A leadership skills development model for the Kwaden Group: A case study of an African fast-moving consumer goods business network

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study was to develop and assess whether a leadership skills development model, which integrates six valid conceptual constructs, will develop enhanced leadership skills in an African-based fast-moving consumer goods business network.

Design/methodology/approach: The six-construct model is predicated on the literature review, which was empirically tested. Thus, the study selected a pragmatic approach and followed up with an explanatory sequential design typology. Moreover, this study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey research methodology, while an online survey was administered to collect primary data from the Kwaden Group. Inferential statistics were also employed so as to appropriately examine the validity and reliability of the constructs. Finally, a qualitative phenomenological research approach was utilised to collect primary data from key decision-makers within the African fast-moving consumer goods business network via structured face-to-face interviews.

Findings: The study provides a theoretically relevant and empirically validated leadership skills development model amendable to an African fast-moving consumer goods business network. Additionally, a confirmatory factor analysis confirmed a good model fit for the leadership skills development model. It was also established that leadership skills development should be multilevel, which infers that participants should have the opportunity to develop multifaceted leadership skills and that such leadership capabilities should be a primary company objective.

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Recommendations/value: The leadership skills development model, if adopted by an organisation, will result in a leadership skills development initiative being established on theoretically relevant and empirically validated constructs.

Managerial implications: This dedicated approach should assist organisations in developing the necessary leadership skills among their personnel so as to enhance the company's leadership capacity and ultimately improve business potential and profitability. This perspective should also challenge the fast-moving network of consumer goods organisations and academic institutions to seek a new approach to developing leadership skills.

Keywords

Business network; fast-moving consumer goods; FMCG; leadership; leadership skills; skills development; skills development model.

JEL Classification: M10, M13, M14, M16.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Organisations that are currently competing and/or preparing to compete in Africa's business sectors tend to face numerous complex and substantial challenges. Also, the African continent is comprised of 1.2 billion people in 54 countries, which collectively account for over a thousand languages, diverse resources, a broad spectrum of income levels, infrastructure progress, educational opportunities and, in turn, business capabilities. Accordingly, it remains 'a high priority' to pursue business-model improvement, develop local talent, improve local development, and create business resilience in Africa. However, Africa's business setting remains poorly understood and is, thus, predicated merely on its reputation for complexity, corruption, and continuing conflict (Desvaux & Leke, 2018; Leke *et al.*, 2018; Chironga *et al.*, 2019).

Moreover, Africa has an abundance of talent; thus, businesses that succeed in Africa must invest in talent as such investments will reap significant rewards for these organisations as they grow and become more profitable. In other words, developing talent is a strategic role, which should be considered part of the value chain and not merely outsourced to the national university system (Cohen, 2017; Chironga *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, converting Africa's raw talent may only require a short training program that could be sufficient to unlock the skills and leadership capacity that businesses need for success and sustainability (Leke *et al.*, 2018; Swaniker, 2018; Chironga *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, Jacobs and Mafini (2019) posited that South Africa's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry is faced with significant challenges that require prompt attention and pragmatic solutions.

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Additionally, Africa covers a large geographic area that provides ample space to build and develop scalable business networks, whether in technology, retail, agriculture, manufacturing, mining, or other important sectors. Also, Africa's immense unmet leadership needs make it a prime target for leadership skills development and commercial expansion (Muller & Pelser, 2022). According to Cohen (2017) and Eberly *et al.* (2017), leadership skills development initiatives are often constructed on various questionable assumptions, which, in turn, do not develop the necessary leadership skills to improve the leadership capacity required for African FMCG businesses (Eberly *et al.*, 2013; Cohen, 2017; Cullen-Lester *et al.*, 2017; Leke *et al.*, 2018; Jacobs & Mafini, 2019; Chironga *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, to appropriately address the leadership challenges and business prospects in Africa's FMCG businesses, we must cultivate the next generation of leaders. In doing so, we could cultivate the required leadership capability to establish a successful business model in Africa.

This study aims to develop a conceptual model based on developing theoretically-relevant leadership constructs that focus on appropriate approaches that promote leadership skills development. In other words, we must develop a unique model for expanding leadership skills that can be empirically tested by performing a quantitative assessment of the appropriateness of leadership constructs based on a conceptual leadership skills model. Additionally, the model should be amenable to performing a qualitative assessment governing leadership skills and establishing specific protocols to critically explore how the conceptual model could develop leadership skills within the Kwaden Group.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership research extends throughout the behavioural, social, and physical sciences, including management, psychology, anthropology, politics, sociology, biology, and evolutionary studies (Yammarino, 2017). In contrast to the comparatively extended history of leadership theory and research, the orderly analysis of leadership development (generally defined as including leader development) has a relatively limited historical background (Yammarino, 2017). More than a century of leadership study has resulted in various paradigm shifts, which have given rise to much confusion. On numerous occasions, leadership scholars have become somewhat frustrated with exploring minor theoretical advances with contradicting results. Bennis (1959:259-260) proffered six decades ago that "*Of all the hazy and confounding areas in social psychology, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for the top nomination… Probably more has been written, and less is known about leadership than about any other topic in the behavioural sciences.*" Similarly, Hackman and Wageman

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(2007:43) established that the subject of leadership is "curiously unformed". Over the last half-century, leadership scholars have struggled to construct an integrated and theoretically cohesive perspective of leadership. As such, leadership remains an expansive and essential field of study (Bass & Bass, 2008; Yukl, 2012; Day *et al.*, 2014; Yammarino, 2017; Day & Thornton, 2018).

More importantly, leadership is a central component in the managerial and mainstream media realm. Accordingly, corporate-, government-, military-, and not-for-profit organisations all require effective leadership, which is currently a significant concern for all organisations (Day *et al.*, 2014). In spite of considerable growth and investment in leadership development, there is limited evidence that leadership has improved, nor has it become more effective. Leaders at the helm of various religious, financial, corporate, educational, and government institutions have been responsible for significant organisational failures. Such failures have eroded public trust and, thus, led to damaging social, economic, political, and environmental consequences (Cohen, 2017). In order to resolve these complex problems facing our global society, we must develop leaders who have the necessary skills to transform our current social, economic, political and ecological realities (Burns *et al.*, 2015).

Overall, leadership is one of the social sciences' most significant studied phenomena; however, such scrutiny is not surprising considering that leadership is a widespread problem related to humanity in general (Bass & Bass, 2008). References concerning leadership are evident in Western and Eastern texts, with a consensus that leadership is essential for social, economic, and environmental development (Antonakis & Day, 2018). Therefore, it is possibly the most critical event in the realm of human behaviour, especially since very little is accomplished without appropriate leadership (Yammarino, 2017).

While leadership may be easily recognised in practice, it is often difficult to define and clarify. When considering the multifaceted study of leadership, a generally agreed-upon definition of leadership does not currently exist (Yammarino, 2017). Antonakis (2018 highlighted that academic training in the social sciences is still not cohesively integrated; thus, there is profound evidence that leadership researchers operate in an area of uncertainty. Similarly, Fiedler (1971:1) posited that "*There are as many definitions of leadership as there are leadership theories-and there are almost as many theories of leadership as psychologists are working in the field.*" It is, therefore, problematic to get leadership researchers to settle on a specific definition. In the absence of a consensus, the following description of leadership was submitted by Antonakis and Day (2018:3) "*Leadership is equally formal and informal,*

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contextually fixed and an objective-orientated manner that comprise leadership, followers, or societies. The discipline of leadership concerns a methodical inquiry of this practice and its effects. Leadership includes how the leader's character and behaviours, observer assumptions concerning the leader's qualities, and witness acknowledgements created concerning the effects". Furthermore, leadership is equally formal and informal, contextually fixed and objective-oriented, and comprises leadership, followers, or societies (Muller & Pelser, 2022). The discipline of leadership concerns a methodical inquiry of this practice and its effects. Hence, leadership includes the leader's character and behaviours, observer assumptions concerning the leader's qualities, and witness acknowledgements created concerning the effects (Muller & Pelser, 2022).

In order to offer further clarity, a summary of the six leadership constructs, the associated construct theories, and examples of the related leadership skills for development are presented in Table 1. The six leadership constructs are as follows: choices, principles, mental (cognitive), emotional, physical, and spiritual. These are perceived as humancentric and multidimensional and inherently incorporate the notion of being developmental. In short, these leadership attributes can be developed.

Table 1:   **Leadership constructs, associated theories, and skills**

Leadership constructs	Theory, author(s) and a brief description or explanation	Leadership skills for development
1. Choices (e.g., morals, values, attitude, decision-making, judgment, risk-taking)	Choice theory: Levin and Milgrom (2004). Choice theory is the skilful process of evaluating available options and then choosing the preferred option based on a consistent criterion	E.g., decision-making; risk assessment; moral decision-making
2. Principles (e.g., ethics, context, situation, principles)	Principle theory: Caldwell *et al*., (2006). Principle theory provides a foundation of guiding principles, which relate to a person's ability to act by the rules or standards	E.g., context; ethics; governance
3. Mental (e.g., cognitive, logos, problem-solving, knowledge, vision,	Cognition theory: Prinsloo & Barrett (2013), Mumford *et al*.(2017).	E.g., thinking; learning; teaching

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Leadership constructs	Theory, author(s) and a brief description or explanation	Leadership skills for development
experience, understanding, memory, education, goals)	Cognition theory is a person's ability to solve problems, plan, reason, think conceptually, grasp complex concepts and learn quickly as well as learn from experience; cognitive skills are essential aspects and of critical importance in the leadership context	
4. Emotional (e.g., emotion, pathos, social, motives, self-efficacy, relational, communication, social, interpersonal, influence, conflict resolution)	Emotional intelligence theory: Mayer *et al*. (2004), Doe (2015), Heath *et al*. (2017),. Emotional intelligence theory comprises a four-branch ability model of a person being able to perceive, use, understand and manage emotions. Each branch of emotional intelligence can be developed and are vital attributes of effective leadership	E.g., social skills; motivation; self-awareness
5. Physical (e.g., physical, stress, body, physiological)	Physical well-being theory: Hattie *et al*. (2004). The 'Wheel of Wellness' theory relates to a person's physical health and that stress management, nutrition, and exercise are critical aspects of the physiological well-being of a leader	E.g., stress management; nutrition; exercise
6. Spiritual (e.g., character, ethos, integrity, trust, purpose, trust-building, role-model)	Spirituality Scale: Maslow (1972), Delaney (2005); Avolio *et al*. (2009) . The 'Spirituality Scale' is a method to assess a person's beliefs, values, and choices. The spiritual life (the contemplative, religious, philosophical, or value-life) is part of the human essence and a defining characteristic of human nature	E.g., individual, team, and organisational leadership (purpose, meaning, and values)

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Overall, people possess varying educational levels, different experiences, diverse views, and unique circumstances—resulting in a diverse range of knowledge, skills, abilities, and perspectives. This study aims to critically explore how the conceptual model for leadership skills development could grow leadership skills within the Kwaden Group as a case in the African FMCG sector. As such, it tends to infer that the model should cater to all people within the Kwaden Group—irrespective of age, ethnicity, education, experience, belief system, circumstances, etc. The overall objective of the leadership skills development model is to assist individuals to improve their leadership capacity and, in this case, the Kwaden Group, as a case in the African FMCG sector.

As will be discussed in further detail later in the paper, our conceptual leadership skills model will be presented as a cube. According to the conceptualisation and naming of the conceptual leadership skills model, the word cube refers to "you", where the letter "u" in the word cube represents you… the leader. The word "super" is an adjective, which implies you are wonderful, fantastic, great, marvellous, fabulous, excellent, splendid, superb, brilliant, superior, enhanced, outstanding, etc. The primary objective is to provide a pragmatic model that promotes and enables superior leadership (you) capability (i.e., you (from a multidimensional perspective) are superb).

The conceptual model proposes Buber's I-Thou relation, which appreciates people as equals (Morgan & Guilherme, 2012). The I-Thou relation highlights the mutual and holistic existence of two distinctive entities. Morgan and Guilherme (2012) describe the I-Thou approach as an encounter of equals who value each other as such. The ethical nature of the I-Thou relation also proffers that if someone is unable to respect a fellow human being as a person and merely as an object, they too will be considered an object (Morgan & Guilherme, 2012). This approach represents a person as a means to an end; however, it ceases to ascribe rights and duties to both parties. However, Buber encouraged people and communities to perceive fellow human beings as "Thous", having the same psychological, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual attributes. In this study, the conceptual leadership skills model values people as being holistic entities comprising multidimensional capabilities, along with the capacity of being both a leader and/or follower in certain contexts.

Six constructs conceptualised the theoretical six-construct leadership skills model from the leadership theory discussed and presented previously. Foti and Hauenstein (2007:347) argued that *"the person is considered as an integrated totality rather than a summation of variables."* Also, leadership scholars posit that progressive research on traits or personal

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characteristics and their effects on leadership requires more extensive, multifaceted models and approaches (Bass, 1990; Lord & Hall, 1992; Zaccaro *et al.*, 2013). Considering the above discussion, the researchers conceptually developed a leadership skills model that comprises six leadership constructs grounded in associated academic literature.

The first construct (Choices) was appropriated from choice theory. Choice theory describes the notion that making choices is a skilful process of evaluating available options and then choosing the preferred option based on a consistent criterion (Levin & Milgrom, 2004). Levin and Milgrom (2004) proffered that real-world choices often appear to be highly situational and context-dependent such as the social context, the emotional state of the decision-maker, and a variety of other environmental factors that influence choice behaviour. Based on the conceptual model perspective, the Choices construct represents the primary function that is influenced by cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions but conceptually guided by the Principles construct.

The second construct (Principles) is supported by the principle theory, which provides a foundation of guiding principles related to a person's ability to act according to established rules or standards (Caldwell *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, Johns (2006) argued that context is a phenomenon external to the individual; yet, tends to affect leadership decision-making processes. In the context of this study, the Principles construct represents the rules and standards of social, economic, and natural laws (e.g., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)). In essence, the Principles construct corresponds to ethics (decision-making foundations) and, thus, ethical leadership development for the greater good of humanity (Wilson & McCalman, 2017). Based on the evidence from these two theories, it appears reasonable to suggest that choice and principle theory support tend to symbiotically guide one another as established in the conceptual model for leadership skills development.

Furthermore, with the conceptual leadership skills model in mind, the third construct, Mental (cognitive), represents a leader's mental intelligence, which is supported by cognition theory. This theory claims that is a person's knowledge, skills, and ability to solve problems, plan, reason, think conceptually, grasp complex concepts, learn quickly, learn from experience, and teach are essential aspects and of critical importance within and throughout the leadership context (Prinsloo & Barrett, 2013; Mumford *et al.*, 2017). Mumford *et al.* (2017) proffered that mental intelligence ultimately refers to the speed and depth of leaders' information processing skills and their ability to solve complex problems. Furthermore, evidence suggests that mental

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intelligence can be developed to provide people with the required knowledge and skills necessary to perform complex leadership tasks (Mumford *et al.*, 2017).

Also, emotional intelligence theory includes a four-branch ability model of a person being able to perceive, use, understand and manage emotions (Mayer *et al.*, 2004). Each branch of emotional intelligence can be developed and represent a crucial attribute for effective leadership (Mayer *et al.*, 2004; Doe *et al.*, 2015; Mfikwe & Pelser, 2017). Likewise, Heath *et al.* (2017) highlighted that great leaders can develop five emotional intelligence skills: self-awareness; self-regulation; motivation; empathy; and social skills. The first three skills are related to personal competence, while the last two skills involve social competence, all of which determine how leaders deal with relationships (Doe *et al.*, 2015).

Next, the physical construct of the conceptual model for leadership skills development represents a leader's physiological well-being and is conceptualised as physical intelligence. The "Wheel of Wellness" theory involves a person's physical health and states that stress management, nutrition, and exercise are all vital aspects of the physiological well-being of a leader (Hattie *et al.*, 2004). Harms *et al.* (2017) postulated that stress and leadership are inextricably linked and argued that leadership is most needed and vital to any organisation during stressful events.

Subsequently, leaders who can handle stressful events effectively are generally more inclined to engage in appropriate decision-making and facilitate overall group fitness (Harms *et al.*, 2017). Edwards (2006) maintained that regular exercise for an average of thirty minutes a day at least three times a week is associated with significant improvements in a person's physical well-being and positively impacts mood, coherence, fortitude, and stress management.

Next, the Spiritual construct of the conceptual model for leadership skills development represents a conduit between the leader's Choices construct and Principles construct. Moreover, the Spiritual construct also symbolises a fusion between the mental, emotional, and physical constructs of a leader. Delaney's (2005) "Spirituality Scale" is commonly utilised to assess a person's beliefs, values and choices. Maslow (1972) contended that "*the spiritual life (the contemplative, religious, philosophical, or value-life) is … part of the human essence… a defining characteristic of human nature*…" In this regard, Avolio *et al.* (2009) suggested that spiritual intelligence is central to leadership capacity as it unites the four innate aspects of a person's existence (mind, heart, body and spirit). Therefore, it can be inferred that spiritual intelligence prompts people to be more intrinsically motivated to achieve important goals, become more committed to achieving organisational objectives, and experience higher levels

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of personal joy, peace, and fulfilment. Similarly, research findings in South Africa established that higher levels of spirituality were generally associated with improved health, fewer mental health problems, and better health-related, physical, psychological and environmental outcomes (Edwards, 2006; Muller & Pelser, 2022).

Based on the conceptual leadership skills model, the researchers (Muller & Pelser, 2022:199) define leadership as a "*multidimensional, human-centric and principled approach that promote the progression of humanity (i.e., the process of developing or moving gradually towards a more advanced state)".* As a supplement to the complexity of the six-construct conceptual model, Day and Thornton (2018) also proposed that leadership development is inherently a multilevel process. Hence, levels include within-person and between-person; higher dyadic levels involving relationships with followers, peers, and subordinates; and team and organisational levels. Muller and Pelser (2022) proffered that cross-level research approaches will further promote the understanding of leadership skills development. Leader and leadership skills development is a dynamic and longitudinal process that involves considerable time (Kalenzi & Pelser, 2021). The development of organisational leadership in general and leaders, in particular, occurs throughout one's entire adult lifespan (Day *et al*., 2012). Furthermore, leaders do not develop in the same way through identical growth patterns (Antonakis & Day, 2018). In other words, people learn different things from the same experience, while some learn critical lessons through experience quicker than others (Day & Thornton, 2018). Despite the distinction between leader development and leadership development, it is not an either/or proposition. Instead, advanced initiatives seek to establish methods that combine individual leader development with that of collective leadership development to further the overall leadership capacity among teams and organisations (Day & Dragoni, 2015).

3.   METHODOLOGY

This study employed a pragmatic approach and followed an explanatory sequential design typology. A quantitative analysis was conducted, after which an inductive thematic interpretation methodology was adopted to help clarify the initial quantitative results. By applying confirmatory factor analysis, the three data-model fit indices were able to provide empirical evidence that the leadership skills development model was a good fit for the model. In this study, the hypothesis development of the leadership skills development model involved reviewing leadership and leadership development theories: traditional and contemporary topics in leadership and leadership skills development topics. Subsequently, a review of

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traditional and contemporary leadership schools identified various theoretically-relevant leadership attributes and dimensions so as to establish constructs for a conceptual leadership skills model. Six leadership constructs perceived as human-centric, multidimensional, and inherently incorporating the notion of being developmental were conceptualised as follows: i) choices; ii) principles; iii) mental (cognitive); iv) emotional; v) physical; and vi) spiritual. Foti and Hauenstein (2007:347) argued that "*the person is considered as an integrated totality rather than a summation of variables*". Leadership scholars argue that more multifaceted models and approaches are required to advance research involving traits or personal characteristics and their effects on leadership (Bass, 1990; Lord & Hall, 1992; Zaccaro *et al.* 2013; Muller, 2021; Muller & Pelser, 2022;). Considering the above, the researcher conceptually developed a leadership skills model that encompassed six leadership constructs grounded in academic literature (as shown in Table 2).

Table 2: **A conceptual leadership skills model**

Leadership constructs		A conceptual leadership skills model
1. Choices		
2. Principles		
3. Mental		
4. Emotional		
5. Physical		
6. Spiritual		

Source: Own compilation

The conceptual leadership skills model is presented as a cube and named super-cube®. The super-cube® model in the schema in Table 2 implies that each side of the cube unites to create a holistic, integrated, coherent, multifaceted human-centric perspective (refer to the interpretation of "u" and "you" as explained earlier). The objective was to provide a model that promotes and enables *superior* leadership (you) capability (i.e., you (from a multidimensional perspective) are superb). Leadership, on its own, is already a highly complex construct in scholarly disciplines and appears "curiously uninformed" (Hackman & Wageman, 2007:43).

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Furthermore, Baltes (1987) suggested that development is an equally complex construct, given that it involves change and is a process of innate gains and losses.

Zaccaro and Horn (2003) ascertained that there is a wide gap between leadership theory and leadership practice. As a result of this gap, the field of leadership development is mainly a collection of disparate "best practices" (e.g., coaching, mentoring, on-the-job experience) rather than a coherent, continuous, theoretically relevant, and empirically-validated process (Day, 2000). Additionally, Illeris (2018) proffered that more education does not necessarily result in increased and better learning. He further went on to state that while the theory of learning is broad, it invariably comprises three dimensions:

1. Content dimension: refers to knowledge, understanding, behaviour, skills, values, or feelings—typically cognitive;

2. Incentive dimension: refers to the intrinsic, interest and motivational aspects—typically emotional; and

3. Interaction dimension: refers to the social engagement and has various layers, ranging from the current, local, institutional, environmental, national and other situations to the global context in general.

The unification of the conceptual leadership skills model (discussed and presented in Table 2) and the leadership skills development dimensions that form a model for leadership skills development are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: **A conceptual model for leadership skills development**

Leadership constructs		A conceptual leadership skills model	Leadership skills development
1. Choices			**1.** Leaders can and do develop over time
2. Principles			**2.** Create structured programmes and experiences
3. Mental			**3.** Adhere to the theory of learning
4. Emotional			
5. Physical			
6. Spiritual			

Source: Own compilation

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In the conceptual model for leadership skills development, the leadership skills development process can be considered inherent in each of the six leadership constructs of the model. The leadership skills development rationale is as follows: (1) leadership can and does develop overtime (De Neve *et al.*, 2013); (2) structured programmes and experiences best promote leadership development (Conger, 2010; Kegan & Lahey, 2016; Day & Thornton, 2018); and (3) there should be an adherence to the theory of learning during the developmental process (Illeris, 2018).

Based on the conceptual leadership skills development model, the authors defined leadership skills development as being "*inherent skills developed by structured methodologies concerning learning theory, associated with the development of multidimensional, human-centric and principled approaches towards the progression of humanity*." Due to the complex nature of the research problem this study addresses, an overarching philosophy of pragmatism has been embraced as it combines two worldviews or perceptions that benefit from addressing the research problem from multiple perspectives (i.e., pragmatism is one philosophy that includes post-positivism and constructivism).

Research approaches are broadly classified into two categories, namely, quantitative and qualitative methods, and when combined, they are referred to as a mixed-method approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This study adopted a mixed-method approach. Moreover, an explanatory sequential design was followed, comprising an initial quantitative analysis followed by the qualitative analysis. Bryman and Cramer (2005) concluded that the quantitative approach presents methods used to combine empirical observations with deductive reasoning. The questionnaire survey included the following sections:

1. Research project overview;
2. Informed consent; and
3. Leadership question evaluation:
   3.1. Choices construct: three questions;
   3.2. Principles construct: three questions;
   3.3. Mental construct: three questions;
   3.4. Emotional construct: three questions;
   3.5. Physical construct: three questions; and
   3.6. Spiritual construct: three questions.

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The questions were developed from the leadership theory associated with the dimensions and attributes pertaining to each construct in the conceptual model for leadership skills development. The questionnaire was subsequently converted into an electronic format. Moreover, the quantitative approach covers the conceptualisation and operationalisation of a conceptual model for leadership skills development as shown in Table 4.

Table 4:   Construct conceptual and operational definitions

Leadership constructs	Conceptual definition	Operationalisation definition
1. Choices	Decision-making intelligence	The ability to make decisions based on a set of principles
2. Principles	Decision-making foundations	The ability to understand the rules and standards of social, economic, and natural laws
3. Mental	Mental intelligence	The capability to think, learn, teach, and have self-awareness
4. Emotional	Emotional intelligence	The ability to perceive, use, understand and manage emotions
5. Physical	Physical intelligence	The capability to manage stress, nutrition, and cardiovascular well-being
6. Spiritual	Spiritual intelligence	The ability to act according to principles

Source: Own compilation

The multivariate statistical technique—confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to perform theory-testing rather than opt for a theory-generating approach (Stapleton, 1997). By utilising CFA, the researcher departed with the conceptual model for leadership skills development and then specified the relevant variables expected to correlate with certain factors. Inter-factor correlations were also proposed. Ullman (2006) noted that once the subject of concern is multifaceted and multidimensional, CFA is the one assessment that reliably offers concurrent tests regarding all the correlations in a theorised framework or model. Consequently, CFA supports a level of examination to fit with the level of theory as CFA can test the hypothesis at a factor or construct level.

By using this methodology, the reliability and internal consistency of the data were also measured using Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Cooper & Emory, 1995; Field, 2009). Overall, the primary intent of a mixed methods explanatory sequential design is for the qualitative phase to explain the initial quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Furthermore,

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Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) posited that the qualitative phase typically explores and elaborates on the statistical tests from the quantitative phase.

Therefore, during the qualitative phase, this study was able to collect primary data via face-to-face, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with key decision-makers in the Kwaden Group, a business case in the African FMCG sector. The data analysis comprised thematic interpretation and aimed to explore and elaborate on the results from the quantitative results. The validity of the qualitative data was assured by applying the four criteria used to ensure a trustworthy study: credibility; transferability; dependability; and conformability (Shenton, 2004).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The online quantitative questionnaire achieved a 43.9 percent response rate. The age group with the highest percentage of respondents was those aged 36-45 at 36 percent, while the second-highest was aged 25-35 at 28 percent. The remainder of the respondents were those below age 25 at 4 percent, and those over 65 at only 1 percent.

In terms of gender, the respondent percentage was relatively equal, with slightly more female participants at 53 percent, versus 47 percent of the male population. Additionally, with regard to the educational level, most of the respondents (30%) reported an undergraduate qualification, with the second-highest percentage of the respondents (26%) listing a postgraduate qualification. The third highest response rate's qualification status is unknown at 22 percent, while 12 percent of the respondents indicated a secondary qualification. A certification (5%) and trade certification (5%) contributed towards 10 percent of the participants. Next, confirmatory factor analysis was used to provide a viable method to evaluate the construct validity (Stapleton, 1997).

In order to determine the relative contribution of each variable (i.e., each question), a standardised regression weight analysis was performed. The results from the standardised regression weights analysis determined the relative contribution of each variable (research question), which, in this case, are noted as the estimate. It should be clarified that estimate values between 1.0 and 0.5 are acceptable; however, values of 0.3 are also considered acceptable (Stapleton, 1997).

The Choices construct had estimates of 1.071, 0.776 and 0.377. While an estimated value of 1.071 is marginally higher than 1.0, it is deemed acceptable. The Principles construct results of 0.713, 0.622 and 0.529 are deemed acceptable. The results for the Cognitive construct

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were 0.710, 0.614 and 0.495, which are all considered acceptable. The Emotional construct results were 0.804, 0.518 and 0.509, and all deemed acceptable. The results of the Physical construct were 0.969, 0.955 and 0.386, which are all acceptable. The Spiritual construct results are all deemed acceptable at 0.773, 0.736 and 0.572 Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the construct-to-construct relationship.

Figure 1: **Confirmatory factor analysis**
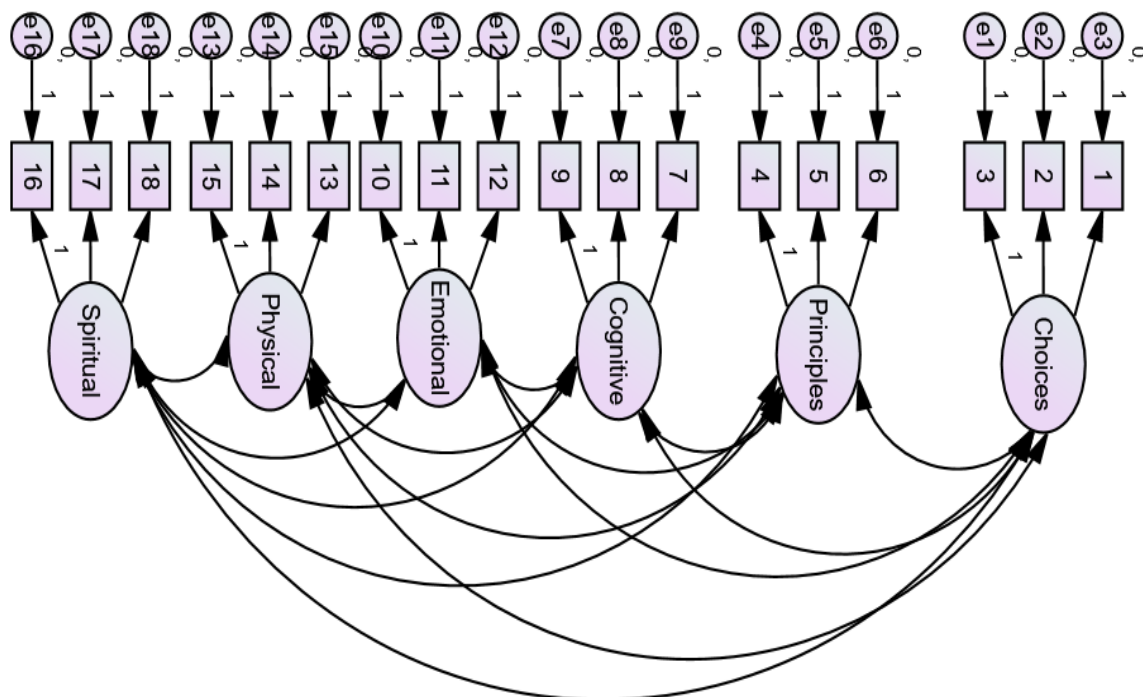
Source: Own compilation

The model-fit statistics were calculated to evaluate a model where fixed parameters were applied so as to postulate the model and the approval or dismissal of the model (Stapleton, 1997). Table 5 displays the summary of the conceptual model-fit results.

Table 5: **Model-fit summary**

Model	CMIN/DF	CFI	RMSEA
Requirement	~1:5	≥0.90	<.100
Study results	2.232	0.86	0.097
Study findings	Good model fit	Acceptable model fit	Good model fit

Source: Own compilation

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As can be ascertained, the results provide empirical evidence that the conceptual model for leadership skills development is considered a good model fit. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha coefficient values ranged between 0.604 and 0.803, indicating acceptable and satisfactory reliability. Table 6 depicts Cronbach's Alpha coefficient distribution results.
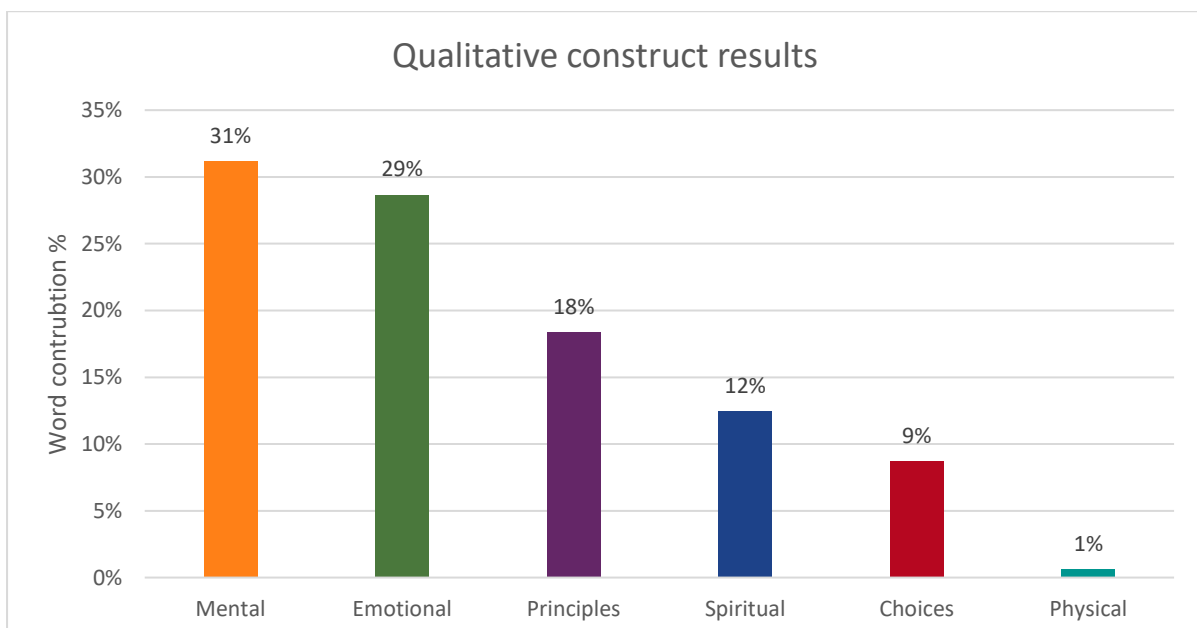
Table 6:   Construct reliability distribution

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Standard Deviation
Choices	0.74	6.66	0.62
Principles	0.65	6.76	0.39
Cognitive	0.60	6.28	0.72
Emotional	0.62	6.78	0.35
Physical	0.80	5.47	1.14
Spiritual	0.63	6.44	0.62

Source: Own compilation

The objective of the qualitative phase in an explanatory mixed-methods design is to further explain and elaborate on the initial quantitative results obtained from the statistical analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Figure 2 depicts the construct distribution results from the qualitative thematic analysis.

Figure 2:   Construct distribution results

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Source: Own compilation

As per Figure 2, the results from the conceptual model indicate that the mental construct had the most words at 31 percent, while the emotional construct was marginally lower at 29 percent. Therefore, the Mental and Emotional constructs represent 60 percent of the words described by participants during the interview process as pertaining to leadership skills required by the Kwaden Group.

The Principles and Spiritual constructs contributed 18 percent and 12 percent, respectively (30% when combined). Choices contributed 9 percent of the total word count and Physical only 1 percent, with only two words qualifying from 321 words.

From the qualitative results and findings in this study, it seems reasonable to suggest that the qualitative phase in this explanatory mixed-methods study sufficiently clarifies and elaborates on the initial quantitative results obtained from the quantitative strand. Next, Table 7 presents the qualitative results that complement the initial quantitative results concerning the leadership constructs of the conceptual leadership skills development model.

Table 7:   Summary of results

Super-Cube® Model	Constructs	Measurement reliability	Qualitative results
Model-fit tests: CMIN/DF: 2.232; CFI: 0.86; RMSEA: 0.097	1. Choices	0.74	9%
	2. Principles	0.65	18%
	3. Mental	0.60	31%
	4. Emotional	0.62	29%
	5. Physical	0.80	1%
	6. Spiritual	0.63	12%
Good model-fit = accepted as a model	**Cronbach's alpha** = construct reliable		**Interview:** word count as a percentage (%)

Source: Own compilation

Empirical evidence discussed in the quantitative strand notes the Choices construct as the second most reliable (0.74) construct. This result is also supported and explained in the qualitative strand, with an overall word count of 9 percent.

The Choices construct concerns the primary construct in the leadership skills model. In this study, the ability to make choices is described as a skilful process of considering available

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options and then selecting an option based on principles (Levin & Milgrom, 2004). As this choice skill develops, decision-making can improve decision-making speed, accuracy, and consistency.

Additionally, the empirical results presented in the quantitative strand state that the Principles construct is the third most reliable (0.65). This result was also confirmed and explained in the qualitative strand with an overall word count of 18 percent.

The Principles construct concerns the foundational and guiding principles which relate to the ability to make decisions according to rules or standards (Caldwell *et al.*, 2006). In this study, principles involve the following:

- Social principles: the skills and abilities to care for other people, put other people's needs first, serve others and act as a servant for the good of another person (i.e., embracing the principles of servant leadership;
- Economic principles: the skills and abilities to operate efficiently (lean) and effectively during business operations. For example, a business should adhere to economic principles, such as making a profit to ensure continuity—to pay employees, suppliers, and other business-related activities. Importantly, the business must adhere to ethical principles, that is, the rules and standards concerning statutory and regulatory requirements in the context in which it manifests itself and where the business operates.
- Natural law principles: the skills and abilities to understand and apply STEM and natural law (i.e., gravitational) principles.

Generally, the understanding of principles will inevitably vary based on personal circumstances (e.g., education and experience). However, improving the understanding and adherence (choices construct) to principles is considered foundational and intentionally designed as the foundation of the leadership skills development model.

Empirical evidence discussed in the quantitative strand noted that the Mental construct is the least reliable (0.60), yet was supported and explained in the qualitative strand with the highest word count of 31 percent.

The Mental construct represents the skills and ability to solve problems, plan, reason, think, grasp complex concepts, learn quickly, and learn from experience, as well as the capability to teach and impart knowledge (Prinsloo & Barrett, 2013; Mumford *et al.*, 2017).

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In this article, the Mental construct refers to the speed and depth of information processing skills when solving complex problems. Evidence suggests that mental intelligence can improve so as to provide the required knowledge and skills to perform complex leadership tasks (Mumford *et al.*, 2017).

The empirical results presented in the quantitative strand state that the Emotional construct is the fifth most reliable (0.62), yet was explained in the qualitative strand with an overall word count of 29 percent, the second-highest. Here, the Emotional construct represents the skills to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions (Mayer *et al.*, 2004).

Additionally, the Emotional construct concerns abilities involving self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The first three skills are regarded as one's personal competence, while the last two skills are considered one's social competence. All five skills determine how relationships are handled and are attributes that can be enhanced (Mayer *et al.*, 2004; Doe *et al.*, 2015; Heath *et al.*, 2017).
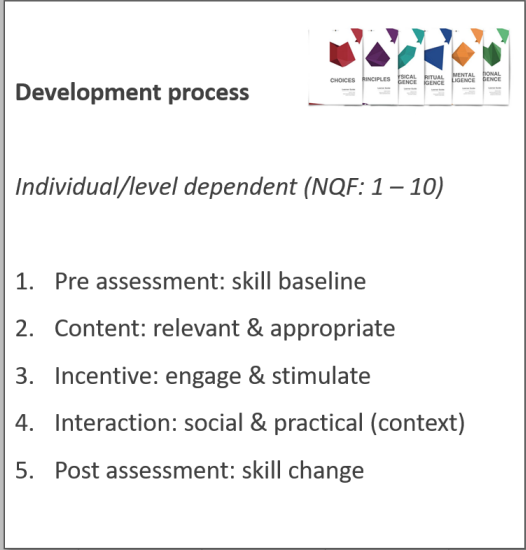
The empirical evidence discussed in the quantitative strand note that the Physical construct is the most reliable (0.80); however, it was hardly discussed in the qualitative strand with the lowest overall word count of 1 percent. Here, the Physical construct represents the physiological well-being of a person.

Additionally, as previously discussed, the management of stress, nutrition, and exercise is considered essential for physical well-being (Hattie *et al.*, 2004). Edwards (2006) suggested that regular exercise is associated with significant improvements in physical well-being, including mood, coherence, fortitude, and stress management. Harms *et al.* (2017) noted that stress and leadership are inextricably linked.

Next, the empirical results presented in the quantitative strand state that the Spiritual construct is the fourth most reliable (0.63). This result was confirmed and explained in the qualitative strand with an overall word count of 12 percent. Here, the Spiritual construct represents the conduit between the choices and principle constructs and unites the four innate aspects of a person's existence (mind, heart, body and spirit) to intrinsically motivate people to achieve important goals (Maslow, 1972; Delaney, 2005).

Lastly, Figure 3 illustrates leadership skills development at an individual level. The concluding findings indicate that it is possible to develop leadership through a series of events to improve the overall wholeness of a person.

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Figure 3: Leadership skills development illustration at an individual level.

5. CONCLUSION

The study purposed to develop a conceptual model from theory and also to test the conceptual model empirically. The results reveal that the leadership constructs identified within the conceptual model for leadership skills development in the Kwaden Group, as a case in the African FMCG sector, are statistically valid and reliable and, therefore, considered appropriate. A thorough review of leadership and leadership development literature resulted in conceptualising and operationalising a multidimensional conceptual model involving leadership skills development that comprised six constructs. The key contribution of the conceptual model for leadership skills development was that it effectively incorporated traditional and contemporary leadership theories into a holistic, integrated, coherent and universal approach to advancing leadership skills development.

In this study, it was established that leadership skills development should be multilevel, which implies that everyone should have the opportunity to cultivate their leadership skills and that developing leadership capability should be a company objective. Importantly, the findings suggest that the Kwaden Groups' leadership team need to prioritise leadership development, which requires careful thought and pragmatic planning. Additionally, the findings confirm the

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conclusion of Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2021) that leadership skills development is a continual journey, which should include coaching, mentorship, and a blended learning approach.

The leadership skills development model, if adopted by an organisation, should result in a leadership skills development initiative being built on theoretically relevant and empirically-validated constructs. This approach should assist organisations in building the necessary leadership skills to advance leadership capacity and ultimately improve business potential. This perspective should also challenge FMCG (and other) organisations and learning institutions to seek a new approach to leadership skills development.

The opportunities for future research are vast. As leadership is a complex and evolving concept with numerous variables, opportunities for future research exist, particularly in evaluating the effectiveness of leadership interventions. Based on this study, future research, for example, could include research at the individual level, business level, FMCG Group level, FMCG Alliance level, and industry and African continent level. Research opportunities also exist for longitudinal studies, where subjects can be assessed over an extended period of time. Other possibilities include assessing subjects in the various contexts in which they operate and live (e.g., at home and with their family).

FMCG businesses in Africa need to work towards developing Africa's talent at scale to effectively unlock the skills that businesses require to promote local economies and create sustainable ecosystems throughout the supply chain. The researchers hope to continue research in the field of leadership, coordinated with a particular focus on the effectiveness of leadership interventions.

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