

# Leadership as Cognitive Scaffolding: Tracing Cultural Internalisation Through Bloom's Taxonomy in a Healthcare Complex Adaptive System

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## Abstract

This article examines the co-evolution of transformational leadership and organisational culture through a cognitive-sensemaking lens, offering a distinct departure from purely structural or dynamical accounts. While extant research has emphasised behavioural contagion, systemic coupling, and non-linear phase transitions, this study foregrounds the interpretive and meaning-making processes through which organisational actors cognitively scaffold cultural adaptation. Drawing on transformational leadership theory, Schein's multilayered culture model, and the Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) framework, we propose that leadership behaviours function as cognitive attractors that shape collective sensemaking, thereby enabling cultural emergence through iterative cycles of interpretation, enactment, and reinforcement. A longitudinal mixed-method design is advanced, integrating Bloom's Revised Taxonomy to structure qualitative enquiry across cognitive domains, from factual recall to metacognitive evaluation. This approach enables systematic tracking of followers' progression from surface-level awareness of cultural artefacts to deep internalisation of the underlying assumptions. This study contributes to the theory by reconceptualising leadership-driven cultural change as a staged cognitive apprenticeship. Wherein micro-behaviours scaffold collective learning. In practice, the framework informs leadership development interventions that target cognitive complexity and sensemaking capacity. By foregrounding cognition as the mediating mechanism linking leadership action to cultural transformation, this study addresses a critical gap in the organisational change literature.

**Keywords:** cognitive sensemaking; interpretive processes; longitudinal research; organisational culture; transformational leadership