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Introduction

In 2008, the CIPD published a Research Insight entitled *Engaging Leadership: Creating organisations that maximise the potential of their people*, which was written by Beverly Alimo-Metcalfe and John Alban-Metcalfe. This Research Insight briefly defined leadership, including an exploration of how that definition and theoretical description of leadership may have changed over the decades, before the authors introduced and suggested recent and future directions in leadership. The Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe report discussed the impact that the two 'seismic shocks' of the new millennium, namely the 9/11 terrorist attack and the scandals surrounding the collapse of Enron, AmCom and WorldCom, had upon the popular leadership models of the day. The authors described this as the 'post-heroic' era, where leadership practice and theory moved from an expectation of charismatic, inspirational leadership (think the Tony Blair style of leadership) to one that increasingly focused upon leadership that included less 'spin' and more humility and consideration. It is no coincidence that the changes in our organisational leadership expectations closely mirrored those of political leadership at the time. Within the 2008 Research Insight, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe suggested that in the future, leadership theory needed to take into account the impact of context, pointing to the influence of cultural diversity and the increasing concern for environmental issues. They suggested that the 'strongest and clearest' themes emerging in the literature surrounded employee engagement – and that therefore 'engaging leadership' would be a key future focus and direction for leadership practice and theory.

This current Research Insight explores what effective leadership looks like in 2012, four years on from Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe's report. Our world and organisational context has undergone major change in these four years. In 2008 we entered a financial recession, and the financial crisis has continued to worsen. In recent months, we have seen the UK re-enter recession, resulting in the first double-dip recession our economy has experienced since the two-year period from 1980. Business confidence in the UK is low, unemployment is increasing and more and more organisations are falling into administration and bankruptcy. Within organisations, there are increasing levels of mental health issues, presenteeism (when employees are at work but shouldn't be) and disengagement (when employees are physically present but mentally absent). In the political environment, between 2008 and 2009 the MP expenses scandal hit the press, and in 2010 Gordon Brown's Labour Government was ousted and replaced with a Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition. Mid-term elections this year have suggested a vote of no confidence for both the Conservative and the Liberal Democrat parties. Few would disagree that currently trust in, and engagement with, our political leaders is at a very low ebb. The same can be said of trust in organisational leadership. CIPD data on employee attitudes since spring 2009 shows trust in senior leaders has deteriorated, which is perhaps not surprising given increased levels of redundancies, job insecurity and change, as well as widespread media headlines highlighting excessive executive pay, bonuses and rewards for failure.

Globally, the financial crisis also rages on. In Europe in particular the situation is at breaking point, with many economists speculating that there could be a break-up of the single monetary currency and an even more unstable economy and environment for the UK.

This Research Insight therefore explores the situation in 2012, taking into account how the economic and political environment since 2008 may have affected conceptualisations of leadership theory and expectations, and suggesting both current and future directions in leadership. The review will be largely focused upon academic research, but will also include and refer to key papers and research within management and practitioner literature. The review will also look at where HR fits into the leadership agenda and explore the implications of developments in leadership theory and research for the practice of leadership and leadership development in real-world organisations.

It is designed to help HR and other business leaders preoccupied with building leadership and management capability in organisations to reflect on their role and the role of HR in enabling and driving this agenda forward.

The evolution of leadership theory – where are we now and where are we going?

Importance of leadership and management in organisational/people performance and health

Nearly a century of academic research on leadership has provided convincing evidence that leadership is a key factor in affecting both individual and organisational performance, health and effectiveness. It is also clear that leaders within organisations personally affect the dynamics, culture and values of that organisation (for example Giberson et al 2009). Academic literature suggests therefore that not only does leadership matter in terms of the outputs of an organisation, but also in terms of the structure, culture and values held by that organisation. Practitioner research and public policy reports also point to the importance of leadership and good people management to both organisational performance and other, related outcomes. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills has produced a range of research reports that highlight the evidence base that shows effective leadership and people management to be core components of high-performance working, linked to enhanced business performance. Previous CIPD research has come up with similar conclusions. For example, the report *High-performance Work Practices* (CIPD 2005), in collaboration with DTI and Best Companies, suggests that leadership is crucial for developing high-performance working and that leadership across the organisation is required for high-performance working practices to deliver results; and the CIPD report *Understanding the People and Performance Link: Unlocking the black box* (Purcell et al 2003) concludes that front-line management and leadership are crucial in implementing the HR practices that generate high organisational performance. The CIPD's Shaping the Future (2011c) report names leadership as one of three drivers for sustainable organisational performance; it also suggests that middle management and leadership distributed throughout the organisation are important.

David MacLeod and Nita Clarke's report to the Government, *Engaging for Success* (2009), makes it clear that both leadership and 'engaging managers' are key drivers of employee engagement – these are two of the four drivers they identify. CIPD research on engagement (Truss et al 2006) also suggests that the manager's role is vital to engagement, while its research on trust in organisations (CIPD 2012d) suggests that trust in an organisation stems from the behaviour of line managers and leaders and that managers' actions are pivotal in shaping perceptions of and trust in the organisation.

Employee health and well-being are also seen as being linked to leadership and people management in the practitioner and policy domain. For example, Dame Carol Black's Review of the health of Britain's working age population (2008) highlighted people management capability as key to preventing and managing employee absence and ill health at work and supporting people back to work after illness.

History of leadership

Before looking in more depth at the conceptualisation and emerging themes regarding leadership in 2012, it is useful to reflect briefly on the history of leadership and theory. Figure 1 graphically depicts the major movements in leadership theory from 1930 (which is when the focus on leadership theory began) with trait theories to the emergence of value-based and contextual leadership theories in the present day.

Figure 1: Historical developments in leadership theory

1930

Trait theories or 'the great leader approach': *What leaders are*

The idea that leadership is an 'ability' you are born with (a personality trait) rather than something you can learn.

1940

Behavioural theories: *How leaders act*

Exploring how leaders behave, distinguishing between task (initiating structure) and relationship (consideration) focused behaviour.

1950

1960

Situation/contingency theories: *How leaders act in different environments*

Exploring how behavioural needs of leaders may change with task or situation; often focused on matching leader (trait) to environmental demands.

1970

1980

New paradigm/post-heroic models: *Focusing on how leaders create and handle change*

Includes charismatic, transformational and visionary leadership. Remains a very active area of leadership research.

1990

Relational leadership theories: *Focusing on the quality of the relationship between the leader and direct report*

Best exemplified by leader–member exchange theory (LMX). Remains a very active – and emerging – area of leadership research. Focus on engaging leadership.

2000

Values-based leadership theories: *Focusing on 'who' the leader is as a person, including their values, morals and ethical stance*

Includes authentic leadership, ethical leadership, and negative models such as destructive and abusive leadership. An emerging area of leadership research.

2010

Contextual leadership: *To understand leadership, need to understand context in which he/she/it operates*

Includes hierarchical level, wider economic situation, organisational characteristics, leading in a VUCA* world. An emerging area of leadership research

* VUCA: Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous

What is 'leadership'?

Although this seems a simple question, as can be seen from the previous section, the theories and models of leadership have changed over time – and continue to change with time, with context and with each theorist or subject-matter expert. There is no one overarching theory or model of leadership. There is no one agreed definition of leadership. There is also no agreed set of knowledge, skills and behaviours that leaders need to perform effectively. As a result, the answer to the simple question 'What is leadership?' is almost impossible to capture.

That said, it could be argued that there are a number of common threads or properties that most would agree represent modern conceptualisations of what leadership is/involves (Leonard et al in press):

- Leadership both creates and addresses challenges and goals at the strategic, cultural level of an organisation.
- Leadership is key to the success of an organisation.
- Leadership involves influence over, and responsibility for, individuals (both internally and externally to the organisation).
- Understanding and enhancing human behaviour is key.
- Leadership involves a continuous process.
- Leadership must be viewed within its context.

In both academic and practitioner literature, the terms 'leadership' and 'management' are often used interchangeably; and debate continues about what the distinction between these two terms may actually be. A popular view is that whereas leadership is a dynamic process, which concerns influence at the strategic, organisational level, management is a more static process concerning influence at the local level and involving activities such as administration, planning and organisation.

When considering this distinction in the context of a VUCA world (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous), it is unlikely that managers would be able to take a static approach to management; and it is also unlikely that leaders would be able to progress without clear planning and organisation skills. In reality, the distinctions are blurred. Managers need at some level to perform leadership functions and leaders will tend also to be managers. In this review, therefore, the distinction is also deliberately blurred. Where reference is made particularly to one level of leadership or management, it will be made apparent (such as by discussing top leadership or line management); however, generally it will be appropriate for all levels.

New directions in academic theory and research on leadership

This section extends and builds upon the areas outlined by Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe in their 2008 Research Insight and will focus upon three main areas of emerging leadership theory and research, namely:

1. relational leadership (focusing on the relationship between the leader and their direct report and wider team)
2. values-based leadership (focusing on the characteristics of the leaders and their sense of self, self-awareness and ethics system)
3. contextual leadership (focusing on the importance of the environment and system within which the leader operates).

1 Relational leadership

This body of study focuses on the relationship between the leader and their direct report or wider team. The body of literature really gained awareness in the mid-1990s, best exemplified by leader–member exchange (LMX) theory. This section explores a number of areas of research within this common theme.

LMX

LMX theory proposes that managers develop close, high-quality relationships with only a proportion of their direct reports (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995). Evidence has strongly demonstrated that being part of a high-quality leader–member relationship (as opposed to the employee and manager not having a close relationship) confers a wide range of positive outcomes for both the employee and the manager, including performance, job satisfaction, commitment to the organisation and well-being.

LMX posits that leaders develop different relationships with employees across a group, and that therefore each employee will be treated differently as a result. It is not hard, when considering our personal experiences of working within a team, to see that these differential relationships will be highly visible – and to imagine that the impact of these relationships may be experienced by others in the team (consider for instance if you have a poor relationship with your manager, but your peer has a great one).

Despite this, until 2008, research into LMX had, in the main, focused on the dyad of the manager–employee and ignored the wider work group context. Research has now started to explore how the outcomes of a high-quality LMX relationship will, in part, depend on the team in which that relationship resides. Although this literature is still in its infancy, the evidence suggests:

- LMX is likely to be only really understood if both the manager–employee dyad and the social context in which that dyad resides is considered.
- The better the LMX relationships in general, the better the employee and team outcomes (that is, when the manager has generally good relationships with all employees in the team).
- The strength of an employee's relative (to other team member LMX relationships) LMX is important, particularly in teams with lower average LMX relationships.

Research is also exploring the impact of LMX differentiation (the spread of LMX relationships across a team) but it is currently equivocal in terms of what the impact of differentiation is in explaining individual outcomes.

Social cognitive perspective

This area of research places social cognition at the centre of understanding leadership and proposes that leadership is in the eye of the beholder (Kenney et al 1994). Rather than seeing leadership as an objective reality (for instance what they do or say), this theoretical perspective is based on the employee's interpretation of the leader. Perhaps the most prominent theory within this perspective is that of implicit leadership theory (ILT). This was developed in the 1980s by Lord and Associates (for example Lord et al 1984) but has only been tested within occupational settings in recent years. ILT refers to the benchmarks (prototypic ideal) that employees use to form impressions of their manager (Lord and Alliger 1985). The theory suggests that employees categorise leaders as effective based on the perceived match between the leader's actual behaviour and the prototypic ideal of a leader (ILT) held by that employee. Evidence has suggested that the better the match, the more positively that leader will be rated by the employee. In other words, this perspective holds that rather than effective leadership being about what the leader says or does, it is to do with the extent to which that leader represents what the employee expects/wants the leader to say or do.

Shared leadership

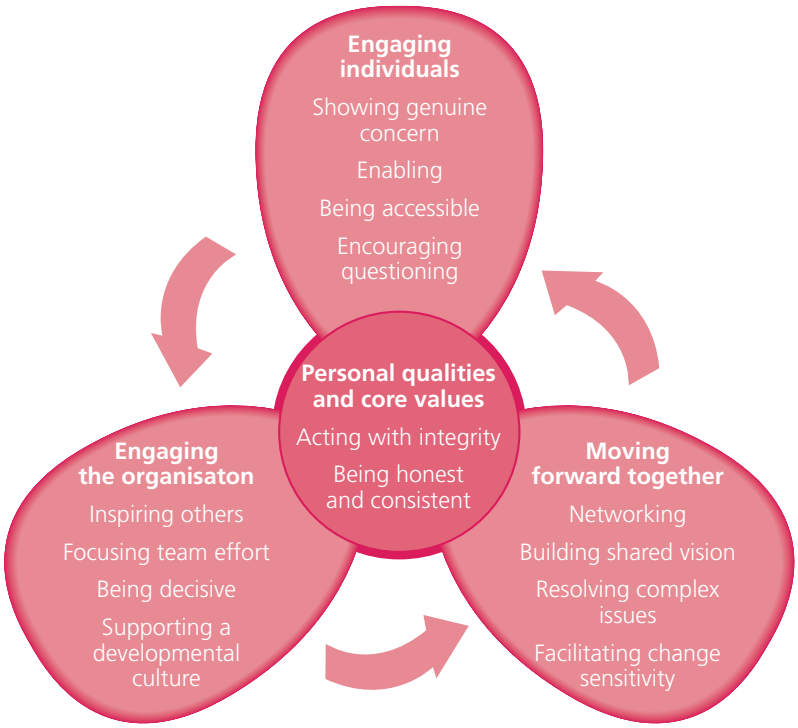
Shared leadership is a model, first defined in 2003 by Pearce and Conger, which departs from the traditional view of the leader holding the power, and moves to a perception that leadership can be shared across team members both simultaneously or in a rotating fashion (Hernandez et al 2011). In the last year, researchers have started to explore how the model may actually work in practice. Hernandez et al (2011) suggest that in order to enable this model, the leader would need to provide the foundations for the team by engaging their team members, understanding their contributions and ensuring that no team member was 'more powerful, knowledgeable or influential' than others. Within this context, the leader could share their power and enable leadership to become a collective entity.

Shared leadership is one theory that sits within an emerging approach to leadership that focuses on both the power and the responsibility of employees or team members in shaping leadership and its outcomes. It is clear from all three of the relational perspectives (LMX, ILT and shared leadership) reviewed here that the follower (the employee) is increasing in importance in leadership theory. Seeing the follower as anything but passive and a reactor to the behaviour of the leader is a relatively new concept in leadership theory. The movement in the literature, particularly the widening of LMX research to the team level, suggests that the importance of and power held by the employee when considering leadership is likely to continue to grow.

Engaging leadership

In the 2008 Research Insight, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe suggested that engaging leadership was likely to be the strongest leadership model for the future, stating '*What leaders need to strive towards is to lead competently in an engaging way.*' The authors presented their model of engaging leadership, derived from their existing transformational leadership model (TLQ). The model has four elements or scales. Figure 2 shows the various scales in each cluster.

Figure 2: The structure of the 'engaging' Transformational Leadership Questionnaire™ (TLQ)™



It is certainly true that following the publication of that Research Insight, the profile of both employee engagement and the role of leadership in creating it has been raised, particularly within practitioner literature. In 2009, the *Engaging for Success* report by MacLeod and Clarke for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) was published, which focused on engagement and the benefits for organisations. As mentioned above, this report described four key enablers of employee engagement, two of which referred directly to the manager–employee relationship. The first described the need for leaders who provided strong and strategic direction, which was supported and 'owned' by all levels of the organisation. The second described managers who facilitated, empowered, appreciated and respected their employees while showing a commitment to their development and growth. Alfes et al (2010), in research undertaken on behalf of the CIPD, added to this by highlighting the important, and different, roles of both managers and leaders in fostering employee engagement and suggesting further behavioural themes. However, further work on the *Locus of Engagement* (CIPD 2011a) finds that many managers are reluctant to adapt from a more traditional style of management to a more engaged role.

Despite the proliferation in both academic and practitioner literature linking leadership to employee engagement (such as Tims et al 2011), little literature has sought to identify the specific behaviours relevant to enhancing and managing employee engagement. Research by Robinson and Hayday (2009) attempted this, but the behaviours published were broad and lacked distinction in terms of management level (which is contrary to the suggestions by the MacLeod and Clarke report and the research by Alfes et al mentioned above). In 2011, research sponsored by the CIPD was published in a Research Insight (Lewis et al 2011) that addressed this particular gap. The study involved interviews with 48 employees of a large global energy provider with the aim of identifying both effective and ineffective management behaviours in this context. The research also sought to identify differences in 'engaging management behaviours' between first-level line managers and more senior managers. The study identified three themes of engaging management: supporting employee growth; interpersonal style and integrity; and monitoring direction. These are described more fully in Table 1.

Table 1: Engaging management competency framework, with brief descriptions

Theme	Management competency	Description
Supporting employee growth	Autonomy and empowerment	Has trust in employee capabilities, involving them in problem-solving and decision-making
	Development	Helps employees in their career development and progression
	Feedback, praise and recognition	Gives positive and constructive feedback, offers praise and rewards good work
Interpersonal style and integrity	Individual interest	Shows genuine care and concern for employees
	Availability	Holds regular one-to-one meetings with employees and is available when needed
	Personal manner	Demonstrates a positive approach to work, leading by example
	Ethics	Respects confidentiality and treats employees fairly
Monitoring direction	Reviewing and guiding	Offers help and advice to employees, responding effectively to employee requests for guidance
	Clarifying expectations	Sets clear goals and objectives, giving clear explanations of what is expected
	Managing time and resources	Is aware of the team's workload, arranges for extra resources or redistributes workload when necessary
	Following processes and procedures	Effectively understands, explains and follows work processes and procedures

Interestingly this study did not identify any differences in patterns of behaviour by management level, and as a result one framework was developed.

Following further CIPD sponsorship, the authors of this Research Insight are developing this framework in two different ways. First, as the initial work was purely qualitative and based within one organisation, there is a need to test the applicability of the model more widely. Currently the model is being tested with a longitudinal study in eight organisations, involving more than 100 managers and 500 employees. The results of this will be published later this year with a view to developing a measure of engaging management from this.

Second, the researchers and the CIPD are also interested in the sustainability of engagement. It has been suggested by some practitioners (such as Towers Watson) that, in its positive extreme, engagement could be detrimental to an employee's well-being – for instance making them overwork or place too much importance and sense of self in their workplace. This theory is supported by the CIPD research report *Emotional or Transactional Engagement – Does it matter?* (CIPD 2012b), which highlighted the difference between transactional and emotional engagement. This found that while transactionally engaged employees (that is, engaged only with the task or job role at hand through concerns over earning a living) may respond positively to engagement surveys and display outward behaviours associated with engagement, they also report higher levels of stress than employees who are emotionally engaged (that is, engaged with the organisation's mission and values).

The researchers therefore are seeking to develop a model of 'sustainable engagement' by looking at the links between the engaging manager framework (as published in 2011 and outlined above), and their stress management competencies work (which identified the manager behaviours associated with prevention and reduction of stress in employees – see, for example, CIPD 2009). It is particularly important in the current organisational environment, where mental ill health is increasing, that advice given to managers on fostering and creating engagement in their team does not, inadvertently, cause ill health. The results of this work will also be published later in 2012.

It is important to note, however, that both MacLeod and Clarke (2009) and Alfes et al (2010) described the need for engaging leadership, meaning senior executives, within an organisation – and how the needs with this group were different from those of managers. Although in the CIPD (2011a) research, two levels of managers were included, senior executives were not studied. There therefore remains a gap in research to explore the behaviours required by senior leaders in an organisation in order to engage their employees and to facilitate and enable the development of an 'engaging' organisational culture and climate.

2 Values-based leadership

The second emerging area of leadership theory focuses on characteristics and behaviours of the leader that display honesty, integrity and strongly held ethical and moral principles. It is no coincidence that the interest in, and demand for, leadership to be more value-driven and transparent comes at a time when the public has seen key political, financial and media figures display dishonesty and questionable ethical and moral principles. Importantly, the public has also seen the impact of these decisions on our daily living and working lives. Although there are a number of these theories, the two main theoretical models are ethical leadership and authentic leadership, each of which are briefly explained below.

Ethical leadership

This model was developed by Brown and colleagues in 2005, and is defined as *'the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two way communication, reinforcement and decision making'* (Brown et al 2005). It has been operationalised in the form of a measure called the ELS (Brown et al 2005). An ethical leader is one who

emphasises shared values, fair treatment and integrity to their team and others, is caring and principled, makes fair and balanced decisions, communicates with employees about ethics and sets clear ethical standards.

The model suggests that ethical leaders, by role-modelling ethical conduct, inspire others to behave and act similarly. In fact, within the academic literature, ethical leadership has been shown to create positive outcomes in employees, including organisational commitment, willingness to exert effort, willingness to report problems, job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviours (going the extra mile) and trust and satisfaction in management. An interesting study by De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) found that ethical leadership (measured in CEOs) was positively related to top management effectiveness and employee optimism about the future. This study also found that the key important elements of this form of leadership for CEOs were morality and fairness.

Research has started to explore what causes a leader to display ethical leadership and has found various antecedents, including social responsibility in the leader and a strong ethical climate in the organisation (such as an ethics code or reward system around ethics). But it is clear that more research is needed on what facilitates the development of an ethical climate within an organisation (O'Connell and Bligh 2009).

Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership was first defined as a model in 2004 as *'those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave, and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspectives, knowledge, strengths, aware of the context in which they operate and are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient and of high moral character'* (Avolio et al 2004). It has been operationalised in the form of a measure called the ALQ (Walumbwa et al 2008). There are generally agreed to be four components of authentic leadership as shown by the leader: (1) objectively making decisions; (2) being guided by internal moral standards; (3) presenting the self openly by thoughts and feelings; and (4) demonstrating an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. The leader displaying self-awareness and belief, and then acting upon these beliefs, is said to positively influence employee behaviour – again in a role-modelling way. This assertion is reinforced by literature that demonstrates the positive impact of authentic leadership on job satisfaction and satisfaction with leadership, organisational citizenship behaviours, employee empowerment, perceptions of support, and organisational financial performance.

An interesting element of authentic leadership is that, although research tends to focus on the leader, the core theory emphasises a dyadic approach, describing an 'authentic relationship' between leaders and followers (Hernandez et al 2011). In their review of this literature, Gardner et al (2011) go further than this to assert that *'authenticity of followers may be as important to the development of authentic leadership as the authenticity of the leader'*. In a similar theme to that explored in the relational leadership literature, it is clear that followership (or the influence of the employee) in leadership and its effectiveness is becoming a much greater consideration in research.

The CIPD's recent research on trust repair (CIPD 2012d) emphasises the importance of both leaders and followers. The research highlights that to maintain or rebuild trust, leaders need to demonstrate that they are not self-serving, but instead serving the needs of the whole organisation. It also finds that the nature of followership has to change if trust within organisations is to be bolstered; what's needed is an attitudinal shift on the part of employees from being dependent on leaders to also seeing themselves as responsible for creating a positive workplace climate. Benevolence should become a two-way relationship, with employees becoming more benevolent towards new leaders and not blaming new leaders for the mistakes of their predecessors.

3 Contextual leadership

The third emerging area of leadership research and theory focuses on the influence of context. The central tenet of this approach is that *'a better understanding of leadership processes requires a better understanding of the contextual factors in which leadership is embedded'* (Day and Antonakis, in press). Theorists (for instance

Gibson et al 2009) have suggested that the study of leadership must shift focus from individual leaders operating in a hierarchy to a conceptualisation of leadership as the process by which social systems operate through the structuring of roles and relationship. This perspective argues that leadership involves more parties than just the leader and more than the individual leader–employee relationship (Dulebohn et al, in press).

Given the pace of change within the economic and business environment, and the recognition that within organisations change is often perceived as a constant, this emerging branch of leadership theory would assert, therefore, that leadership cannot be seen as a static entity because the nature of the leadership would be required to change along with the wider internal and external environment. Spillane puts this very succinctly: *'My argument is not simply that situation is important to leadership practice, but that it actually constitutes leadership practice. Situation defines leadership practice in interaction with leaders and followers. This way of thinking about situation differs substantially from prior work'* (Spillane 2006, p145, in Alimo-Metcalfe, in press).

As can be seen from the previous two new leadership areas, the issue of context is a uniting theme across all. From the relational leadership theories we can see, in terms of LMX research, that the literature is moving in a direction whereby the social context in which the leader operates (such as the team) is considered. In the shared leadership model, leadership is seen as a set of practices that are fluid and dynamic in that they can be enacted by different people at all levels and will occur through social process. It is clear in this model that the issue of context is actually as key an element of the conceptualisation as the relational element is and comes from a recognition that we are now within a knowledge-based era where, in order for organisations to be effective, there must be an ability to share knowledge effectively throughout the organisation. It is argued that a classic hierarchical leadership arrangement would not enable this.

Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership is a similar concept to that of shared leadership, but while shared leadership concerns a relational or social process by which leadership is arranged, distributed leadership is more about a structural arrangement whereby leadership responsibilities are delegated to employees in different roles and different levels across the organisation (Alimo-Metcalfe, in press). Within this arrangement, employees at all levels would have responsibility for leadership. The need for distributed leadership was found to be one of the key characteristics of long-term organisational high performance in the recent CIPD Shaping the Future final report (2011c). More research is needed to understand the conditions under which distributed leadership can be achieved (Alimo-Metcalfe, in press).

Complexity leadership theory

This theory was first published in 2007 by Mary Uhl-Bien and colleagues as a reaction to the assertion that traditional leadership models are not relevant to a knowledge-oriented economy and that the context that leaders now operate within is radically different and diverse. With complexity leadership theory, the leadership is *'an interactive system of dynamic, unpredictable agents that interact with each other in complex feedback networks'* (Uhl-Bien et al 2007). It suggests that organisational contexts and needs are too complex to be answered by leaders and followers in a simple exchange relationship and therefore that leadership occurs within a 'complex adaptive system'. It is suggested that within an organisation there are three key leadership roles: adaptive leadership (involving change – the source by which change outcomes are produced), administrative leadership (the traditional planning and organising leadership), and enabling leadership (the role that manages the 'entanglement' between the administrative and adaptive roles). Although widely cited and written about, the theory has been criticised for lack of substantive research (Avolio et al 2009), and actually exists purely in conceptual terms at present.

Context in terms of diversity

It was noted by Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2008) in their Research Insight that leadership theories had neglected to consider the influence of different cultures on leadership. More recently, Chin (2010) asserted that *'theories of leadership have neglected diversity issues'*. Despite this, a growing body of research is focused on exploring leadership in the context of culture or global orientation. Perhaps the most influential

cross-cultural study is that of Project GLOBE by House and colleagues (2004). This study investigated leadership using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies across 62 different cultures and aimed to explore how leadership beliefs and attributes differed by culture. The study uncovered both differences and similarities in leadership constructs. Leadership attributes of integrity, honesty and inspiration were described universally as positive, and leaders being autocratic and un-cooperative were found as universally negative attributes. Many were seen as more culturally contingent, meaning there were differences across cultures in what were regarded as positive leader attributes. These included ambitious, risk-taking and enthusiastic examples. It is interesting to note that those attributes held as universally positive are those more reflective of new leadership theories within the values-based leadership models, whereas those described as more culturally contingent (such as ambitious and enthusiastic) might be described as more reflective of the earlier 'new paradigm' models such as transformational leadership models. It is encouraging to see that some leadership behaviours and attributes may be able to *'transcend diversity in race, religion, disability, or other particular facets of diversity'* (Day and Antonakis, in press), and that these behaviours are those reflected in emerging trends in academic leadership research.

What is clear from the literature exploring context, whether intra-organisational or inter-cultural, is that there is a need for both explicit contextually oriented theoretical models (Avolio et al 2009) to be developed and for the use of appropriate statistical techniques. The vast majority of academic research in the field of leadership explores relationships between variables such as leaders and their direct reports at one time point. This excludes the opportunity to explore the more complex underlying relationships that exist within the context of that relationship as it develops over time. The need for more sophisticated analytical techniques that allow the use of cross-level analysis (such as multi-level modelling techniques) of data will become of core importance.

Academic perspectives on leadership development

It has been argued (for example Avolio et al 2009) that despite almost a century of research into leadership, the focus has largely been on theory development and that actually little attention has been paid to how that theory will be developed in practice or, in other words, what may be a facilitator of, or a barrier to, leadership development. Day and Antonakis (in press) state that this omission is a critical one given that *'most organisations care relatively little about which particular leadership theory has the most support, but they do care a great deal in how best to develop leadership'*. They go on to say that there is an assumption within the literature that each particular leadership theory can be operationalised by training – but criticise this for being a short-term approach, saying what is needed is a focus on ongoing long-term development.

In 2011, a special issue of *Leadership Quarterly*, the major academic journal for leadership research and theory, focused on longitudinal studies of leadership development. This issue presented an emerging field of research exploring how and why leaders develop over time. Although there are a number of frameworks, the majority have not been theoretically tested. The most comprehensive model, and one which has some initial empirical validation (Day and Sin 2011) is that of Day and colleagues (2009). This model is an integrative theory of leadership development that is not affiliated with, but will be applicable to, any type of leadership theory. The approach focuses on the developmental processes that underlie leadership development and suggests that the behaviours that are visibly observed and understood to be evidence of effective leadership are actually underpinned by potentially unconscious developmental processes.

One of the key aspects of this is the concept of leader identity formation. Identity refers to a multidimensional construct that goes beyond leader behaviours or traits and instead includes an individual's values, experiences and self-perceptions (Day and Harrison 2007). The theory is that a person's identity develops as a result of experiences and challenges from life. Over time, a person's identity becomes more and more complex and multifaceted. Adults, for instance, have a range of different identities according to their different roles in life (such as parent, friend, worker, leader). Although we can swap between these identities readily and easily (think for instance how quickly you can swap between a work meeting and a call home immediately afterwards – but how you may differ in each role), we only display one identity at a time (Lord and Brown 2004). An individual's leader identity is a sub-component of their overall identity that refers to how they see themselves as a leader.

Although some theorists argue that leader identity is developed across adulthood, most agree that it is developed from early childhood. Before experiencing the workplace, individuals will start to develop their leader identity as a result of aspects of 'nature' (such as genetics, gender and personality) and also nurture, including their parental and teacher experience (such as having authoritarian as opposed to supportive or *laissez-faire* guardians) and early learning experiences (such as education, sports and role-playing) (Murphy and Johnson 2011). Whether or not these experiences will actually be embedded into their leader identity will be affected by contextual factors such as societal expectations (whether that child is expected to go on and be a leader) and age of the child, and whether that individual is confident and resilient enough to learn and grow from the experiences – and take on more challenges and experiences.

It is suggested that the more a leader thinks of themselves as a leader, the more they will act as a leader and develop the associated skills. The idea is that the stronger the leader identity, the more likely it is that that individual will seek opportunities, experiences and challenges in which they can display that role (that is, act as a leader) and will be motivated to develop that aspect of self. Day and Sin (2011) provided support for this theory that the extent that individuals identify with the role of leader is related to their development as a leader and effectiveness in the role over time.

Theorists also suggest that key in leadership development is the congruence between the leader identity and the personal identity – in other words, how much a leader acts in a way that is true to themselves. This very much speaks to the literature on authentic leadership and suggests that to explore a leader's development over time it would be important to explore their self-concept and how that impacts on their behaviour (Avolio et al 2009). Day et al (2009) propose that this congruence between the personal identity and the leader identity will develop and mature over time and with experience. An important consideration, however, is that leader identity can be both enhanced and damaged by experience. Day et al (2009) propose the idea of leader identity development spirals. The theory goes that when an individual is placed in a leadership position, their leader identity is strengthened. If they have positive experiences in that role, this aspect of their identity will be further strengthened by increasing their confidence and increasing their motivation to develop further. If, however, that individual has negative experiences in the role, their identity could be weakened, making them less motivated to accept challenges and opportunities and therefore less likely to develop further (Day and Sin 2011). This highlights the need for organisations to support and monitor the leadership development process.

Day and colleagues (2009, 2011) tend to describe leader identity development in terms of the leader and their experiences. An alternative perspective is offered by Ashford and De Rue (2012), who state that leader identity develops through interactions between leaders and followers. They introduce the idea that leader identity needs to be 'granted' by others for it to be both internalised in the leader and recognised and accepted by others. In this perspective, even though an individual did not see themselves as a leader, if others see them as such and treat them as such, over time, the individual would develop their leader identity and 'discover the leader within'. This relates to the relational leadership theories and, if taken further, could be hypothesised that the beneficial outcomes seen by positive social interactions between leader and follower in research relating to relational leadership theories may, in part, be as a result of the reinforcement and development of the leader identity.

Further, Day and Sin (2011) found that having a strong learning orientation, defined as '*a desire to develop the self by acquiring new skills, mastering new situations and improving one's competence*' (Van der Waale 1997), or an approach whereby individuals were focused on skill development and attaining a deeper understanding of the task or subject, was related to a strong leadership development trajectory. It is possible to increase an orientation towards learning in an individual by, for instance, presenting the benefits and relevance of that learning to an individual.

Although this literature is in its infancy and directions in terms of methodologies cannot yet be conclusive, it does appear that including a focus on developing an individual's 'leader identity' and their sense of self and focusing on building a learning orientation in leaders may be promising areas of focus for future leadership development. What is clear from the literature is that having a long-term focus is key. In their paper, Day and Sin (2011) suggest that a three-month intervention may not be long enough to bring about long-term changes in leader effectiveness and that programmes should focus on lifelong learning. It is likely that in the next five years there will be much more solid empirical evidence published around how to develop leaders within organisations.

Where does HR fit into the modern leadership agenda?

As the importance of leadership increases and the role of HR evolves, the two domains become ever more interdependent. Put simply, leaders are unlikely to demonstrate good leadership skills without HR support, while HR is unlikely to fulfil its role if the organisation isn't infused with good leadership skills.

HR's role establishing good leadership skills

The CIPD's Shaping the Future (2011b) report and the leadership literature summarised above both suggest that there needs to be good leadership distributed throughout all levels of the organisation in order to achieve sustainable organisational performance. If this is to happen, HR must address leadership capability in a coherent manner across the organisation and ensure that all areas of HR activity underpin and develop leadership capability. This is likely to include the following areas, each of which will be explored in more depth:

- defining what good leadership means
- developing leaders' and followers' skills
- creating systems, processes and policies that support good leadership
- creating the conditions in which the value of leadership is recognised.

Defining what good leadership means
Given the diversity of leadership models and the continuing evolution of leadership theories, as explored above, HR has a key role to play in identifying what good leadership looks like in their own particular organisational context. It is unavoidable that different individuals within the organisation will hold different implicit models, but HR can set out some common expectations of leadership, expressed through a framework of competencies, behaviours or descriptors in a way that is meaningful in their context. This can create a common language around leadership that business leaders, HR and managers at all levels – and employees – understand. HR can also be instrumental in ensuring that leadership is seen as something that is distributed throughout the organisation, rather than resting with a small number of identified leaders.

Developing leaders' and followers' skills
CIPD research shows that nearly three-quarters of organisations in the UK report a management and leadership skill deficit – two-thirds report senior managers and 85% report line managers and supervisors lack these skills (CIPD 2012c). Organisations need HR to support the development of leadership skills. The survey on global leadership (CIPD 2011d) suggests that the effectiveness of leadership development is seen as the top determinant of leadership quality within an organisation.

An initial step in leadership development is to understand current levels of capability and where the key deficits lie – for individuals and the organisation as a whole. An audit or diagnostic looking at leadership capability can help clarify development needs. Ideally this needs to gather data not only from the leaders and potential leaders themselves, but also from their followers, perhaps through 360-degree feedback, which has the added advantage of providing data to the individual on their development needs as well as providing data to HR on the overall pattern of strengths and deficits.

There is an array of methodologies that can be brought into play to develop leadership skills, from coaching and mentoring to blended learning, from peer networks to toolkits, from face-to-face training to self-assessment tools and intranet sites. As shown in the review above, academic research to date provides little definitive guidance on the best methods for leadership development, but it is clear from research that leadership development interventions, in order to bring about long-term changes in leader effectiveness, need to be long term (more than three months) and that the focus on short training programmes is not enough. It is also suggested that focusing on building leaders' sense of self and identity as a leader over time may be a promising area for focus. This suggests that programmes involving an extended period of coaching and mentoring both in current leaders and, importantly, for those who may be leaders in the future, may be the most effective methods of leadership development in order to address the role of identity. Practitioner views suggest that in-house development programmes and coaching from line managers are the most effective activities for learning and development in general (CIPD 2012c); and the survey on global leadership (CIPD 2011c) suggests that formal workshops, training courses and seminars are seen as the most effective form of leadership development, with special projects of assignments and coaching from your current manager also being highly rated. It is important to note, however, that the practitioner literature is largely constructed based on practitioners' *subjective opinion* about effectiveness and may therefore not represent the *actual* effectiveness of an intervention in terms of impact on outcomes over time.

As well as addressing skills deficits in the organisation's current leadership cohorts, HR also needs to develop the generation of future leaders. It needs to understand how leadership demands may change and what skills leaders of the future may need, and use succession planning and talent management processes to build 'future-fit' leaders (CIPD 2010). In order to support distributed and shared leadership, HR also needs to develop 'follower' skills and the capabilities of those throughout the organisation who will be taking on leadership responsibilities. As discussed above, academic literature further suggests that building in long-term coaching and mentoring opportunities for 'future leaders' may be an effective way to develop their 'leader identity' and push forward their development into current leaders.

Creating systems, processes and policies that support good leadership

HR systems and processes such as recruitment, promotion and appraisal can be used to embed a culture of good leadership. By emphasising the vital importance of relational leadership capability – or at least the potential to develop leadership capability – recruitment and promotion processes can ensure that only those who have – or can develop – leadership skills are put into positions involving people management. This may mean that HR needs to find alternative, technical promotion routes for those who deserve promotion, but are never going to be good at relational or engaging leadership. Appraisal and performance management also need to be aligned with the desired leadership behaviours.

Teamworking processes can also be important in establishing and developing distributed and shared leadership. Even with great leadership development, it is likely that individuals will have both strengths and areas in which they are weaker, so HR should particularly look to support the creation of leadership teams in which all leadership skills are covered.

Organisation development, change management, employee engagement initiatives, culture and values exercises and job design can all involve and support emphasis on and development of leadership capability and distributed leadership. Policies relating to all the different HR areas from diversity to well-being to employee relations can include reference to leadership skills. HR's data-gathering, analysis and feedback can also support leadership by measuring the elements of 'organisational equity', such as culture and alignment (CIPD 2010), and will need to become more sophisticated in order to gain real insight from the data, which will only grow in both volume and complexity within organisations.

A recent report in *Harvard Business Review* (Shah et al 2012) suggested that within organisations, the understanding of data has fallen behind the ability to generate it, and that there is a real need for organisations to train and develop employees on data analysis skills. This was picked up in Issue 12 of the CIPD 'In a nutshell' series, offering clear implications for HR in the need to both develop and manage analytical skills and 'data-driven behaviour' in

organisations. A key message was that although many organisations generate data, it is not always done with insight, and that there is an opportunity for HR to build strength by linking the business and HR metrics, by involving L&D in training and developing employees in data skills and by employing more expertise. This is a theme that comes through strongly in the CIPD's *Business Savvy: Giving HR the edge* report (CIPD 2012a).

Creating the conditions in which the value of leadership is recognised

Top-level buy-in is crucial to achieving good leadership and leadership development (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe 2008). To obtain this buy-in, HR needs to consider carefully how best to articulate the business case for leadership development, using internal and external data and taking into account the nature of the organisation, its sector and the competitive environment it faces. It must ensure that return on investment is assessed and communicated.

The CIPD's Shaping the Future (2011b) report suggests that good leadership and distributed leadership are particularly important during times of change and challenge, when they are vital to sustain organisational performance, but are also more likely to get overlooked as senior managers focus on the market challenges and environment. At this point HR needs to act as 'provocateurs' and encourage new ways of doing things, using influence and insight and moving beyond the process-driven approach (CIPD 2010) to help their organisations achieve distributed leadership and deal with the complex contexts in which they are operating.

Both the CIPD's *Next Generation HR* report (2010) and its more recent report on trust in organisations (CIPD 2012d) emphasise the need for HR to hold their organisation to account and be guardians of ethics and integrity – referred to as 'chief integrity officers'. This may involve challenging senior and top managers to role-model leadership, including looking at authenticity, integrity, consideration and engagement in order to meet the requirement for values-based, as well as relational, leadership.

To achieve this element of its role in the leadership agenda, HR will need to show the three savvies outlined in the CIPD's Next Generation HR report (2010):

- business savvy – understanding the link between leadership capability and business performance
- contextual savvy – for example, understanding how the supply of leadership talent and requirements made of leaders will be affected by external trends and forces
- organisational savvy – understanding the leadership capability within the organisation – what exists, what is needed and how to develop it.

The importance of leadership to HR success

The ability of managers throughout the organisation to show leadership and people management skills and behaviours is central to HR's ability to succeed in almost all of the professional areas identified in the CIPD HR Profession Map, particularly: employee engagement, performance and reward, learning and talent development, resource and talent planning, organisation development, organisation design, employee relations. Each of these areas needs to be delivered at the local level by local managers. While HR can set up the systems and processes for these areas, co-ordinate activities at the organisational level and be guardians of their implementation, they cannot be on the ground delivering every individual appraisal or doing the day-to-day engagement of individual employees. Instead, HR needs to develop the leadership skills of those in management positions in order to embed these practices in the organisation. A range of CIPD reports have identified the vital role of front-line managers in implementing HR policies, such as appraisal and team briefing (for example Hutchinson and Purcell 2003, CIPD 2007); they suggest that line managers can have a big impact on the success of such practices in reality and whether or not there is a 'rhetoric–reality gap' (Hutchinson and Purcell 2003, pix).

In addition, the changing structure of HR in many organisations that involves the adoption of shared HR services and the creation of HR business partners, or variations on a theme, requires greater people management capability on behalf of line managers. If HR is to be a truly strategic 'insight driven' function (CIPD 2010) then it needs to spend less time hand-holding managers, managing absence and conflict and generally providing a shield for poor management and more time helping to build management capability. It needs to get to the point where managers are doing these leadership and people management roles for themselves – where managers have the skills to engage people, support well-being and get the most out of their employees.

To take a further example, many organisation development projects are fundamentally about leadership and management development. In many cases, if organisations are genuinely to change, leadership and management must change. If an organisational change is seen purely as a systems issue, involving an intervention at a particular time with no consideration of leadership and local-level engagement, it is unlikely that the desired changes will be embedded for the long term. Line managers are often the real agents of change at the local level – their sanction, support and involvement is vital to the success of change initiatives. In the learning and development arena too, with the shift from training to learning, the role of managers in creating learning cultures and enabling individuals to engage in learning becomes ever more important (Reynolds 2004).

HR is in the best possible position to take up the challenges of the leadership agenda. It also needs to seize this agenda to show its relevance and importance in the modern working environment. If it doesn't do so, it risks others taking on elements of its role and eroding its position – for example, others may take on the 'chief integrity officer' role (CIPD 2012d). Interestingly and coming full circle, HR practitioners need to show leadership capability themselves to lead and develop the HR function: HR leaders need to create a vision of insight-driven HR and make changes to the HR function as needed.

Implications for leadership and leadership development in organisations

Organisational, national and international contexts in 2012 present new and rapidly evolving challenges for leaders and for those involved in developing leadership in their organisations. Given the economic situation in the UK, Europe and beyond, the need to create high-performing organisations is ever more imperative – and ever more challenging. The importance of leadership for creating high performance is increasingly recognised. But the type of leadership needed in 2012 is very different from that which many of our current leaders will have experienced in their early career and perhaps in which they have received development themselves. Not only have leadership theories changed dramatically in the last few decades, the change is continuing at an increasing pace: the types of leadership that are highlighted in our 2012 review have already evolved markedly from those that were current when Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe wrote the previous Research Insight on this topic only four years ago. This section considers the implications of each of the major developments in academic theory and research for real-world leadership and leadership development.

Relational leadership

This strand of leadership study not only emphasises the need for leaders at all levels to engage and develop good relationships with those who work for them, but also explores the important role of 'followers' and the concept of shared leadership, suggesting that power can be shared across the team. Leading in a complex, fast-moving, knowledge-based economy demands new and more evolved forms of leadership: employees need to be engaged and results achieved through a complex network of relationships, not a static hierarchy and certainly not an 'old-fashioned' command and control approach. Communication, approachability, a flexible approach and individual consideration all become central to the leadership skill-set, and the perceptions of those being led also form part of the picture. While engagement has already risen much higher up the agenda over the last few years, sustainability of engagement and performance is also likely to become more important as more is demanded of people and well-being is put at risk. The leaders who achieve success

in the long term will be those who can both engage their people and ensure that resilience is achieved through looking after employee well-being and avoiding stress-related problems – and do all of this despite a context in which pressures are ever higher and engagement harder to achieve.

This engaging, relational and even shared form of leadership is likely to become ever more significant as the expectations of the modern workforce change through the generations. Those who have grown up in the age of the Internet and social media are used to levels of communication and involvement that their parents would not have considered possible; they expect to be engaged and empowered. Their implicit leadership theories are likely to be very different from that of previous generations, giving a very different perspective on what constitutes leadership effectiveness. World events such as the Arab Spring have shown that power can be shared and exerted by the people; workforces will potentially benefit from a greater sharing of power across teams and departments. Leaders may find their role to be more one of building foundations, engaging people and ensuring equity rather than exerting power.

Current and future leaders need to find ways to develop the skills and approaches set out in this set of relational leadership theories in order to create organisations fit for the future and achieve success in the years to come. While there is little research of direct value to the leadership development field, those whose role is to develop existing and future leaders can draw inspiration and support from the models emerging from leadership literature and research. For example, specific behavioural indicators developed in research in this field, such as the engaging management competency framework (see Table 1 on page 8), can be used directly in the design of development programmes. These models can also be used to help with areas such as performance management, succession planning and talent management to create future-fit leaders.

Values-based leadership

This developing area of leadership theory brings ethics, morals, integrity and honesty into the mix through models such as ethical and authentic leadership. It complements the previous, relational perspective on leadership in that it speaks to relational elements such as trust and authentic relationships, and it too looks at the importance of followership for the perception and effectiveness of leadership. In the context of the tarnished reputations of leaders in business, political and institutional domains, the demand for leaders to be more values driven, transparent and ethical is strong. In many cases, trust must be rebuilt if future success is to be assured.

Central to this aspect of leadership are honesty, integrity, transparency of process, shared values and fair treatment. Authentic leadership models suggest that to achieve a values-based approach a leader must have self-awareness, understand the impact of their behaviour on others and be able to present themselves openly as well as having their own inner moral compass. Leaders therefore need to develop the ability to reflect on their inner world and their effect on others; leadership development becomes about building an understanding of self, including strengths, weaknesses, values, drivers and how all of these affect behaviour and outcomes. Feedback mechanisms such as 360-degree feedback can be a powerful way to understand others' perceptions and approaches such as mindfulness can be used to facilitate self-exploration. It may also be that reliable and rigorous personality-based psychometrics will continue to see an increasing utility in leadership development, particularly those that can explore the perceptions of others in addition to the self.

This area is not just about leadership, but also about the culture of the whole organisation. Values-based leaders facilitate the development of an ethical climate within their organisation: they do this partly through their position in the organisation structure and the processes they put in place, but equally if not more importantly through how they role-model a values-based approach, behave towards and share power with others. Conversely, organisations in which there is already a strong ethical climate are more likely to develop values-based leaders; authenticity is about a relationship in which both sides are willing to be open, so authentic leadership involves both leaders and followers engaging in the process. Thus leadership development is about developing the culture of the organisation as well as individuals.

Contextual leadership

This third area of emerging theory and research on leadership takes a step back from the individual leader and the leader–follower relationship to a broader perspective on leadership in which the context and whole system are taken into account. The complexities of the modern world mean that organisational sustainability can only be achieved by dealing with constant change in the organisational and wider environment. Leaders will have difficulty in providing direction when there are no easy answers and solution-finding depends on rapid, effective knowledge-sharing. Instead of operating through a hierarchy, leaders need to share responsibility and decision-making; leadership becomes more about genuine collaboration towards achieving a shared purpose. To achieve this, relationship-based shared leadership needs to be supported by structures that allow leadership responsibilities to be distributed across the organisation. Complexity leadership theory suggests that this creates a complex adaptive system.

From this perspective, leaders are challenged to be agents of change in subtle and implicit ways through their self-management, behaviour and relationships, as well as instigating more explicit leadership factors such as creating direction and power-sharing processes. Leaders themselves need to have a strongly systemic perspective, combined with organisational understanding and wider perspective on the business, sector, national and international context in which they are operating. They need to be ready to share power and collaborate effectively with people across their organisation.

Another layer to this is the need for organisations to understand the implications of diversity on beliefs about leadership. Leaders will be viewed differently depending not just on what their direct reports want and expect, but also upon the culture and context in which they operate. It is key for leaders to develop 'cultural intelligence' in order to manage this most effectively.

Perhaps the greatest challenge presented by this perspective on leadership is that of getting everyone in the organisation into a position where they have the skills and mentality to share in its leadership. This presents a need for business and organisational savvy to be built throughout the organisation, for systems and processes to provide rapid information flow and facilitate networking, and for people to be willing to take on the responsibility of sharing power and decision-making. At an organisational level, the use of metrics needs to become more adaptive and to allow more-complex analytics – perhaps more importantly, though, there needs to be the skills within the organisation to *actually interpret and act upon* the data generated.

Implications for HR professionals

The leadership agenda represents an enormous opportunity for HR professionals to prove their central importance in the complex environment of the modern-day and future workplace. If HR can play its role well, take a dynamic evidence-based approach and ensure organisations have the leadership they need to survive and thrive, it will secure its role as a vital function for organisational success. The converse of this is that if HR fails to grasp this agenda and move it forward, it risks being marginalised, stuck in a limited role with ever-diminishing influence. In this context the business, contextual and organisational savvy outlined in the CIPD's *Next Generation HR* (2010) report become a crucial foundation from which to influence and build a leadership strategy for the organisation.

While the academic leadership agenda can follow different strands and develop a diversity of theoretical models, the role of HR professionals needs to be to weave the emerging strands together into a coherent approach for their organisation. Thus relational leadership needs to be combined with values-based leadership and contextual approaches to leadership to generate clarity about what is expected of leaders and followers within their own organisational context. HR professionals need to keep abreast of developments in leadership theory and research in order to ensure that they are using the best and latest evidence base to support the leaders in their organisation and to ensure success in their own role in developing both individual leaders and the wider organisational culture, systems and processes to support leadership.

The need for further research

As can be seen from everything that has been written so far, leadership is a dynamic and rapidly evolving research domain and is fundamentally important to the role of HR within organisations. As the context is one of constant change, so the leadership literature needs to keep developing and meeting the new need to understand what is required of leaders. Questions remain unanswered in all of the strands of work we have considered, such as:

- What are the relational or engaging leadership behaviours needed at senior levels in organisations as compared with those needed at lower levels in the leadership hierarchy?
- More broadly, where do senior leaders fit in in terms of facilitating and enabling relational, engaging climates where these forms of leadership can emerge throughout the organisation?
- What facilitates the development of an ethical climate within an organisation? And what do senior leaders need to do to create values-based organisational climates?
- What organisational structures need to be in place to support and enable leadership styles that best handle complexity and fluidity?
- How can distributed leadership best be achieved? What is required of leaders and followers? What systems and processes need to be put in place?
- How should leadership development activities dovetail with wider organisational development and culture-change programmes?
- What do we need to know when considering leadership in a global context? How do leadership attributes and beliefs differ cross-culturally?
- What is the most effective way to develop leaders? What is the key element to focus upon in leadership development?

Further research is also needed to understand how HR can best support and progress the leadership agenda within organisations. There is a need to explore what are the relevant levers and how HR professionals can pull them in order to facilitate good leadership at all levels of the organisation. This should also explore what HR professionals need to do to put in place leadership development that creates future-fit, distributed leadership throughout the organisation.

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sustainable organisation performance

Stewardship, leadership and governance is one of the three themes in our Sustainable Organisation Performance research programme. The other two themes are future-fit organisations and building HR capability. Within each of these themes we will research a range of topics and draw on a variety of perspectives to enable us to provide insight-led thought leadership that can be used to drive organisation performance for the long term.

stewardship, leadership and governance

future-fit organisations

building HR capability

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