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# Chapter 11: Leadership Development Needs and Experiences: Survey Findings

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## Abstract

This chapter reports the findings that emerged from the follow-up survey on leadership skills and on people's development needs and experiences. It starts by explaining the design of the survey and the key demographics of the people who completed it. It then reports 'top 10 items' in terms of importance, frequency of occurrence, and the size of gap between the two. Next it reports the three main constructs – Inspiring leadership, Egalitarian leadership, and Leadership development – that emerged from a factor analysis, including the range of viewpoints held. The results indicate that there is evident dissatisfaction with the current state of leadership, and that this is particularly true for leadership development. The large number of open comments from the survey provide additional insights on this.

**Keywords:** Leadership survey; inspiring leadership; egalitarian leadership; leadership development needs; leadership research

## 11.1. Survey design

As explained in Chapter 5, Methodology, a follow-up survey was designed to explore and validate on a broader scale the leadership issues and development needs emerging from the case studies. Since many case study participants commented on the need for a change in traditional leadership styles and expressed a desire for personal self-development as a leader, we designed the survey to explore five facets of leadership spheres, plus routes to developing as a leader:

- Self: Me as a leader
- Employee: Me and the employees I am responsible for
- Team: Me and my team
- Organization: Me and my organization
- Community/society: Me and the wider community/society
- Leadership development: Routes to becoming a leader

A total of 33 items were designed, whereby each of these facets was probed with five to eight items and, building on the design of the Global Education Profiler developed by Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2015) at the University of Warwick, we asked respondents to answer each of the items in two ways:

- **"Importance to me"** (i.e. how important it is to you to practise or experience this at work, e.g. for carrying out projects well and/or for people's well-being)

AND

- **"Frequency of occurrence"** (i.e. how often you actually practise or experience this in your workplace).

They gave their responses on 6-point Likert-type scales, ranging from ‘Very important’ to ‘Not at all important’ for ‘Importance to me’ and ranging from ‘Very often’ to ‘very rarely’ for ‘Frequency of occurrence’.

These scales enabled us to examine not only the issues of importance to the respondents, but also the size of the gap between the importance they attach to something and the extent to which they are experiencing it in their context. This information then offers insights that are helpful for prioritizing the development issues. The survey was available in English and French.

## 11.2. Participants

A total of 240 completed questionnaires were received, with respondents from 31 different countries in all five regions of Africa (North, West, Central, East and Southern). 118 completed the English version and 122 completed the French one. Details of participants’ demographic characteristics are shown in Table 11.1 and Figure 11.1.

	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Total	%
<b>Central Africa</b>	5	20	0	25	<b>11%</b>
<b>East Africa</b>	33	41	3	77	<b>33%</b>
<b>North Africa</b>	3	3	0	6	<b>3%</b>
<b>Southern Africa</b>	4	6	0	10	<b>4%</b>
<b>West Africa</b>	29	89	0	118	<b>50%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>236</b>	
<b>%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>1%</b>		

Table 11.1: Descriptive statistics of participants based on gender and region of origin

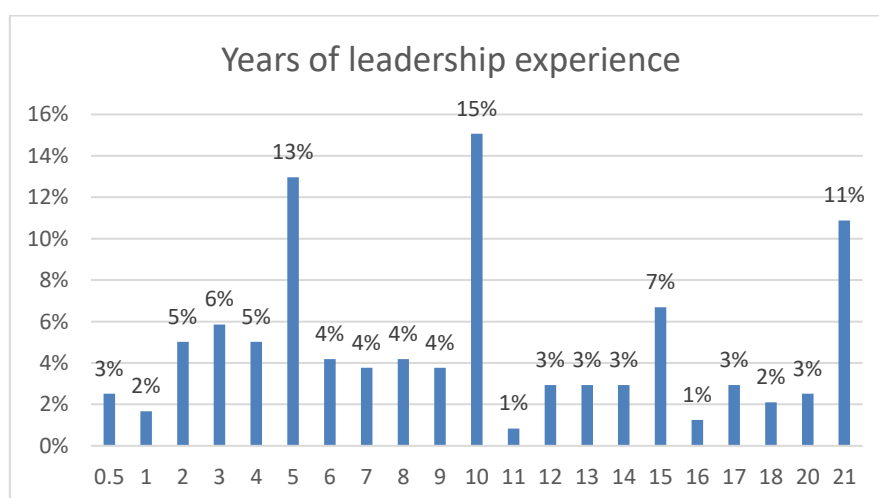


Figure 11.1: Relative distribution of participants based on years of leadership experience

Overall, our survey respondents were two thirds male and one third female, half of them from West Africa, and another third from East Africa, with the remaining 18% from other regions in Africa. 65.4% of respondents were from countries other than our 5 case study countries. 38% of respondents we can categorize as young, with 6 years or less years of leadership experience.

### 11.3. 'Top ten' items

First of all, the mean ratings for importance (IMP) and frequency of occurrence (FOO) were calculated for all of the individual items, along with the gap between IMP and FOO. Then the items were ordered in three ways: size of mean importance, level of frequency of occurrence, and size of gap.

Participants' mean ratings of the items for importance ranged from 5.69 to 4.57. Since 3.5 is the cut-off point between important and not important, these figures indicate that all items were regarded as important or very important. Table 11.2 shows the 'top ten' items for IMP (in other words, the ten items that received the highest mean scores for importance), along with their corresponding FOO and Gap scores.

	Mean IMP	Mean FOO	Mean Gap
<i>Having a clear vision for my team and my organisation</i> [Self]	5.69	5.03	0.66
<i>Being aware of my weaknesses</i> [Self]	5.69	4.89	0.80
<i>Ensuring fair treatment for both men and women inside and outside my/our work</i> [Community/Society]	5.69	5.11	0.58
<i>Motivating staff</i> [Employee]	5.66	4.97	0.72
<i>Promoting ethical ways of doing my/our work</i> [Community/Society]	5.64	5.16	0.48
<i>Helping my team diagnose and address problems that are preventing progress</i> [Team]	5.63	5.03	0.60
<i>Communicating strategic direction and goals to my team</i> [Team]	5.60	4.96	0.65
<i>Having strong values that influence my work</i> [Self]	5.60	5.09	0.52
<i>Coaching my staff</i> [Employee]	5.60	4.92	0.68
<i>Giving constructive feedback to my staff</i> [Employee]	5.59	5.06	0.53
<i>Managing my emotions well at work, e.g. controlling my anger or level of anxiety</i> [Self]	5.59	4.70	0.88

Table 11.2: The ten items rated highest for importance and their corresponding frequency of occurrence and gap scores

As can be seen, the items ranged across the different facets of leadership, with issues relating to 'self' and 'handling employees' appearing more frequently than the other elements (4 out of 10 and 3 out of 10 items respectively).

Participants' mean ratings of the items for frequency of occurrence ranged from 4.08 to 5.16. Since 3.5 is the cut-off point between frequent and infrequent ratings, these figures indicate that all items were regarded as occurring relatively frequently. Table 11.3 shows the 'bottom ten' items for FOO (in other words, the ten items that received the lowest mean scores for frequency of occurrence), along with their corresponding IMP and Gap scores.

	Mean IMP	Mean FOO	Mean Gap
<i>Having access to helpful leadership training programmes</i> [Development]	5.32	4.08	1.24
<i>Seeking feedback from the external community/stakeholders on my/our work</i> [Community/Society]	4.92	4.16	0.76
<i>Being mentored very well</i> [Development]	5.39	4.23	1.15
<i>Respecting my leaders by always obeying what they say</i> [Organisation]	4.57	4.25	0.32
<i>Consulting widely with all my/our stakeholders</i> [Community/Society]	4.98	4.28	0.71
<i>Developing plans for managing change in my organisation</i> [Organisation]	5.33	4.32	1.02
<i>Learning from reading (leadership) books</i> [Development]	5.10	4.33	0.66
<i>Reconciling conflicting needs/demands of leaders above and the people below me</i> [Organisation]	5.20	4.40	0.80
<i>Persuading my leaders to consider new ways of doing things</i> [Organisation]	5.33	4.42	0.91
<i>Having peers with whom I can discuss leadership challenges</i> [Development]	5.48	4.45	1.03

Table 11.3: The ten items given the lowest ratings for frequency of occurrence and their corresponding importance and gap scores

As can be seen from Table 11.3, the items relating to leadership development and to leadership across the organization (4 out of 10 items for each) occurred with comparatively lower frequency than other facets of leadership. These same items did also not figure in the top ten most important items and ranked most often among the lowest in importance.

In terms of size of mean gap between participants' importance ratings and frequency of occurrence, they ranged from 1.24 to 0.32. Table 11.4 shows the eleven largest mean gaps between mean importance ratings and mean frequency of occurrence ratings (there were two tied items at #10, and so eleven items have been included).

	Mean IMP	Mean FOO	Mean Gap
<i>Having access to helpful leadership training programmes</i> [Development]	5.32	4.08	1.24
<i>Being mentored very well</i> [Development]	5.39	4.23	1.15
<i>Having peers with whom I can discuss leadership challenges</i> [Development]	5.48	4.45	1.03
<i>Developing plans for managing changing in my organisation</i> [Organisation]	5.33	4.32	1.02
<i>Being able to choose competent people to work with me</i> [Employee]	5.56	4.55	1.01
<i>Persuading my leaders to consider new ways of doing things</i> [Organisation]	5.33	4.42	0.91
<i>Having good role models to follow</i> [Development]	5.46	4.56	0.90
<i>Managing my emotions well at work, e.g. controlling my anger or level of anxiety</i> [Self]	5.59	4.70	0.88

<i>Confidently voicing my opinion to people who are above me even when my views are different from theirs [Organisation]</i>	5.31	4.48	0.83
<i>Reconciling conflict needs/demands of leaders above me and the people below me [Organisation]</i>	5.20	4.40	0.80
<i>Being aware of my weaknesses [Self]</i>	5.69	4.89	0.80

Table 11.4: The eleven items with the largest gaps between ratings for importance and frequency of occurrence, along with their corresponding IMP and FOO ratings

As can be seen from Table 11.4, the largest gaps again occurred for leadership development and leadership across the organisation (4 out of 11 items for each), followed by issues related to 'self' (2 items).

#### 11.4. Underlying leadership constructs

After this we carried out separate factor analyses of the importance items and the frequency of occurrence items and found there were three underlying constructs. A few of the items either loaded across two or more constructs or else loaded differently on the importance scales than on the frequency of occurrence scales so, for the purpose of subsequent analysis, these items were discarded. The retained 22 items and their factor loadings are shown in Table 11.5. Reliability scores were obtained for each scale (importance and frequency of occurrence) for each of the three underlying constructs and all were satisfactorily high (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.7$ , and  $> 0.8$  in three cases). These are shown in Table 11.6.

Item	IMP			FOO		
	IL	EL	LD	IL	EL	LD
<i>Enabling my team to perform their tasks through ensuring supportive processes and available means.</i>	0.74	0.01	0.17	0.74	0.14	0.12
<i>Helping my team diagnose and address problems that are preventing progress.</i>	0.69	0.11	0.12	0.63	0.42	0.14
<i>Having a clear vision for my team and my organisation.</i>	0.64	0.09	0.17	0.52	0.33	0.31
<i>Ensuring that my team members of different backgrounds co-operate well among each other.</i>	0.61	0.27	0.16	0.39	0.31	0.21
<i>Motivating my staff.</i>	0.64	0.12	0.14	0.61	0.28	0.20
<i>Coaching my staff.</i>	0.54	0.11	0.21	0.54	0.19	0.24
<i>Giving constructive feedback to my staff</i>	0.57	0.27	0.10	0.71	0.19	0.01
<i>Managing my time and conflicting priorities well</i>	0.49	0.12	0.18	0.56	0.00	0.35
<i>Managing my emotions well at work, e.g. controlling my anger or level of anxiety.</i>	0.43	0.09	0.22	0.44	0.19	0.25

<i>Confidently voicing my opinion to people who are above me even when my views are different to theirs.</i>	0.09	0.74	-0.04	0.13	0.76	0.10
<i>Reconciling conflicting needs/demands of leaders above me and the people below me.</i>	0.23	0.64	0.25	0.14	0.59	0.14
<i>Communicating effectively to my leaders the needs of my staff.</i>	0.43	0.47	0.14	0.22	0.65	0.10
<i>Confidently managing staff members who are older than me.</i>	0.17	0.52	0.38	0.21	0.47	0.13
<i>Persuading my leaders to consider new ways of doing things.</i>	0.36	0.46	0.02	0.18	0.65	0.18
<i>Being given responsibilities early on in my life/career.</i>	-0.05	0.47	0.40	0.08	0.43	0.25
<i>Promoting ethical ways of doing my/our work.</i>	0.29	0.29	-0.05	0.28	0.48	0.14
<i>Reflecting on the challenges I have faced as a leader.</i>	0.10	0.28	0.68	0.34	0.30	0.49
<i>Being mentored very well.</i>	0.13	0.20	0.66	0.16	0.18	0.75
<i>Having good role models to follow.</i>	0.29	-0.07	0.66	0.12	0.19	0.73
<i>Learning from reading (leadership) books.</i>	0.18	-0.03	0.64	0.23	0.12	0.62
<i>Having access to helpful leadership training programmes.</i>	0.35	-0.02	0.66	0.16	0.25	0.76
<i>Having peers with whom I can discuss leadership challenges.</i>	0.14	0.20	0.63	0.20	0.11	0.70

Table 11.5: The three underlying leadership constructs and the factor loadings of the component items

<b>Construct</b>	<b>IMP</b>	<b>FOO</b>
Inspiring leadership (IL)	0.813	0.834
Egalitarian leadership (EL)	0.700	0.743
Leadership development (LD)	0.789	0.832

Table 11.6: Reliability of the three underlying leadership constructs (Cronbach's alpha)

Factor 1 reflects people's perceptions of working with others when leading, including developing a vision, enhancing team performance and relations, and enabling everyone to achieve. Factor 2 reflects people's concerns about dealing with hierarchy and their desire to lead in a more egalitarian environment. Factor 3 reflects people's perceptions of leadership development needs and opportunities. So, on the basis of the content of the item loadings (and also partly drawing on terminology used by Redeker, de Fries, Rouckhout, Vermeren, & Filip, 2014), we have labelled the three factors as follows:

- Factor 1: Inspiring leadership (IL)
- Factor 2: Egalitarian leadership (EL)
- Factor 3: Leadership development (LD)

### 11.5. Analysis of the three underlying leadership constructs

Having established the reliability of the three underlying leadership constructs, we used these for all further analyses.

Table 11.7 gives the mean scores for the IMP and FOO scores for each of the constructs, the gap between them, and paired t-test scores for each of the construct pairs. As can be seen, there was a statistically significant difference between the IMP and FOO ratings for all three constructs, indicating a desire for change.

	IMP	FOO	Gap	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Inspiring leadership (IL)	5.58	4.93	0.65	15.92	<.001
Egalitarian leadership (EL)	5.34	4.64	0.70	16.49	<.001
Leadership development (LD)	5.35	4.37	0.98	17.07	<.001

Table 11.7: Mean IMP and FOO scores for each of the underlying leadership constructs, and the significance of the gap between them

Tests were also run to explore whether any of the following demographic characteristics influenced the ratings: gender, age (less than 40, 40 and older), length of leadership experience (less than 6 years and 6 years or more), and geographical region. No meaningful significant differences were found for any of these independent variables.

### 11.6. Distribution of scores by underlying leadership construct

Distribution plots were then obtained for the three leadership constructs and these are shown in Figures 11.2 – 11.4.

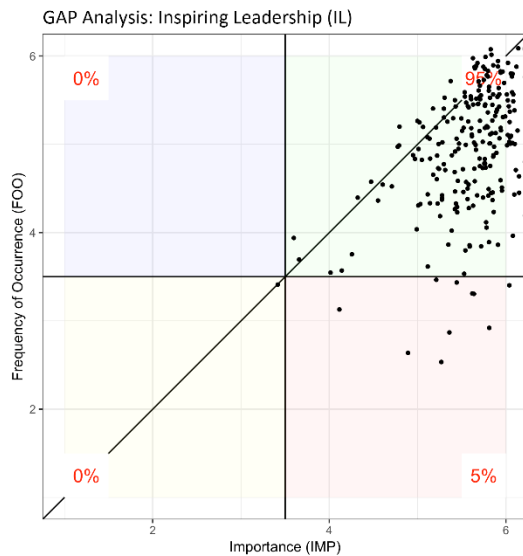


Figure 11.2: Gap matrix for Inspiring Leadership (IL)

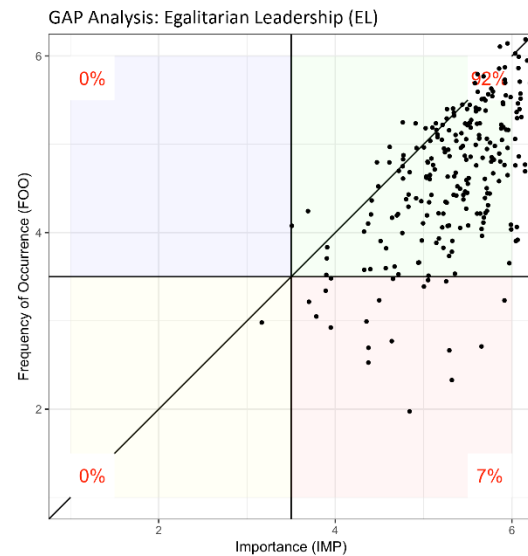


Figure 11.3: Gap matrix for Egalitarian Leadership (EL)

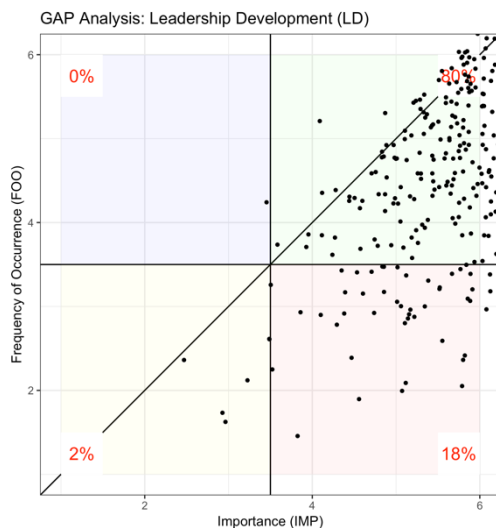


Figure 11.4: Gap matrix for Leadership Development (LD)

As can be seen from the matrices, almost all of the respondents rated the three constructs as important or very important, as nearly all the scores fell in the two right hand quadrants. For Inspiring Leadership (Fig. 11.2), there is a very strong consensus on the importance of the issues (the ratings are closely bunched); nevertheless, the gap between the importance ratings and the frequency of occurrence ratings is noticeable. In fact, 5% of the respondents' ratings fell into the unfulfilling quadrant (bottom right), suggesting that they would experience a sense of dissatisfaction. For Egalitarian Leadership (Fig. 11.3), there was almost unanimous agreement that this was important or very important, although the distribution was a little more dispersed than for Inspiring Leadership. 7% of respondents reported that their experience of new ways of leading was low. For Leadership Development (Fig.11.4), the distribution is noticeably more dispersed. 98% regard it as important or very important, but

18% rated their experience of leadership development as low or very low, and thus fell into the unfulfilling quadrant. This clearly indicates a perceived need for more and/or better leadership development.

The diagonal in the matrices shows where the IMP and FOO scores are the same (i.e. where their scores are identical, with no gap at all) and thus indicate the respondents are satisfied. Another way of analyzing this data is thus to examine the proportion of respondents who fall into different sizes of gap. This is shown in Table 11.8 and Figure 11.5.

Size of gap	IL		EL		LD	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
-2.0 to -0.01	0	0	0	0	1	0.4%
-1.0 to -0.01	11	4.6%	10	4.2%	4	1.7%
0 to +0.99	153	63.8%	145	60.4%	119	49.6%
+1.0 to +1.99	55	22.9%	70	29.2%	75	31.3%
+2.0 to +2.99	9	3.8%	6	2.5%	30	12.5%
+3.0 to +3.99	0	0	1	0.4%	4	1.7%
+4.0 to +4.99	0	0	0	0	1	0.4%

Table 11.8: Size of gap between IMP and FOO ratings by frequency and percentage per construct

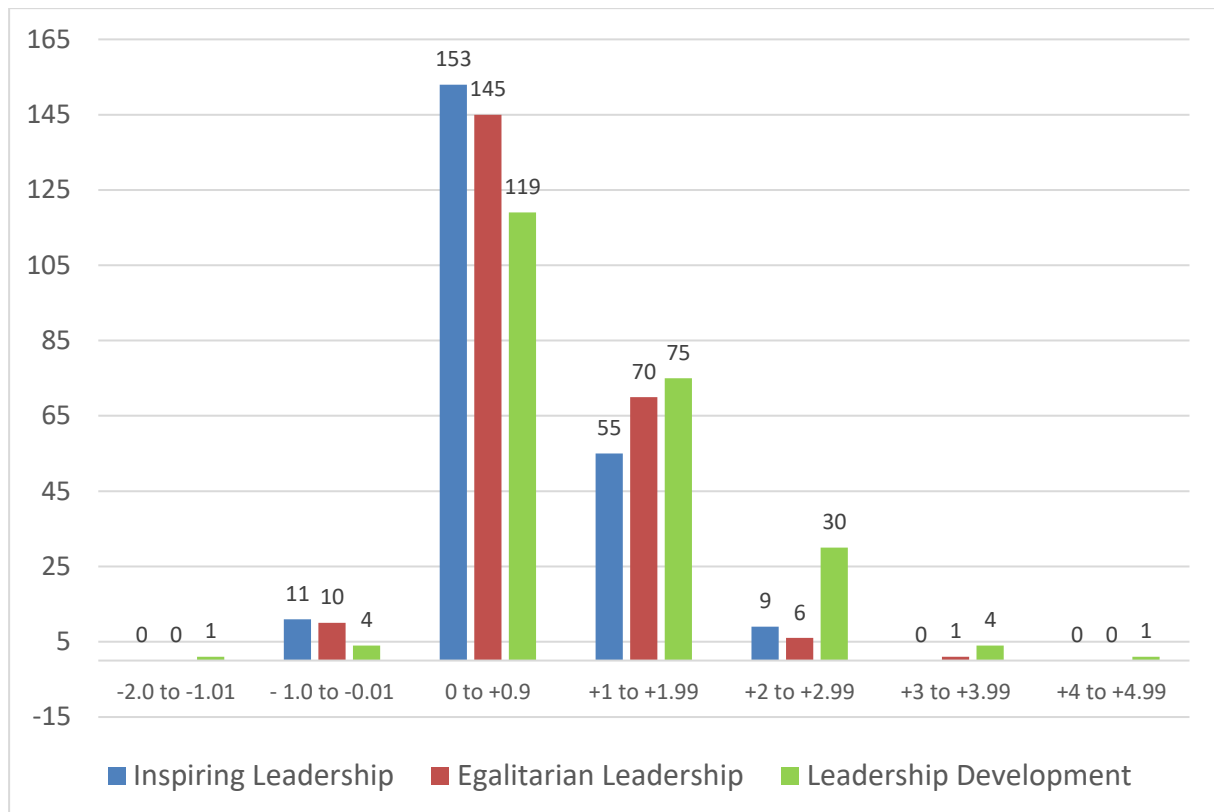


Figure 11.5: Frequency of size of gap between IMP and FOO (on a 6-point scale)

As can be seen from Table 11.8 and Figure 11.5, the most frequent gap for all three constructs was between 0 and +0.9 on a 6-point scale, although the proportion falling into this category was noticeably less for Leadership Development than for the other two constructs. Between 22.9% and 31.3% of respondents were showing a gap of between +1.0 and +1.99 on a 6-point scale, which is a large gap and a relatively large percentage. In this category, Leadership Development once again showed the highest proportion, but Egalitarian Leadership was very close. There were relatively few people showing an even larger gap, although for Leadership Development, 12.5% showed a gap of between +2.0 and +2.99, which is massive, and a further 2.1% showed larger gaps still.

These results indicate that there is an evident degree of dissatisfaction with the current state of leadership. This is particularly marked for Leadership Development, with a huge 45.6% of the respondents revealing a gap of 1 or more points (on a 6-point scale) between IMP and FOO; i.e. between the importance they attach to leadership development and the frequency with which they experience it. For Egalitarian Leadership, the percentage showing a gap of 1 or more points is 32.1%, which is also very high since it is about one third of the respondents. For Inspiring Leadership, the figure is 26.7%, which again is high in that it is about one quarter of the respondents.

## 11.7. Open comments

A total of 68 participants added comments in the open question at the end of the survey. Some made a brief one sentence comment, while others wrote several paragraphs. The French comments were translated into English by one of the authors, then the data were imported into the qualitative data analysis program, MaxQDA, and coded inductively. Three broad themes emerged, as shown in Figure 11.6: the leadership multiplex, leadership in Africa, and leadership development. In addition, two comments were unclear and seven commented on the survey (e.g. that they had found it helpful to complete). We report on the three broad themes in turn.

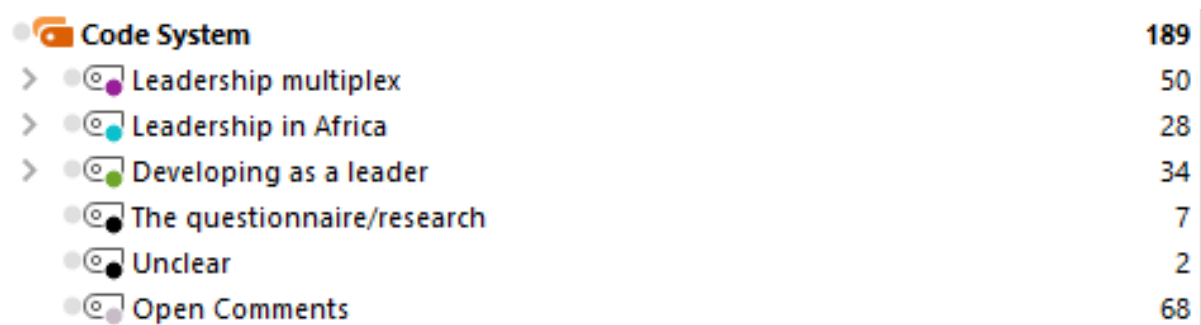


Figure 11.6: Broad themes in the open comments

### 11.7.1 Leadership multiplex

As we explained in Chapter 2, leadership can be conceptualized as a multiplex, involving four interrelated elements: leader, follower, context, and purpose/goal. These elements emerged in the comments, with a total of 51 comments referring to the leadership multiplex. Of these, the largest number of comments were made on 'leader' and on the leader-follower dynamic, which we have labelled Inspiring leadership. The distribution and frequency of comments are shown in Figure 11.7.

▼ Leadership multiplex	0
▼ The leader	0
▼ Leader attributes	0
Confident, strong, resilient	5
Caring & supportive towards st...	3
Act as role model	2
Open-minded/positive attitude	2
Fair, humble	2
Responsible & disciplined	2
Dynamic & passionate	1
Emotionally intelligent	1
Good communication	1
▼ Personal challenges for leaders	0
▼ Jealousy & bias	0
Gender bias	2
Age bias	2
Difficult tasks	2
Lack of mentoring	1
Leadership is generally difficult	1
Lack of belief from superiors	1
Supervisors have limited knowl...	1
▼ Personal needs of leaders	0
Sense of achievement	1
Time for reflection	1
Inspiring leadership	11
Benefits of good leadership	1
▼ Context	0
Contexts are different	1
Broader environment	2
Workplace culture/morale	2
Task/goals should not be only priority	3

Figure 11.7: Codings for the Leadership multiplex

19 comments were made on the attributes of a good leader, with confident/resilient and caring/supportive being mentioned the most often; for example:

*Confidence always makes a leader to have courage to stand to any challenges that they may face in an organization. [East Africa participant]*

*It's always very important to know your staff and apply emotional maturity to handle them, you get their commitment more that way and they can go the whole hog to do whatever task you assign them with all pleasure. I have the habit of saying to my staff "Thank you", "well done" and they get more encouraged and motivated that way. I don't criticize to make them feel bad, but help them see deficiencies in a given assignment and give them clues and suggestions on how to handle it. This way, I get better results. It has made my leadership less cumbersome and easy to do. [West Africa participant]*

Several personal challenges were mentioned, including gender bias and age bias, as well as personal needs in relation to leadership.

There were 11 comments on inspiring leadership – the importance of consulting with others and being open to incorporating their ideas.

*Leadership is an aspect that is exercised by relying on other Colleagues of Work. To be a good leader, you have to open up, try to understand the other in your points of view and see how to integrate it into the dynamics of your organization or your project. It's not about taking all the points of view into account, even the insane ones, but focus on those that are realistic and achievable in time and space that can visibly advance your organization or your project in its race for the realization of its ambitions. [East Africa participant]*

*I believe working in a dynamic environment and team work. I feel that creative does not happen in isolation. [East Africa participant]*

*I work in South Sudan my experience in leadership is that mindset and positive attitude towards development and embracing change is the driving force to any successful project. Above all is the readiness to integrate ideas from different stakeholders and individuals by valuing their ideas as great contributions to any developmental initiative. [East Africa participant]*

Finally, with regard to the leadership multiplex, a few people commented on the importance of both the workplace context and the broader regional/national context.

### 11.7.2 Leadership in Africa

Participants made 27 comments on the leadership situation in Africa, on the one hand mentioning hindrances to good leadership, and on the other leadership needs that exist (see Figure 11.8).



Figure 11.8: Codings for leadership in Africa

With regard to hindrances, there was a cluster of comments on the problems caused by traditional beliefs/customs, corruption and autocratic or egocentric leadership.

*Actual practices in many public agencies are at variance with the policies and ethics and a lot of people do not question this due to the fear of losing their jobs.* [West Africa participant]

*Effective leadership inevitably contributes to achieving the goals of the firm. but in Africa the socio-cultural burdens related to customs and beliefs make it difficult to apply good corporate leadership.* [West Africa participant]

*Leadership can be subverted and directed to fulfill a narrow minded and fraudulent perspective; it becomes an arduous task to fight such a captured leadership. The best way is to be vocal and continuously raise concerns about fraudulent activities and to never compromise one's conscience. Repeated exposure of fraudulent behavior is paramount.* [Southern Africa participant]

*In Ghana, leadership is a great challenge which retards development. Leaders are appointed because of their academic qualifications, the popularity of the school they attended, family, church, and political affiliations without necessarily considering competencies. Leadership is mainly autocratic and does not involve subordinate ideas and inputs. Leaders generally lack technical intelligence, spatial management and financial discipline.* [West Africa participant]

Linked with this, participants referred to several 'lacks': lack of leadership skills, lack of consultation and lack of good role models. For some of the participants, this was very demoralising.

*Africa lacks leadership skill, hence our problems.* [West Africa participant]

*The most important thing for me in leadership is that the leader must be a model and must take into account the concerns of his collaborators. This is often missing in Africa. In a nutshell, the model and sharing are essential for good management in Africa.* [West Africa participant]

*It's hard to be a leader in a dimension that only accepts chiefs and bosses, even more so if the superior does not have that notion of leader, which creates frequent conflict. I tried for a long time to be a leader but it was too difficult. Most people considered the participative approach as a weakness, this notion is still absent especially among the decision-makers who do not even accept it. I have a lot to say about it, I hope that I will have an opportunity to express myself.* [North Africa participant]

In light of these hindrances, some participants commented on leadership needs in Africa. Several referred to the need for stronger values, transformational leaders who can change the current situation, and training that come overcome traditional thinking.

*How to build the African leaders of tomorrow? By giving them models, offering them an educational system full of values and with a clear vision for the role they must play and finally giving them the opportunity to act and build up experience in the construction of the Africa in their area of expertise.* [Central Africa participant]

*I consider the training of soft skills paramount at the workplace in order to disassemble primitive characteristics (traditional) that often surface among workmates especially those in decision making positions. Characteristics such as "seniors are always true", "young people do not talk among elder", "Adults know it all", "leadership is meant for grownup", "commanding is for the adults and submission for the young" among others have caused chaos at the workplace, hindering directed career development for younger workers.* [East Africa participant]

The last comment above brings us to the third broad main theme: leadership development.

### 11.7.3 Developing as a leader

Participants made 34 comments on the process of developing as a leader, covering several different aspects, as shown in Figure 11.9.

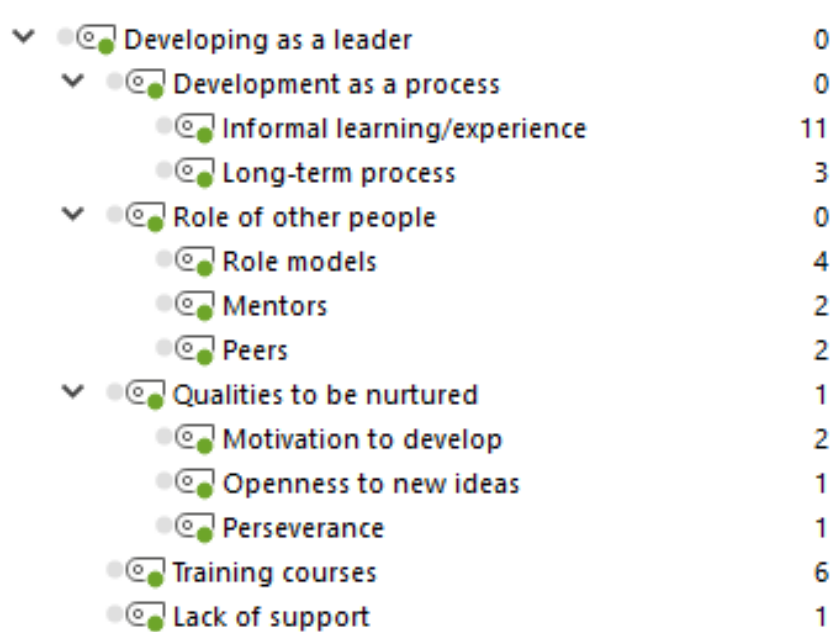


Figure 11.9: Codings for developing as a leader

The largest number of comments referred to the importance of informal learning experiences.

*Leadership is a journey and not a destination, we progress continuously if we work on it and we stay stationary, in the best case, if we do not work on it. Leadership experiences seen early in the career have a very high probability of becoming a benchmark or*

*reference against which the rest of the career will be measured at the personal level. The beginning of the Leadership trip is therefore very important. [West Africa participant]*

*Having started at the very bottom of the work/task ladder despite being academically qualified was/is the best thing that could happen to anyone with a vision to become a true professional person and leader of others. My most important qualification is not an academic one! It's called QBE, "Qualified by Experience". The scars gained from failure within real project experience and the assimilated feedback have shaped me as a professional and expert in my field and as a Leader. [Southern Africa participant]*

*I personally believe that leadership is learnt but not taught in any traditional training center. I learnt to be able to bring different people together by just going out and getting them to work together. The experience will establish a new perspective on the way you view leadership which is not often what you'd read from books. [Central Africa participant]*

Others referred to formal training courses. Many were very positive about them, although some had reservations.

*Some training courses on leadership in other contexts have allowed me to reinforce my choice to respect the good practices in my company and to increase my strength to influence my leaders. The impact has very often been fruitful for the organization. [Central Africa participant]*

*Outside stakeholders has shown a great impact towards career and leadership development by offering some training to leaders in Africa to enhance education transformation. I have a good example from Warwick in Africa project. They have impacted to many of us African teachers through various training and its impact is seen and acknowledged to high extent. [Participant's region not given]*

*Africa doesn't have the luxury of role models to mentor the youth by observing. Nonetheless, reinforcing our education with soft skills training elements such as teamwork, respect, discipline, communication, problem-solving, negotiation among others should be handy. The unfortunate part is that soft skill training is lacking in 80% of the workplaces for reasons that are part of the very discussion I am trying to present. [East Africa participant]*

*Leadership is too much in the books, it must be more in the guts of people and translate into actions. This is how we inspire others and those that follow us. One can learn theory, and yet true leaders are those who have not learned that in school and in all those MBAs of the earth that train on the basis of theoretical format instead of training. True leaders believe in what they do and live and do it with passion, humility, perseverance, resilience, and, hopefully, with integrity, otherwise they are only manipulative opportunists as we see every day. True leaders are ready to die for what they believe. [West Africa participants]*

As some of the above comments note, some of the participants also identified the qualities that need to be fostered in any development process. Others also referred to the importance of mentors and role models for leadership development.

*Having mentors as well as the desire and hunger for growth is very important for leaders. Leaders must be ready to learn and want to grow each day in order to help the people under them grow as well. “growth mindset”. [East Africa participant]*

*Mentorship and peers are important in developing good leaders. [East Africa participant]*

*Good examples can do a lot for leadership development, but it is important that the education system and the environment also play their part in acquiring the fundamental values and elements for forming a leader in society. Abilities and skills can also add opportunities to develop a leader. Finally, the sum of all this: experience helps to build confidence and create confidence in a leader. [Central Africa participant]*

As the last comment above indicates, in fact a combination of development opportunities is needed. In other words, multiple elements are involved in the development of leaders, including the broader environment and educational system, in addition to formal and informal learning and the influence of role models and mentors.

## **11.8. Summary and discussion**

This survey has highlighted a very strong consensus among respondents on the importance of all aspects of leadership; all our survey items scored well above 3.5 for importance. Within the top ten most important items, issues relating to ‘self’ and ‘handling employees’ appeared more frequently than others. We further noted that the items that were least frequently experienced were in the areas of ‘leadership development’ and ‘leadership across the organization’. Consequently, these same items showed the largest gaps.

Factor analyses resulted in three factors as follows:

- Inspiring leadership (IL)– mostly related to aspects of self – dealing with employees and managing a team: some respondents (5%) rated their experience as low, indicating dissatisfaction, and consequently a need to improve on these aspects. It is interesting that the survey items that focus on self-awareness as a leader, as well as people-oriented leadership skills such as dealing with employees and leading a team were rated so high on importance, but also that their occurrence is the highest of all items.
- Egalitarian leadership (EL): mostly concerned items related to leadership across an organization and showed a lower occurrence than importance – with 7% dissatisfied. These include items related to leading across the organization, such as managing upwards, and managing change.
- Leadership development (LD): gap analysis showed the largest group of respondents dissatisfied (18%) with their experience, indicating a need for better or more leadership development opportunities

A more detailed gap analysis revealed that there is an evident degree of dissatisfaction with the current state of leadership. This is particularly marked for Leadership Development, with almost half of respondents revealing a gap of 1 or more points (on a 6-point scale) between

the importance they attach to leadership development and the frequency with which they experience it. For Egalitarian Leadership, the dissatisfaction percentage is about one third of the respondents; for Inspiring Leadership, the figure is also high in that it is a little over a quarter of the respondents.

Respondents' interest in the topic was also evident from the many open comments (68: 44 in English, 24 in French) that they provided. Three broad themes emerged from the comments: the leadership multiplex, leadership in Africa, and leadership development. The comments illustrate the frustrations of respondents with the gaps they experience, but even more comments included ideas and suggestions on a practical way forward to address these gaps. The following comment is illustrative of this:

*African leaders often fall into an operational trap because of various factors including the pressure of the hierarchy that is often present in Africa and misleading our realities. We need more and more transformational leaders who can with the right conditions prove their effectiveness. It would then be necessary to allow these young leaders to pass on their knowledge and experience to the younger ones while they are active or through blogs, books or lectures in schools. Finally, we need platforms for research and exchange through teams that will focus on specific activities. [West Africa participant]*

Overall, the survey thus indicates a consensus among leaders of a need to improve inspiring leadership aspects, a need for more attention to be paid to egalitarian leadership, and for more leadership development opportunities. One young female survey respondent from Nigeria phrased her view on the need for transformation as follows:

*While many people don't usually discuss leadership, I think it is worth looking at the change of trend from passive leadership to proactive leadership when many African leaders are no longer in the limiting mentality of waiting to be provided for or waiting to be told what to do or waiting to be given things as we see in the relationship between Africa and more developed countries in the west or Asia. This is a mindset that needs to be broken free from at all levels of society from government to small business, farmers etc. Taking ownership, accountability and responsibility are key factors and servant leadership is serving the common good of the community and nation rather than trying to keep everything within the family and close friends. [LinkedIn message to one of the authors]*

We can conclude on a positive note. Our respondents' keen awareness of the gaps in leadership is combined with their ambition and a range of ideas on how, and confidence in the ability, to address these gaps. As such, we are witnessing the signs of emerging leadership transformation, especially among young leaders but also among many senior leaders.

## References

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