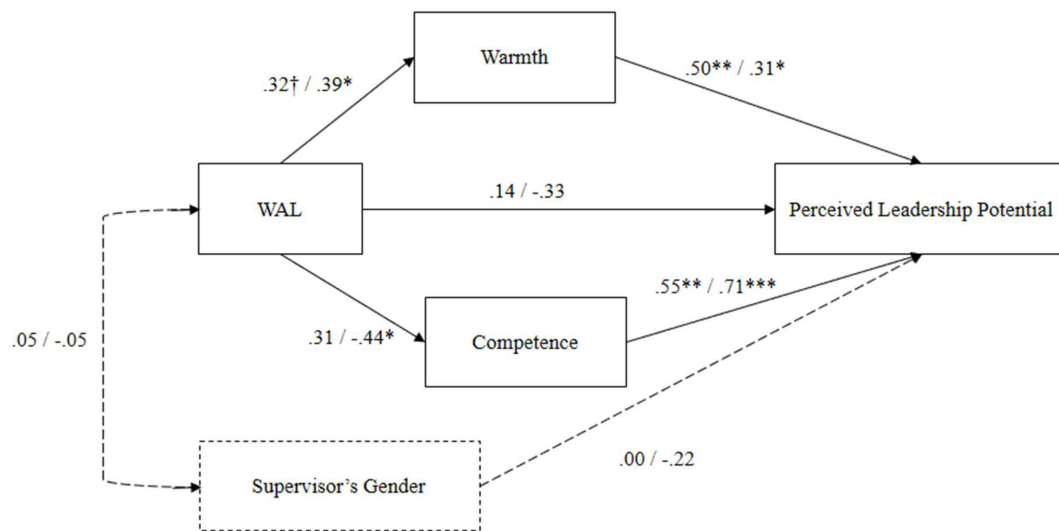***p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001; †p < 0.10.*

FIGURE 4 | Results of the multi-group SEM mediation model in Study 3. The first regression coefficient represents the standardized regression weight under the unconstrained model for the female candidate; the second coefficient represents the same for the male candidate; error terms of warmth and competence were correlated; *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$, †$p < 0.10$.

than women's personal attributes for judging women as warm and competent in the work context.

Drawing on EVT, we further tested whether the role of warmth and competence as potential mediators between WAL and perceived leadership potential is moderated by the candidate's gender. Our moderated mediation analysis revealed that high WAL decreased the perception of leadership potential *via* lower ratings of competence for the male candidate, but not for the female candidate. We further found that high WAL also increased the perception of leadership potential *via* higher ratings of warmth for the male candidate, but not for the female candidate, which confirms Hypothesis 4. Overall, our results suggest that high WAL of females had no implications for judging their warmth, competence, and thus their leadership potential. While this result signals that women with high WAL are not perceived as less suitable for leadership, it also signals that those with low WAL women do not receive a leadership advantage. Even though the female candidate's evaluation as warm and competent was positively associated with their perceived leadership potential, their WAL did not function as a cue to inform others about their warmth and competence. Overall, and together with the results obtained in the second study, our findings seem to be indicative of overreliance on gender stereotypes when judging women's leadership potential. It seems that biased and stereotypical perceptions dominate over the effect of WAL, and push women out from leadership positions regardless of their personal attributes.

For the male candidate, however, our analyses confirmed an indirect effect of WAL on perceived leadership potential through competence and warmth. Overall, our findings indicate that male candidates with higher WAL are perceived as less competent than males with lower WAL, which then negatively relates to their ratings of leadership potential. However, males with higher

WAL are also perceived as having higher warmth than males with lower WAL, which then positively relates to ratings of leadership potential (**Figure 4**). As such, the effect of WAL on men's leadership potential perceived by others appears to be ambivalent.

When comparing the results obtained for the males in the second study with the results of the present study, differences in the association between WAL and perceived leadership potential become evident. While the direction of this association was positive in Study 2, the association between WAL and perceived leadership potential was negative by tendency (as not significant) in Study 3 (see **Table 5**). As already noted, Study 3 employed an explicit manipulation of employees' WAL where the WAL scores of the candidates were directly visible to the supervisors, while, in Study 2, the supervisors were not informed about the WAL level of their subordinates, and judged their perceived leadership potential on the basis of subordinates' observable behaviors and actions at work. This implies that WAL may affect the perception of men's perceived leadership potential through two interconnected paths. On the one hand, males may externalize their WAL differently so that the behaviors of men with high WAL do not signal high levels of worry, and are not perceived by their supervisors as worry. On the other hand, the results of the present study suggest that, even if supervisors accurately perceive men's WAL, they may still gain leadership advantage through enhanced perceptions of warmth.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Drawing on the gender bias and stereotypes perspective proposed by Kossek et al. (2017), our objective was to examine whether leadership-related worries (WAL) may provide an additional explanation for why women (and men) opt out and are pushed

out of leadership. In Study 1, we examined whether WAL was associated with men's and women's willingness for leadership in a group-decision making task involving financial risk. As hypothesized (Hypothesis 1), WAL operated differently on women and men; while women with high WAL were more likely to opt themselves out of leadership, men with high WAL did not abstain from leadership. As such, our results imply that WAL is part of self-selection bias in leader emergence for women, but not for men (Epitropaki, 2018).

In Studies 2 and 3 where we focused on WAL's effect on pushing out men and women from leadership, we found further support for the gender-divergent effect of WAL; in Study 2, WAL was positively related to ratings men receive for their leadership potential while it was unrelated to those women received. In Study 3, where WAL levels were made visible to the supervisors, perceptions of warmth and competence mediated the relationship between WAL and perceived leadership potential for men but not for women. These findings in combination suggest that high WAL in men may create an advantage for men's perceived potential for leadership. Aligned with EVT (Jussim et al., 1987), in Study 3, the supervisors viewed high WAL as conveying positive signals about men's warmth, which, in turn, lead to higher ratings of men's leadership potential. However, high WAL in men was not entirely positive but signaled ambivalent qualities concerning leadership potential, while explicit WAL was found conducive for men's perceived leadership potential *via* enhanced perceptions of warmth. Indeed, recent evidence has suggested that perceptions of warmth seem to become increasingly important for leader perception (Laustsen and Bor, 2017; Bor, 2020; Vroman and Danko, 2020). Thus, perceptions of warmth can be an important mechanism causing the seemingly paradoxical positive effect of WAL to predict the perceived leadership potential of men in the second study. However, in Study 3, we also found that high WAL decreased the perceived leadership potential of male candidates *via* decreased perceptions of competence. This, on the other hand, implies that the male employees with high WAL in Study 2 were not perceived by their supervisors as worried, and that the male employees possibly did not perform behaviors that would make them look worried. Instead, the high WAL men in Study 2 may have engaged in self-promoting behaviors that had signaled their interest in leadership. As such, our results suggest that the WAL of men and women may not only reflect differently on others *via* different types of behaviors that benefit men's perceived leadership potential but is also judged differently when WAL is made visible. Even when men and women are rated as similarly worried (as it was the case in Study 3), men may still gain a leadership advantage through enhanced perceptions of warmth.

For women, on the other hand, findings from both Studies 2 and 3 suggest that their WAL is not influential on their perceived leadership potential. An intriguing question to be explored in future research is why low WAL did not benefit women. It may be due to the backlash effects (Rudman and Glick, 2001). For instance, women with low WAL may be considered assertive and dominant, which creates a "double bind" for them (Eagly et al., 2007). Biased and gender-stereotypical perceptions against women as leaders seem to prevail in creating diverging effects

of WAL found in the present research. The negative gender biases against women as leaders may have overridden the effect of WAL and perpetuated the perception that women lack leadership potential (Schein et al., 1996). This interpretation aligns with the biases and stereotypes perspective proposed by Kossek et al. (2017) and converges with the findings of the current research.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The present research extends existing leadership literature in several ways. First, our findings contribute to the literature on women's underrepresentation in leadership. By using the novel construct of WAL, the present research addressed the role of agentic mechanisms to explain gender differences in leader emergence. Complementary to the meager literature on the agentic processes in leader emergence (e.g., Maurya and Agarwal, 2013; Elprana et al., 2015; Epitropaki, 2018), the present research found that women's reluctance for leadership does not only come from being less motivated for leadership but also from perceived threat of leadership positions and accompanying emotion of worry about accepting such positions (Hoyt and Murphy, 2016; Alan et al., 2020).

Second, our findings contribute to the burgeoning attempts to expand the construct domain of leader emergence (cf., Hanna et al., 2021). Extant literature on leader emergence is relatively narrow in scope and focuses on who is "perceived as leader like" based on a person's influence and dominance in informal group settings (Kaiser et al., 2008, p. 97). The current research addresses both opt-out and pushed-out processes (Kossek et al., 2017) operationalized as willingness for leadership and perceived leadership potential, respectively. Confirming the results of Aycan and Shelia (2019), we found evidence for the role of WAL in predicting both opt-out and pushed-out processes of leadership. As such, our research supports the notion that these two processes represent two intertwined, inseparable, and yet distinctive aspects of leader emergence. Following the example of the present research, we call for broadening the scope of contemporary and future leadership research to include possibilities of both self-selection and selection by others to formal leadership positions (cf. Aycan and Shelia, 2019) to provide comprehensive answers to the question of "how do leaders come about."

Third, our findings have implications for the literature on stereotypes against women: (a) stereotype threat, and (b) stereotypical perception of women's leadership potential. The finding that women with high WAL opt themselves out of leadership extends the stereotype threat literature in the domain of leadership (e.g., Hoyt and Murphy, 2016). WAL represents an anticipatory emotion that may be able to explain why situationally induced stereotype threat in a leadership context does not uniformly affect all women. We found that women with low WAL may be less susceptible to stereotype threat effects and, consequently, less likely to opt themselves out of leadership than women with high WAL. However, low (compared to high) WAL did not provide an advantage for women's perceived leadership

potential; women were pushed out of leadership regardless of their WAL levels. Our findings suggest that stereotypes against women are so pervasive that positive attributes, including low WAL and high competence, did not benefit women in their perceived leadership potential.

Finally, our findings also contribute to the meager literature on stereotypes about men in the leadership context. It appears that: (1) high WAL signals warmth for men, and (2) perception of warmth benefits men in receiving positive judgment of leadership potential. These findings support the growing literature on the role of communal qualities and androgyneity in leader effectiveness for males (e.g., Laustsen and Bor, 2017). Our findings imply that violating the stereotypical expectations (cf., EVT, Jussim et al., 1987) benefits men but not women in the context of WAL and leadership. In other words, men with high, compared to low, worries (which is against the stereotypical view of men in leadership, cf., Schein et al., 1996) received better ratings for their leadership potential, whereas women with low, compared to high, worries (which is against the stereotypical view of women, cf., Hoyt and Murphy, 2016) did not receive better ratings for their leadership potential.

Our findings are hoped to make contributions to practice. We attempted to offer a novel explanation for why women, including those with high potential, may choose to stay away from leadership positions. To empower more women and close the overall economic opportunity gap (World Economic Forum, 2018), organizations must not only create incentives to increase the attractiveness, aspiration, and motivation for leadership but also develop interventions that help to view the position of leadership as less threatening and worrisome, and thus address women's WAL. Women may be informed about the finding that WAL is an ambivalent construct concerning leadership that is not necessarily obstructive to leadership; men's WAL was unrelated to their willingness for leadership and even viewed as an advantage by others. Organizations may use this information to develop strategies that help women to overcome their worries about leadership or to reevaluate their worries in such a way that these worries do not turn into a self-set barrier to leadership. Information sessions explaining that women can be effective leaders, implementing organizational policies that allow for more flexible work schedules, and putting more women in charge to create positive role models may be ways of reducing women's WAL (Olsson and Martiny, 2018). Additionally, intervention programs that make use of coaching, mentoring, emotion-regulation activities, or role modeling (see also, Martin et al., 2017) may help women to overcome their self-set barriers.

Our research further suggests that the perception of women as leaders is strongly driven by gender biases rather than by their qualifications. To alleviate the pushed-out effects on women's leadership, interventions should also target those who are in charge of promotions in organizations. Raising awareness about gender-biased perceptions, adopting standard operations and practices that clearly define the criteria for promotion, and changing the organizational culture toward endorsing "atypical leaders" (Samdanis and Özbilgin, 2020) may help to promote a more gender-neutral and unbiased view on women's leadership potential.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Study 1 focused on the process of opting out of leadership using student samples who were charged with completing a risky decision-making task in a laboratory. One limitation here concerns the operationalization of leadership self-selection by using a single-item rating of willingness to decide on behalf of a group in Study 1. The possibility of discrepancy between intention and behavior has been discussed in the literature on attitudes (e.g., Ajzen et al., 2004). Our subjects may have not actually taken the leadership role in their group despite their stated willingness to do so. Yet, it should be noted that our probability measure of leadership was strongly tied to the actual behavior of becoming a leader (as the eventual "leader" was drawn among those who were willing to be the decision-makers). Moreover, the construct of interest – which is whether the participants are interested in making a decision on a specific task – seems suitable for a single-item assessment (for similar approaches, see Ertac and Gurdal, 2012; Born et al., 2020).

Studies 2 and 3 focused on being pushed out of leadership, where the participants were real-life supervisors who evaluated the leadership potential of real and imagined male and female subordinates. Even though external validity is increased by our use of students in an experimental setting and our use of supervisors in an organizational and experimental setting, the findings may fail to generalize to other leadership tasks (e.g., persuasion, negotiation, or conflict mediation), populations, and samples. Admittedly, the leadership-conducive effect of WAL among men may be context dependent and only advantageous in contexts where warmth is congruent with organizational goals (Eagly and Karau, 2002), which may have been the case for the retail organization from which data for Study 2 and Study 3 were collected. That is, warmth may fail to mediate WAL's effect in other organizational contexts, or WAL may even exert a negative effect *via* decreased ratings of competence when the particular leadership situation requires to act more relentless. Thus, men with high WAL may have advantages in conflictual contexts that call for warm leaders who may be better able to smooth conflicts and promote cooperation.

This may also explain why the supervisors in Study 2 considered high WAL as an advantage for the male employees' leadership potential. In their research, Gartzia and Van Knippenberg (2016) identified communion as a crucial feature of men's leadership effectiveness. Communal traits among men engendered cooperative behavior, and this effect was especially pronounced in contexts that were dominated by men. Yet, it is equally possible that the stereotypical perception that men are competent (Cuddy et al., 2011) may have buffered the negative effect of WAL in Study 2, or that low competence of men was overlooked in favor of communal attributes, or that having worries was viewed as being overly ambitious. Thus, the leadership conducive effect of WAL among men may operate in a context-dependent manner, and be only advantageous where

warmth is congruent with organizational goals (Eagly and Karau, 2002), or in conflictual contexts that call for warm and more "feminine" leaders who may be better able to smooth conflicts and promote cooperation (Tomlinson et al., 1997). The identification of possible boundary conditions to turn WAL into a leadership advantage requires further research in organizational settings where different styles of leadership are more desired.

In the future, researchers should consider the role of emotions, particularly WAL, and study how emotions shape the leadership processes of both women and men in conjuncture with different contexts where stereotypes against women are more versus less salient. Moreover, in order to identify the boundary conditions that prescribe whether the effect of WAL turns into an advantage or barrier, leadership research would benefit from a more systematic examination of the effects of WAL in organizational settings that involve different leadership requirements. Future research is also needed to understand how WAL is observable by others and how it affects others' perceptions of leadership potential. Even though our research offers an initial insight, the issues of whether (and how) the behavioral reflection of WAL are different for men versus women, whether men and women are subject to biased evaluations despite equal reflections of WAL, or whether both the different reflections of WAL and the biased perceptions jointly affect men's and women's processes of being pushed out of leadership remain unresolved. Future research that compares self-reported WAL to other-assessments of WAL by also assessing the physiological and behavioral manifestations of WAL may help to find a remedy.

CONCLUSION

In three studies using experimental and field study methods, we examined the role of WAL for men and women in opting out and being pushed out of leadership. While the WAL of women operated as a self-set barrier in terms of their willingness for leadership (i.e., opt-out), men with high WAL did not abstain from assuming leadership. Moreover, high WAL even turned into a leadership advantage among men by enhancing their perceptions of leadership potential (i.e., pushed out), most likely *via* enhanced perceptions of warmth. When judging women's leadership potential, however, their WAL seems to be irrelevant,

suggesting that women's leadership potential may be evaluated in light of the gender stereotypes. As such, while WAL seems to represent an influential construct to predict leadership opt-out processes of women, it turned out to be irrelevant for predicting women's pushed-out processes. Yet, further research is needed to examine how WAL would operate on women to be pushed out of leadership in work settings that are more or less afflicted with gender biases and stereotypes.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Koç University (Turkey). The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s) for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

AK, AB, and ZA involved in planning and designing the research and formulated the research questions and hypotheses for all three studies included in the manuscript. AK and AB prepared all data collection material and were actively involved in collecting the research data. AK performed the data analysis for Study 1 and Study 2. GK performed the data analysis for Study 2. All authors actively contributed to writing and editing parts of the manuscript.

FUNDING

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