AOSIS

Leadership development process maturity: An Afrocentric versus Eurocentric perspective

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Orientation: Organisations continuously find it a challenge to focus on the right areas that would result in successful and effective leadership development. This article reports on a comprehensive study to identify the leadership development process maturity areas fit for Southern Africa.

Research purpose: This article aims to identify and report on Eurocentric and Afrocentric leadership development process maturity areas and assess how these are similar or different.

Motivation for the study: This study was conducted to help enhance the understanding of which Eurocentric and Afrocentric leadership development areas, organisations, especially in Southern Africa, need to focus on in support of a mature leadership development process.

Research approach: A qualitative, deductive approach was adopted, which included an extensive, in-depth literature review, followed by in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Southern African leadership development expert panel members.

Main findings: A complementary, inclusive and comprehensive list of 125 leadership development process maturity areas was developed within the Southern African context, which could be used by leadership development practitioners as a guide to focus their resources and leadership development efforts. It also functions as a new foundation for future leadership development research.

Practical implications: Southern African organisations should focus more on what works in this geographical context to ensure that focused leadership development interventions are implemented, resulting in a higher return on leadership development investment.

Contribution and value-added: This article contributes to the leadership development body of knowledge, specifically relating to the maturity of this process within the Southern African context.

Keywords: leadership development; process; maturity areas; Southern Africa; Afrocentric; Eurocentric.

Introduction

Long-term sustainability of companies depends on the choice and cultivation of their future leaders (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). As a result, companies spend enormous amounts of money on leadership development (Armitage, Brooks, Carlen, & Schultz, 2006; Cohen, 2019; Martineau, Hoole, & Patterson, 2009; Thomas, Jules, & Light, 2012; Vogel, Reichard, Batistič, & Černe, 2020). Yet, organisations do not necessarily know exactly which leadership development areas they should invest in so as to ensure the best possible return on its learning investment. The ultimate goal of leadership development research should be to identify which components of the leadership development process have the most significant outcomes and impact (Hopkins & Meyer, 2019).

Owusu-Frempong (2005) referred to Afrocentrism as an African worldview and value system that guides the knowledge of the people of Africa and knowledge transfer thereof to future generations. Iyioke (2017) claimed that to deny Afrocentrism is to effectively deem all life and cultural experiences as being the same. He adds that Afrocentrism is an approach that deals with life experiences in Africa. This view was supported by Kumah-Abiwu (2016) when he called for African intellectuals to persist with research to expose common cultural foundations and values amongst Africans as part of the Afrocentric paradigm. He makes an important

distinction between scholars who truly share Afrocentric ideas and those who claim to adopt a pure Afrocentric paradigm but actually share strong Eurocentric views in their analyses of Africa. Chawane's (2016) view is that Afrocentricity represents a call for recognition of the African viewpoint.

Eurocentrism holds a worldview (Akpan & Odohoedi, 2016), which advocates the use of European and United States standards and models (Hoskins, 1992), whereas Afrocentrism deals with a specific cultural history that originated in Africa and consists of norms based on which African people judge or measure themselves. According to Chawane (2016), the Eurocentric version prioritises Europeans and does not acknowledge the historical role Africans have played in world development. Hoskins (1992) further distinguishes between these two worldviews – Afrocentrism places the human being central to all existence, whilst Eurocentrism places political power and material possessions central to all existence.

Research purpose and objectives

In most African organisations, the building of a robust leadership development system is utterly neglected (Walumbwa, Avolio, & Aryee, 2011). There is also a claim from Iwowo (2015, p. 6) that 'there have been several calls for a more indigenised model of leadership in Africa'. There is increasing interest in research and developing theory focused on leadership across cultural contexts (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009), as most leadership studies have been conducted in a Eurocentric context. Historical research has proven that many companies do not have a process in place that is structured to develop its leaders, as such a leadership development process will also focus on future competencies and capabilities that the company thinks it needs (Van Dongen, 2014).

A gap has therefore been identified in the field of leadership development, specifically in the Southern African geographical context, to pursue research that would achieve the following research objectives (ROs):

1. RO1: To identify the critical areas in the leadership development process from a historical (Eurocentric) research point of view, which indicate leadership development process maturity in an organisation, across all the levels of leadership as follows (1) senior managers, (2) middle managers and (3) supervisory level and junior management (Griffith, Baur, & Buckley, 2019)

2. RO2: To identify the critical areas in the leadership development process across all the levels of leadership, from an Afrocentric point of view

3. RO3: To determine to what extent the identified critical areas are different and/or similar from a Eurocentric versus an Afrocentric point of view.

The purpose of this research study, after achieving these ROs, is that it will lay a solid foundation to address some of the concerns that were highlighted with regard to a lack of indigenised leadership development systems and leadership models in Africa.

Research design

The researchers adopted an approach similar to what Hanson (2013) followed to develop his Leadership Development Interface Model. Firstly, secondary data were gathered from existing literature, followed by empirical research. This approach connected leader and leadership development with individuals and the organisation. The researchers combined the data from qualitative interviews with Southern African leadership development specialists, with the data from a rigorous literature review of leadership and leadership development, to develop holistic Leadership Development Process Maturity Areas for further analysis.

A systematic process was followed in the present study to access leadership development articles, textbooks and other credible, peer-reviewed secondary sources. To identify the leadership development process maturity areas, a structured content analysis approach was applied and only those factors that were critical to the successful implementation of a leadership development process were extracted from the literature.

A total of 55 leadership development process maturity areas were identified from 11 published books and 63 academic or peer-reviewed articles on the topic of leadership development. Whilst not deliberately selected as such, all these books and virtually all the articles were European or United States sources, which jointly represent Eurocentric sources. New literature sources were no longer added to the review process, when it became clear that data saturation had been achieved – in other words, when no new themes emerged (see Braun & Clarke, 2013; Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013). Ten themes emerged, namely *leadership development methods*, *required resources*, *alignment*, *continuity*, *culture*, *design*, *feedback*, *management support, skills or competencies* and *customisation*. These themes formed the basis of the interview questions, conducted with the expert panel members, as each of the Southern African leadership development experts were asked, in their experience, which areas were critical to the success of the leadership development process in organisations, as it relates to each of these themes within this process. As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2013), an additional open-ended question was added, posed at the end of the interview, which allowed each participant to add any knowledge he or she deemed important but, which did not fall under any of the 10 themes.

Expert panel population

The expert panel population comprised all and everybody who specialises in leadership development in Africa. However, it has to be borne in mind that different African regions are characterised by different contextual factors, history, political backgrounds and cultural richness

and diversity. Therefore, leadership development is not necessarily the same in all regions in Africa (Muchiri, 2011). For these reasons, and for the sake of practicability, the scope of this study was then limited to Southern Africa, the most southern region in Africa.

The following countries are the member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (https://www.sadc.int/member-states/): Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Therefore, the population of this study comprised the leadership development practitioners in SADC member countries.

Sample method and participant profile

Purposive sampling (a form of non-probability sampling) was used in the present study, as it is suitable for qualitative research, which tends to use smaller samples as compared to quantitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Guest et al. (2013) posited that the logic and power of purposive sampling can only be realised by applying appropriate criteria for inclusion of participants in a study. The criteria for inclusion in this study were similar to those employed by Burke and Collins (2005) in their study on providers of leadership development. The participant profile that was sought and obtained, possessed the following research criteria – they had to have:

1. been working as a leadership development practitioner for at least 5 years
2. managed this area of work as a full-time business
3. worked as leadership development practitioner in all three levels of work (supervisory level and junior management, middle management and senior management)
4. worked as a leadership development practitioner in at least one, but preferably more, SADC member states
5. a formal post-matric qualification in leadership development or be able to demonstrate that he or she had been sufficiently and holistically mentored throughout their careers to be recognised by his or her peers as a leadership development practitioner.

Purposive sampling was first applied on a limited scale, where participants 3 and 7, who were well-known to the author from previous involvement in leadership development projects, were chosen based on their experience and level of involvement in the leadership development field. Participants 1 and 2 were referred by the co-author. Thereafter, snowball sampling, another non-probability sampling technique whereby participants referred other possible participants (Gray, 2018; Guest et al., 2013) was used to get additional participants. Guest et al. (2013) explained that snowball sampling makes it possible to utilise the social networks of research participants, enabling sampling from hard-to-reach populations. Noy (2008) stated that snowball sampling (Figure 1) is arguably the most widely used sampling method in qualitative research across various disciplines in the social sciences.
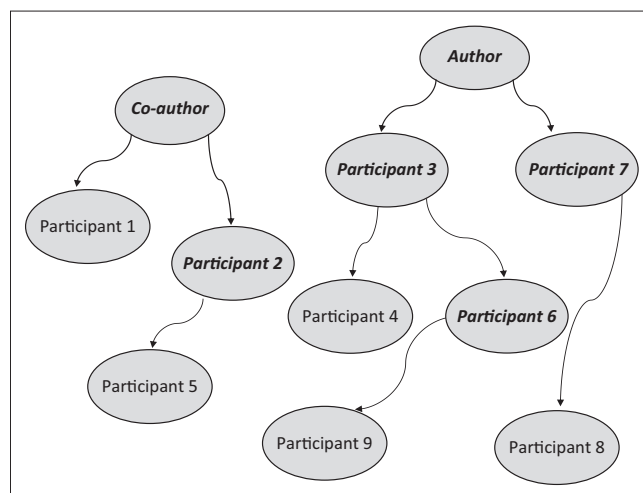

FIGURE 1: Visual illustration of snowball sampling.

Expert panel and rational for choosing participants

Expert knowledge is valuable in contributing to research, especially if empirical information on the topic is scarce or not readily available (Orsi, Geneletti, & Newton, 2011). Guest et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of including the most knowledgeable individuals and documenting multiple viewpoints, in order to enhance the trustworthiness of a research study.

Experts were therefore chosen based on them being considered active and leading practitioners in the field of leadership development. Krueger et al. (2017) stated that the participation of experts enhances the accuracy of a study's findings. They also suggested that experts on a topic possess diverse pertinent expertise and that a process be used that encourages the active sharing of this knowledge.

As a result of the specialised nature of the field of study, nine experts were identified who met or exceeded the stated research criteria and were selected to participate in the study. The demographic details of this sample of leadership development practitioners who took part in the study are provided in Table 1.

The in-depth, semi-structured interviews allowed for the probing of the leadership development experts to provide greater detail on their responses (see Braun & Clarke, 2013; Gray, 2018). Open-ended questions were used to maximise the inductive and conversational aspects of the interview (Guest et al., 2013). As recommended by these authors, each expert was interviewed separately, using open-ended questions to gather data on each theme. Inductive probing was conducted by asking questions like 'what', 'why' and 'how' to gain deeper insights.

A pilot interview (Guest et al., 2013; Mouton, 2013) was conducted with one participant. The intention was not to use the data, only to test the questions, but because of the richness of the data that were gathered during this interview, it was

TABLE 1: Demographic summary of expert study participants who met or exceeded the research criteria

Participant number	Highest qualification	Gender	Racial group	Full-time LD practitioner (Yes/No)	Completed years as full-time LD practitioner	Operating across all 3 levels of leadership as defined (Yes/No)	Southern African countries included in the scope of work	Other African countries included in the scope of work
1	Ph.D.	M	White people	Yes	10	Yes	South Africa Botswana Namibia	
2	Ph.D.	M	White people	Yes	7	Yes	Namibia	
3	Master's degree	F	White people	Yes	20	Yes	South Africa Botswana Namibia	Angola Mali Mauritius
4	Master's degree	M	African people	Yes	15	Yes	South Africa Eswatini Lesotho	Zimbabwe Ghana Tanzania
5	CA (SA)	M	White people	Yes	15	Yes	South Africa Botswana Namibia	Zambia Zimbabwe Angola
6	Ph.D.	M	African people	Yes	14	Yes	South Africa Botswana Namibia Eswatini Lesotho	Ethiopia Kenya Zimbabwe Zambia Nigeria Côte d'Ivoire
7	Ph.D.	F	White people	Yes	20	Yes	South Africa Namibia	Mauritius
8	Ph.D.	F	Indian people	Yes	30	Yes	South Africa	Rwanda South Sudan Burundi
9	Master's degree	M	White people	Yes	10	Yes	South Africa Botswana	Togo Kenya

LD is an acronym for Leadership Development.

then classified as the first interview. Minor adjustments were made to the sequence of the open-ended questions and the interviewing process, before the other eight leadership development experts could be interviewed. All interviews were recorded (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Gray, 2018; Guest et al., 2013).

There are no fixed rules for coding qualitative data analysis, as it is challenging to analyse a vast amount of written data and convert the findings into a compelling argument (Gray, 2018). Passages were labelled with terms that were relevant to the RO, as explained by Belotto (2018) to identify all possible leadership development process maturity areas from the transcript. After coding the data, the next step was to look for larger patterns across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Thematic analysis was applied and 'involves identifying and coding emergent themes within data' (Guest et al., 2013, p. 9). With the thematic analysis process, new Afrocentric and existing Eurocentric themes were identified from the coded transcriptions. In determining to what extent, the identified critical areas are different and or similar from a Eurocentric versus an Afrocentric point of view, the themes were compared. Similarities and differences had to be analysed and documented further although, by also categorising these areas as more *process* related or more *people* related.

Strategies to ensure data quality and integrity

Various approaches were followed to ensure quality and rigour across all phases of the study (Guba, 1981;

Shenton, 2004). With regard to credibility – structured content analysis combined with literature reviews using peer-reviewed articles, as well as in-depth, semi-structured interviews are all well-established methods in qualitative research. In addition to data accuracy and other quality checks, triangulation was employed when similarities and differences between the literature review and in-depth, semi-structured interview data sets were analysed (Flick, 2007; Gray, 2018).

Furthermore, strategies were employed to ensure participants' honesty and iterative questioning took place during the in-depth, semi-structured interviews to confirm participant feedback accuracy. Transferability, dependability and confirmability were also addressed, which included steps that were taken to avoid researchers bias and the use of a data-tracking log to manage the data.

Ethical consideration

This article followed all ethical standards for a research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Results and discussions

Results obtained from the extensive in-depth literature review

A total of 55 Euro-centric leadership development process maturity areas (across 598 citations) were identified from the literature, namely:

1. Alignment is needed between the leadership development process and Business Strategy.
2. The leadership development process should be integrated into the business.
3. The leadership development programme must be tied to the succession planning in the organisation.
4. The leadership development process should include a strategy to retain high-potentials.
5. The leadership development program should be evaluated continuously for continuous improvement purposes.
6. Leadership needs to understand that leadership development is a continuous process.
7. The culture and values of the organisation and that of its leaders should be considered in the development of a leadership development program.
8. A leadership development culture should be present in the organisation.
9. The leadership development model or approach should best fit the company's unique culture and should be integrated into this culture.
10. Each organisation should have a leadership development model.
11. A formal exercise should be completed to ensure that all the required components have been included in the design of the leadership development process of the organisation.
12. Participants in the leadership development program should be involved in its design.
13. A pilot program is required, before the leadership development program launch.
14. Technology should be used in the leadership development process.
15. Formal and informal leadership development experiences are required as part of the leadership development process.
16. The successes of the leadership development programme should be celebrated.
17. The developmental readiness of the leader should be assessed at the start of the leadership development process, which includes his or her willingness to receive feedback.
18. Feedback from formal assessments should regularly be shared with the leader.
19. Leaders should be encouraged to take time to reflect on their leadership and leadership development journey.
20. 360-degree feedback should be used to provide feedback in the leadership development process.
21. It is critical to have some form of Return on Learning or Return on Investment measurement in place for the leadership development process.
22. The selection of the participants in the leadership development program should be communicated to the organisation, but with sensitivity.
23. The leadership development process should include a range or variety of leadership development methods.
24. Coaching is required for successful leadership development.
25. Mentoring is required as support to leadership development initiatives.
26. Action Learning needs to be used in the leadership development programme.
27. Job expansion is a successful leadership development method.
28. Job rotation is a successful leadership development method.
29. International assignments are a successful leadership development method.
30. Experiential learning is a successful leadership development method.
31. Simulation-based learning is a successful leadership development method.
32. Stretch assignments are a key method in the leadership development process.
33. Networking is used as a method of leadership development.
34. Competency-specific training is used as a method of leadership development.
35. Informal assessment is important in the leadership development process.
36. Self-development activities are used as methods of leadership development.
37. Job shadowing is used as a method of leadership development.
38. The leaders that are in charge of the leadership development process should be well respected in the organisation.
39. Senior management should provide long-term support to the leadership development process as a strategic priority in the organisation.
40. Leadership development initiatives should be coordinated by a steering committee.
41. Senior managers should personally act as facilitators in the leadership development programme.
42. Senior management and the human resources department are partners in the leadership development process.
43. Leaders that focus on the leadership development of their people should be remunerated for these efforts.
44. Internal and external organisational resources should be used in the leadership development process.
45. A leadership development process resource requirement assessment should be conducted.
46. All the stakeholders in the leadership development process should commit the required amount of time to this process.
47. Resources should be invested to identify the high-potential leaders (HIPO's) in the organisation.
48. The establishment of a Corporate University will assist in fostering leadership development in the organisation.
49. Participants in the leadership development programme should have a long-term commitment towards self-development.
50. The start of the leadership development process is to hire leaders with the right leadership skills or competencies.
51. The leadership development process should focus on identifying and closing the gaps between the leader's current versus required competencies.
52. The leadership development process should focus on developing hard and soft skills in each leader.
53. Baseline assessments are required to confirm the leader's baseline competencies, skills or behaviours.
54. The leadership development process should be unique for each leadership level in the organisation.

55. Each leader should have an individual development plan that needs to be revised over time.

The identification of these 55 Eurocentric leadership development process maturity areas from historical research, addressed RO1.

Results obtained from the in-depth semi-structured interviews

The in-depth, semi-structured interviewing process resulted in identifying the following 70 new Afrocentric leadership development process maturity areas:

1. As part of the leadership development process each person should have a 'personal manifesto for leading', which includes their own personal values.
2. Training that helps develop the ability of the leader to be strategic and to think at the strategic level, is critical to the leadership development process.
3. As part of the leadership development process leaders should be taught how to ensure and to maintain personal resilience.
4. It is important that team-based leadership development is included in the design of the leadership development process.
5. Diversity management should be incorporated into the leadership development process.
6. The harnessing, synthesis and sharing of innovations and a focus on innovation should form part of the leadership development process.
7. The principle of connectivity between people and the Ubuntu philosophy should be incorporated into the leadership development process.
8. Ethics should be an underlying theme throughout the leadership development process.
9. Sufficient funds or a budget should be allocated to the implementation of the leadership development process.
10. Senior management should take the foundational and physical aspects in the organisation seriously, in support of organisational practices, such as the leadership development process.
11. The business cycle and economic climate should be taken into account before finalising the content and the scope of the leadership development process.
12. During the induction of each new potential leader it needs to be communicated what is required to become a leader in the organisation and what this process entails.
13. A sponsor-driven approach should be adopted in the leadership development process where a developing leader can continuously check in and share his or her reflections with an assigned sponsor.
14. Senior leaders should create an environment where developing leaders can share what they have learnt in the leadership development process and where these learnings or changes are at least considered for implementation or trial in the organisation.
15. As part of the leadership development process it is important to ensure that the developing leaders understand their meaning and purpose at work and in the world.

16. Teaching our leaders to ask the right questions with the information that is available to them, is an important part of the leadership development process.
17. The ability to be able to cope with a world that is full of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) should be incorporated into the leadership development process.
18. The leadership development process should focus on creating leaders that are in service of both driving the business goals and creating a safe productive place in which people are inspired and enjoy coming to work.
19. The leadership development process should teach leaders how to manage the political map inside the organisation.
20. The leadership development process should focus on cultivating the right habits in leaders.
21. Each of the leadership development methods that are being used in the leadership development process should be measurable.
22. Peer group interventions are important in the leadership development process.
23. For the leadership development process to have value, the participants in this process should commit their own resources to the process.
24. The start of the leadership development process should be to hire leaders based on their whole being, which is more than only their skill and knowledge.
25. The leadership development process should be aligned to the purpose and calling of the leader that is being developed.
26. For the leadership development process to be successful a culture of authentic people care should exist in the organisation.
27. A key focus of the leadership development process should be to develop the leader's ability to manage himself or herself.
28. The leadership development process should be outcome-based.
29. The developing leader should be involved in the design and the content of his or her individual development plan.
30. The leadership development process should be a focused process, without overwhelming the leader with too many leadership development interventions or leadership development methods.
31. Indigenous leadership development methodologies that are specific to its wider geographical region should be included in the leadership development process of the organisation.
32. An important aspect of the leadership development process is, to not only focus on the end result, but to also focus on and appreciate the learning that takes place during the leadership development process.
33. Storytelling is an important transformational learning method that should be used in the leadership development process.
34. With every leadership development method that is being used by the organisation, mutual respect and authenticity should form the basis of all interactions with developing leaders.

35. The success of the leadership development process is not dependent on the amount of available resources to support this process, but is dependent on the commitment and the passion of the people who are involved in the leadership development process.

36. The leadership team that drives the leadership development process needs to be good leaders with a long enough tenure at the organisation, to ensure the continuity of the leadership development process.

37. The purpose of the leadership development process is not only to teach leaders to become better leaders, but it should also be to develop them into better beings.

38. To include developing leaders from all levels of work in the organisation into the same leadership development process, the learning experience that takes place from this process would be improved (vs. developing leaders separately per level of work).

39. The leadership development process should be implemented, not only for the greater good of the organisation, but also for society to benefit from it.

40. At the start of the leadership development process it is important that an assessment is completed, which will highlight the leadership and business challenges that the organisation is facing, in order to ensure that the leadership development process provides solutions to these challenges.

41. Ongoing role alignment is required in the leadership development process where the specific capability, skill or competency to deliver on the work that's needed, is aligned to a changing business environment.

42. In order to support the leadership development process, ongoing alignment is required between the organisational structure and new ways of working.

43. Whenever an organisation uses external leadership development resources to assist in the leadership development process, it is important that a true partnership is formed with these external resources to co-create the leadership development journey map of the organisation.

44. The leadership development process should include specific leadership development programmes that are structured in a specific order and structured according to how their business needs to win in their market.

45. It is critical to the success of the leadership development process that clear communication exists and that developing leaders understand the way concepts are put across to them.

46. Before the leadership development process is launched it is important that each facilitator has an in-depth understanding of the developing leaders and their unique context, which should deal with any discomfort that might exist in this developmental relationship.

47. For the leadership development process to be successful, senior management must first and foremost change their mindset that leadership development is not an expense, but an investment.

48. For learning in the leadership development process to be most effective, it needs to occur by taking developing leaders away from the workplace, to where an atmosphere exists that is supportive of structured learning and development.

49. Each of the participants in the leadership development process must be assured that the company appreciates them and that this process will be improving their lives in general and also their chances of career advancement.

50. The contributions of the participants in the leadership development process must be formally recognised in the organisation.

51. The leadership development process should include a mechanism where developing leaders are continuously aligned back to the culture of the organisation.

52. With the design of the leadership development process it is important to have an end in mind of what the organisation would like to achieve with this process.

53. All the feedback that is given during the leadership development process, also to developing leaders, should be constructive.

54. As part of their commitment to and involvement in the leadership development process, senior management must demonstrate that they can also learn from the leaders that are being developed.

55. Senior management should adopt the principles of servant leadership in order to create the right environment in the organisation to successfully implement the leadership development process.

56. The ultimate purpose of the leadership development process should be to develop leaders who are whole and complete.

57. In the leadership development process it is critical to teach developing leaders how to handle and to embrace conflict and tension.

58. During the leadership development process leaders should be taught how to successfully handle their personal finances, otherwise the leader cannot lead diligently without any financial burden.

59. The ability to forgive in order to remove the hindrances of the past, should be taught during the leadership development process.

60. Senior management in the organisation should accept the responsibility of character development in their leaders during the leadership development process, especially if other formal institutions such as schools and churches previously failed in this regard.

61. The use of technology is important in the leadership development process, but not at the expense of personal face-to-face contact.

62. An environment should exist in the organisation that is conducive to leadership development and learning.

63. The leadership development process should form part of a change management process in the organisation.

64. For the leadership development process to be successful it is important that the leadership in the organisation truly understand the adult learning process, growth and development.

65. The leadership development process should take place in an environment where it is acceptable for the developing

leader to make mistakes and where they are encouraged to fully express themselves.

66. There should be a positive philosophy of inclusiveness in the leadership development process where the developing leader matters, is valued and is deemed as worthy.

67. Included in the leadership development process should be a mechanism for capturing the feedback from every leadership development encounter, also to determine its impact on the business.

68. To ensure business continuity it is important that each leader, as part of the leadership development process, develops someone in his or her team who is able to do their job and take over in their absence, when and if required.

69. The competencies that are required from the developing leader should be integrated into his or her individual performance contract to ensure that it is sufficiently developed.

70. The leadership development process should be aligned to the strategic talent plan, which details the strategic talent pipelines of the organisation.

The identification of these Afrocentric leadership development process maturity areas addressed RO2. Linking the outcomes of the analysis to existing literature by determining how the findings contribute to, further develop or challenge what we already knew about the research topic is important (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The identification of these 70 new Afrocentric leadership development process maturity areas allowed for a comparison of these areas with the 55 existing Eurocentric areas from the literature review.

Comparing Afrocentric and Eurocentric leadership development process maturity areas

Hoskins (1992) observed that Afrocentricity is a mindset that is rooted in the African communal value system and heritage. He added that, in Afrocentricity, people are the central focus or 'centrality of existence', whereas in Eurocentricity, people are not central and the focus is on material possessions and political power. One of the findings of the present study is that the Afrocentric leadership development process maturity areas that were identified from the in-depth, semi-structured interviews seem to be significantly more people orientated than the Eurocentric that were identified from the literature review.

Applying thematic analysis, 51 of the original 55 Eurocentric areas that were identified from the literature review were confirmed by one or more of the nine research participants as a critical requirement in the leadership development process in organisations, from an Afrocentric point of view. The focus in this section is a comparison of areas that were originally classified from the literature as important from a Eurocentric point of view, with the Afrocentric areas that were extracted from the in-depth, semi-structured interviews that were conducted.

In the same manner in which the themes were originally assigned to each of the 55 Eurocentric areas, the identical themes were also used and assigned to the 70 Afrocentric areas. Each of the 125 statements was therefore classified by theme, but also as either being more *process* related or more *people* related. In analysing these results, the 55 Eurocentric areas seem to be more *process*-related or *process*-driven, whereas the 70 Afrocentric areas seem more focused on *people*-related issues or prioritisation of the developing leader and his or her specific needs.

The detailed observations were as follows

In both sets of data, *leadership development methods* were the most prevalent theme across all the statements.

For the *Eurocentric* data set this theme represented 27% (or 15) of the 55 statements versus 23% (or 16) of the 70 statements for the *Afrocentric* perspective. However, of these 15 *Eurocentric* statements, 67% were classified as process related. Only 33% were therefore classified as people-related, as opposed to 88% of the 16 *Afrocentric* statements being categorised as people-related statements. The *Eurocentric* statements typically included areas such as job expansion, stretch assignments and action-learning, compared with the *Afrocentric* statements under this theme typically including the following areas: teaching the developing leader to be able to operate in a world that is VUCA; a focus on indigenous leadership development methods to cater for different groups of people and ensuring that the leader is not overwhelmed with too many leadership development interventions during the development process.

The *Design* theme was the second-largest priority in both the *Eurocentric* and *Afrocentric* data sets. For the *Afrocentric* dataset, this theme also represented 23% (or 16) of the 70 statements, versus 13% (or 7) of the 55 statements for the *Eurocentric* perspective. A similar observation was made with the *Design* theme as with the *Leadership development methods* theme in the previous paragraph: of the seven *Eurocentric* statements, 71% were classified as process-related, or, conversely, only 29% were classified as people-related statements. This was again in contrast to the 63% (or 10) of the 16 *Afrocentric* statements that were categorised as people related. Table 2 highlights examples of statements that were categorised under the *Design* theme, indicating the contrast between the Eurocentric and Afrocentric views.

TABLE 2: Eurocentric versus Afrocentric Design theme statements: Examples.

Eurocentric statements	Afrocentric statements
Each organisation should have a customised leadership development model or framework	The principle of connectivity between people and the Ubuntu philosophy should be incorporated into the leadership development process
Formal and informal leadership development experiences are required as part of the leadership development process	For learning in the leadership development process to be most effective, it needs to occur by taking developing leaders away from the workplace, to where an atmosphere exists that is supportive of structured learning and development
Technology should be incorporated into the leadership development process	The ultimate purpose of the leadership development process should be to develop leaders that are Whole and Complete

Another interesting observation was that *Culture*, with regard to frequency, was ranked as the third-most important *Afrocentric* theme, but ranked as only the eighth-most important *Eurocentric* theme. The remaining themes of *Required resources*, *Alignment*, *Continuity*, *Feedback*, *Management support*, *Skills or competencies* and *Customisation* ranked similarly from a relative position or percentage point of view, when comparing the *Afrocentric* and *Eurocentric* views.

Overall, across all 10 themes, almost two-thirds (65%) of the *Eurocentric* statements were classified as *process-related*, where the picture was reversed for the *Afrocentric* perspective, where two-thirds (67%) of all statements were *people-related*.

In summary, it was observed from the analysis that there is certainly some truth in the claim by Hoskins (1992) that Eurocentrism does not prioritise the human factor or element as a central theme, to the extent that Afrocentrism does. This is an important validation as designers, developers and implementers of leadership development processes in organisations need to take into consideration that the content of these processes needs to be adapted to the unique requirements of the Afrocentric or Eurocentric geographical context in which they operate, in order to be successful.

The detailed observations that were made in comparing the Eurocentric and Afrocentric areas, addressed RO3.

Practical implications

The findings of this research should benefit all Southern African organisations, who assumed that its leadership development process could be based on Eurocentric areas only. It would also be of value to multinational organisations that operate in Africa, as these organisations may have erroneously assumed that a Eurocentric approach to leadership development would necessarily be successful in their African operations. The research findings allow these organisations to place more focus on Afrocentric leadership development process maturity areas, which is representative of 'what works' in the Southern African geographical context.

Southern African organisations that are serious about the success of their leadership development process and about investing in their people for the right reasons, including financial gain, should use the results from this research to close its leadership development process gaps. This would be achieved by including in its leadership development strategy, and actively driving the implementation of, the areas that have been identified as critical to the success of leadership development in this geographical context. This process should be led by Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), managing directors and human resources directors, as support at the highest echelons in organisations is vital to the success of such programmes.

Limitations and future research

The biggest limitation to this study is that it was completed at organisational level across all levels of leadership and also that it is difficult to know where to start in terms of focusing on a comprehensive list of 125 leadership development process maturity areas. This article reports on the first phase of a more comprehensive study. The second phase of the study used the findings from this research to successfully shortlist these leadership development process maturity areas and to then include it in a measure or 'tool' that could be used to assess, according to the different individual levels of leadership (supervisory level and junior management, middle management and senior management levels), to what extent organisations are mature as far as its leadership development process is concerned.

Conclusion

Bent-Goodley, Fairfax and Carlton-LaNey (2017) highlighted the fact that Afrocentric researchers should promote the voice of African research participants, relate their unique experiences and use their stories to generate knowledge. This research study answers this call and makes a significant and unique contribution to the body of knowledge on leadership development. From the extensive literature review conducted in the secondary research phase, it was obvious that there was a lack of Afrocentric leadership development research. This view is supported by authors such as Bolden and Kirk (2009), Geber and Keane (2013), Kuada (2010) and Mbigi (2005).

The research revealed that almost all of the Eurocentric leadership development process maturity areas were deemed relevant by the Southern African leadership development experts, as critical to the leadership development process. In addition to these areas, the research participants have identified 70 other areas that are critical to the successful implementation of the leadership development process in organisations within the Southern African geographical context. When comparing these two sets of data, it became apparent that the focus of the Afrocentric areas differed from that of the Eurocentric areas. Afrocentric leadership development process maturity areas were found to be more *people* related as opposed to Eurocentric areas that were more *process* related.

This article focused extensively on extracting an Afrocentric perspective on the critical success areas that are required for leadership development in organisations. This addressed the gap in the knowledge identified by Chawane (2016), that Eurocentric literature does not acknowledge African perspectives.

Owusu-Frempong (2005) called for a joint employment of both African and European views in harmonious growth and development of a society. This view is shared by Chawane (2016) when he calls for the co-existence of Eurocentricity and Afrocentricity. According to Iwowo (2015), a system that combines indigenous African leadership development knowledge with mainstream Eurocentric leadership development theories, is the most viable option for leadership development in Africa. By achieving the stated ROs in this study, a complementary, inclusive and

comprehensive list of 125 leadership development process maturity areas was developed within the Southern African context, which can be used by leadership development practitioners as a guide to focus their resources and leadership development efforts. The output from the current research study allows for the 70 newly identified Afrocentric areas, being part of the stated comprehensive list of areas, to be included in the leadership development processes in organisations, which creates a new foundation for future leadership development research.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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