

HOLDERSHIP: EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY OF AFFECT, HOLDING, TRANSITIONAL-TRANSFORMATIVE ENVIRONMENTS, AND RELATIONAL DYNAMICS

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ABSTRACT

The present theoretical article aims to address the differences and approaches between two potentially competing conceptions of political administration: the perspective of immanent management and that of capitalist conciliation. On one hand, it suggests that political administration corresponds to the set of immanent management principles of the capitalist mode of production. On the other, it refers to the management by the State of the dynamics of capital, coordinating social conciliation to facilitate the particular accumulation of wealth. This work is based on a narrative literature review, through a deductive-explanatory approach and the comparative method. It concludes with the proposition that the immanent and conciliation perspectives of political administration are not, in fact, competitors, but complementary. This is because the suggestion that there are management principles embedded in social practices, which are an expression of the interests of a dominant class, does not exclude the understanding that the State promotes social conciliation to support the projects of that same class.

Keywords: Intra and Interorganizational Relational Dynamics, Holdership, Transitional Environment, Transformative Environment, Leadership.

HOLDERSHIP: EXPLORANDO A INTERAÇÃO ENTRE AFETO, SUSTENTAÇÃO, AMBIENTES TRANSICIONAIS-TRANSFORMATIVOS E DINÂMICAS RELACIONAIS

RESUMO

O presente artigo teórico tem como objetivo tratar das diferenças e aproximações entre duas concepções de administração política potencialmente concorrentes: a perspectiva da gestão imanente e a da concertação capitalista. De um lado, sugere-se que a administração política corresponde ao conjunto de princípios imanentes de gestão do modo de produção capitalista.

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De outro, que a administração política se refere à gestão feita pelo Estado da dinâmica do capital, coordenando a concertação social para viabilizar a acumulação particular de riqueza. Este trabalho se fundamenta numa revisão narrativa de literatura, por meio de uma abordagem dedutivo-explicativa e do método comparativo. Chega-se a uma proposição de que a perspectivas imanente e da concertação da administração política não são, de fato, concorrentes, mas complementares. Isto, porque, a sugestão de que existem princípios de gestão entranhados nas práticas sociais, que são expressão dos interesses de uma classe dominante, não exclui o entendimento que o Estado promova a concertação social para dar suporte aos projetos dessa mesma classe.

Palavras-chave: Dinâmicas Relacionais Intra e Interorganizacionais, Holdership, Ambiente Transicional, Ambiente Transformativo, Liderança.

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RESUMEN

El presente artículo teórico tiene como objetivo abordar las diferencias y aproximaciones entre dos concepciones potencialmente competidoras de administración política: la perspectiva de la gestión inmanente y la de la concertación capitalista. Por un lado, se sugiere que la administración política corresponde al conjunto de principios inmanentes de gestión del modo de producción capitalista. Por otro, que la administración política se refiere a la gestión realizada por el Estado de la dinámica del capital, coordinando la concertación social para facilitar la acumulación particular de riqueza. Este trabajo se basa en una revisión narrativa de la literatura, mediante un enfoque deductivo-explicativo y el método comparativo. Se llega a la proposición de que las perspectivas inmanente y de la concertación de la administración política no son, de hecho, competidoras, sino complementarias. Esto, porque la sugerencia de que existen principios de gestión arraigados en las prácticas sociales, que son expresión de los intereses de una clase dominante, no excluye el entendimiento de que el Estado promueva la concertación social para apoyar los proyectos de esa misma clase.

Palabras clave: Dinámicas Relacionales Intra e Interorganizacionales, Holdership, Ambiente Transicional, Ambiente Transformador, Liderazgo.

INTRODUÇÃO

In modern organizations, leadership plays a pivotal role in navigating complex and rapidly changing environments (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017; Avolio, Walumbwa, Weber, 2009). However, traditional approaches to leadership, which often emphasize individual charisma, skills, competencies, and behaviors, have proven to be limited in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by organizations today (Alvesson, 2012; Ford & Harding, 2011; Yukl, 2010;

Fletcher, 2004; Kellerman, 2004; Grint, 2005; Mintzberg, 2004; Pfeffer, 1997). In response to this gap, there is a growing recognition of the importance of considering broader contextual factors and the impact of affective experiences on intra and interorganizational relational dynamics (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Barsade, Brief, Spataro, 2003; George, 2000).

This article aims to explore the interplay of affect, holding, transitional-transformative environments, and relational dynamics in organizations and societal ecosystems. By drawing upon insights from psychoanalysis, philosophy, and organizational studies, one proposes an integrative approach of holdership that captures the reciprocal and transformative nature of leadership relationships. Holdership moves beyond the individual leader-centric perspective and highlights the significance of creating nurturing and transformative environments that foster emotional holding, innovation, and collaboration (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

To lay the foundation for holdership, one delves into the Spinoza ontology and the conceptual frameworks provided by the psychoanalysis, including authors such as Winnicott, and Bollas. Spinoza's notions of immanence and affect (Spinoza, 1994), Winnicott's understanding of holding phenomenon (Winnicott, 1971, 1965, 1953), Lacan's theory of social ties (Lacan, 1998), and Bollas' perspective on transformative environments (Bollas, 2008, 1987) offer valuable insights into the intricate intra and interorganizational relational dynamics (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

Through a comprehensive synthesis of these contributions, one aims to provide a nuanced understanding of holdership as sustenance that embraces the reciprocal influence of affect, relational contexts, and discourses. This viewpoint acknowledges the interconnectedness of individuals with their relational environments, highlighting the transformative potential of emotional holding, collaborative exchanges, and the construction of social ties.

Furthermore, this article seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice by drawing upon empirical evidence and real-world examples. By examining the implications of the proposed approach for holdership development, team dynamics, and organizational

culture, one aims to provide practical insights for workers, managers, human resource professionals, and organizational consultants.

BEYOND LEADERSHIP

In recent years, the concept of holdership emerges as an alternative approach to leadership within the field of organizational studies. Contrasting with traditional leadership approaches, which predominantly focus on the attributes and behaviors of individual leaders, holdership emphasizes the vital importance of support and sustenance within the organizational ecosystem. Drawing on psychoanalytic object relations theories, and integrating insights from authors such as Winnicott, Lacan, and Bollas, the perspective of holdership as sustenance provides a distinctive and enriched lens through which to comprehend the intricate human dynamics at play in organizations (Bollas, 2008, 1987; Lacan, 2006, 1998; Spinoza, 1994; Winnicott, 1971, 1965, 1953).

While holdership is still a relatively new concept within the field, there are previous studies on leadership that explore various dimensions associated to holdership. These studies discuss some of the key dimensions related to the notion of holdership within the field of organizational relational dynamics research (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017; Avolio, Walumbwa, Weber, 2009; Day & Antonakis, 2012; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, Walumbwa, 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003)

One dimension refers to the examination of leadership as a collective, shared, and distributed phenomenon (Uhl-Bien, Marion, McKelvey, 2007; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Gronn & Hamilton, 2004; Day, Gronn, Salas, 2004; Pearce & Conger, 2003). Rather than viewing leadership as solely the responsibility of formal leaders or designated individuals, these studies explore the idea, that leadership can be shared and distributed among various organizational members (Pearce & Sims, 2002; Gronn, 2002). This perspective acknowledges the important role that followers and other stakeholders play in providing support, creating a nurturing environment, and contributing to the overall leadership process.

Furthermore, recent studies in leadership have shed light on the limitations and shortcomings of charisma-oriented approaches (Shamir, House, Arthur, 1993; Conger & Kanungo, 1987). These approaches, while emphasizing the personal qualities and charismatic behaviors of leaders, often overlook the contextual and environmental factors that significantly influence leadership effectiveness (Avolio & Bass, 1991; Burns, 1978). Studies have called for a shift in focus towards a more integrative understanding of leadership that takes into account the complex interplay between leaders, followers, and the broader organizational and societal context (Day & Antonakis, 2012; Avolio, Walumbwa, Weber, 2009).

In this sense, the holdership perspective is also in line with the prevailing currents in leadership research that underscore the significance of context, environment, relational dynamics, and the establishment of a supportive organizational culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Schein, 2010; Edmondson, 2019; Brown, Treviño, Harrison, 2005). By embracing these dimensions, scholars and practitioners can cultivate a more nuanced and comprehensive comprehension of leadership and devise effective strategies for leadership development and organizational effectiveness.

The examination of a collective leadership context highlights the importance of creating a nurturing and supportive organizational environment. Research has shown that individuals who embrace this principle create an environment where teamwork, common purpose, and psychological safety and trust thrive culture (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Brown, Treviño, Harrison, 2005; Edmondson, 1999). Such a culture encourages open communication, constructive feedback, and a willingness to learn from one another (Edmondson, 2019; Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Schein, 2010). When leadership is shared and distributed, organizational members feel supported and empowered to take risks, share their ideas, and contribute to decision-making processes.

In contemporary leadership studies, another important dimension emphasized refers to the concepts of stewardship, ownership, and empowerment (Russell & Stone, 2002; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Block, 1993). Scholars have recognized the significance of leaders acting as stewards of the organization, taking responsibility for its well-being and long-term

sustainability. This perspective emphasizes the need for leaders to demonstrate a sense of ownership, not only of their own roles and responsibilities but also of the collective goals and values of the organization. Moreover, empowering individuals at all levels of the organization has emerged as a crucial aspect of effective leadership, as it fosters a sense of autonomy, engagement, and ownership among employees, leading to enhanced performance and commitment (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Further, enabling leadership, as conceptualized by Uhl-Bien and her colleagues, has gained significant attention in leadership studies (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017, 2007; Uhl-Bien, 2006). This approach emphasizes the importance of leaders creating an empowering environment that enables individuals within the organization to fully utilize their skills, knowledge, and capabilities. Enabling leaders focus on removing barriers, providing support, and fostering a culture of trust and collaboration. Studies exploring the notion of enabling leadership have highlighted its positive impact on employee engagement, ambidexterity, creativity, and organizational performance. By understanding and implementing enabling leadership practices, organizations can enhance employee well-being, foster innovation, and create a culture of continuous learning and growth. Therefore, further research on enabling leadership is crucial in order to gain a deeper understanding of its mechanisms and to identify effective strategies for its implementation in diverse organizational contexts (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017, 2007; Uhl-Bien, 2006)

In addition, another critical aspect being highlighted in contemporary leadership studies is the importance of this phenomenon within increasingly virtual, flexible, and horizontal organizational structures (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017; Avolio, Kahai, Dodge, 2001). With the rise of remote work, cross-functional teams, and networked relationships, leadership is no longer confined to traditional hierarchical structures. Leaders are now required to navigate complex virtual environments, build trust and collaboration across geographically dispersed teams, and adapt to changing dynamics and technological advancements (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003; Lipnack & Stamps, 2000). Effective leadership in these contexts involves ethical conducts, ability to communicate effectively, inspire and motivate without physical proximity, and facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration across boundaries (Zaccaro, Rittman,

Marks, 2001). As organizations continue to embrace virtual and flexible structures, understanding the unique challenges and opportunities associated with leadership in such settings becomes crucial for achieving organizational performance.

Furthermore, some studies have investigated the role of leadership in the development and the cultivation of future leaders (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). These studies argue that a leadership can be instrumental in promoting learning, growth, and resilience among emerging leaders (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, Shamir, 2002). By providing a nurturing and supportive environment, holdership-oriented leadership development programs can help individuals develop the necessary skills, confidence, and sense of purpose to effectively lead others (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, Norman, 2007).

THE MOVEMENT AROUND THE HOLDERHIP AS SUSTENANCE

The traditional approach to leadership has long been centered around individual leaders who possess certain traits or skills and exert authority and control over their followers (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018; Yukl, 2010; Hackman & Johnson, 2009; Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, in the contemporary organizational landscape, there is a growing recognition that effective leadership extends beyond the actions of a single leader. It encompasses the collective efforts and contributions of individuals within an organization, as well as the nurturing and supportive environment that facilitates their growth and development.

In this context, the concept of “holdership as sustenance” emerges as a transformative perspective that goes beyond the traditional notions of leadership. Holdership as sustenance emphasizes the importance of creating an environment that supports and sustains the growth and well-being of individuals within an organization. It recognizes that leadership is not confined to a single figure, but rather, it is distributed among various individuals who contribute their unique skills, perspectives, and experiences.

Holdership as sustenance is rooted in the understanding that individuals thrive and reach their full potential when they are provided with the necessary support, resources, and opportunities for growth. It involves creating a culture of collaboration, trust, and

empowerment, where individuals are encouraged to take ownership of their work and contribute their best efforts. It is about fostering an environment that values diversity, creativity, and continuous learning.

This concept challenges the traditional hierarchical and command-and-control approaches of leadership. Instead, it emphasizes shared responsibility, collective decision-making, and collaboration. Holdership as sustenance recognizes that effective relationships involves creating an environmental ecosystem where individuals can flourish and contribute their unique talents and perspectives.

Furthermore, holdership as sustenance aligns with the emerging research and practices in fields such as positive psychology, employee engagement, and organizational development. It emphasizes the importance of employee well-being, job satisfaction, and work-life balance, as these factors contribute to the overall effectiveness and performance of the organizational ecosystem.

In this regard, the concept of holdership emerges as a significant framework for understanding the interplay between affect and intra and interorganizational relation dynamics. Holdership, defined as a dynamic relationship involving the transacting, mobilizing, and imprinting of affects, recognizes the complex and reciprocal nature of interpersonal connections. It acknowledges that individuals do not exist in isolation but are embedded within relational contexts that shape their behaviors, attitudes, and effectiveness.

Drawing on Spinoza's ontological understanding of immanence and concept of "affectus", which emphasizes the capacity to affect and be affected, holdership recognizes the fundamental role of affect in shaping human interactions (Spinoza, 1994). Affects, whether positive or negative, have the power to influence individuals and their relational dynamics, thereby affecting relationships and outcomes. By acknowledging the reciprocal nature of affective experiences within holdership, individuals can better understand the complexities of their relationships and navigate them more effectively.

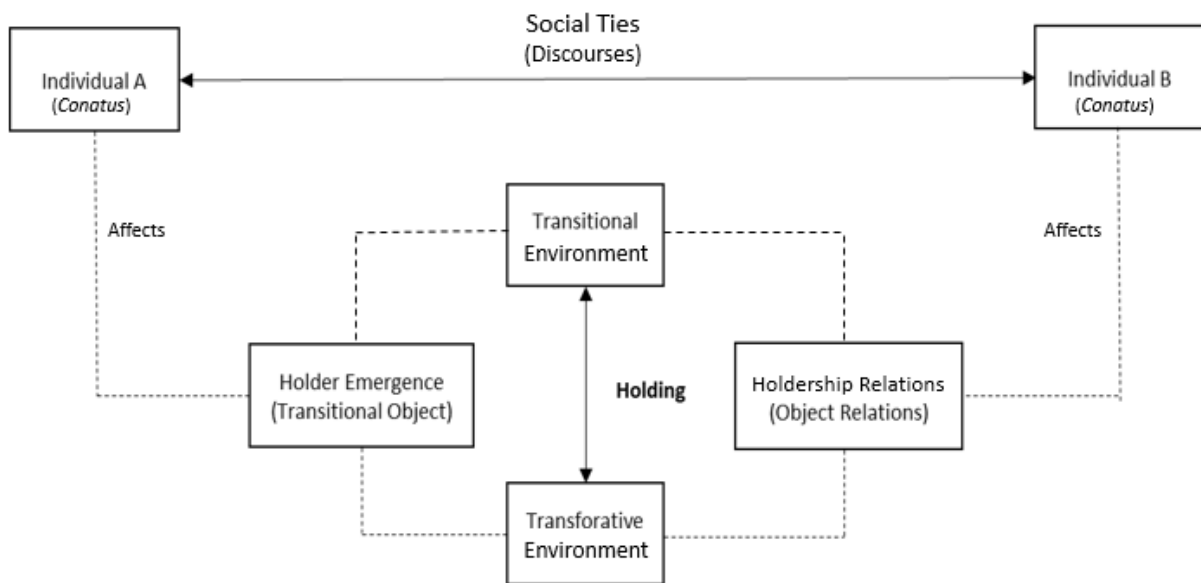
Moreover, holdership highlights the importance of creating and nurturing transformative and transitional spaces within organizational contexts (Winnicott, 1971, 1965, 1953; Bion, 1961). These spaces foster collaborative and innovative exchanges, allowing for the generation of new ideas, the development of collective intelligence, and the cultivation of a positive organizational culture. By recognizing and valuing the affective dimensions of holdership, individuals can create environments that promote creativity, resilience, and growth.

The concept do holdership can be further enriched by incorporating Spinoza's concept of "conatus" - or the "will to act" (Spinoza, 1994). Spinoza's philosophical framework posits that every individual possesses an innate drive, a striving towards self-preservation and self-actualization. This concept aligns with holdership as sustenance, as it emphasizes the ongoing process of engagement and active participation in relational dynamics. The notion of "conatus" underscores the importance of individuals' inherent drive to act, to seek connection and engagement with others, and to navigate and shape their relational environments (Spinoza, 1994). By integrating Spinoza's concept of the "will to act", holdership as sustenance expands its philosophical foundation and deepens our understanding of the dynamic interplay between individuals, their desires, their agencies, and their relational contexts.

In addition to the philosophical concept of affect, the incorporation of concepts from psychoanalytic studies, particularly object relations - "mother enough good", "transitional object", "transitional environment", "transformative environment" - and social ties theories - "discourse of the Analyst" - is highly relevant in addressing the gaps and challenges within the leadership paradigm (Bollas, 1989; Lacan, 1975; Winnicott, 1965, Klein, 1948). Object relations theory, initially rooted in Freudian psychoanalysis and significantly influenced by the work of Klein, has undergone further development by numerous theorists, notably including Winnicott and Bollas. The theory of discourses - or social ties - in Lacan emphasizes the interplay of language and social structures in shaping subjective experiences and social relations (Bollas, 1989; Lacan, 1975; Winnicott, 1965, Klein, 1948).

Figure 1 encompasses the intra and interorganizational relational dynamics interplay between individuals, their relational contexts, and the affective dimensions that shape their interactions and effectiveness.

FIGURE 1
 The holdership as sustenance



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

According to Figure 1 at the core of the approach lies the recognition of “holdership” as a reciprocal and transformative relationship. Holders, as emerging “good enough transitional objects” are not seen in isolation but as interconnected with their relational contexts, referred to as “holdership relations” (Bollas, 1989; Winnicott, 1965, Klein, 1948). These relational contexts encompass “holding environment”, which are notably influenced by discourses. Discourses establish social ties, and in the case of holdership, the “Lacanian discourse of the analyst” assumes significant importance (Lacan, 2006, 1998, 1975).

The dashed lines illustrate the transacting, mobilizing, and imprinting of affects within holdership. Affects, both positive and negative, flow between individuals and their relational contexts, influencing behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes. This dynamic process emphasizes the

mutual influence and interdependence between individuals and their environments (Izard, 2009; Frijda, 2007; Spinoza, 1994; Lazarus, 1991).

Furthermore, the approach highlights the importance of creating and nurturing transformative and transactional environments within organizational contexts. These environments foster collaborative and innovative exchanges. They provide the fertile ground for the generation of new ideas, the development of collective intelligence, and the cultivation of a positive organizational culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Amabile, 1996; Anderson & West, 1998, 1990).

The approach emphasizes that “holders” who embrace holdership as sustenance recognize the fundamental role of affect in shaping their relationships. They are attuned to the reciprocal nature of affective experiences, understanding that their own affective states impact their interactions and that of others. By valuing and harnessing the power of affect, holders can create environments that promote creativity, resilience, and growth (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Fredrickson, 2001; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

The following subtopics provide detail explanations of each element included in the proposed approach.

“Conatus”

The concept of “*conatus*”, as proposed by Spinoza, holds significant relevance within the context of this approach. “*Conatus*” refers to the inherent striving or drive for self-preservation and self-actualization that is present in all living beings. It is the fundamental essence that propels individuals to act in ways that promote their own existence and well-being. In Spinoza’s philosophy, “*conatus*” is not limited to human beings but extends to all forms of life (Spinoza, 1994).

The concept of “*conatus*” highlights the innate desire and inclination within individuals to strive for their own flourishing. It encompasses the inherent impulse for self-preservation, growth, and the pursuit of happiness. According to Spinoza, this striving is an essential

attribute of human nature and plays a crucial role in shaping human behavior and motivation (Spinoza, 1994).

In this approach, the concept of “*conatus*” informs our understanding of human agency and the driving force behind individuals’ actions and decisions within holdership. It recognizes that individuals are naturally inclined to seek growth, development, and fulfillment, both personally and within their relational contexts. By acknowledging and harnessing the power of “*conatus*”, holders can tap into the inherent motivation and drive within individuals, fostering an environment that promotes self-actualization and collective growth.

Spinoza’s concept of “*conatus*” provides a profound insight into human nature and serves as a guiding principle for understanding and fostering human potential within the context of this approach. It reminds us of the innate drive within individuals to strive for their own well-being and the importance of creating conditions that nurture and support this inherent inclination. By aligning our understanding of human agency with the concept of “*conatus*”, one can unlock the transformative potential of individuals and foster a culture of growth, fulfillment, and flourishing within holdership.

Discourse as social ties

Lacan’s theory posits that discourse is a fundamental element in the formation and maintenance of social ties, shaping the ways in which individuals communicate, relate, and construct meaning within a given social context (Lacan, 1998, 1975).

According to Lacan, discourses - master, hysteric, university, and analyst - operate as symbolic structures that organize and regulate social interactions, exerting influence on subjectivity and shaping individual and collective identities. These discourses encompass various forms of communication, including language, speech, and social norms, which structure and give coherence to human interactions (Lacan, 1998, 1975).

In holdership, one discourse that holds significant relevance is the discourse of the analyst. The discourse of the analyst, as articulated by Lacan, refers to the speech and language

structures employed in psychoanalytic practice, particularly within the context of analysis. This discourse assumes a specific position and function, enabling the analyst to facilitate the exploration and interpretation of unconscious processes, desires, and conflicts (Lacan, 2006; Fink, 1995).

The discourse of the analyst plays a vital role in this approach as it encourages self-reflection, introspection, and the uncovering of unconscious dynamics within holdership relationships. Through the analytical discourse, individuals can gain insight into their affective experiences, relational patterns, and intrapsychic conflicts, promoting personal growth, self-awareness, and transformative change (Kohut, 1971; Winnicott, 1960).

Moreover, the discourse of the analyst provides a framework for understanding and addressing the complexities and challenges that arise within holdership relationships. By utilizing psychoanalytic techniques and interpretations, the analyst can help individuals navigate their affective desires, subjectivities, experiences, resolve conflicts, and develop more authentic and fulfilling relational dynamics (Kets de Vries, 2006, 1997, 1984; Ogden, 1994).

In this approach, the incorporation of the discourse of the analyst underscores the importance of psychological insight, introspection, and authentic interventions in fostering healthy and transformative holdership relationships. By drawing upon the discourse of the analyst, individuals can engage in a deeper exploration of their affective experiences, engage in self-reflection, and develop a greater capacity for self-regulation and emotional well-being (Mitchell, 1993; Winnicott, 1960).

Ultimately, the inclusion of the discourse of the analyst in this approach highlights the significance of psychological insight and therapeutic interventions in promoting the development of nurturing, transformative, and sustainable holdership relationships. By incorporating the principles and techniques of psychoanalysis, this approach offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and enhancing interpersonal dynamics, emotional well-being, and personal growth within holdership relationships.

Affect

“Affect”, in Spinoza’s philosophy, encompass a broad range of emotional states, sensations, and passions that individuals experience in their interactions with the world. They are the affective qualities that shape their experiences, thoughts, and actions, exerting a profound influence on our well-being and behavior (Damasio, 1994; Spinoza, 1994).

Spinoza posits that affects arise from the encounters between individuals and external events, objects, or ideas. They are the result of the complex interplay between their own internal constitution and the external stimuli that one encounters. Affects can be understood as a response to the way in which their bodies and minds are affected by external influences, resulting in a variety of emotions, such as joy, sadness, love, and anger (Spinoza, 1994).

In holdership, the concept of “affect” sheds light on the inherent emotional nature of human beings and its significance within relational dynamics. It recognizes that individuals are not solely rational beings, but are also deeply affected by their emotional states. By acknowledging the role of affects, holders can gain a deeper understanding of the emotional dynamics within holdership and leverage this knowledge to create an environment that fosters emotional well-being and enhances relational dynamics (Damasio, 1994; Spinoza, 1994).

Furthermore, Spinoza’s concept of “affect” emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and self-mastery. By cultivating an understanding of our own affects and their origins, one can gain greater control over our emotional responses and navigate interpersonal relationships more effectively. This self-awareness allows us to make conscious choices, align our actions with our values, and cultivate harmonious and constructive interactions within holdership (Damasio, 1994; Spinoza, 1994).

Holder

Within the scope of this approach, it is crucial to explore in-depth the concepts of “good enough mother” and “transitional object” as defined by Winnicott. These concepts form the foundation of Winnicott’s theory of object relations and play a significant role in understanding the dynamics of human development and the formation of the self (Winnicott, 1988, 1971, 1965, 1953).

According to Winnicott, the “good enough mother” refers to a mother or primary caregiver who is attuned, responsive, and capable of meeting the individual’s basic needs. This concept emphasizes the importance of a nurturing and supportive environment for the individual’s healthy emotional and psychological development. The “good enough mother” is not expected to be perfect but rather to provide a “good enough” level of care that allows the individual to experience a sense of safety, security, and emotional connection (Winnicott, 1988, 1965, 1960, 1953).

The notion of the “transitional object” is closely linked to the concept of the “good enough mother”. Transitional objects serve as a bridge between the individual’s internal and external worlds. They provide comfort, reassurance, and a sense of continuity during times of separation or stress. The “transitional object” represents the individual’s first experience of having a personal possession that holds emotional significance and acts as a source of comfort and security (Winnicott, 1988, 1971, 1953).

Winnicott argues that the presence of a “transitional object” allows the individual to navigate the process of separation-individuation, which is crucial for the development of a separate and autonomous self. The “transitional object” serves as a symbolic representation of the “good enough mother” and provides a transitional space where the individual can explore and experience a sense of control, ownership, and emotional connection (Winnicott, 1988, 1971, 1960, 1953).

The concept of the “good enough mother” and the “transitional object” highlights the importance of relational experiences in shaping the individual’s sense of self, emotional well-being, and capacity for healthy relationships. These concepts emphasize the significance of a nurturing and supportive environment in facilitating the individual’s development of trust, emotional resilience, and the ability to form secure attachments (Winnicott, 1988, 1965, 1960, 1953).

In the context of the holdership, the concepts of the “good enough mother” and the “transitional object” underscore the importance of creating a supportive and nurturing

environment within holdership. They highlight the role of caregivers or “holders” in providing a safe space for individuals to explore, grow, and develop a sense of self and relational capacities (Stern, 1985; Winnicott, 1965, 1960, 1953).

By integrating the insights of Winnicott’s theory into this approach, one recognizes the significance of the holder’s role in fostering emotional well-being, facilitating the exploration of internal and external realities, and promoting the development of healthy relationships. The concepts of the “good enough mother” and the “transitional object” offer a framework for understanding the importance of early relational experiences and their ongoing influence on individuals’ emotional and psychological well-being within holdership.

Transitional environment

Within the context of this approach, it is also essential to delve into the concept of the “transitional environment” as defined by Winnicott (1971, 1965, 1951). The “transitional environment” refers to the intermediate space that exists between the inner world of the individual and the external reality. It is a psychological space where creativity, imagination, and play come together to facilitate the individual’s exploration and development.

Winnicott emphasizes the significance of the “transitional environment” in human development. He views it as a vital bridge that allows the individual to navigate the transition from complete dependence on the caregiver to a growing sense of independence and autonomy. The “transitional environment” provides a safe and nurturing space where the individual can engage in imaginative play, create meaning, and experiment with different roles and possibilities (Winnicott, 1971, 1965, 1951).

In the “transitional environment”, conducts, behaviors, and experiences take on symbolic significance, allowing the individual to express and understand their emotions, desires, and fantasies. It is a space where the individual can freely explore their creativity, engage in make-believe play, and experiment with different aspects of their identity. This environment supports the individual’s emotional and cognitive growth, fostering their capacity for self-expression, problem-solving, and emotional regulation (Winnicott, 1971, 1965, 1951).

The “transitional environment” is facilitated by the presence of a metaphorical “transitional object” or a “good enough mother”, which acts as a holder. The holder serves as a bridge between the inner world and external reality, providing comfort and familiarity. The “transitional object” holds emotional significance and acts as a source of security and reassurance for the individual. It represents a tangible connection to the “transitional environment”, allowing the individual to transition between the internal and external worlds with a sense of continuity and safety (Winnicott, 1971, 1965, 1951).

Winnicott emphasizes that the “transitional environment” is not limited to early childhood but continues to play a role throughout the lifespan. In adolescence and adulthood, the transitional environment takes on different forms. The work, cultural, and creative experiences serve as transitional phenomena that allow individuals to explore and express their emotions, experiences, and inner worlds (Winnicott, 1971, 1965, 1951).

In the context of this approach, the concept of the “transitional environment” highlights the importance of creating an environment that supports creativity, imagination, and play within holdership. It emphasizes the need for spaces where individuals can freely explore, experiment, and engage in imaginative activities that promote personal growth, self-expression, and the development of a sense of self.

By incorporating the insights of Winnicott’s concept of the “transitional environment”, one recognizes the significance of providing a supportive and nurturing space within holdership. This allows individuals to engage in creative and imaginative endeavors, fostering their emotional well-being, personal growth, and the cultivation of a sense of self within the context of their relational dynamics.

Transformative environment

The “transformative environment” refers to a psychological space where individuals have the opportunity to engage in self-exploration, self-reflection, and personal transformation (Mezirow, 2000; Kegan, 1994; Bollas, 1987).

According to Bollas, the transformative environment is created through interpersonal relationships and interactions. It is a space where individuals can feel safe, supported, and understood, allowing them to explore and express their innermost thoughts, feelings, and desires without fear of judgment or rejection (Bollas, 1989, 1987).

The “transformative environment” is characterized by qualities such as empathy, attunement, and acceptance. It is a space where individuals can experience deep emotional connections and authentic encounters with others. In this environment, individuals are encouraged to explore their unconscious processes, confront unresolved conflicts, and gain insight into their own emotional and psychological dynamics (Mitchell & Black, 1995; Stern, 1985; Kohut, 1971).

Through the “transformative environment”, individuals have the opportunity to engage in a process of self-discovery and personal growth. It is a space where individuals can reflect on their experiences, challenge their assumptions, and develop new perspectives and understandings. This process of self-reflection and self-exploration allows individuals to transform their self-concept, expand their sense of identity, and cultivate a greater sense of authenticity and well-being (Mezirow, 1991; Rogers, 1961).

The “transformative environment” also plays a significant role in therapeutic settings. It provides a container for individuals to engage in deep therapeutic work, facilitating the exploration and resolution of unconscious conflicts, traumas, and emotional wounds. Through the transformative environment, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of themselves, develop greater self-compassion, and work towards healing and personal transformation (Geller & Greenberg, 2012; Yalom, 2002).

In the context of holdership, the concept of the “transformative environment” underscores the importance of creating a relational space that fosters personal growth, self-reflection, and emotional transformation within holdership. It recognizes that individuals thrive when they are provided with an environment that supports their exploration, self-expression, and self-discovery (Bion, 1961; Winnicott, 1960; Rogers, 1957).

By integrating the insights of Bollas' concept of the transformative environment into this approach, one acknowledges the significance of creating relational spaces that promote personal growth, emotional well-being, and authentic self-expression. These transformative environments offer individuals the opportunity to engage in deep self-reflection, gain insight into their inner world, and embark on a journey of personal transformation within the context of their relational dynamics (Bollas, 1992, 1987).

Holding

The concept of "holding" as defined by Winnicott refers to the nurturing and supportive environment provided by a caregiver, typically the mother that allows an infant to feel secure, protected, and held both physically and emotionally (Winnicott, 1965).

Winnicott emphasizes that holding goes beyond the physical act of cradling an infant; it encompasses the caregiver's attunement, responsiveness, and ability to create a safe and containing space for the infant's emotional experiences. "Holding" involves being emotionally present, understanding the individual's needs, and providing a consistent and reliable presence that fosters a sense of trust and security (Winnicott, 1965, 1960).

The concept of "holding" is crucial during the early stages of development when an individual is vulnerable and dependent on the caregiver for survival. It establishes the foundation for healthy emotional development, forming the basis for the infant's capacity to regulate emotions, form secure attachments, and develop a sense of self (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, Wall, 1978; Winnicott, 1958).

Through "holding", the caregiver provides a holding environment that enables the individual to explore and engage with the world while knowing that they have a secure base to return to for comfort and support. This "holding environment" allows the individual to gradually develop a sense of agency and autonomy, confident in the knowledge that they are held in mind and emotionally supported (Winnicott, 1965, 1960).

“Holding” plays a crucial role not only in early developmental stages but also throughout the lifespan. As individuals grow and face various challenges and transitions, the presence of a holding environment becomes vital for emotional well-being and growth. This “holding” can come from significant relationships, therapeutic contexts, or supportive communities that provide a sense of containment, understanding, and empathy (Bowlby, 1988; Winnicott, 1960).

In the context of the holdership, the concept of “holding” highlights the importance of creating a nurturing and supportive environment within holdership. It emphasizes the role of emotional attunement, empathy, and responsiveness in fostering a sense of safety and security for individuals. Through “holding”, individuals can feel supported, validated, and held in mind, enabling them to explore and engage with their experiences while knowing they have a supportive relational container (Stern, 2004; Siegel, 1999).

By integrating the insights of Winnicott’s concept of holding into this approach, one recognizes the significance of creating relational spaces that provide emotional holding and support. This holding environment allows individuals to feel secure, nurtured, and validated as they navigate the complexities of their personal and professional lives within the context of holdership.

Holdership as object relations

The concept of holdership relations based on object relations theory, as seen through the lens of Winnicott (1971, 1965). Holdership relations refer to the dynamic and reciprocal interactions between individuals within relational contexts, where the focus is on the quality of the relational experiences and the emotional holding provided.

Winnicott emphasizes that holdership relations are essential for the development of a sense of self and the establishment of secure attachments. These relations involve the attuned and responsive presence of caregivers or significant others who provide emotional containment, support, and validation. The quality of holdership relations shapes an individual’s ability to form healthy relationships, regulate emotions, and navigate the complexities of social interactions (Winnicott, 1986, 1965).

Holdership relations are built upon the foundation of the early mother-infant relationship, where the mother's ability to attune to the infant's needs and provide a secure holding environment is crucial. As the infant grows, holdership relations expand to include other significant relationships, such as father, siblings, extended family, and later on, peers and intimate partners (Bowlby, 1982; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, Wall, 1978).

In holdership relations, individuals experience a sense of emotional holding and containment, where their emotional experiences are acknowledged, understood, and validated. Through these relations, individuals develop a sense of trust, security, and connectedness, enabling them to explore their internal and external worlds with confidence and resilience (Kohut, 1971; Winnicott, 1965).

The concept of holdership relations also encompasses the idea of "transitional objects", which serve as mediators of the holding experience. "Transitional objects" represent the continuity of the holdership relationship when the caregiver is physically absent. They provide a sense of comfort, security, and familiarity, facilitating the child's transition between dependence and independence (Winnicott, 1971, 1953).

In the context of this approach, holdership relations underscore the importance of creating relational contexts that provide emotional holding and support. These relations involve attunement, responsiveness, and empathy, where individuals feel seen, heard, and understood. Holdership relations foster a sense of safety, trust, and validation, enabling individuals to engage in authentic and meaningful connections within holdership (Mitchell & Black, 1995; Bollas, 1987).

By integrating the insights of Winnicott's object relations theory and the concept of holdership relations into this approach, one acknowledges the significance of creating relational dynamics that prioritize emotional holding. This includes fostering attuned and responsive interactions, validating emotional experiences, and providing a secure base from which individuals can explore, grow, and thrive (Stern, 1985; Winnicott, 1965).

Table 1 presents the key dimensions of the proposed approach, which integrates philosophical, psychoanalytical, and organizational studies concepts and perspectives to enhance our understanding of holdership as sustenance. The components of the approach include “*conatus*”, which represents individuals’ inherent drive for self-satisfaction and self-preservation. The notion of “discourses” encompass the speech and language structures that shape subjectivity, particularly within psychoanalytic contexts. “Affect” encompasses emotions and affective states that have an impact on human interactions. “Holder” is represented by the concept of the transitional object and the “good enough mother,” highlighting the importance of support and care for healthy development. The “transitional environment” provides a context for exploring and integrating new perspectives and identities. The “transformative environment” creates a space for change, innovation, and personal and professional growth. “Holding” point-out the emotional containment and support provided by individuals or environments, fostering psychological trust and safety. “Holdership relations” involve the interactions and interpersonal dynamics within organizational contexts, influencing psychological development. The table offers a comprehensive overview of the approach’s dimensions and concepts, providing a valuable framework for further exploration and understanding.

Table 1
 Key approach dimensions

Approach Components	Concept Descriptions
Individual A and B (<i>Conatus</i>)	Conatus represents the inherent force in each individual to persevere in existence, seek self-satisfaction, and preserve their own being.
Social Ties (Discourses)	Refers to the speech and language structures that shape and influence subjectivity, especially in the psychoanalytic context.
Affect	Refers to the emotions, feelings, and affective states that influence human interactions.
Holder (Transitional Object)	Individual or symbolic element that assists in the transition from the inner world to the external world. Refers to Winnicottian concept of “good enough mother”, figure who provides adequate care and support to promote healthy development.

Transitional Environment	Provides a context for transitional experiences and facilitates the exploration and integration of new perspectives and identities.
Transformative Environment	Provides a space for change, innovation, and personal and professional growth.
Holding	Represents the care, support, and emotional containment provided by an individual or environment, fostering a sense of psychological trust and safe.
Holderness Relations (Object Relations)	Involves the interactions and interpersonal dynamics that occur within an organizational context. Deals with the interactions and interpersonal relationships that are internalized and influence psychological development.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the limitations and shortcomings of charisma-oriented approaches in leadership studies (Avolio & Bass, 1991; Burns, 1978). These approaches, while emphasizing the personal qualities and charismatic behaviors of leaders, often overlook the contextual and environmental factors that significantly influence leadership effectiveness. As a result, scholars and practitioners have called for a shift towards a more integrative understanding of leadership that takes into account the complex interplay between leaders, followers, and the broader organizational and societal context (Yammarino & Desserroux, 2018; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

In line with this growing emphasis on context and environment, the proposed approach of holdership as sustenance offers a distinctive and enriched lens through which to comprehend the intricate human dynamics at play in organizations. By drawing on psychoanalytic object relations theories and integrating insights from authors such as Winnicott, Jacques Lacan, and Christopher Bollas, one sheds light on the importance of support, care, and emotional containment within the organization. This perspective acknowledges that leadership is not solely the responsibility of formal leaders or designated individuals, but rather emerges through the collective efforts of multiple organizational members (Carson, Tesluk, Marrone, 2007; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Gronn & Hamilton, 2004; Pearce & Conger, 2003). It

emphasizes the significant role that followers and other stakeholders play in providing support, creating a nurturing environment, and contributing to the overall relational dynamics.

Furthermore, the approach aligns with contemporary perspectives on organizational studies that highlight the importance of relational dynamics and shared responsibility (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009; Carson, Tesluk, Marrone, 2007; Gronn & Hamilton, 2004; Pearce & Sims Jr., 2002). Instead of focusing solely on the hierarchical authority of formal leaders, this approach recognizes the diverse contributions of individuals at all levels in driving organizational outcomes. It emphasizes the need for collaboration, shared decision-making, and the recognition of unique knowledge and perspectives within the organization. By adopting a collective and distributed perspective, this approach delves deeper into understanding the complex dynamics and its implications for organizational performance.

Overall, this approach of holdership as sustenance aligns with the contemporary trends in organizational studies research that emphasize the importance of context, environment, relational dynamics, shared responsibility, and the creation of a supportive organizational culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Schein, 2010; Edmondson, 2019; Brown, Treviño, Harrison, 2005). By embracing these perspectives, scholars and practitioners can develop a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of relational dynamics and devise effective strategies for individual development and organizational effectiveness. Through this integrative approach, one aims to contribute to the advancement of organizational studies theory and practice in the digital era.

The exploration of concepts from psychoanalytic and philosophical perspectives has shed light on the complexities of relational dynamics and the significance of relational dynamics within holdership. By integrating insights from Spinoza, Winnicott, Lacan, and Bollas, one has deepened our understanding of the multifaceted nature of relational dynamics, emphasizing the interplay between affect, context, and transformative environments (Lacan, 2006; Spinoza, 1994; Winnicott, 1965. Bollas, 1987).

From Spinoza's concept of "*conatus*" to Winnicott's understanding of holding relations, one have recognized the importance of affective experiences, transitional objects, and emotional holding in shaping individuals' development and their interactions within organizational contexts. Lacan's discourse of the analyst has highlighted the role of language,

power dynamics, and the construction of social bonds in influencing relational processes. Bollas has contributed to our understanding of the transformative potential of environments that foster creative exchanges and promote personal growth (Lacan, 2006; Spinoza, 1994; Bollas, 1987; Winnicott, 1965).

By integrating these perspectives, one move beyond the limitations of traditional leadership paradigms, which often focus solely on individual traits, charisma, and behaviors. Instead, one embrace a integrative approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of individuals within relational contexts, the transformative potential of affective experiences, and the role of discourses in shaping social bonds. This approach highlights the importance of creating nurturing and supportive environments that promote emotional holding, encourage innovation, and foster collaboration.

In this sensen, the discussion and conclusions of this article highlight the limitations of entity-oriented leadership paradigms (Uhl.Bien, 2006), and emphasize the need for a more integrative approach that considers the contextual, horizontal, and relational dynamics inter and intraorganizational. The proposed approach of holdership as sustenance aligns with contemporary trends in organizational studies that emphasize the importance of context, environment, relational dynamics, and shared responsibility. It recognizes the significance of support, care, and emotional containment within the organization, and acknowledges the contributions of followers and stakeholders in driving organizational outcomes. This approach contributes to the advancement of organizational studies theory and practice by deepening our understanding of relational dynamics and providing insights into effective strategies for individual development and organizational effectiveness. Integrating insights from Spinoza, Winnicott, Lacan, and Bollas, this approach highlights the transformative potential of affective experiences, discourses, and nurturing environments in shaping relational processes and outcomes. By embracing this comprehensive approach, holders can create environments that foster creativity, resilience, and growth, and navigate the complexities of contemporary organizations in the digital era. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms and effective strategies for implementing this approach in diverse organizational contexts.

Despite the valuable insights provided, it is important to acknowledge some limitations of this study. Firstly, the approach draws heavily on psychoanalytic and philosophical

perspectives, which may limit its applicability in empirical research and practical settings. While these perspectives offer rich theoretical foundations, further empirical investigations are needed to validate and operationalize the concepts and principles of the approach.

Additionally, the approach primarily focuses on the interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics within holdership, and may not fully capture the broader contextual factors that influence leadership and organizational outcomes. Future studies should consider integrating other theoretical frameworks and perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership dynamics.

In addition, the proposed approach may require a significant shift in mindset and organizational culture, which could present challenges in terms of implementation and acceptance within traditional leadership paradigms. Therefore, careful consideration of organizational readiness and strategic planning would be necessary for successful adoption and integration of the approach in real-world organizational contexts.

Lastly, while the current article provides a comprehensive and compelling perspective on holdership as sustenance, it is essential to foster an ongoing dialogue and critical examination of the approach.

By addressing potential limitations and critiques, future articles can further refine and strengthen the framework, ensuring its applicability and relevance in diverse organizational contexts. This can involve exploring alternative perspectives, considering potential unintended consequences of the approach, and examining its limitations in terms of scalability and implementation challenges.

Engaging with critiques also allows for a more balanced and nuanced understanding of the framework's strengths and weaknesses. By addressing and integrating these critiques, future discussions can contribute to the ongoing development and evolution of the holdership approach, ensuring its continuous growth and applicability in leadership studies.

Despite these limitations, the study contributes to organizational studies in several ways. Firstly, it expands the understanding of leadership beyond individual traits and behaviors by highlighting the importance of relational dynamics, emotional holding, and supportive environments. It emphasizes the reciprocal nature of relationships and the significance of followers and other stakeholders in shaping leadership processes and outcomes.

This perspective challenges the traditional hierarchical view of leadership and emphasizes the distributed and collective nature of leadership within organizations.

Secondly, the integration of psychoanalytic and philosophical perspectives enriches our understanding of the underlying psychological and emotional processes at play in intra e interorganizational relational dynamics. By drawing on concepts such as affect, transitional objects, and discourses, the approach provides a deeper exploration of the subjective experiences and intrapersonal dynamics within holdership. It acknowledges the complex interplay between individual internal processes, external influences, and social interactions, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of leadership.

Furthermore, the approach offers insights into the importance of creating nurturing and supportive environments within holdership. It highlights the role of emotional holding, empathy, and collaboration in fostering well-being, innovation, and growth. This perspective aligns with contemporary research on positive organizational behavior and emphasizes the importance of relational aspects for individual and organizational outcomes.

In practical terms, it emphasizes the importance of creating a nurturing and supportive organizational culture. By prioritizing emotional holding, trust, and collaboration, organizations can enhance employee well-being, satisfaction, and engagement. This can be achieved through the promotion of open communication, active listening, and creating spaces for meaningful interactions and connections.

Secondly, the approach of holdership can inform the design and implementation of leadership development programs. By incorporating the principles of emotional intelligence, empathy, and relational skills, organizations can foster the development of leaders who are able to create a safe and supportive environment for their team members. This includes providing opportunities for self-reflection, feedback, and continuous learning.

Furthermore, the approach promotes innovation and creativity within organizations. By recognizing the role of transformative environments and encouraging creative exchanges, organizations can create spaces where new ideas, perspectives, and ways of working can flourish. This can be achieved through the establishment of cross-functional teams, fostering a culture of psychological safety, and providing resources and support for experimentation and risk-taking.

Additionally, the emphasis on relational dynamics and shared responsibility in holdership can enhance team dynamics and collaboration. By promoting open communication, trust, and the recognition of unique contributions, organizations can create an inclusive and collaborative work environment. This can be facilitated through team-building activities, establishing clear goals and expectations, and creating channels for feedback and dialogue.

Lastly, the approach of holdership as sustenance supports employee growth and development. By providing emotional holding and supportive environments, organizations can create opportunities for individuals to learn, grow, and reach their full potential. This can involve providing coaching and mentoring programs, supporting career development initiatives, and creating a culture that values continuous learning and personal growth.

It is important to note that the practical contributions of the holdership may vary depending on the specific organizational context and the implementation strategies adopted. Organizations should consider their unique characteristics, challenges, and resources when applying these principles to create positive and meaningful change within their organizational settings.

In conclusion, the proposed approach of holdership as sustenance expands our understanding of relational dynamics by emphasizing the reciprocal and transformative nature of relationships within organizational contexts. By integrating insights from Spinoza, Winnicott, Lacan, and Bollas, one acknowledge the significance of affect, relational dynamics, and discourses in shaping relational processes and outcomes (Lacan, 2006; Spinoza, 1994; Bollas, 1987; Winnicott, 1971, 1960). This approach invites holders to cultivate transformative and transactional spaces, foster emotional holding, and create environments that promote creativity, resilience, and growth. By embracing this comprehensive approach, holders can navigate the complexities of contemporary organizations, foster collective well-being, and drive innovation in the digital era.

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