Leadership Development among the Top 100 companies in Mauritius

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Effective leadership development is viewed as a source of competitive advantage and crucial for high organisational performance. This paper investigates the state of leadership development among the Top 100 companies in Mauritius. Postal questionnaires from the entire population, helped to uncover the leadership skills and competencies developed by these Mauritian firms, identify the approaches and methods used for effective leadership development, and situate the leadership development maturity level among these companies. The study revealed some coherence with major trends in leadership development, although the maturity level of leadership development needs be improved. Some recommendations to address this situation are discussed.

Keywords: Leadership development, Competencies, Methods.

The development of future leaders in companies is viewed as a source of competitive advantage and crucial for high organisational performance. The shortage in talented managers, global competition, corporate restructuring, role of information and communication technologies, impact of stress and continuous rapid changes in the business context are challenges that organisations ought to overcome through effective leadership development programmes. This paper investigates the state of leadership development among top Mauritian companies. It aims at uncovering the leadership skills and competencies developed by Mauritian firms, identifying the approaches and methods used for effective leadership development, and thus situating the maturity level of leadership development among the top companies in Mauritius.

Literature Review

Leadership development has been described as a systematic effort to train, educate, and develop individuals to influence other people in positive ways (Rothwell and Kazanas 1999). It may be conducted on or off the job to meet individual, group and organisational learning needs to improve individual, group and organisational performance. Leadership development is about teaching leadership – create and carry out a mix of activities that will lead to learners becoming adept at shaping and fulfilling, not only their own aims, but those of their followers as well. Instrumental to leadership development is a wide range of aptitudes and capabilities, all of which affect a person’s interactions with co-workers, constituents or customers – personal qualities, moral commitments and management skills. The effects of leadership development are most directly felt in the social setting of an organisation, where leaders and
followers attempt to work together to attain common goals. Day (2000) shares this view of leadership development as being more than just individual level skill development to building social systems. The emphasis is on both building of human and social capital.

Leadership development has evolved over the past decades, and the trends demonstrate the dynamic nature of this field. According to Fulmer (1997), leadership development has gone through seven major shifts along the following dimensions – participants (passive listener to active learner), programme design (unique event to never-ending process), purpose (knowledge to action), period focus (past tense to future perfect), players (limited roles to general partners), presentations (style to substance/process and outcome) and place (ivory tower/ university campus to factory floor/anywhere). Table I, below, depicts the historical changes in leadership development, Conger and Benjamin (1999).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1960s – 1980s</th>
<th>1990s - Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Knowledge</td>
<td>Leadership/organisational change/Highly relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University based</td>
<td>Specialised knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>In-Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-industry focus</td>
<td>Action learning projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical/analytical techniques</td>
<td>Single industry focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few executives/managers</td>
<td>Executive teams/managerial cohorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted to one or two levels/functions</td>
<td>Cascades down multiple levels and across functions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table I: Historical Changes in Leadership Development**

Hence, best practice organisations are expected to have evolved with the trends in leadership development.

**Leadership Skills and Competencies**

Leadership, in a change context, requires focus on building the capability of people within the organisation to deal with continuing change (Fineman 1997; Conner 1999; Goffee and Jones 2000). Therefore, transformational rather than transactional leadership has a more prominent role in today’s business context, with leadership competencies remaining at the core of leadership development in organisations (Bass and Avolio 1996; Day 2000; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004). This would imply that interpersonal competencies are predominant in leadership development as opposed to just investing in intrapersonal competencies development. The latter competencies would include self-awareness (e.g. emotional awareness, self-confidence), self-regulation (e.g. self-control, trustworthiness, adaptability), and self-motivation (e.g. commitment, initiative, optimism). Interpersonal competence would incorporate social awareness (e.g. empathy, service orientation, and developing others) and social skills (e.g. collaboration and cooperation, building bonds, and conflict management). This is reinforced by studies from Kotter (1990), and Kouzes and Posner (1998), which identified the elements of effective leadership as follows: challenging the process; enabling others to act; modelling the way; encouraging the heart. Higgs and Rowland (2001) confirmed
the importance of transformational leadership with the identification of areas of competence of effective leaders of change (creating the case for change, creating structural change, engaging others, implementing and sustaining changes, facilitating and developing capability). Furthermore, Smith and Rogers (2003) spoke about the competencies and values of leaders as: masters at managing through ambiguity, inspire confidence and belief in the future, have a passion for results, marked by unwavering integrity, set others up for success, have strong rather than big egos, have the courage to make decisions, coach for results, drive performance, partner within and across teams, manage work, influence through personal power, select talent, inspire loyalty and trust, change driver, and global thinker.

Hamlin (2004) developed a generic model of managerial and leadership effectiveness identifying six “positive” criteria (called indications) showing the range and type of effective behaviours managers and leaders should exhibit, and five “negative” criteria (called contraindications) demonstrating the range and type of least effective or ineffective management and leadership behaviours. The indications are ‘Effective organisation and planning/proactive management’, ‘Participative and supportive leadership/proactive team leadership’, ‘Empowerment and delegation’, ‘Genuine concern for people/looks after the interests and development needs of staff’, ‘Open and personal management approach/inclusive decision making’, and ‘Communicates and consults widely/keeps people informed’. The contraindications are ‘Shows lack of consideration or concern for staff/ineffective autocratic or dictatorial style of management’, ‘Uncaring, self-serving management/undermining, depriving, and intimidating behaviour’, ‘Tolerance of poor performance and low standards/ignoring and avoidance’, ‘Abdicating roles and responsibilities’, and ‘Resistant to new ideas and change/negative approach’. This is suggesting a universalistic model for leadership competencies and skills that organisations could address in their leadership development programmes.

However, there is a ‘strategic fit’ perspective to the development of leadership competencies, which raises questions about the adoption of a universalistic approach to leadership competencies. This perspective advocates that leadership competencies should be integrated with the organisation’s distinct strategy and business model, suggesting that the development of leaders and leadership competencies should be linked to the unique organisational challenges and goals. There is a further level of fitness corresponding to the individual, suggesting that it is unlikely that all leaders within an organisation would possess similar sets of competencies to be effective or ensure organisational success. Hence, under this perspective, leadership effectiveness is not solely about behaviours displayed by leaders but relates to their accountability to desired outcomes (Cacioppe 1998; Intagliata et al. 2000; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004).

Therefore, the best practice organisations are expected to focus on building the effective leadership competencies to ensure transformational leadership permeates across all levels of the organisations. As well as, ensuring that these leadership competencies are clearly linked to the organisational strategy.

**Leadership Development Methods and Techniques**

To develop leadership competencies, various methods and techniques are being used by organisations, which can be categorised as formal training and developmental activities. The formal leadership training programmes are widely used in organisations, and designed to increase generic skills and behaviours relevant for managerial effectiveness and advancement. The training mainly targets lower and middle-level managers than top management, and there is usually more emphasis on skills needed by managers in their current position than on skills needed to prepare for promotion to a higher position (Rothwell and Kazanas 1999). However, the old pattern of selecting mostly “fast-track” managers for leadership training and providing
it only once or twice during a manager’s career is gradually being replaced by a series of leadership training opportunities that are available to any manager in the organisation at appropriate points in his or her career (Vicere and Fulmer 1997; Popper 2005). Leadership training can take many forms, from short workshops that last only a few hours and focus on a narrow set of skills, to comprehensive programmes that last for a year or more and cover a wide range of skills. A larger variety of methods have been used successfully for leadership training like lectures, demonstrations, procedural manuals, videotapes, equipment simulators, and intensive computer tutorials to learn technical skills; Cases, exercise, business games, simulations, and videotapes to learn conceptual and administrative skills; Lectures, case discussion, videotapes, role-playing, and group exercises to learn interpersonal skills. Five techniques widely used for leadership training are lecture, case discussion, role-play, behaviour role modeling, and business games and simulations (Burke and Day 1986; Bass 1990; Collins and Holton 2004).

Development activities can be used in leadership development programmes to enhance the learning experience towards contributing to the strategic business direction, building leadership, team and interpersonal skills, and self-development (Cacioppe 1998). These development activities include assessment/development centres, multi-source feedback (360 degree feedback process), developmental assignments (job assignments), action learning, developmental relationships (one to one mentoring, peer/executive/group coaching), networking, leaders developing leaders, outdoor challenge programmes, and hardships (business mistakes and failures, career setbacks, personal trauma, problem employees and downsizing) (Fulmer 1997; McCauley et al. 1998; Day 2000; Collins and Holton 2004; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004; Popper 2005).

Assessment/development centres have for many years been used for identifying and developing leadership and managerial competencies. Typically, assessment/development centres focus on evaluating specific “skills” and the behaviours involved in well-defined activities as managing conflict, leading discussion, or making presentations. An assessment/development centre is a method of evaluating, over one to three days, participants’ knowledge and skills using a series of exercises or activities designed to elicit a range of responses, while trained observers are rating them. Starting with a thorough job analysis, key competencies are identified, and activities are developed that are intended to elicit the behaviours deemed most crucial for job success. Then each participant gets an individual report and a Personal Development Plan geared to the learner’s development needs. Assessment/development centres that are systematically developed with clear outcomes can improve an individual’s ability and capacity to respond to change, can identify individuals that are able to create a culture of trust and who are perceived as having a high level of personal integrity, and can reveal an individual’s attitude and orientation toward diversity management (Cacioppe 1998).

Multi-source feedback make use of behavioural feedback from multiple sources and has become a popular method for leadership development over the past 10 years, and it is now widely used in many multi-national organisations (London and Smither 1995). This approach is also known by various names, including “360 degree feedback” and “multirater feedback”. It can be used for training needs analysis, team building, management development, coaching programmes, succession planning, and for monitoring the effects of change programmes. 360 degree feedback implies participants completing a self assessment of the key leadership skills and competencies. Other rating sources including peers, direct reports, supervisors, and even external stakeholders like customers and suppliers also complete an evaluation of the individual’s skills. A summary report incorporating comparison of self-ratings against others is the basis for the focus on specific skills to be developed. A psychologist or HR professional to help the individual interpret the report also supports this exercise. This can facilitate self-
development, and is viewed as the most useful and powerful element of the leadership development process (Cacioppe 1998; Day 2000).

Since forming sound and meaningful relationships with others has been found to be another effective method of improving one’s leadership capacity, development relationships can be considered as central to the learning and development process, and it is important to examine the various forms of relationships that one could establish for self development purposes. Development relationships like one to one mentoring and peer/executive/group coaching supported by job assignments, networking, and leaders developing leaders efforts, can yield tremendous leadership development outcomes when purposefully and strategically applied (Cacioppe 1998; Day 2000; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004).

Action learning assumes that people learn most effectively when working on real-time organisational problems (Revans 1980). It involves a set of participants (action learning set), each individual working on a unique problem, and collectively constructing social meanings and shared realities like in a community of practice, with the support of a set adviser who is there to raise questions and challenge assumptions in an effort to develop reflective learning towards solving each participant’s problem (Mumford 1997; Day 2000). Since contemporary pressures are reinforcing the application of knowledge to solve actual problems, action learning could be the answer to developing leaders and simultaneously generate results (Fulmer 1997).

These leadership development methods and techniques are suggesting that contemporary leadership development involves action and workplace learning towards building human and social capital. In fact, best practice organisations acknowledge leadership as a key component of jobs at all levels and demonstrate commitment to growing leaders all over their organisations. Thus, leadership development should target all the employees and not just top management (Fulmer 1997; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004).

Therefore, we would expect organisations to provide leadership development opportunities, across all levels, using the above-mentioned formal training and development activities.

Leadership Development Maturity
Effective leadership development implies consistent and intentional implementation, targeting the whole organisation, rather than restricted to specific levels, and tied to strategic business imperatives. There is a need for coherent and integrated leadership development experiences and strategies, with leadership competencies of a best practice organisation align to its distinct strategy and business needs (Cacioppe 1998; Day 2000; Intagliata et al. 2000; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004). Thus, the extent of strategic integration of leadership development in the organisation can be used to indicate its maturity level in leadership development.

Therefore, a model of leadership development maturity devised from Burgoyne’s six levels of maturity of organisational management development, in Mumford (1997), could be used to benchmark organisations embarking on leadership development. The various adapted levels are as follows: Level 1 - No systematic leadership development, Level 2 - Isolated tactical leadership development, Level 3 - Integrated and coordinated structural and development tactics, Level 4 - A leadership development strategy to implement corporate policy, Level 5 - Leadership development strategy input to corporate policy formation, and Level 6 - Strategic development of the management of corporate policy. Adapting McCracken and Wallace (2000) strategic maturity rating, levels five and six organisations could be considered as very mature in leadership development, while levels three and four organisations as quite mature, and finally levels one and two as not mature in leadership development.
Thus, we would expect best practice organisations, which ensure the strategic integration of their leadership development initiatives to be at the higher end of the leadership development maturity levels.

Methodology

The population for this study was the 2004 Business Magazine Top 100 companies in Mauritius, in terms of business turnover. Data collection was through postal questionnaires targeting the entire population. The questionnaire was made up of multiple choice (4-point/5-point scale) and open ended questions and designed into three sections with the first one gathering general information about the organisations looking into the demographic information about the selected firm, whether investment was made in leadership development for its employees, and the total budget for leadership development. The second section focused on finding out about the leadership development actions and activities undertaken by the organisations as well as the current critical leadership capabilities that were developed. The final section was on investigating the future trends in leadership development capabilities as well as the commitment to a strategic orientation to leadership development among these Top 100 companies. The respondents were mainly the organisations’ human resource managers (40 percent).

Leadership development being a newly introduced approach in Mauritius, relatively few firms completed the questionnaire. A close and continuous follow-up of respondents had to be maintained in order to increase the response rate which was finally of 37 percent. 38 and 62 percent of responding companies were from corporate headquarters and business division/subsidiary respectively.

SPSS 12.0 was used to compute all relevant descriptive statistics and carry out percentages analysis, as well as undertake two-dimensional cross tabulations to analyse several related questions scattered throughout the questionnaire.

Analysis and Discussion

A majority of respondents (60.5 percent) do provide leadership development for their employees. The Top 100 companies in Mauritius are investing in leadership development, with the median budget for executive/leadership development being £18 500 (Rs 1 000 000) and 74 percent reporting an increased budget for the past five years, while 26 percent reported that their budget remained constant. Over 40 percent of respondents indicated that the primary reason why the budget allocated for leadership development has gone up over the past 5 years is to develop the competitive capability of the organisation. While 24 percent indicated that the need for more leaders is the main reason for increased expenditure on leadership development. The reasons cited are an indication that Mauritian companies are faced with increased competition and in order to remain competitive organisations are increasingly developing their leadership capability (Day 2000; Collins and Holton 2004). Also 95 percent indicated that their current business strategy included a commitment to leadership development. A commitment within the company’s business strategy indicates top management commitment to developing leaders. This is an essential requirement, as many leadership development initiatives fail because of lack of top management commitment (Conger and Benjamin 1999).

However the results from Figure I below, indicate that for companies who allocate a substantial budget for leadership development training, a large percentage of the allocated
budget is dedicated to developing employees at the level of the Chairman’s office, CEO’s, and Executives, and at middle management level. Nevertheless, those companies who allocated 0-5 percent of the budget indicated that it was distributed almost equally across the different management levels. This finding is reinforced by the fact that 70 percent of those employees from the Chairman’s office eligible for leadership development training were sent on such training programmes, while at the middle management level, 60 percent of those eligible were sent on leadership development training. On the other hand, at the professional technical level, only 11 percent of those employees eligible for leadership training programmes were actually sent for training. This indicates that leadership development in Mauritius is concentrated at the senior management level, which goes against contemporary and future trends in leadership development (Fulmer 1997; Conger and Benjamin 1999).

Figure I: Percentage of firm’s budget devoted to personnel level

However, the change in participation to leadership development programmes over the past and next 5 years for professional and technical staff was + 8.2 and +8.7 percent respectively, as compared to + 3.6 and +4.3 percent respectively for Chairman’s office, CEO’s and Executive committee. Similar results were found with respect to the expected change in budget allocation for the next five years. This indicates that there is a shift towards greater investment in leadership development at the professional and technical level of the organisation. Thus, the Top 100 Mauritian firms are aiming to bridge the gap on future trends in leadership development, which will help them respond to the increased competition, uncertainty and pace of change in the business environment (Fulmer 1997; Day 2000; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004).

Although the respondents indicated “corporate training staff” and “company personnel and other staff” were involved in the development (51 percent) and delivery (41 percent) of leadership training programmes, Top 100 companies seem still reliant on external expertise
(professional consultants, university executive education resources, and non-university leadership development resources) for development (49 percent) and delivery (59 percent) of leadership training. As seen before, the Top 100 companies are investing in in-house corporate expertise and since 70 percent of them are designing their own leadership development programmes, they might be trying to address this dependence on external resources. Nevertheless, doubts remain on their ability to customise their leadership development initiatives to the strategic business imperatives since outsiders predominantly do the delivery of leadership development programmes.

Leadership Development Methods and Techniques
The main learning methods and techniques for leadership development used for the past five years, currently being used and expected to be used over the next five years, were investigated and reported in Figure II below.

**Figure II: Past, current and future leadership methods and techniques**

Over the past five years, the majority of respondents have relied on classroom instruction, role-plays, and developmental relationships as the three main learning techniques. Currently, respondents tend to rely on role-plays, multi-source feedback, developmental assignments and developmental relationships as the main techniques to develop leaders. When asked to project which learning techniques will dominate leadership development programmes five years from now, participants indicated that they would be using assessment (development) centres, multi-source feedback, and developmental relationships. Although action learning is not yet predominant among the respondents as a leadership development method, these results indicate that the Top 100 companies are moving towards the leadership development methods and techniques conducive to workplace learning. This will ensure that the leadership development programmes are focused on transformational leadership and can be measured on
their contribution to the organisational performance and strategic objectives, which are the attributes of contemporary and future leadership development trends (Fulmer 1997; Cacioppe 1998; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004).

**Leadership Skills and Competencies**
Organisations were asked to identify the five most critical leadership capabilities they are developing through their leadership development programmes, reported in Figure III below.

![Figure III: Critical leadership capabilities in leadership development programmes](image)

Respondents reported that the most critical leadership capabilities that they wish to develop include: ability to think globally; ability to effect change; ability to maintain high performance teams; ability to create vision; the ability to inspire trust and confidence within the organisation; and ability to get work done through others. These leadership capabilities are the foundations of transformational leadership, incorporating intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies that would ensure development of both human and social capital in the organisation. The ‘indications’ of Hamlin’s generic model of managerial and leadership effectiveness are also present (Day 2000; Hamlin 2004). Respondents indicated that the reasons for developing the above mentioned abilities are primarily for the following purposes: articulating a vision depicting where the organisation need to be heading; coaching people to be able to succeed before they have the opportunity to fail; setting clear goals and objectives; identify connections between accountabilities, team goals and organisational vision and strategies. The latter reason could suggest that the organisations are trying to link leadership competencies to business challenges and strategy. This indicates that the Top 100 organisations are trying to develop world-class leaders required for the current and future business context.
**Leadership Development Maturity**

A question addressing evaluation of leadership development programme indicated that approximately 62 percent of the companies made it a policy to formally evaluate the leadership development programme following an employee’s attendance. The main types of evaluation that companies addressed, were to assess the changes in job behaviours (44 percent) and job results (25 percent) that resulted from the training. This is reinforced by the fact that 29 percent of the respondents made it a policy, in a briefing session with participants prior to enrolling on a leadership development programme, to assign specific projects or corporate problem to focus on during the programme. This focus on job results and behaviours could be useful to make learners accountable for job outcomes but would miss on linking the leadership programme to organisational performance and fail to perform a cost/benefit or return on investment analysis. The latter two levels of evaluation would have ensured the extent to which leadership development programmes contribute to improved business performance and meet organisational strategy (Fulmer 1997; Cacioppe 1998; Hernez-Broome and Hughes 2004; Collins and Holton 2005).

A question addressing the relationship between duration of course (less than one week, 1-2 weeks, more than two weeks) and centralisation of approval yielded the outcome, reported in Table II below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Squared Test for Independence</th>
<th>Duration of course and centralisation of approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequencies Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual work units</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both individual work units and centralised department</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralised department</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table II: Relationship between duration of course and centralisation of approval**

At the 0.1 level of significance, it can be concluded that centralisation of approval depends on the duration of the course. It is observed from Table II that, the longer the duration of the course, the more likely it is that the approval will come from a centralised department. This indicates that respondents take much interest in the long-term development of their employees and we might thus infer that the development initiatives undertaken are aligned with the organisations’ overall business strategy. However, a joint exercise would have been better to ensure the strategic integration of leadership development since, according to Cacioppe (1998), strategic issues have to be clarified and agreed on before leadership development programmes are designed.

As seen in the previous sections of leadership development trends, competencies and skills, and methods and techniques, slight doubts still remain as to whether the leadership development programmes of the Top 100 companies are entirely strategically driven. Hence,
we can safely infer that the Top 100 companies in Mauritius have gone beyond strategic maturity levels 1 and 2, to levels 3 and 4 but are not yet at levels 5 and 6. Therefore, they are at the quite mature levels of ‘integrated and coordinated structural and development tactics’ and ‘a leadership development strategy to implement corporate policy’. Since 40 percent of respondents were mainly HR managers, a more conservative outlook should be taken because the respondents might have expressed more of an aspiration than the reality. Thus, the top 100 companies in Mauritius can be precisely situated at the strategic maturity Level 3 - ‘integrated and coordinated structural and development tactics’.

**General comments**

The above analysis has highlighted a few relevant trends with respect to leadership development initiatives undertaken among the Top 100 companies in Mauritius. Firstly, investment in leadership development is on the increase since the leadership function is increasingly being recognised as the key factor to obtain sustainable competitive advantage in the business environment. Secondly, Top 100 Mauritian companies are increasingly adopting best practice techniques and methods like assessment (development) centres, multi-source feedback and developmental relationships, in leadership development training, although there is still room for improvement in the adoption of action learning as a leadership development method. Thirdly, organisations have recognised that leadership is not the sole responsibility or activity of employees employed at the senior management level of the organisation. Furthermore, respondent companies indicated that they recognised the need for developing leadership talent at the professional and technical level of the organisation. This intent to spread leadership development across all levels of the organisation is aligned with the global trend of empowering employees at all levels to take part in leadership training. Fourthly, respondents showed that the leadership skills and competencies, they are aiming to develop through leadership development training are associated to transformational leadership, which is required to address the increased changes and uncertainty in the business environment. These skills and competencies converge on the universalistic model of leadership development although the companies are trying to align and integrate them with the overall strategic objectives of the organisation. However, one must exercise caution when interpreting these results, as some companies may not actually be investing in leadership development, but are rather paying ‘lip service’ to the function and activity. Fifthly, the majority of respondents indicated that they are investing in in-house corporate expertise to develop and deliver leadership training. This indicates that they are trying to limit their reliance on professional consultants or other external resources like university executive education resources, especially for the delivery of leadership development programmes. Sixthly, those respondent companies that embark on leadership development programmes make it a policy to evaluate the training programmes but mainly at job level, which could undermine the credibility of these programmes since the impact on organisational performance and return on investment analysis are not being assessed. Seventhly, there is a strong relationship between the duration of a course and the centralisation of approval. It was found that the longer the duration of the course, the more likely it is that the approval will come from a centralised department. However, this could inhibit the strategic orientation of the leadership development programmes since a joint exercise between individual learner/individual unit and centralised authority would have facilitated clarification and agreement on strategic goals to be addressed. Finally, all these findings can be summarised as the Top 100 companies in Mauritius, even though they seem to be embracing the contemporary and future trends in leadership development, being strategically quite mature in leadership development corresponding to level three of Burgoyne’s six levels of maturity of organisational management development.
Hence, some course of actions could be explored to improve the strategic maturity level in leadership development of the Top 100 Mauritian companies.

**Recommendations and Conclusion**

Major HRD implications can be drawn from these findings for the top 100 companies. They should adopt an integrated approach to leadership development. This involves determining and defining the key strategic objectives that are vital to the survival, success and growth of the organisation, and key issues or problems that the organisation must deal with in the next two to three years if it were to survive and prosper. They include the vision and strategy of the organisation and the external and internal factors that drive the decisions of the organisation.

In an effort to ensure that their leadership development programmes are strategically driven, these Top 100 companies could develop their own leadership competency framework integrated with their corporate strategies. The competences of future lifeline jobs could be assessed and incorporated in this leadership competency framework. Thus the organisations and individuals could undertake leadership development needs assessments against such a framework, to identify and incorporate in the leadership development programme design the required organisational and individual leadership dimensions. Thus, development of leadership competencies will be customised to the organisational and individual needs, and these could be complemented by the universalistic view of effective leadership competencies.

Evaluation of leadership development programmes should be undertaken at the organisational performance and cost-benefit or return on investment levels. This will ensure that the leadership development initiatives are strategically driven. Using a Balanced Scorecard approach, strategy maps linking intangible assets like human capital and social capital to tangible outcomes like financial imperatives, could help in measuring improvement in organisational performance and return on investment resulting from a leadership development programme (Kaplan and Norton 2004).

Furthermore, the HRD function has a significant role to play in the democratisation of leadership development across all levels of the organisation. It should lead the development of a strong learning culture in the organisation, which will ensure strategically mature leadership development initiatives. A strategic human resource development approach based on the McCracken and Wallace framework could be a good starting point. This will help in developing a self-development orientation to leadership development and ensure that the responsibility for developing leaders is shared across the various organisational levels.

Organisations should focus on integrating leadership development initiatives with management and human resource systems. The participant’s manager must be aware of the major outcomes and competencies taught during the programmes and should actively support the participant to utilise and implement the acquired leadership dimensions. The human resource systems within the organisation like recruitment and selection, performance management, and rewards and recognition, should also be coherent with the strategic directions, issues and skills covered in the leadership development programme.

Leadership development methods, which will reinforce workplace learning, like action learning, 360 degree feedback, development centres, and developmental methods (coaching and mentoring) would help in overcoming the challenge of building leadership capabilities of the whole workforce. Hence, organisations will be proactive towards their strategic imperatives.

Therefore, the Top 100 companies in Mauritius have to some extent embrace the contemporary and future trends in leadership development, with the building of critical leadership competencies through leadership development methods and techniques geared
towards reinforcing human and social capital. Nevertheless, these organisations still have to improve the strategic integration of their leadership development initiatives to be very mature in leadership development.

References


