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## Leadership Development in Context: Insights and Best Practices from Global Organizations

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction/Main Objective:** This study explores the diverse leadership development practices of three global organisations to identify effective strategies and their alignment with organisational performance. **Background Problems:** Leadership development is recognised as critical for organisational success, yet approaches vary widely across industries and regions, requiring contextual alignment with workforce needs. **Novelty:** The paper contributes by comparing leadership development strategies in diverse organisational contexts, and linking them to Adult Learning Theory (ALT) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to explain how adults learn and sustain motivation in leadership training. **Research Methods:** A document-based comparative analysis was conducted using secondary public data from academic literature, industry reports, and company sources. The analysis focused on three multinational organisations known for pioneering and innovating leadership development practices. **Finding/Results:** Findings show that successful leadership development is contextualised, incorporates experiential learning, and leverages digital technologies. Organisations emphasise alignment with strategic goals and a blend of formal and informal learning to strengthen engagement and long-term effectiveness. **Conclusion:** Effective leadership development requires strategic alignment with organisational goals, some level of personalisation to ensure relevance and engagement, and blended approaches that combine the best methods that suit the targeted demographic. These practices enhance sustainability of leadership pipelines and provide models for organisations to emulate.

## 1. Introduction

Leadership development has taken many shapes and forms over the years. In ancient civilisations, leadership development was informal, familial, and driven by mentorship systems where elders trained the young (Early, 2020; Irby, Abdelrahman, Lara-Alecio, & Allen, 2020; Jacobs, 2022). During this time, leadership development was particularly evident in specific domains such as the military (e.g., strategic thinking, discipline) and religion (e.g., theology) (Karim, Bakhtiar, Sahrodi, & Chang, 2022; Tedla & Vilas B, 2022). Fast forward to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the foundations of the modern-day approach to leadership development could be seen during the industrial revolution; possibly best captured in Frederick Taylor's 'Scientific Management' (Taylor, 1914), which focused on task-oriented leadership and management techniques (Ajunwa, 2023; Merkle, 2020). This period also saw the emergence of corporate training programmes with pioneering companies such as General Electric (GE) implementing courses for middle managers which focused on technical skills and supervisory competencies (Gryta & Mann, 2021; Nicholas, 2023).

An extension of the corporate training development saw the rise of behavioural leadership where significant theories such as Lewin's 'Leadership Styles' (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939) and Blake and Mouton's 'Managerial Grid' (Blake & Mouton, 1994) emphasised the importance of balancing people-oriented and task-oriented leadership approaches (Gutterman, 2023; Saeed, Lauriello, Roberts, & American Psychiatric Association, 2023). A milestone that marked the growth of corporate training was the emergence of corporate universities (e.g., GE,

McDonald's), which were mainly built by large corporations as their in-house leadership development centres (Lissillour & Rodriguez-Escobar, 2023; Singh, Verma, & Chaurasia, 2020). At the same time, leadership development was also infused into higher education through early MBA programmes, which is still progressing through leadership research and education (Delbert & Jacobs, 2021; Hertelendy et al., 2021). In the present day, organisations are beginning to recognise leadership development as a critical component to achieve competitive advantage, leading to extensive global programmes, experiential learning components, and the infusion of technology (Franco, 2020; Su, 2022).

This study builds on the historical progression of leadership development by examining the diverse approaches of three global organisations, each adopting unique strategies to train and empower leaders at all levels. Using a document-based comparative analysis approach, the paper explores how contemporary leadership training methods, including experiential learning, coaching, and digital tools, align with the evolving needs of global organisations. The goal is to provide a snapshot of what is happening today, for the benefit of other organisations to adapt, adopt, and emulate, depending on the suitability of how different approaches fit their respective companies. This study highlights the importance of contextualisation to ensure the right content is delivered correctly to the correct demography within the workforce. The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the different approaches of the companies analysed in the study?
2. What are the best practices of these companies that others can emulate and implement?

## 2. Literature Review

Two theories are relevant to the development of this analysis, namely adult learning theory (ALT) (M. S. Knowles, Holton III, Swanson, & Robinson, 2020) and self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These frameworks relate to how leadership development strategies and programmes are designed, delivered, and evaluated against the desired objectives and impact goals. ALT or 'andragogy' suggests that adults learn differently from children due to their self-directedness, accumulated experiences, and internal motivation (M. S. Knowles et al., 2020). Given the demography within the organisational context, these elements are critical in shaping the way companies align their business strategies with leadership development approaches (Avolio & Drummey, 2023; Pollock, Holly, & Leggett-Robinson, 2022). There should be considerations on empowering learners to decide what, when, and how they learn (Abedini, Abedin, & Zowghi, 2021; Housel, 2020). These factors influence the way leadership development programmes might contain customised learning paths and executive coaching (S. Knowles, 2021; Rajasinghe & Allen, 2020). In meeting the expectations of adult learners to utilise experience as a learning resource, it is important to consider how learners can draw from their professional experiences in contextualising new knowledge via case study discussions, mentorship, and role-play exercises (Mizzi, Hawley, Rocco, Smith, & Merriweather, 2023; Silvennoinen et al., 2022). Further, as adults engage more meaningfully with learning when it directly relates to their current roles or future aspirations, organisations are to consider linking leadership training to career progression, such as succession planning and

stretch assignments (Ingale, 2025; K.Siambi, 2022; Tang & Hussin, 2020).

SDT provides a psychological lens on motivation, particularly distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in learning and professional development (Ryan & Deci, 2020). It suggests that adults are more likely to engage in learning when three fundamental psychological needs are met namely autonomy (i.e., the degree to which individuals feel control over their learning process), competence (i.e., the sense of mastery and self-efficacy in acquiring new skills), and relatedness (i.e., the sense of connection and belonging in the learning environment) (Ryan & Deci, 2020). These considerations surface the need for organisations to incorporate flexibility (e.g., self-paced), skill-building (e.g., hands-on experiential training), and peer learning (e.g., group coaching). SDT is particularly relevant in understanding why leaders engage with training programmes and how they sustain learning over time. The considerations of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of employees engaging in leadership training can facilitate organisations to achieve higher levels of engagement and long-term leadership effectiveness (Aljumah, 2023; Walker & Reichard, 2020).

The considerations of ALT and SDT within the context of this study provide a combined approach to understanding leadership development. ALT explains how leadership training should be designed to suit experienced professionals, while SDT provides insights into what motivates individuals to engage in leadership development and sustain their growth. Applying these theories in real-world practices is prevalent across the companies analysed in this study. Specifically, the study will discuss how the companies align

leadership training to organisational and workforce objectives and how they deliver the training programmes to fit the employees' immediate competency development needs.

### 3. Method, Data, and Analysis

This study employs a qualitative documentary analysis approach to examine leadership training strategies across three global organisations. This method involves the review, selection, and interpretation of publicly available documents, including peer-reviewed journal papers, industry reports, company websites, magazine articles, and annual reports (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis was chosen to synthesise secondary data where primary access is not immediately feasible. It is particularly effective in identifying patterns, gaining contextual understanding, and generating insights from textual sources produced outside the research process.

The companies were selected based on their reputation for implementing innovative and successful leadership development initiatives. The expectation was to identify common themes, best practices, and lessons learned that could inform leadership development practices more extensively. Thematic analysis was conducted on the gathered data to identify patterns and extract key points relevant to this study's research questions. It is important to acknowledge several limitations associated with this approach. First, the selection of organisations may not fully represent all industry contexts, limiting the ability to generalise findings. Second, the reliance on self-reported data from published interviews and documents may introduce biases in the data.

It also needs to be clarified that the study adheres to a public document analysis

method whereby the study did not include direct engagements with the selected companies in any form (i.e., interview, survey, correspondence), and the findings do not represent perspectives of the organisation. The documents referred to are secondary data only, and the views in the study are primarily the interpretations of the author.

### 4. Result and Discussion

Each analysed company presents a unique organisational situation covering diverse industry sectors and business cultural backgrounds. This study selected three companies for analysis: GE, Google, and DBS. While these companies represent similar industries, they were founded across different periods and operate globally, which can also provide a more varied outlook on how company age or maturity can influence best practices in leadership development.

#### 4.1. General Electric (GE) –Transitioning from Physical to Digital Learning

**Background:** GE is a multinational conglomerate founded in the USA in 1892 and has evolved to grow into many different forms over the years. GE operates through three main businesses: GE Aerospace, GE Vernova (Energy), and GE Healthcare (GE.com, 2024). GE is one of the pioneering organisations in pushing forward leadership development (P. S. Kim & Jin, 2008; Waters, 2015). Over the years, GE's best practices in leadership development have been emulated by organisations worldwide (Frederick, 2020; Groves, 2007; Henson, 2016; Leskiw & Singh, 2007). GE's influence can be seen in how they organise and structure leadership development across all levels of the organisation. Different methods, content, and delivery modes were adopted for each group, depending on their learning needs and immediate competency gaps (Waters,



2015). More recently, GE has shifted from in-person delivery of leadership programmes to online (Cappelli, 2022). GE was chosen for this study's purpose, given its long-standing reputation as a keen proponent of leadership development and how it has evolved to adopt technology over time (Onatolu, 2012).

GE's main leadership programmes were initially conducted at the GE Crotonville centre, their corporate university in New York, USA. Founded in 1956, the centre was positioned as a leadership institute to push for innovation, ideas, and learning across the organisation (Tichy, 1989). In addition to the physical campus in New York, GE also ran leadership and functional learning programmes across its global learning centres based on local offices worldwide. Over the years, Crotonville has hosted various leaders from across the organisation to engage with internal and external leaders from partnering organisations and client companies to host structured courses, seminars, and workshops (Waters, 2015). Regarding the initial founding aspiration, the founders envisioned the Crotonville Centre as providing an experience comparable to an MBA (Ben Hur et al., 2012). Initially, programmes conducted at the centre were only for high-performing managers and potential executives. Classroom training was done in settings similar to business schools.

**Leadership Development Approach:** Specific to leadership development, GE conducts a range of programmes for different levels of leadership. GE's leadership learning used to follow a stair-step approach, including on-demand courses, essential skills offerings, cornerstone courses, executive-level courses, and team-based learning programmes (Wharton School, 2010). GE also leveraged its global research centres in various locations to deliver leadership training worldwide, adapting content to local cultural contexts. While face-to-face learning is valued, GE also integrates

technology into its training efforts, offering on-demand materials and virtual collaboration tools (Cappelli, 2022).

More recently, GE delivered its leadership programmes through its 'BrilliantYOU' programme, an entirely digital learning platform (Walters, 2015). Launched in 2014, the platform took over the in-person delivery of training programmes across the organisation. This platform provided employees access to a personalised learning experience adapted through machine learning. As such, there is an opportunity for a multimodal learning environment including social and individual as well as formal and informal learning (Cheng, 2024). As online learning platforms gained momentum, the sale of the Crotonville facility was announced in early 2024, signalling a shift away from owning a physical facility to deliver in-person leadership programmes and distributing the operations to localised regional facilities (Cappelli, 2022; Cheng, 2024). This move was also said to reflect GE's current corporate structure based on the three distinct businesses, i.e., Aerospace, Healthcare, and Vernova (energy), whereby each subsidiary's workforce development needs differ. By selling the facility, the company demonstrated its transition towards a more flexible facility model, utilising spaces as needed and providing broader access (Gupta, 2024).

**Comparative Analysis:** The most significant observation on the GE story is the sale of the Crotonville centre. Observers can view this situation from various perspectives, such as the trend of shorter executive tenures and the increasing availability of executive education programmes in the market (Gupta, 2024). To a further extent, this was also an indicator of how corporate culture is less centralised than it was before, whereby regional

contextualisation is required, especially in developing leaders.

This study noted GE's movement towards fully online delivery during the pandemic lockdown and found that the organisation's decision to shift to blended learning was strategic. Combining online and in-person learning deliveries converged what works best from the virtual and physical worlds (Bown-Anderson, 2019; Waritsman, 2022). The GE evolution remains a reference of how leadership development adapts to how organisations evolve (Guerrero, 2020). The GE's example also further signals that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to leadership training; instead, it remains situational and highly dependent on an organisation's strategic and tactical direction (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020)

#### **4.2. Google - Personalised Leadership Development**

**Background:** As a company that began as a search engine in 1998, Google has grown to become one of the biggest companies in the world (Cusumano, Yoffie, & Gawer, 2020). As a subsidiary of Alphabet Inc., today, Google is an influential technology company that has expanded to a wide array of tools and solutions that have become integral to work and life (Voronkova, Andriukaitiene, & Oleksenko, 2022). Headquartered at the 'Googleplex' in Mountain View, California, the campus illustrates the company culture that is subscribed to by the workforce (Zulfan et al., 2020); one that infuses creativity, innovation, and continuous learning. The working environment includes inclusive and expansive amenities for employees, including on-site fitness centres, free cafeterias, and open spaces for collaboration (Zulfan et al., 2020).

This emphasis on work-life balance has enabled the company to garner multiple plaudits among the 'best places to work' (H. Kim, 2020). As a progressive organisation, research and development have been central to the growth and evolution of Google over the years (Garvin, 2013). The company reflects this philosophy through its organisational structure, which operates with a flatter hierarchy, open communication across the workforce, and idea-sharing at all levels. The company anchors its culture on data-driven decision-making and develops managers into leaders throughout the organisation (H. Kim, 2020).

**Leadership Development Approach:** As a primarily technical organisation that anchors on engineering and innovation, Google, as a company, was not an immediate subscriber to the conventional concept of leadership development, as demonstrated by GE. Therefore, the organisational structure began as a flat and least hierarchical model that did not utilise the presence of a manager until 2002 (Steiber & Alänge, 2013). While this structure appeared to be workable in nurturing innovation, it was not immediately apparent how communication could be relayed across the workforce, signalling the need for managers to be present (Garvin, 2013). This scenario led to the initiation of 'Project Oxygen' in 2009, which utilises data to identify key traits, behaviours, and qualities that can enable managers to contribute effectively to productivity, performance, and overall team member happiness (Garvin et al., 2013). The goal was to improve managerial effectiveness by analyzing data points such as performance appraisal, survey on team member feedback, and nomination of awards for performance as managers (Bryant, 2011).

As a result of this effort, the project has identified several behaviours of effective managers that are to be adopted and subscribed to by their own leaders at all levels (Garvin, 2013).

The personalisation of leadership training at Google has also enabled it to be flexible in how programmes and learning curation are tweaked occasionally (Tran, 2017). Such personalisation extends to tailoring training to specific project needs. Such an approach brings about a high level of relevance and meaning for participants, resulting in minimal 'scrap learning' (i.e., content that is not immediately applicable) or upskilling experiences perceived as less meaningful or relevant (Manimala & Poornima, 2013). Therefore, the transfer rate of learning and applicability to the workplace is high. While these are positive outcomes from the learning intervention, there are potential drawbacks. One is the narrow view of a particular leader in only seeing what is truly relevant to his or her function in the company, arising from the function-focused training provided to them (Garvin, 2013). Further, there are also risks of inconsistencies in development as the experiences that each individual goes through might differ depending on the varying needs that they have in terms of capability and capacity (Garvin et al., 2013). In this regard, organisations might develop only pre-existing management skills without identifying additional areas where a manager can grow as a leader.

One prominent programme within the Google training portfolio is the 'Googler-to-Googler' (G2G) programme, a peer-to-peer learning approach (Pearson & Sadacharam, 2023). In this solution, employees can nominate themselves to train on any topic, including leadership, technical, and

functional. This mode of social learning has enabled employees to explore platforms to extend their knowledge and skills to others within the organisation. Within leadership development, discussion topics can include communication, empowerment, and collaboration. Further, employees are equipped with training and upskilled to teach their skills within a classroom setting. The organisation also installs a learning management system to enable mobile learning and facilitate the virtual exchange of ideas. This learning style has extended to communities of practice, including leadership roundtables that bring together leaders to discuss topics relevant to leading better at work (Trisca, 2024).

**Comparative Analysis:** Just as it is with their other solutions as a technology firm, Google's approach to leadership development depends heavily on data that indicates the personality, behaviour, and traits of an individual (Trisca, 2024). Therefore, the probability of a leadership development intervention in improving and enhancing the leadership competency of a leader is higher (Trisca, 2024). In this regard, the approach to personalising each leader with tools and techniques relevant to their work scope, learning preference, and work schedule commitments is an expected consequence. While this strategy is highly relevant for the leader, the organisation's cost can be higher, given that the resources required to attend to the needs of one leader incur more cost (Tran, 2017). However, the costs can be mitigated if many learning components are automated or rely on self-directed learning (Tran, 2017; Zufan et al., 2020). When this is the case, the need for the organisation to invest in specific solutions such as enrolment into executive education

or executive coaching provision is not as significant.

### **4.3. General DBS Bank - Spearheading Digital Leadership**

Background: The Development Bank of Singapore, better known as DBS, was established by the Singaporean government in 1986 to undertake industrial financing activities in the country (Siddiqui, 2016). Over the years, DBS has grown into the region's leading financial service provider (Chang, 2019). The company is also instrumental in driving economic development of the country, one of the most powerful in the region and the world (Liow, 2012). Its key business driver is digital transformation in banking, specifically leveraging technology to enhance customer experience and spur operational efficiency and productivity (DBS.com, 2024). DBS expects its more than 40,000 employees worldwide to subscribe to the key values of innovation and collaboration. In hiring talents, DBS anchors on acquiring talent like a technology startup (Kiron & Spindel, 2019). In adopting this recruitment model, the organisation believes in setting up a workplace environment that mirrors a startup ecosystem as a value proposition to attract talent (McKinsey, 2024).

Disruptions in the banking sector drove DBS to emphasise digital transformation (HROnline, 2015). In spearheading this effort, the leadership pushed for agile and innovation, taking a cue from the successes of technology firms in the West. In line with this effort to move from traditional to digital, DBS took deliberate steps in immersing their leaders into the world of technology and digitalisation (HROnline, 2015). To bridge the gap between generations at the workplace, the company launched several

'hackathons' to give a platform for younger employees to solve problems in groups sponsored by senior leaders (Ratanjee, 2013). Through this effort, young talents showcase their digital proficiency by delivering result-driven projects, while senior management gains exposure to how technology drives the business forward. Additionally, 'reverse mentoring' was discussed as a leadership development mode at DBS (HROnline, 2023). Sustainability leadership is also prominent in the DBS agenda, and initiatives include reporting decarbonisation efforts, realising the carbon neutrality goal, and supporting social enterprises close to the community (Birch, 2023).

**Leadership Development Approach:** DBS integrates its focus on digital transformation as a strategic business agenda into its talent management practices, including performance management (Kusnadi, Zaky, & Markonah, 2024). To drive innovation, DBS applies advanced analytics and machine learning to track deliverables and monitor real-time results with high precision (HROnline, 2015). In this effort, collaboration is facilitated by co-creating key performance indicators among employees to determine the clarity of roles. In contrast, a high level of performance is aspired for through collective efforts across different functions (Kiron & Spindel, 2019). DBS embeds continuous learning into its leadership development strategy through a growth model described as 'education, exposure, and evaluation' (Ratanjee, 2013). To facilitate this process, a platform called 'iGrow' was developed as an internal career development platform for talents to drive and curate their personal and professional growth journeys (HROnline, 2023). At the back-end of this system is a machine learning facility which can recommend employees



with suitable learning programmes relevant to their specific competency gaps or functional needs.

In addition to the online learning management system, DBS has also launched its Transformational Leadership Programme, which lasts several years for each leader to be equipped with the skills necessary to effectively carry out tasks and deliver goals (Kiron & Spindel, 2019). Within this approach, several provisions are provided to leaders, including a managerial role framework, soft skills upskilling opportunities, and values to be subscribed to by all employees. Paramount to the DBS approach is team member wellness. This philosophy has influenced several policies and practices in the company, including work-from-home flexibilities, as well as confidential call lines for employees to reach out in case there is a need for mental health support (HROnline, 2023). These efforts culminate in the role of the human resources function at DBS as a strategic partner to the business (Kusnadi et al., 2024).

**Comparative Analysis:** The DBS approach illustrates how business strategy closely influences other organisational functional efforts. In this case, the two key corporate agendas of digital transformation and customer service have certainly influenced how other organisational activities are carried out (Woo, 2023). One consistent observation across the companies analysed in this paper indicates the link between company values and mission in the design and delivery of leadership development programmes. While there are no specific indicators within the literature on DBS' specific leadership training programme, there are signals of how technology is heavily used, thus illustrating

an empowered and self-driven learning culture across the company (HROnline, 2015). DBS is a clear example of how business strategy is translated into tactics and parameters to measure business performance, which are then embedded to be a part of an employee's day-to-day target, both in the pursuit of professional development and in realizing business goals.

#### *4.4. Summary of Analyses*

From the analysis conducted on the companies, an extensive range of insights was obtained regarding the best leadership development practices. Specifically, observations can be made in terms of how companies develop leadership development strategies, link them to company vision and mission, design programmes so that learning happens in a timely and meaningful manner, and also how policies and practices are influenced resulting from the focus to develop the types of leaders required to deliver the specific business goals across these companies. Insights were also gained from how leaders respond to these learning interventions, mainly regarding how organisational goals are realised or otherwise come from these interventions; these are signals of how effective or ineffective leadership training can be.

Based on the analysis, several themes emerged that highlight the evolution and current trends in leadership development. A common thread across the organisations is the strategic alignment of leadership development initiatives with their broader business strategies. For instance, GE's transition from physical to digital learning platforms mirrors its organisational restructuring and strategic direction. Similarly, DBS integrates digital transformation and customer-centric

strategies into its leadership training, reflecting its broader corporate priorities. These instances highlight the importance of designing leadership programmes that are not only functional but also strategically aligned. Another shared feature is the personalisation of leadership training. Google leverages data and role-specific success profiles to customise leadership development for individuals, ensuring relevance and higher rates of learning transfer. This approach contrasts with traditional, standardised training models, demonstrating a shift toward individualised and adaptable development programmes.

While commonalities exist, the companies also exhibit distinct approaches. Google's data-driven 'Project Oxygen' provides a highly structured method for identifying and nurturing effective managerial behaviours. GE, a pioneer in corporate universities, has redefined its leadership development strategy by embracing digital platforms like 'BrilliantYOU' and moving away from traditional in-person programmes. Based on the earlier findings, three recommendations can be derived from this study. First, align leadership development with organisational strategy to ensure relevance and impact. Second, leverage data and technology to personalise training. Third, leadership development should be embedded into daily operations as an on-the-job coaching approach. Despite the success of these initiatives, challenges remain. For example, Google's personalised approach may not be cost-effective for smaller organisations with limited resources. These challenges also present opportunities for innovation, such as adopting artificial intelligence (AI)-driven solutions to enhance scalability and efficiency (e.g., AI coaching).

When put against the two theories within the framework of this study, ALT and SDT, several observations can be made. First, in the example of GE, the 'top down' approach of organisational learning contextualises to the team member the importance of their participation in leadership development. This approach clarifies how the organisation can tap into employees' extrinsic motivations, especially concerning company goals, as suggested by SDT. Second, in Google's case, the company empowers individual employees and line managers to take ownership of leadership development, giving them greater autonomy and control over what skills and knowledge they acquire and how they acquire them. These examples align with both ALT and SDT in the way that empowerment and flexibility are encouraged.

The consistency of practices applied by the companies analysed, with the suggestions of ALT and SDT, indicates the relevance of these theories in the present day. However, there are opportunities for revisions to see how work productivity and wellbeing factors can be factored in to reflect the modern-day workplace closely. As this study focuses on the organisational perspective, whereby strategy and vision are central, there is an opportunity to extend the theories to consider the ecosystem in which the adult learner exists. Specifically, as much as ALT and SDT highlight the employee's motivation, desire, and goal-setting, an appreciation of how these factors link to the bigger picture is also important. Within the private sector, this can be in the form of creating shareholder value. In contrast, in the public sector, this could take shape in the functions or deliverables of the specific civil service.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestion

Leadership development has evolved significantly over the years, as evidenced by the diverse approaches adopted by the organisations in this study. Such evolution illustrates how leadership training has adapted to meet the demands of contemporary business environments. This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating the importance of contextualisation in leadership development. These insights are particularly relevant for organisations navigating the challenges of globalisation, digital transformation, and workforce diversity.

### *5.1 Limitations and Considerations for Future Research*

While the findings provide practical insights, the study is not without limitations. The focus on a small sample of companies limits the generalisability of the results, and the reliance on secondary data may introduce biases. Further, the reliance on publicly available secondary sources means that the findings are shaped by the framing of the analysed documents. Moreover, the selection of companies, although intentional in showcasing organisations with strong reputations in leadership development, may not adequately reflect the diversity of industries or organisational sizes where leadership training is implemented.

As the study did not incorporate direct engagement with company representatives, the interpretations offered are based solely on the author's synthesis of the available materials. This absence of primary data limits the ability to validate or triangulate findings. In addition, the focus on well-documented organisations may lead to an overrepresentation of best-case scenarios and

overlook challenges that are less likely to be published.

Nonetheless, this study highlights several opportunities. Future research efforts could adopt a mixed-methods approach that combines documentary analysis with primary data collection, such as interviews with programme designers and participants. Expanding the scope to include a wider range of industries and organisational sizes, including small and medium enterprises would enhance the generalisability of findings. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could explore the sustained impact of leadership development initiatives over time, offering insights into the link between programme design and organisational outcomes.

In the introduction of this study, the author recapped a chronological view of leadership development from a mentorship or pedagogical exercise to a structured and systematic approach across the public and private sectors. This study highlights the importance of present-day leadership development initiatives to align the needs of both the organisation and its workforce. While the challenges are becoming more complex today, learning from the experiences of these leading companies can help organisations design programmes that develop effective leaders and drive organisational success.

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