

## Distributed Leadership and Emergency Response: A Study on Seafarers

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**Abstract :** Merchant shipping is an occupation with a high rate of fatal injuries caused by organizational accidents and maritime disasters. In most accident investigations, the leader's actions are under scrutiny and point out the necessity to investigate the leader's decisions in critical conditions. While several leadership studies have been carried out in the past, there is a tendency for most research to focus on holders of formal positions. The unit of analysis in most studies has been the 'individual.' A need is, therefore, felt to adopt a practice-based perspective of leadership, understand how leadership emerges to affect maritime safety. This paper explores the phenomenon of distributed leadership among seafarers more holistically. It further examines the role of one form of distributed leadership, that is, planfully aligned leadership in the emergency response of the team. A mixed design will be applied. In the first phase, the data gathered by way of semi-structured interviews will be used to explore the seafarer's implicit understanding of leadership. The data will be used to develop a conceptual framework of distributed leadership, specific to the maritime context. This framework will be used to develop a simulation. Experimental design will be used to examine the relationship between planfully aligned leadership and emergency response of the team members during navigation. Findings show that planfully aligned leadership significantly and positively predicts the emergency response of team members. Planfully aligned leadership leads to a better emergency response of the team members as compared to authoritarian leadership. In the third qualitative phase, additional data will be gathered through semi-structured interviews to further validate the findings to gain a more complete understanding of distributed leadership and its relation to emergency response. Above are the predictive results; the study expects to be a cornerstone of safety leadership research and has important implications for leadership development and training within the maritime industry.

**Keywords :** authoritarian leadership, distributed leadership, emergency response , planfully aligned leadership

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