

**An exploratory study of leadership differences in  
the Central Bank of Ireland through grade levels**

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Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2018

## Abstract

This thesis aims to explore in what ways leadership in the Central Bank of Ireland, hereafter referred to as ‘the Bank’ or ‘CBI,’ differs dependant on grade levels. To be precise, the main goals are to identify differences in leadership styles and skills in the Bank at team lead and manager grades. In examining skills, the researcher focused on change, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, communication, emotional intelligence, motivation and teaching. The researcher followed a qualitative, inductive approach with an exploratory focus. Semi structured interviews were conducted with ten interviewees from the CBI – five team leads and five managers. The Bank’s Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013) acted as a main reference point for this thesis, describing the expected behaviours of team leads and managers within the Bank.

The overall results demonstrated similarities and dissimilarities in leadership style and skills across both grade levels, which both supported and contradicted previous findings. Precisely, managers focus more on flexibility and collaboration in terms of style compared to team leads who are more affiliative and focused on the development of followers. In terms of similarities, both grades demonstrated authority and an outcome focus. In relation to overall skill differences, managers focus more on vision, strategy, tailoring, encouragement and rationale, while team leads place more emphasis on emotional intelligence and again, staff development. With regard to overall similarities in skills, team leads and managers emphasised integrity, trust, intellect, understanding and acknowledgement. In addition, both grades consider communication as an important skill for leaders. However, the results showed managers apply this skill more than team leads.

The findings from this thesis provide more understanding on the ways in which leadership differs generally at grade levels but particularly within the CBI. There are also implications for the Bank’s response to the 2017 GPTW Trust Index Survey results (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a), the design of career development programmes and succession planning within the CBI.

The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and the unofficial responses from interviewees. Neither of which represent the official views of the CBI.

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## **Acknowledgements**

First, I wish to thank my supervisor Dr. Paul Hanly for his assistance and guidance throughout my research.

Second, I would like to thank my interviewees in the Central Bank of Ireland for their generosity of time, cooperation, as well as open and honest responses.

A thank you in particular to my manager for his understanding, help, time and encouragement.

Finally, but by no means least, I wish to thank my friends and especially my family for their reassurance, support and patience.

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## **Abbreviations**

CBFSAI - Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland

CBI – Central Bank of Ireland

EI – Emotional Intelligence

FTE – Full time equivalent

GPTW – Great Place to Work

NWQ – North Wall Quay

## Introduction

On 1 February 2018, the CBI, marked seventy-five years of public service. This was a significant anniversary in the history of the institution and provided an ‘important opportunity to reflect on the Bank’s past, while also looking to the future’ (Ni Choncubhair, 2018, p.1). Ni Choncubhair (2018, p.1) explains:

As the bastion of economic stewardship and the guardian of financial regulation in Ireland, the Bank has played a central role in Irish financial history since its establishment in 1943 following the dissolution of the Currency Commission.

She points out that:

This organisation has witnessed turbulent times over the past seventy-five years. Its performance, particularly in the recent financial crisis in Ireland, which resulted in a €64 billion bank bailout, stained its credibility. This devastating episode in Irish financial history and impetus for change, underlined the serious shortcomings of the Bank or “burning platform” at that point in time (Ni Choncubhair, 2018, p.1).

Several damning reports were published (Regling and Watson, 2010; Honohan, 2010; Nyberg, 2011; Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis, 2016) which included reference to the Bank’s activity. The main causes identified with regard to the CBFSAI included:

- i) A regulatory approach which was and was perceived to be excessively deferential and accommodating; insufficiently challenging and not persistent enough...
- ii) An under-resourced approach to bank supervision that, by relying on good governance and risk-management procedures, neglected quantitative assessment and the need to ensure sufficient capital to absorb the growing property-related risks.
- iii) An unwillingness by the CBFSAI to take on board sufficiently the real risk of a looming problem and act with sufficient decision and force to head it off in time. “Rocking the boat” and swimming against the tide of public opinion would have required a particularly strong sense of the independent role of a central bank in being prepared to “spoil the party”

and withstand possible strong adverse public reaction (Honohan, 2010, p. 16).

Honohan also pointed out:

There are undoubtedly many other factors, which may have militated against the effectiveness of the CBFSAI during this period. These include: aspects relating to the quantity and skill mix of the staffing of the bank regulation function; an unduly hierarchical CBFSAI culture discouraging challenge; management process problems; difficulties, related to the rather unwieldy organisational structure, in ensuring coordination between economist and regulator sides of the house; and weaknesses in preparing for a crisis (Honohan, 2010, p. 16).

In essence, strong leadership encompassing accountability, courage, decisiveness, openness to challenge, effective communication, along with adequate resourcing and emphasis on rule instead of principle based supervision, was absent at that time in the CBI.

The aim of this thesis is to explore in what ways leadership in the Bank differs dependant on grade levels i.e. between team lead and manager grades. It is not to study the root causes of the Irish financial crisis and the Bank's actions or inactions at that time. However, in examining leadership and its various components including directing change, it is important to include the Bank pre crisis as this provides the necessary context and causality. With a mandate from the government, the Bank is a leading, central figure in economic and financial regulation in Ireland with national and international stakeholders. Its strategic responsibilities are extensive and include eurosystem effectiveness and price stability, stability of the financial system, protection of consumer of financial services, regulation of financial institutions and enforcement actions, regulatory policy development, efficient and effective payment and settlement systems and currency services, independent economic advice and high quality financial statistics and recovery and resolution of financial institutions (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018b). Hence, it has a sphere of influence and impact that is widespread and worthy of studying.

Briefly, as background, the Bank's structure contains four pillars – Operations, Central Banking, Prudential Regulation and Financial Conduct and at the end of 2017, the organisation employed 1,816 full time equivalents (FTE) (Central Bank of Ireland,

2018c, p. 177). The mission of the CBI is ‘safeguarding stability, protecting consumers’ (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018c, p. 15). The CBI remains a hierarchical institution, despite increased attempts to flatten the organisation. This thesis focuses specifically on team lead and manager grades, which are level two and level three respectively within a four level system. The remaining levels are level one – team member and level four – senior leader. The team leads interviewed in this thesis have responsibility for on average four teams with twenty staff members. The managers interviewed are in charge of eight teams on average with fifty employees.

An exploratory study of leadership differences in the CBI is opportune now. In 2017, the Bank embarked on a three-year journey to acquire accreditation as a Great Place to Work (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a). The GPTW team define a great workplace as ‘where you achieve organisational objectives with employees who give their personal best and work together as a team – all in the environment of trust’ (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a, p. 3). Strategy and direction, change ready and innovation, along with continuous improvement were the top three areas identified for improvement (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a). These credible results are a useful reference. They also promote further study within the area of CBI leadership.

## **Leadership**

Leadership is a hugely significant standalone topic in itself. It helps to maximise efficiencies and achieve organisational goals. Leaders embody the culture of organisations, they lead by example and can have a powerful impact on staff through their guidance and motivation. Strong leadership in an organisation is vital, i.e.:

Effective leaders, who can inspire their people to realise their personal and collective potential, are often the deciding factor between a company being good at what it does and achieving greatness (Confederation of British Industry, 2005, p. 4).

Numerous descriptions of leadership exist with agreement not yet reached on finding a conclusive definition (Hitt, Black and Porter, 2014). Leadership is a relationship (Prentice, 2004; Mullins, 2016), process (Shackleton, 1995; Hitt et al., 2014; Northouse, 2016), involves influence (Shackleton, 1995; Hitt et al., 2014; Mullins, 2016; Northouse, 2016;) and accomplishing goals (Shackleton, 1995; Prentice, 2004; Hitt et al., 2014; Northouse, 2016) or mission (Luburic, 2015). It can exist at all grades i.e. leadership is not always a downwards process (Hollington, 2006) and it both

overlaps and contrasts with management (Kent, 2005; Hitt et al., 2014). Leaders must be courageous, decisive, visionary, result focussed, involve others, have integrity, strong self-belief, communicate effectively (Confederation of British Industry, 2005) and possess a high degree of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). There are also numerous theories, models and approaches to leadership including leaders' traits approach (Drucker, 1954; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991), behavioural theory involving Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid (1964), transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Yukl, 2006), transactional leadership (Bass, Jung, Avolio and Berson, 2003), authentic leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Rock, 2011; Gill and Caza, 2018), with the importance of flexibility highlighted (Goleman, 2000a; Ibarra, 2015; Jasper 2018). Goleman (2000a) identifies six specific leadership styles. Building on this, Saxena, Desanghere, Stobart and Walker (2017) explore Goleman's leadership styles at different levels within medical education leaders.

The contingency or situational theory of leadership (Fiedler, 1967; House, 1971; Vroom and Yetton, 1973; Hersey and Blanchard, 1993) is another separate school of thought on this theme. These articles, theories, models, frameworks and literature are extremely useful in investigating the research question as they explain the underlying concept of leadership and thus aid understanding. However, with respect to leadership differences in the CBI and specifically at team lead and manager grades, this topic remains generally under examined in published academia. Other theses with applicability to the Bank in general tend to focus more on financial or economic aspects such as economic growth (De Yu Zheng, 1998), risk (Harvey, 2011) and stress testing (Pore, 2016). Collins (2012) looks at the Irish banking crisis, which includes a discussion on the CBI and reference to banking leadership in general but again the key focus is not specifically on leadership within the Bank itself. Therefore, this thesis helps to build on the existing body of knowledge.

The researcher specifically proposes to study in what ways leadership styles and skills in the Bank differ at team lead and manager grades. The Bank's Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013) is the starting point of this thesis. This document sets out the expected values of the Bank in relation to employee behaviour and interaction within the organisation and in delivering its strategy externally. The six priority behaviours are as follows:

Challenge constructively, deliver on commitments, lead the way forward, collaborate and share, develop self and others and initiate improvements (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013, p. 1).

Furthermore, there are twelve core competencies discussed including leadership (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013). The suggested standard or behavioural indicators for each competency by role level acts as a highly useful reference point against the findings of this thesis. It also provides direction for the researcher in examining specific leadership skills. In general, leadership is structured as the skills or traits required to be a leader as opposed to the necessary skillsets at different levels. The Centre for Creative Leadership (2018) identifies four core leadership skills and looks at role. Furthermore, Zenger and Folkman (2014) investigate the skills needed by leaders at each level and observe a leadership skillset necessary throughout one's career development. The work of Blankenship and Miles (1968), Heller and Yukl (1969) and Jago and Vroom (1977) are practical in studying leadership style and levels also.

### **Leadership Skills**

In this thesis, the researcher focuses on the differences in leadership styles and skills in the CBI at manager and team lead levels. Specifically, the researcher looks at change, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, communication, emotional intelligence, motivation and teaching in the context of leadership skills. As explained previously, these specific areas were predominantly inspired from the Bank's Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013). The existing research available on these individual areas are a beneficial guide to this thesis, adding understanding to the results. Kotter (2007) is a leading expert on organisational **change** and his eight-step process to successful organisational change is instrumental in researching this subtopic. Within this theme, resistance to change is analysed (Johnson, 1992), along with change fatigue (Hearsum, 2014).

Encouraging and promoting the attributes of effective **teamwork** is a highly important function of leadership with support from followers essential. As Edmondson (2012, p. 75) explains: 'by pulling together the right people with the right combination of skills and training and giving them time to build trust, companies can accomplish big things.' Existing research in this area covers the importance of balance (Senior, 1997), communication (Pentland, 2012), equal distribution of workload (Katzenbach and

Smith, 1993), speaking as well as listening (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993; Edmondson, 2012), reducing social distance (Meyer, 2015; Neeley, 2015) and **collaboration** as a vital component (Gratton and Erickson, 2007). The existing research on this specific area is extremely useful in analysing teamwork from a leadership point of view with respect to team leads and managers in the CBI. Closely connected is the area of **conflict management** and the ability of a leader to resolve swiftly (Earley and Mosakowski, 2004; Von Glinow, Shapiro and Brett, 2004; Brett, Behfar and Kern, 2006; Meyer, 2015).

**Communication** is a fundamental part of leadership in informing and influencing followers, articulating an organisation's vision and functioning as a foundation for action. Its importance cannot be understated. As Ruben and Gigliotti (2017, p. 20) point out that 'a failure in communication may ultimately lead to a failure in leadership itself.' There is ample research available on this subject, which although not specific to the CBI is extremely useful nonetheless. Research has shown that there is a high, positive relationship between a leader's communication competence and his/her ability to bring about organisational change (Gilley, Gilley and McMillan, 2009). Clear, effective communication from a leader reduces resistance to change (Argenti, 2017) and assists in confronting challenges in organisations (Clampitt, DeKoch and Cashman, 2000). Galpin's (1995) seven principles communication plan is an extremely useful tool and translatable to the CBI.

**Emotional intelligence** is an essential part of leadership and a large contributor to effective performance among teams. Research has shown that the most effective leaders all have high emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). Emotional intelligence incorporates self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills (Goleman, 2000a). Goleman's research on this area is invaluable and provides an excellent framework for analysing leadership emotional intelligence in the context of team leads and managers in the CBI.

**Motivation** is another central element of leadership investigated by the researcher with respect to CBI managers and team leads. Nohria, Groysberg and Lee (2008) look at the four drives that underline motivation and how leaders can meet them. Their research is noteworthy and demonstrates that overall motivation is influenced by individual managers as much as organisational policy (Nohria et al., 2008).

Finally, the researcher looks at **teaching**. This topic has advanced a great deal from the initial belief that great men were born leaders. However, modern thinking suggests



that leaders are developed as opposed to born (Rooke and Torbert, 2005). Furthermore, Finkelstein (2018, p. 142) suggests that ‘the best leaders are great teachers.’ His research on this area, which involved more than a decade observing great leaders in action, benefits the thesis by adding weight to the researcher’s results on teaching.

Qualitative, inductive research methods are proposed, specifically semi-structured interviews conducted with ten CBI employees at leadership level – five team leads and five managers.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, both the CBI and leadership are extremely interesting and important topics individually. The prominence, authority and recent history of the Bank itself, along with subsequent changes, demonstrates the high value of the organisation as a research subject. Leadership is a hugely important activity, which has large impact and effect on individuals and organisations. In addition, differences in leadership styles and skillsets exist within organisations at different levels. Thus, exploring in what ways leadership differs at manager and team lead levels within the CBI and in the context of the Bank’s Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013) is a worthy research topic. Furthermore, a decade has passed since the outbreak of the global financial crisis, which was a huge instigator for change within the Bank. This combined with the results of the 2017 GPTW Trust Index Survey for the CBI (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a), which highlighted weaknesses in the Bank’s leadership, creates an opportune time to explore leadership differences within the CBI. The existing published literature, research and current state of knowledge on the aforementioned themes are all useful and beneficial but do not focus on differences in Bank leadership specifically. Therefore, this thesis helps to provide an insight into the ways in which leadership differs dependant on grades in the CBI. It also enhances the current state of knowledge with regard to leadership differences at different levels. An outline of the thesis structure is a literature review discussion, which covers a critique of the existing body of knowledge and identifies gaps. Second, the research question and aims, followed by methodology, analysis of findings and discussion. Last, the researcher concludes and presents recommendations for further study.

## **Chapter 1 – Literature Review**

In this chapter, the researcher defines the area of research and key variables involved. A discussion of the main frameworks and themes is included in relation to the research question. The existing body of knowledge is discussed and critiqued by theme, with gaps and limitations identified.

The aim of this thesis is to explore in what ways leadership styles and skills differ in the CBI through grade levels, i.e. at manager and team lead grades. Specifically, the researcher proposes to focus on the following areas with respect to leadership skills: change, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, communication, emotional intelligence, motivation and teaching.

### **Behavioural Competency Framework**

The Bank's Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013) is the foundation of this thesis. It provides direction on the skillsets to examine and acts as a main reference point. The twelve core competencies build on the six priority behaviours, which are based on eight underlying principles. Originally developed in 2004, the Bank's Competency Framework involved the participation of staff through workshops and surveys. The framework is a practical translation of the Bank's performance expectations i.e. what good looks like and is applicable to staff across the organisation. By clearly distinguishing performance expectations at the various levels, the Bank recognises that specific skills are required at different grades. In focusing on leadership, managers should 'set tone and direction for their people through change' while team leads are expected to 'promote team effectiveness' (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013, p. 8). Table 1 below reproduces the leadership behavioural requirements of team leads and managers from the Bank's Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013, p. 8).

**Table 1 – Expected team lead and manager leadership behaviours from Behavioural Competency Framework** (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013, p. 8).

<b>Team Lead</b>	<b>Manager</b>
Lets people affected by a decision know what is happening on a timely and regular basis.	Seen as a role model, trustworthy and a credible leader across the Bank.
Ensures the team has the information and resources required to succeed.	Inspires individuals in the team to take ownership for delivering the team’s mission and the Bank’s objectives.
Takes specific actions with the intent of enabling the team to function optimally.	Protects the team and its reputation vis-à-vis the Bank as a whole.
Creates the conditions that enable the team to perform at its best (e.g. setting clear direction, getting the right people, being trusted to act on behalf of team)	Provides or secures needed support and development for both the individuals and the team as a group.
Acts to build team spirit or get others’ input for purposes of promoting the effectiveness of the division.	Leads by example in behaving in ways that are consistent with the Bank’s principles and behaviours.
Communicates the importance of individual or team deliverables to overall Bank objectives.	Makes and justifies difficult decisions for the wider benefit of the Bank.

As per Table 1, the Bank expects team leads to inform, enable, ‘create the conditions’ and ‘build team spirit’ (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013, p. 8). In contrast, the CBI views a manager as a ‘role model’ and expects him/her to ‘lead by example,’ inspire and provide support (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013, p. 8). There are also difference in terms of communication at both grades i.e. decision making and justification by managers with team leads expected to deliver the message (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013).

### **2017 Central Bank of Ireland GPTW Trust Index Survey results**

The 2017 GPTW Trust Index Survey results for the CBI (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a) highlighted differences between actual and best practice within the Bank’s

leadership. Briefly, the GPTW Institute conducts the largest workplace culture survey in the world annually (Great Place to Work, 2018). To increase an organisation’s performance, GPTW suggest developing high-quality relationships focusing on trust, pride and camaraderie in the workplace (Great Place to Work, 2018). Their methodology includes a survey capturing employee sentiment and trust levels across the following five dimensions: credibility, respect, fairness, pride and camaraderie (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a). There are twenty-one categories in total in this survey including change ready, teamwork, communication and involvement, career and development, line management and management and leadership. The survey completed in the CBI in November/December 2017 had a 64% response rate and 99.9% confidence level in the data (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018d). Based on GPTW methodology, the overall result of the survey was 57% positive responses (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018d). Table 2 depicts a high-level breakdown of the overall survey results in ten categories starting with the highest differences between GPTW certification and CBI scores or most critical areas in need of improvement.

**Table 2 – 2017 GPTW Trust Index Survey Results – Central Bank of Ireland**  
(Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a).

<b>Area</b>	<b>CBI Score</b>	<b>Cert</b>	<b>Difference*</b>	<b>Public Sector</b>
<b>Strategy &amp; direction</b>	49%	77%	-28%	58%
<b>Change ready</b>	42%	68%	-26%	47%
<b>Innovation &amp; continuous improvement</b>	47%	70%	-23%	53%
<b>Empowerment &amp; accountability</b>	53%	75%	-22%	61%
<b>Communication &amp; involvement</b>	45%	66%	-21%	46%
<b>Management &amp; leadership</b>	48%	69%	-21%	51%
<b>Recognition</b>	46%	63%	-17%	39%
<b>Teamwork</b>	58%	75%	-17%	59%

<b>Line management</b>	65%	74%	-9%	64%
<b>Career &amp; development</b>	68%	63%	+5%	51%

\*Difference (column 4) is GPTW certification standard (column 3) minus CBI score (column 2).

Table 2 clearly illustrates differences between existing CBI practice and GPTW certification standards, particularly in the areas of strategy and direction, change ready, innovation and continuous improvement and management and leadership. Shortfalls are also evident in recognition, teamwork and notably, line management. Career and development category received a positive result. The GPTW results are a useful, credible guide and reference to the researcher. Indeed, the results from this thesis add to the body of knowledge generated from the GPTW including responses, particularly in relation to leadership by team leads and managers.

### **Centre for Creative Leadership**

The Centre for Creative Leadership (2018) identified ‘self-awareness, communication, influence and learning agility’ as four core leadership skills required at all levels. The centre explains that these four core skills are ‘timeless competencies needed by leaders throughout an organisation, regardless of role, industry, or location’ (Centre for Creative Leadership, 2018). They also suggest that:

Each of the fundamental four is a “continuous improvement” or “build-as-you-go” leadership competency. To be effective, you continue to develop, adapt, and strengthen them throughout your career (Centre for Creative Leadership, 2018).

In this thesis, the researcher explores differences in leadership skillsets between team leads and managers in the CBI.

### **Leadership skills and styles**

Zenger and Folkman (2014) explore leadership skills at supervisor, middle manager, senior manager and top executive levels using a dataset of over 300,000 respondents. They conclude that there is some rationale in concentrating on specific competencies at the various grades but emphasise the existence of a set of skills, which is necessary throughout a person’s career (Zenger and Folkman, 2014). From their results, Zenger

and Folkman (2014) identified the following most significant leadership competencies at all manager levels ranked in order of importance from a list of sixteen: inspire and motivate, integrity and honesty, problem solve, results driven, strong communication, collaborate and promote teamwork, as well as relationship building. These top seven leadership skills are for managers at supervisory group level (Zenger and Folkman, 2014). Problem solving is number one for middle managers, communication takes first place for senior managers and strategy moves to fifth position for top executives (Zenger and Folkman, 2014). This is an interesting and valuable body of work for the researcher, which again acts as a useful reference point in this thesis.

Jago and Vroom (1977) studied the connection between leadership styles and hierarchical level based on self-report data collected from managers at four different levels. They concluded that participativeness increases as the hierarchical level of a manager increases (Jago and Vroom, 1977). This is compatible with research findings by Blankenship and Miles (1968) who investigated the link between hierarchical position, size of organisation, extent of control and managerial decision based on data from 190 managers across eight companies. They discovered that lower level managers tend to include their subordinates less in decision-making compared to managers at higher levels (Blankenship and Miles, 1968). Furthermore, the decision behaviour of a manager was influenced most by the hierarchical position he/she had within the organisation (Blankenship and Miles, 1968). These findings were similar to the results of Heller and Yukl's (1969) study on decision-making by managers, participation and situational variables. Saxena et al. (2017) explore Goleman's leadership styles at different levels within medical education leaders, discovering differences in preferred leadership styles at the various grades. Their results showed that leaders at lower levels prefer to adopt a democratic style, middle managers favour a coaching style and senior leaders embrace multiple styles (Saxena et al., 2017). They concluded that leaders at various grades in medical education use a variety of leadership styles (Saxena et al., 2017). Their results form a very interesting comparison of different leadership styles at different levels within medical education to different leadership styles at team lead and manager levels in the CBI.

### **Leadership Theory**

It is important to examine the term leadership in this thesis. However, there is no definitive explanation available (Hitt et al., 2014, p. 196). As explained in the

introduction, leadership is a relationship (Prentice, 2004; Mullins, 2016), process (Shackleton, 1995; Hitt et al., 2014; Northouse, 2016), involves influence (Shackleton, 1995; Hitt et al., 2014; Mullins, 2016; Northouse, 2016) and accomplishing goals (Shackleton, 1995; Prentice, 2004; Hitt et al., 2014; Northouse, 2016) or mission in the case of central banks (Luburic, 2015). In addition, leadership can occur at any level within an organisation (Hollington, 2006) and there are both differences and similarities between leadership and management (Kent, 2005; Hitt et al., 2014).

An examination of the various approaches, theories and models of leadership adds context, increases understanding and helps to identify limitations and gaps. The original thinking surrounding leadership was that great men were born leaders, inheriting characteristics or traits, which enabled them to stand out as leaders. Furthermore, it was not possible to teach leadership (Drucker, 1954), which seems somewhat simplistic and naïve in the modern day. This thinking progressed from inherited characteristics to identifying such traits. Leadership traits include drive, motivation to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence and emotional maturity (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991). However, criticisms of leadership traits include subjectivity, overlooking situational factors, flexibility factor, knowledge of the business and role of the follower.

Behavioural theory is a second approach to understanding leadership. Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid (1964) focuses directly on the orientation of managers to task (concern for production) and people (concern for people) behaviour dimensions. They devised a nine by nine grid with five distinct leadership styles. The grid is an extremely useful tool in identifying a leader's behaviour. However, situational factors, constraints and the important role of the follower are not included. Five styles is also quite narrow. Burns (1978) first proposed the concept of transforming leadership, emphasising the nature of power i.e. motives and resources. Again, adequate attention is not given to the role of the follower. Bass (1985) developed this theory emphasising the importance of appealing to organisational and team interests in order to achieve significant change in the organisation. Yukl (2006) focused on inspiring and motivating followers through the development and promotion of a clear vision, empowering, coaching and leading by example. Transformational leadership is likely to increase performance but it also raises ethical concerns with possible abuse of power. In addition, without buy-in from followers, transformational leadership will not succeed. Transactional leadership centres on followers receiving rewards in

exchange for their compliance or agreement in the pursuit of self-interest goals (Burns, 1978; Bass et al., 2003). Transactional leadership makes goals achievable and provides motivation for employees but also reduces creativity and does not adequately allow for enough flexibility. Authentic leadership is modelled on positive psychology, a high standard of ethics and morals, along with high self-awareness and self-regulation (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Gill and Caza (2018) demonstrate that authentic leaders can influence followers both directly and indirectly. Furthermore, Rock (2011) proposes that authentic leadership creates a safe, stable environment for followers. A criticism of authentic leadership is that in some situations a leader's style does not fully develop over time and with each new role, as he/she remains fixed to one specific style. To avoid this happening, Ibarra (2015) advocates an evolving authentic leadership style that adapts to changing circumstances and experiences. Jasper (2018) follows a similar line of thinking. Goleman (2000a) also supports a flexible and interchangeable style of leadership. He identified six separate leadership styles as follows: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter and coaching from research based on the random sampling of 3,871 executives from a global database of 20,000 executives (Goleman, 2000a, p. 80). In addition, data was analysed, including observational research, on thousands of executives' behaviours and the impact on their direct sphere of influence (Goleman, 2000a). The results identified a direct effect between leadership styles and climate i.e. flexibility, responsibility, standards, rewards, clarity and commitment (Goleman, 2000a). Goleman's research demonstrated that leaders who exhibit multiple leadership styles, and can easily switch between such styles, are more effective as leaders (2000a).

The contingency or situational theory identifies the situation as the main element in analysing effective leadership characteristics. There are four main models/theories within this central theory:

- 1) Fiedler's Contingency Model (1967) - focuses on a leader's attitude towards his/her colleagues using a least preferred co-worker scale questionnaire.
- 2) Vroom and Yetton's Contingency Model (1973) - centres on the quality and acceptance of a leader's decision.
- 3) Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971) – how leaders motivate followers to obtain a goal by selecting particular leadership behaviours.
- 4) Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Theory (1993) – recommends a specific leadership style based on the readiness of followers.



Further research is required on this theory. In addition, there is ambiguity with regard to the development levels of subordinates and questionnaires are restrictive. In addition, demographic and group-setting factors are not fully addressed.

## **Change**

Change is constant and an organisation that fails to adapt to its operating environment is unlikely to survive into the future. Directing organisational change is also a fundamental part of a leader's role. As Kotter (2007, p. 96, editor's note) explains:

Guiding change may be the ultimate test of a leader...human nature being what it is, fundamental change is often resisted mightily by the people it most affects: those in the trenches of the business. Thus, leading change is both absolutely essential and incredibly difficult.

Kotter's work on organisational change is definitive. He provides an eight-step process to successful organisational change, which is a very helpful guide for leaders (Kotter, 2007). The eight steps are as follows:

Establishing a sense of urgency, forming a powerful guiding coalition, creating a vision, communicating the vision, empowering others to act on the vision, planning for and creating short-term wins, consolidating improvements and producing still more change, institutionalising new approaches (Kotter, 2007, p. 99).

There is an element of overlap between Lewin's Change Model (1947), which is a linear process involving three distinct changes and Kotter's eight steps. Kotter's research methodology is qualitative, using observational and longitudinal designs. A criticism of his work is that it does not take into account global economic change. Johnson (1992) provides a useful framework for strategic management with respect to social and cultural factors in organisations, explaining strategic inertia and drift. His research incorporates a cultural web as part of a culture audit in the case of three companies, which appears somewhat narrow. Hearsom (2014) offers advice in combating change fatigue in connection to learning and development (L&D). He uses a survey as part of qualitative research methods but acknowledges that the survey used was not extensive. Buller (1988) suggests six opportunities for combining organisational development (OD) practices with strategic management, emphasising the human element involved in change. However, he acknowledges several significant obstacles to his proposal including differences in skills, knowledge and values (Buller,

1988). Heifetz and Laurie (2001) echo the importance of focusing on staff needs during the change process, question the established thinking of the leader-follower role and introduce the idea of adaptive change. They use examples to support their work.

### **Teamwork and Collaboration**

The payoffs of an effective team working together are vast with a leader responsible for ensuring his/her unit functions cohesively. Edmondson (2012, p. 75) introduces the concept of teaming which essentially is 'flexible teamwork' based on the principles of project management and team leadership. His longitudinal research includes twenty years of studying teamwork, with examples used to support his argument. Belbin identified nine team roles (1981; 1993) from observational research. He proposed a balance of these nine behaviours for optimal team performance (Belbin, 1981; 1993). Senior (1997) tested Belbin's theory by surveying eleven teams from a combination of public and private organisations and found some support for Belbin's theory but she also called for further study. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) found a connection between teams and good performance based on commitment and trust using qualitative research methods in the form of interviews. They also recommend considering 'skill potential' in team formation and advocate equal distribution of workload (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, p. 115). Similarly, Pentland (2012) found a science to creating great teams. He discovered communication was the key determining factor of success from sociometric data generated on electronic badges worn by team members (Pentland, 2012).

Groupthink can be a threat to effective teamwork. Actions and decisions of individual team members can sway colleagues, particularly if there is a dominating presence on the team. Hence, effective listening is vital in teams. Edmondson (2012) recommends fostering a working environment that encourages each member to speak, listen, as well as interact effectively. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) present a similar argument linking teamwork to values that instil listening, replying constructively etc. In focusing on teamwork at a global level, engaging with colleagues and international counterparts from different countries and cultures presents both opportunities and challenges. Neely (2015) identifies social distance as one such challenge organisations can encounter and introduces a five component framework for recognising and controlling its occurrence. Her research is based on experience gained as a teacher and consultant,

conducting studies and interviews. She also uses survey results to support her findings. Her framework is tested and the recommendation is for leaders to follow all five parts. Meyer (2015) suggests organisations should formulate a plan for the adaption of employees and the entire organisation to working in a global market. She introduces five principles for a successful approach, with examples cited to support her research. Collaborating is a vital part of teamwork with an interdependent relationship between both entities. Gratton and Erickson (2007, p. 104) put forward eight ways to build successful collaborative teams as follows:

Investing in signature relationship practices, modelling collaborative behaviour, creating a “gift culture,” ensuring the requisite skills, supporting a strong sense of community, assigning team leaders that are both task- and relationship-oriented, building on heritage relationships and understanding role clarity and task ambiguity.

Based on interviews and statistical analyses of multinational teams, they suggest that ‘even the largest and most complex teams can work together effectively if the right conditions are in place’ (Gratton and Erickson, 2007, p. 101).

### **Conflict Management**

Leaders should be aware of any underlying causes of conflict within their teams. Brett et al. (2006) identified four causes of conflict from interviewing managers and members of multicultural teams across the globe. Similar to Meyer (2015), Brett et al. (2006) suggest planning for an international culture. They suggest four strategies to resolve challenges but interestingly, acknowledge that there is no one solution to fix all multicultural challenges (Brett et al., 2006). It is also worth noting that Brett et al. (2006) claim that cultural challenges can also potentially uncover issues with managers and team leaders themselves. Similarly, Von Glinow et al. (2004) highlight challenges surrounding language that can arise in multicultural teams. They suggest a rethink on the traditional concept of talking as a solution and offer practical alternatives, citing examples in support (Von Glinow et al., 2004). In connection, Earley and Mosakowski (2004) recommend six steps to growing cultural intelligence, which centres on training and based on empirical and anecdotal evidence.

## **Communication**

Communication is vital for achieving organisational goals and an organisation cannot simply function without it. Communication includes both verbal and non-verbal components, is top-down, as well as bottom-up and includes listening as part of the process. Ruben, and Gigliotti (2017) discuss leadership communication and identify six principles with respect to improving communication in organisations and businesses including focused communication, the role of follower, power of non-communication e.g. silence, consequences, intercultural element and training and development. Galpin (1995) puts forward a seven principles based strategy for effective communication in organisational change, including four phases of the communication process. He identifies pitfalls and acknowledges the limitations of effective communication in completely combatting communication through the grapevine. His plan is useful and very applicable to organisations introducing change. As discussed previously under teamwork, research conducted by Pentland (2012) highlighted communication as the key determining forecaster of team success from data on sociometric badges. In fact, its importance was equated to all other determining factors e.g. intelligence, skill etc. totalled together (Pentland, 2012). Data generated from observational research is not without limitations e.g. researcher bias, subjective interpretation and accuracy. However, predictability increased through data generated by Pentland's particular choice of research method. Argenti (2017) conducted interviews as part of his primary research into corporate communication methods as an instrument for strategy execution. Three broad practises emerged from these interviews including repetition of a clear, consistent strategy, culture for executing strategy developed and visibility of a leader (Argenti, 2017). Interestingly, analysis from previous research supported these findings including published interviews in the case of two of the three themes (Argenti, 2017). Clampitt et al. (2000) discuss the various choices an organisation has in terms of its communication strategy. They also examine the various elements of an effective communication strategy but of interest, acknowledge that 'no one-size-fits-all' (Clampitt et al., 2000, p. 44). In addition, they provide a case study to illustrate the importance of adapting a new communication strategy for uncertainty (Clampitt et al., 2000).

## **Emotional Intelligence**

IQ and technical skills act as basic entry requirements to a grade but emotional intelligence sets leaders apart according to Goleman (1998) who is a leading, authoritative figure in this field. As he explains:

Without it (emotional intelligence), a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas, but he still won't make a great leader (Goleman, 1998, p. 94).

The implications of Goleman's work with respect to leadership are huge, prompting a review of the traditional concept of skill requirements in leaders. As explained earlier, data from the random sampling of executives identified six separate leadership styles – coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter and coaching (Goleman, 2000a, p. 80). Significantly, each of these six styles are based on various elements of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills according to Goleman (2000a, p. 80). Goleman references the work of notable neuroscientists and psychologists including Walter Mischel's 'marshmallow test' (2013) and David McClelland who linked effective leadership (2000a) or a company's success (1998) with emotional intelligence. Interviews were also included as part of the research process and examples cited. Goleman's research indicates a leader's business performance vastly improves when he/she exhibits high emotional intelligence competencies (2000b). Of interest, he also suggests that anyone can learn emotional intelligence skills at any age but it requires dedication and practice (Goleman, 1998; 2000a). Goleman makes a strong case with research-based evidence to support his argument.

## **Motivation**

Nohria et al. (2008, p. 78) identify motivation as 'one of managers' most enduring and slippery challenges.' Indeed, continuously keeping followers motivated is certainly an arduous and lengthy task for any leader alongside business as usual responsibilities. Nohria et al. (2008) examine the four drives that underline motivation and how to meet them. The four drives are as follows: 1) acquire, 2) bond, 3) comprehend and 4) defend (Nohria et al., 2008, p. 80). They also suggest four 'organisational levers' or mechanisms to satisfy each individual drive as per the same order: 1) reward system, 2) culture, 3) job design and 4) performance-management and resource-allocation processes (Nohria et al., 2008, p. 82). They used quantitative research methods in the

form of surveys and in defining motivation, Nohria et al. (2008) focused on satisfaction, engagement, commitment and intention to quit as indicators used regularly to measure motivation in the workplace. Interestingly, they recommend fulfilling all four drives to improve employee motivation (Nohria et al., 2008). Furthermore, they discovered that employees believed a manager had as much responsibility as organisational policy in satisfying these drives (Nohria et al., 2008). Similar to Goleman, Nohria et al. make a strong argument supported by solid research.

### **Teaching**

Leadership teaching has evolved a great deal over time. There is an abundance of courses available to develop leadership skills. However, leadership also involves moulding future leaders. Mentoring and coaching are important components of leadership training and development. Finkelstein (2018, p. 145) explains: ‘teaching is not merely an “extra” for good managers; it’s an integral responsibility. If you’re not teaching, you’re not really leading.’ Finkelstein has spent over a decade engaged in the observational research of leaders in the workplace environment and therefore, his findings are certainly credible. Outstanding leaders, as observed by Finkelstein (2018, p. 143) ‘routinely spent time in the trenches with employees, passing on technical skills, general tactics, business principles, and life lessons.’ He recommends an informal, organic style of teaching (Finkelstein, 2018). The net effect of this hands-on approach is a higher performing team and organisation (Finkelstein, 2018). Kotter (2012) also encourages on the job training. Furthermore, Goleman (1998) suggests that mentoring and coaching not only result in better performance but also improve job satisfaction and staff retention figures. The impact and benefits of a leader genuinely engaged in the training and development of his/her followers cannot be underestimated.

### **Conclusion**

The Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013) identified distinct leadership performance expectations for team leads and managers in the Bank. The 2017 GPTW Trust Index Survey results for the CBI (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a) highlighted differences between actual and best practice in the Bank’s leadership. Studies recommend a core set of leadership skills developed during a career (Zenger and Folkman, 2014; Centre for Creative Leadership, 2018) but also

acknowledge the importance of specific competencies at different grades. There is ambiguity over this precise skillset. In analysing data from team leads and managers in the CBI, the researcher aims to understand in what ways leadership differs at these grades. The researcher discussed a variety of studies in relation to leadership skills under change, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, communication, emotional intelligence, motivation and teaching. The results from these studies aid the findings of this thesis. There is also a great deal written on the various leadership styles, particularly under leadership theory. Scholars suggest leadership styles differentiate with hierarchical levels (Saxena e al., 2017), recommend flexibility (Goleman, 2000a) and suggest participation with subordinates increase as managers climb the organisational ladder (Blankenship and Miles, 1968; Heller and Yukl, 1969; Jago and Vroom, 1977). The literature review suggests there are areas where managers are likely to have different skillsets. However, it also suggests areas in common across grades. Given the technical nature of CBI managers and specialist expertise required, this thesis will focus on identifying if a particular style and skillset varies between both categories of leaders.

## Chapter 2 – Research Question and Aims

Chapter 1 looked at the literature available on leadership style and skills including work on change, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, communication, emotional intelligence, motivation and teaching. The research question was formed from studying this literature including recommendations for further study. The aim of this thesis is to explore leadership in the CBI through grade level. With respect to leadership, the researcher focuses on styles and skills in the CBI at team lead and manager grades.

Focusing on style first, leadership theorists have produced a large body of work in this area. Scholars suggest a leader's style changes as he/she progresses within an organisation (Saxena e al., 2017) and recommend flexibility (Goleman, 2000a). They also suggest managers at higher-levels include their subordinates more in decision-making in comparison to managers at lower levels (Blankenship and Miles, 1968; Heller and Yukl, 1969; Jago and Vroom, 1977). As shown in the Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013), performance behaviours and expectations expand as a leader progresses in his/her career in the CBI. In addition, leaders face different challenges as they climb the ladder. Thus, differences in leadership styles and skill requirements exist at different leadership levels within an organisation. Identifying this research problem helped to form the following research question: in what ways does leadership differentiate dependant on grade in the CBI? Using the Bank's Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013) as the main reference point, the specific sub-objective of this thesis is to:

- Investigate in what ways leadership style and skills in the CBI differ at team lead and manager levels.

The researcher has chosen an exploratory study using an inductive qualitative approach to increase understanding and acquire insight into differences in leadership styles and skills at grade levels in the CBI. With respect to leadership skills, the researcher will specifically focus on change, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, communication, emotional intelligence, motivation and teaching.

The next chapter focuses on methodology including the research philosophy, design, techniques and procedures, interview schedule and data analysis.



## Chapter 3 – Methodology

Using the ‘research onion’ structure developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), chapter three explains the methodology and research method used by the researcher in answering the research question. The main outline of this chapter is as follows: research philosophy, design, techniques and procedures, interview schedule and data analysis.

### Research Philosophy

According to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 107) the research philosophy ‘relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge.’ The researcher has chosen to follow **interpretivism** as a philosophical position, which recommends comprehending ‘differences between humans in our role as social actors’ (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 116). The opposite of interpretivism is positivism, which is another philosophical position that involves:

Working with an observable social reality and that the end product of such research can be law-like generalisations similar to those produced by the physical and natural scientists (Remenyi, Williams, Money and Swartz, 1998, p. 32).

Interpretivism as an epistemology is an appropriate philosophy to pursue in this specific study given the researcher is seeking to understand in what ways differences in leadership styles and skills exists in the CBI based on grade levels.

The second outer layer of the ‘research onion’ focuses on the research approach (Saunders et al., 2009). The researcher has chosen to follow an **inductive approach**, which includes collecting data followed by the development of a theory based on the analysis of that data (Saunders et al., 2009). The rationale of choosing an inductive approach over a deductive approach is because the latter enables ‘a cause-effect link to be made between particular variables without an understanding of the way in which humans interpreted their social world’ (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 126). An inductive approach is suited to this particular study as the researcher is moving from specific observations to the development of a wider theory based on patterns and formulation of a tentative hypothesis.

## **Research Design**

Research design covers the next three layers of the ‘research onion’ incorporating research strategies, then research choices and finally time horizons (Saunders et al., 2009). This thesis is an **exploratory study**. Robson (2002, p. 59) explains that the motive of a researcher engaging in an exploratory study is to discover ‘what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light.’ An advantage of an exploratory study is its flexibility and adaptability according to Saunders et al. (2009). However, Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991) propose that this flexibility refers to the research focus moving from broad to narrow as opposed to lack of direction. Three methods of conducting an exploratory study are a literature search, interview of subject matter experts or a focus group interview (Saunders et al., 2009). The researcher decided on conducting interviews for her exploratory study.

The research strategy of this thesis is based on **grounded theory** principles. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 149) define this term as “‘theory building’ through a combination of induction and deduction.’ Goulding (2002) suggests that grounded theory is useful for researchers in explaining and predicting behaviour. Therefore, this particular choice of research strategy is suitable as the researcher is exploring in what ways leadership styles and skills differentiate dependant on the grade in the CBI. Grounded theory involves developing theory from data produced from a number of observations, which then creates predictions that are tested in additional observations (Saunders et al., 2009). The researcher acknowledges the issue of time constraints in this study, which impede the complete adoption of grounded theory principles. Conducting a survey is another option the researcher could have selected as a research strategy for this exploratory study. The researcher recognises that a survey would have been an efficient tool in collecting responses but overruled this option, as data generated from surveys are considered generally less extensive in comparison to data collected through other research strategies (Saunders et al., 2009).

The researcher has selected a **mono method qualitative research choice** for this study. Qualitative refers to the non-numerical technique of collecting data or analysing data procedure, which produces or uses non-numerical data (Saunders et al., 2009). Qualitative, in the case of this study, refers to the use of an interview as a data collection technique and categorisation of this data as a data analysis procedure. Mono method refers to the use of one specific technique in order to collect data and subsequent use of a single analysis procedure (Saunders et al., 2009). The researcher

acknowledges that the use of multiple methods is preferable to improve reliability but due to time constraints, the choice of a mono method is a practical alternative and solution.

Of course, the main weaknesses of conducting qualitative research include subjectivity, researcher bias, largely open to interpretation, validation and replication concerns and heavily dependent on the skills of the individual researcher involved. However, the researcher defends the use of qualitative research given the exploratory nature of the study itself.

The **time horizon** of this study is **cross-sectional** which provides the researcher with a snap shot at a specific point in time. Ideally, the researcher would have employed longitudinal studies, which involves observing people or an event over a given period and is extremely useful in studying ‘change and development’ (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 155) but again due to time constraints this was not feasible.

**Credibility** of research findings is crucial and hence, the importance of good research design. The issue of **reliability** relates to the production of consistent findings from collecting and analysing data i.e. the same results are recorded on separate occasions, other observers achieve similar observations and transparency in terms of converting raw data to findings (Easterby – Smith, Thorpe, Jackson and Lowe, 2008). Robson (2002) identified possible threats to reliability including errors relating to the observer, subject or participant, as well as the bias of the observer, subject or participant.

**Validity** is another concern with respect to the credibility of research findings with the legitimacy of findings fundamental to research. Robson (2002) discovered several threats to validity including timing, testing, availability of participants and uncertainty with regard to causes. External validity or generalisability is another concern according to Saunders et al. (2009). In terms of this research study, the organisation examined is the CBI and therefore the findings relate to this particular institution. Furthermore, the researcher does not claim that the findings of the research results are generalizable to other organisations.

## **Techniques and Procedures**

### **Data Collection**

The researcher conducted **semi-structured interviews** to collect **primary data**. These interviews were non-standardised, one-to-one and face-to-face. Interviews are a useful and effective method in gathering ‘valid and reliable data that are relevant to your

research question(s) and objectives' according to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 318) and when aiming to 'seek new insights' according to Robson (2002, p. 59). Semi-structured interviews are not standardised, enabling the researcher flexibility in terms of order, omitting specific questions if he/she wishes and adding additional questions (Saunders et al., 2009). Furthermore, non-verbal clues are easier to identify through conducting interviews in person. In addition, the interviewer can steer the conversation and set the pace of the interview itself. However, interviews are also time consuming and success is hugely dependent on both the skills of the interviewer and calibre of interviewees. The researcher defends the use of conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews in this study, as it is an exploratory examination (Saunders et al., 2009). It is also in keeping with the research philosophy and research design of this particular study. In terms of the literature review, interviews featured regularly as a method to collect primary data by respective researchers and experts. The researcher conducted interviews previously and this prior experience benefited this particular study. A list of questions was prepared in advance of the interviews and circulated to the interviewees.

### **Research Sample**

The researcher used **non-probabilistic sampling** based on a **convenience** approach. The researcher had access to the interviewees. She acknowledges that probabilistic or random sampling is optimal when researching as accuracy increases and the results are more rigorous and generalizable. However, she defends the use of non-probabilistic sampling using the convenience approach in this study due to practicality and feasibility reasons. As this thesis focuses on differences in leadership styles and skills in the CBI dependant on grade, i.e. team leads and managers, therefore equal numbers of team leads and managers were selected as interviewees in order to generate fairer results. The researcher interviewed five team leads (three women and two men) and five managers (three men and two women) in person in the CBI office in North Wall Quay over a two-week period. As explained previously, the team leads interviewed in this thesis are in charge of four teams with twenty staff members on average and the managers interviewed have responsibility for eight teams with fifty employees on average. A profile of the interviewees are listed below in Table 3. The real names of the interviewees are changed to give anonymity.

**Table 3 – Profile of Interviewees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years working in the CBI</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Andrew	39	5-10	Manager
John	46	10+	Manager
Ann	34	Less than 5	Team Lead
Denise	36	10+	Team Lead
Peter	52	10+	Manager
Harry	38	10+	Team Lead
James	45	10+	Team Lead
Emma	42	10+	Team Lead
Michelle	46	Less than 5	Manager
Marie	50	10+	Manager

The researcher conducted a pilot study to test the effectiveness and suitability of the questionnaire. Saunders et al. (2009) recommend undertaking a pilot study in order to refine the questionnaire if necessary, assess the understanding and validity of the questions, along with checking the reliability of data collected. The pilot study took place with a team lead, lasted 50 minutes and included 13 questions. Following the pilot study, the researcher refined the questionnaire to nine questions.

#### **Development of the interview schedule**

The researcher conducted the semi-structured interviews in person with all ten interviewees in the CBI headquarters in NWQ. These interviews lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and included open questions. The questionnaire focuses on leadership style and skills covering change, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, communication, emotional intelligence, motivation and teaching. These questions were based predominantly on the Bank's Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013) and on studies from the literature review including the 2017 GPTW Trust Index Survey results for the CBI (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a). Quinlan (2011) recommends providing interviewees with an information sheet containing the interviewer's details including name of university attending, degree sought, research objective, voluntary capacity of the interviewees, along with confirmation of confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher adhered to these

recommendations as shown in Appendix 1. Saunders et al. (2009) recommend audio recording interviews to restrict bias and increase reliability of data, along with note taking. Interviews conducted by the researcher were not audio recorded for this study in order to create a more relaxed environment for the interviewees. As Saunders et al. (2009, p. 341) explain that audio recording interviews can ‘adversely affect the relationship between interviewee and interviewer’ and in addition ‘may inhibit some interviewee responses and reduce reliability.’ The researcher defends the decision not to audio record the interviewees although acknowledges accuracy increases and bias decreases when an audio record of an interview is created. Furthermore, the researcher has prior experience of note taking at interviews. These handwritten notes were then typed and saved as separate confidential word files, which took between 60 to 120 minutes to transcribe.

### **Data analysis**

The researcher used thematic coding analysis to analyse the data in this study. Thematic coding was selected as it is flexible, accessible, as well as relatively straightforward to use and convey results (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Robson, 2011). The researcher followed the five steps for analysing data through thematic coding as explained by Robson (2011, p. 476):

1. Familiarising yourself with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Identifying themes
4. Constructing thematic networks
5. Integration and interpretation.

The researcher familiarised herself with the data thoroughly through rereading following the typing up of the hand written interview notes. Through familiarisation of this data, the researcher was able to produce codes which were mainly data driven but also based on themes from the literature review. The identification of themes followed and formation of networks. Finally, the researcher explored and interpreted these themes. The next chapter focuses on the analysis of findings from this thesis and a discussion.

## **Chapter 4 – Analysis of Findings and Discussion**

The previous chapter discussed the methodology used by the researcher. This chapter describes the coding system, as well as the themes and networks identified and produced by the researcher. Leadership style, leadership skills including change, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, communication, emotional intelligence, motivation and teaching were areas identified for studying. The researcher analysed the findings from these areas and identified themes using thematic coding. The researcher provides an explanation of these themes and interpretation of the networks. Excel was used for coding and theme organisation.

Robson (2011, pp. 479-480) suggests basing codes on ‘specific acts, behaviours, events, activities, strategies, practises or tactics, meaning’ etc. He also suggests techniques for identifying themes including ‘repetition, indigenous categories, metaphors and analogies, transitions, similarities and differences, linguistic connectors, missing data and theory-related material’ (Robson, 2011, pp. 482-483). A complete list of themes and codes is illustrated in Appendix 2. Robson (2011) suggests grouping themes together based on content or theory to create networks. The researcher categorised data in excel format by areas, codes, themes and grade level. Table 5 at Appendix 3 provides an overview of this data set. The researcher created nine maps in word to illustrate these networks visually.

## Leadership style



**Figure 1: Leadership style analysis network**

Leadership style is the first area examined with the seven following themes identified based on repetition and the literature review: outcome focused, flexibility, collaboration, affiliative, authoritative, development and leading by example. Data showed that managers place a greater emphasis on **flexibility** and **collaboration** than team leaders. The latter group focused more on the **development** of their team members, **leading by example** and an **affiliative** leadership style. Managers and team leads showed equal levels of importance for an **outcome focus** and an **authoritative** leadership style.

According to the interviews, many managers described their leadership style as flexible incorporating elements of affiliation, authority, directness, authenticity, democracy and pacesetting. For example, manager Peter said:

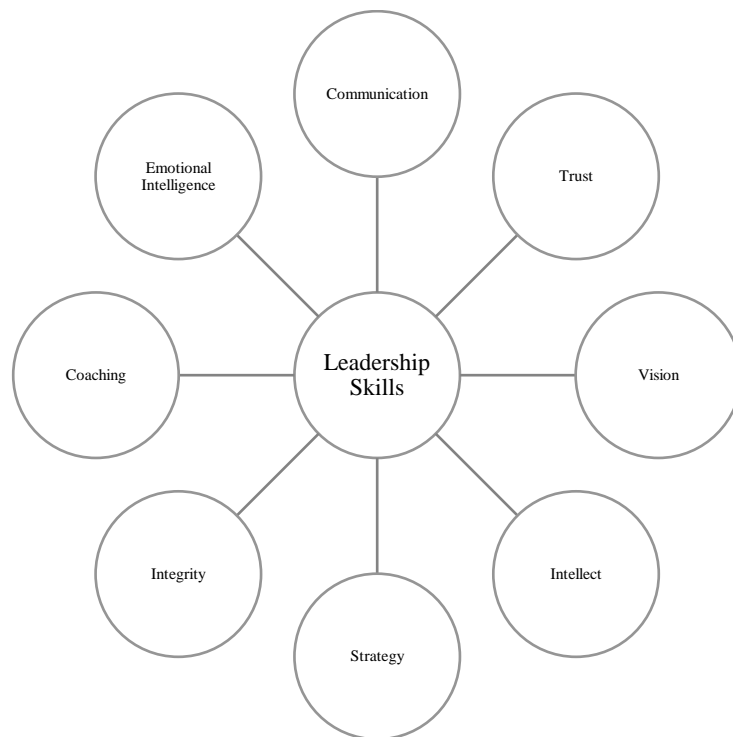
My default or natural leadership style is affiliative, then authoritative...making decisions when they need to be made. I also have a direct style...I am a pacesetter...flexibility is key.

Managers, John and Michelle explained the importance of collaboration in their leadership, which links to an affiliative leadership style. Many team leads described their leadership style as focused on the development of others, which incorporated



leading by example. For example, team lead Denise said: “I help people acquire skills to achieve and delegate.... I’m in the trenches but I also lead by example.” Team lead Harry explained: “I lead by example, try to do a good job, act with integrity and think about what I’m leaving for the person coming after.”

### Leadership skills



**Figure 2: Most important leadership skills analysis network**

Second, the researcher examined the most important skills for a leader to possess as viewed by team leads and managers. Eight themes were identified in this area as shown in figure two. These themes are listed as follows: communication, trust, vision, intellect, strategy, integrity, coaching and emotional intelligence. Managers gave greater importance to **communication**, **vision** and **strategy** than team leads. The latter placed more weight on **coaching** and **emotional intelligence** in comparison to managers.

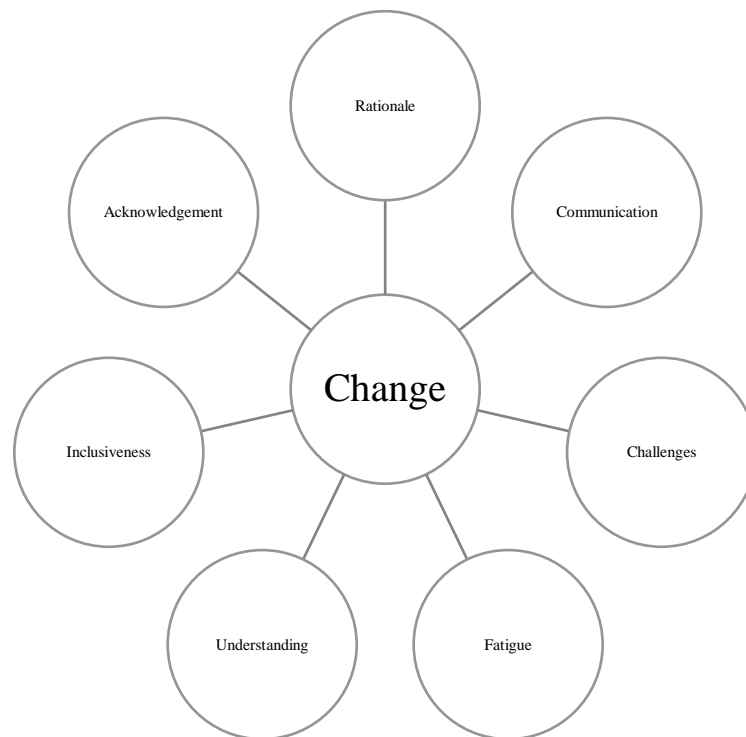
Managers identified communication as a more important skill for a leader to possess than team leads. Manager, Marie listed “good communicator” as the most significant skill a leader can possess. Managers also identified vision and strategy, which are interlinked, as more important compared to team leads. Manager, John said: “vision is essential. You have to have the skills to motivate” Manager, Marie listed “strategic”

as her second most important leadership skill. Team leads gave more importance to coaching skills, which links to development previously discussed under leadership style. Team leads also placed more importance on areas relevant to emotional intelligence over managers. For example, team lead Ann stated:

Coaching is a really important leadership skill. The ability to listen, take in information, involve staff in decision making, to empower.... Emotional intelligence is also significant.... ensuring a connectedness to people, showing empathy, treating people as human beings.

Of interest, managers and team leads gave equal prominence to **trust**, **intellect** and **integrity** as important leadership skills.

### Change



**Figure 3: Change analysis network**

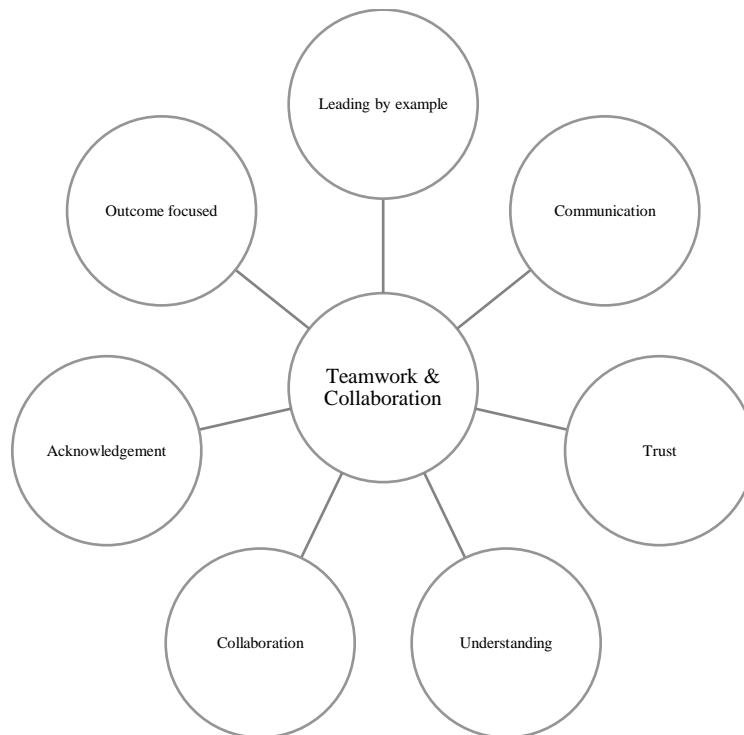
The researcher identified seven themes under change as follows: rationale, communication, challenges, fatigue, understanding, inclusiveness and acknowledgement. Managers identified **rationale explanation** as the most important tool for introducing change to a team. Furthermore, managers gave this device far more prominence than team leads. **Communication** received equal weight by both managers and team leads. As manager, Andrew explained: “a leader must

communicate the purpose behind change and acknowledge the trade-offs.” The importance of **acknowledging** and **understanding** the concerns of team members was identified across both managers and team leads in the data. There is a close link between both mechanisms. Manager, Peter explained:

When introducing change as a leader you have to ensure people understand the rationale and vision. A leader must recognise people’s views, biases, what concerns they have... what should be done differently.... Recognise they are there and mitigate that concern.

Managers and team leads viewed the introduction of change as **challenging** in equal measures. Connected to this was the importance of recognising change **fatigue**, which both levels recognised. In addition, team leads and managers were equally vocal on ensuring team members felt **included** as part of the change process.

### Teamwork and Collaboration

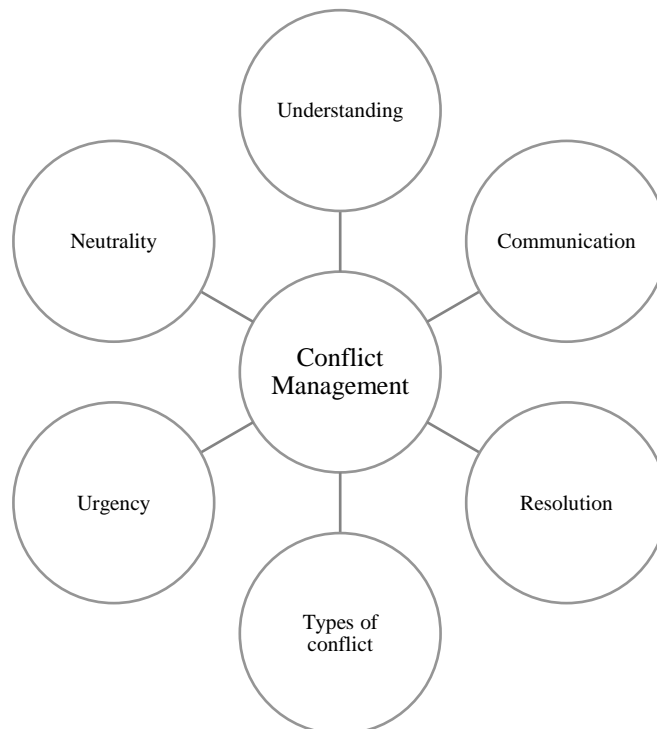


**Figure 4: Teamwork and collaboration analysis network**

The researcher identified seven themes in the area of teamwork and collaboration from analysing the data, as follows: leading by example, communication, trust, understanding, collaboration, recognition and outcome focused. Managers placed greater weight on the use of **communication** tools to promote and encourage

teamwork and collaboration in comparison to team leads. For example, manager Andrew explained: “the management team must ensure communication lines are open.” Both levels focused equally on **outcome**. For example, team lead James explained: “setting goals is important in teamwork and collaboration. As a leader you have to ensure everyone understands the goal we want to achieve.” Team leads gave marginally more prominence to **leading by example** than managers did. Manager, John explained: “you have to show it yourself.” Manager Marie echoed this by stating: “as a leader you are a role model.” Both managers and team leads placed equal prominence on **trust, understanding and collaboration**. Of interest, the meaning of collaboration extended beyond the remit of teams and division but to the wider CBI. Managers and team leads were equally outspoken on the importance of **acknowledging** the assistance of all team members involved. As team lead, Denise stated: “It’s really important that a leader celebrates the wins and recognises the contribution of others.”

### Conflict Management

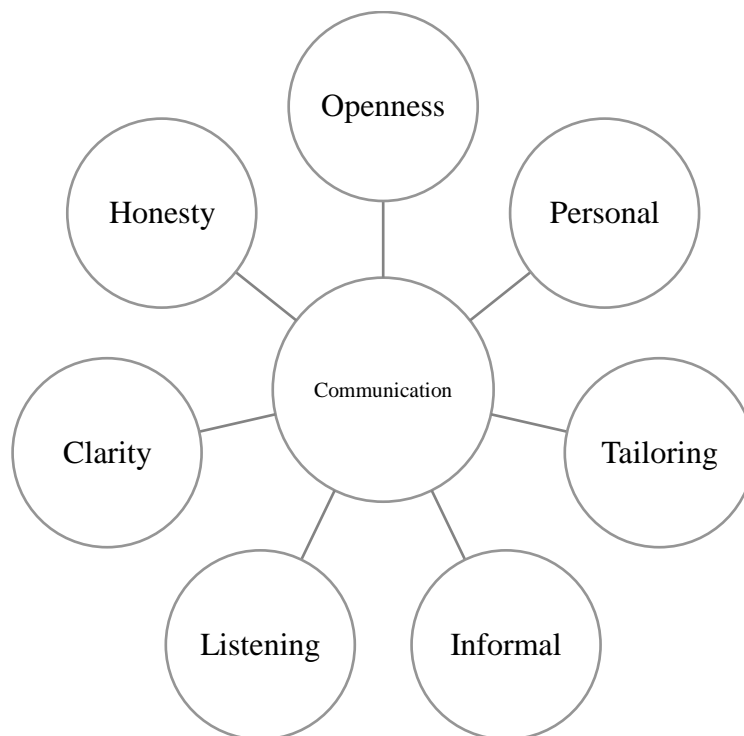


**Figure 5: Conflict management analysis network**

The researcher identified six themes within conflict management as follows: understanding, communication, resolution, types of conflict, urgency and neutrality. Team leads focused slightly more on seeking a **resolution** as part of conflict

management and on **understanding** the source in comparison to managers. Manager, John explained: “having a shared understanding is important. Every party needs to understand each views.” Team leads gave greater prominence to the **urgency** of conflict management over managers. For example, team lead Ann advised: “you really have to tackle conflict straight away and speak to the individuals...” Managers and team leads gave equal weight to the importance of **communication** in conflict management. Team lead Harry recommended: “taking the individuals aside and talking to them...” Team leads were also more vocal on the importance of remaining **neutral** in work conflicts as team lead James suggested: “try to understand both sides without taking sides.” Of interest, both managers and team leads pointed out the different **types of conflict** that can arise in a work environment. Conflict in general has a negative connotation. However, the outcome can be positive dependant on the circumstances. For example, constructive conflict is healthy in organisations. Indeed, this was lacking in the CBI pre financial crisis. Interviewee manager, Peter acknowledged: “constructive conflict is beneficial in that collectively we all have the answer. However, when it’s destructive you have to call a halt to it as it serves no purpose.”

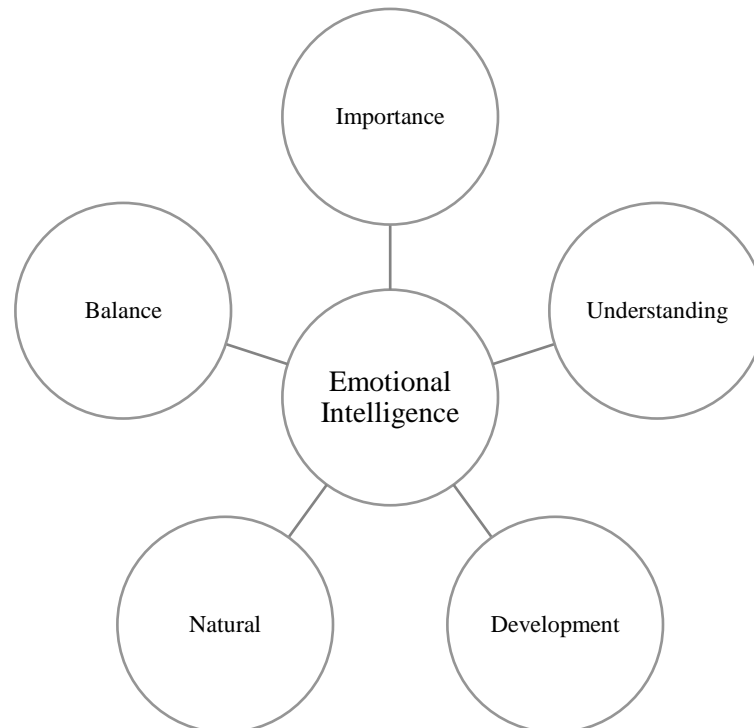
### Communication



**Figure 6: Communication analysis network**

The researcher identified seven themes within the area of communication as follows: openness, personal, tailoring, informal, listening, clarity, honesty. Managers placed slightly more emphasis on **tailoring** in comparison to team leads. Team lead, Emma explained her preference for tailoring was to “adapt her communication style to the person.” Both managers and team leads placed equal levels of importance on **openness, clarity, honesty** and on having an **informal** communication style. Manager, Andrew stated that “openness to challenge was really important” to him. Manager, Marie echoed this sentiment when she explained her communication style was “open to questions and criticisms.” Team lead, Denise explained the importance of clarity in communicating at work to the researcher. Manager, John summed up these central communication styles in describing his personal style as: “open and honest, clear and simple.” Manager, Marie explained that she was “deliberately informal” in communicating with her colleagues. Of interest, the importance of listening was emphasised equally by managers and team leads. Manager, Marie explained: “I seek to **listen** more than to talk – not always successfully!” **Personal**, i.e. face-to-face communication was the preferred style chosen across managers and team leads over email.

### Emotional Intelligence



**Figure 7: Emotional Intelligence analysis network**

The researcher examined emotional intelligence amongst managers and team leads in the CBI and identified the following five themes: importance, understanding, development, natural and balance. Both managers and team leads acknowledged the **importance** of emotional intelligence as a necessity in leaders equally. Manager, Peter summed up its significance when he explained that emotional intelligence was “absolutely vital. If you don't have a decent level then it's very difficult to be a leader.” He (Manager, Peter) added:

If you don't have emotional intelligence you can't understand how you react and how you manage. Then you can't understand how this impacts others and is interpreted on the other side.

The importance of emotional intelligence in relation to **understanding** oneself and others, as well with regard to decision making was illustrated to a greater degree by team leads over managers. For example, team lead, Denise explained: “without emotional intelligence you have increased misunderstanding in teams.” Team leads also demonstrated a stronger inclination for emotional intelligence in terms of **development**, emphasised the importance of **balance** and discussed **natural** emotional intelligence. Team lead, Ann was particularly vocal on emotional intelligence in relation to these last three themes. She (Team lead, Ann) explained:

Emotional intelligence is an area that can be developed. Some have it naturally and with others it doesn't come so naturally but we all have the capacity to develop and work at it. It's an innate quality although a possible hindrance too as too much personal consideration can hinder decision making. Therefore it's essential to set aside personal space... balance is important.

Of interest, manager John acknowledged that emotional intelligence is “underappreciated generally” which is an interesting observation.

## Motivation



**Figure 8: Motivation analysis network**

The researcher identified five themes within motivation as follows: understanding, acknowledgement, encouragement, openness and ownership. The importance of **acknowledging** achievements and good work was evident equally across both managers and team leads in the CBI. For example, team lead, Ann stated “gratitude is very important....leaders should praise good work and say a regular thank you.” In terms of motivation, managers placed slightly more emphasis than team leads on **understanding** the various underlying motives of colleagues, which are unique to those individual team members. As manager, Peter explained:

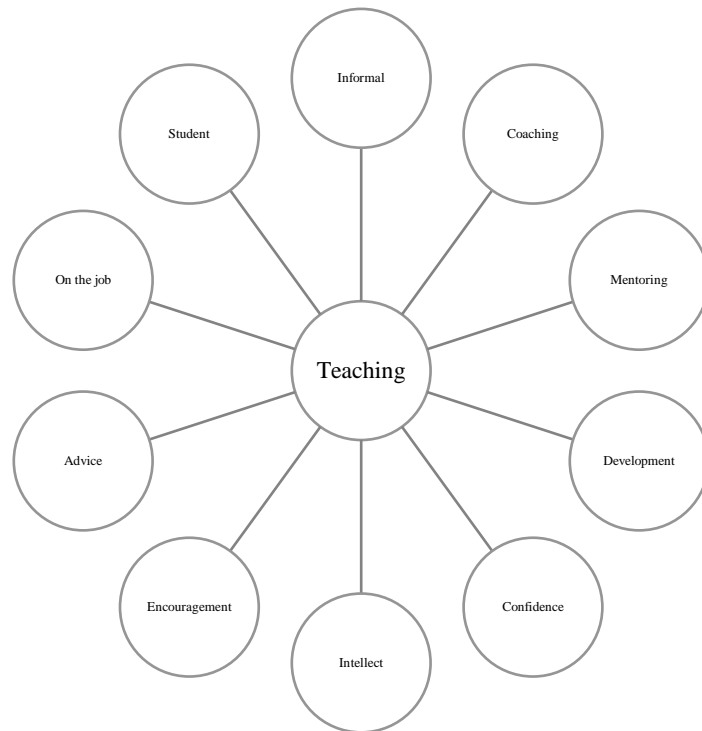
It depends on the person. Some people want to be taught, develop and move to the next grade. As a leader you have to understand the internal motives of your team and what makes them happier in work.

Team lead, James suggested: “money is not always the key factor... You have to understand what makes an individual tick.” In addition, managers placed slightly more significance on **encouraging** their team as part of motivation compared to team leads. Both groups demonstrated a high preference for **openness** as a means for motivating their colleagues. Team lead, Harry explained: “as a leader it’s important to be approachable to all team members. I believe in facilitating an open place to work.” Of



interest, team leads gave slightly greater weight to colleagues **owning** their individual piece of work as part of motivation in comparison to managers. For example, team lead, James believed that “it’s imperative that people present their own work.”

## Teaching



**Figure 9: Teaching analysis network**

The researcher identified ten themes within teaching as follows: informal, coaching, mentoring, development, confidence, intellect, encouragement, advice, on the job and **student**. Team leads showed a stronger preference for **development** over managers. As team lead, Emma explained:

Continual development and learning new skills are fundamental. You must keep moving with best practice as it changes...Complacency is very dangerous. Furthermore, team leads placed greater emphasis on **coaching, mentoring and on the job** training over managers. Team lead, James explained: “it’s good to be coached. Setting strategy, vision and focus is necessary to lead.... and that requires an element of coaching.” Team leads and managers assigned equal importance to **informal** training, **intellect** and **confidence**. Manager, Michelle suggested “a leader should ensure a follower grows in a role... that he or she becomes more confident and knows

more at the end.” Managers placed slightly more emphasis on **encouragement**. Manager, Marie confessed:

You learn a lot in yourself from leading people. I believe that teaching is valuable, encouraging others to learn to seek answers and to ask the right question is equally valuable.

With respect to the Bank, manager Peter made the point that “the CBI is a learning organisation and people want to progress. Great leaders understand what people want.” Of interest, team leads placed slightly more emphasis on offering **advice** to their colleagues in comparison to managers. Furthermore, team leads acknowledged to a slightly greater degree that leaders are both teachers and constant learners.

## **Discussion**

The aim of this thesis is to explore in what ways leadership styles and skills differ dependant on grade in the CBI. The results from the qualitative research illustrated several leadership styles and skills shared in common among managers and team leads in the Bank. However, there were also differences evident at both grades, which both supports and contradicts the previous literature. The researcher discusses these findings below. Within leadership skills, she first focuses on the most important skills for leaders as viewed by team leads and managers. She then discusses leadership skills as demonstrated and most regularly practised by team leads and managers.

### *Leadership style*

From the data, it was evident that managers in the CBI prefer to adopt a flexible leadership style to team leads. This flexibility incorporates elements of affiliation, authority, directness, authenticity, democracy and pacesetting. It is unclear whether this finding is based on situational factors or the personality and behaviour of the individual managers interviewed. These leadership style preferences link in with four styles identified by Goleman (2000a). Furthermore, Goleman (2000a) advocated a flexible, interchangeable and multiple leadership styles. A preference for following an authentic leadership style connects with Avolio and Gardner’s (2005) study. The results demonstrated that leaders at manager level also favour higher levels of collaboration than team leads and thus supports the findings of academic work (Blankenship and Miles, 1968; Heller and Yukl, 1969; Jago and Vroom, 1977).

In contrast, team leads prefer to adopt a leadership style, which is more affiliative. This reflects a team leader's stronger organisational proximity to team members. It is also a specific leadership style identified by Goleman (2000a). The leadership style preference of team leads also places a stronger focus on the development of followers in comparison to managers. Indeed, leading by example was identified as a key feature of a team leader's leadership style in the CBI. This leadership style preference connects in particular with research by Yukl (2006) who discussed developing followers and the importance of empowering, coaching and leading by example. This finding reflects closer interactions and connectedness by team leads to team members. It also connects to the findings from this thesis discussed below under leadership skills. Interestingly, it both supports and contradicts the work of Saxena et al. (2017). Their particular results demonstrated a leadership preference for a democratic style at lower levels, a coaching style at middle levels and multiple styles at senior management (Saxena et al., 2017). In contrast, the results from this thesis showed a preference for a leadership style based on coaching at lower level management and a flexible leadership style at middle management level. Saxena et al. (2017) also concluded that leaders at different grades demonstrate different leadership styles. This thesis supports that particular finding.

However, there were also similarities identified between leadership styles at team lead and manager levels. Both grades showed a preference for an authoritative leadership style and a strong outcome focus. Goleman (2000a) identified this specific leadership style. Again, it is unclear whether this particular preference is based on the situation or the personality and behaviour of the interviewees. It is not surprising that an authoritative leadership style was identified from the results. Responsibility comes with leadership. Indeed, leadership at any level involves decision-making and the achievement of goals. Therefore, leaders must demonstrate some authoritative element for the realisation of these goals. An outcome focus is also essential in leadership, particularly in an organisation like the CBI. Therefore, this finding is also unsurprising. However, this outcome focus diverges somewhat in relation to conflict management discussed later.

### *Leadership skills*

Focusing first on leadership skills in terms of importance as viewed by team leads and managers, the researcher identified both similarities and differences across both levels

in their selection. Intellect, integrity and trust were important skills in leaders identified by both grades in the CBI. However, managers felt communication, vision and strategy were more important as leadership skills compared to team leads. This group believed coaching and components of emotional intelligence were more important as leadership skills to possess. Intuitively, assigning greater importance to vision and strategy by managers over team leads is logical and expected as per the literature. In connection, managers also assigned more weight to communication as a leadership skill over team leads, which links the importance of articulating an organisation's strategy and vision as a leader. In contrast, team leads were more people focused, placing more importance on leadership skills that emphasised the development of followers and components of emotional intelligence. These results both support and contradict previous literature. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) identified integrity as an important leadership trait. In addition, integrity and honesty was the second most important skill identified by Zenger and Folkman (2014) for all management positions and communication was also near the top. However, Zenger and Folkman (2014) identified inspiring and motivating others as the most important leadership skill viewed by lower level managers, while problem solving was chosen as the most important skill by middle managers, which contradicts the findings of this thesis. Strategy and developing others featured much lower in the list of the most important skills for all management positions compiled by Zenger and Folkman (2014). These results also support and contradict the core four leadership skills identified by the Centre for Creative Learning (2018).

In terms of overall leadership skills demonstrated and practiced by team leads and managers (as opposed to the most important leadership skills perceived which were discussed earlier), understanding, communication and acknowledgement were the most common skills shared across both grades, although team leads were slightly more vocal on understanding, managers placed slightly more emphasis on communication and acknowledgement was promoted equally. The researcher identified understanding as part of change, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, emotional intelligence and motivation. The importance of this leadership skill links in with Nohria et al. (2008) through the drive to comprehend and job design lever.

As per the literature, it is unsurprising that communication features among the top leadership skills by both grades. The researcher identified this skill under change, teamwork and collaboration and conflict management. This finding supports the work

of Ruben and Gigliotti (2017). In addition, it supports the results of Kotter (2007), Gilley et al. (2009) and Argenti (2017) with respect to change. Pentland (2012) identified communication as a key factor in terms of team success, which managers recognised under teamwork and collaboration. With regard to facing challenges and in that respect conflict management, this result supports the findings of Clampitt et al. (2000). The Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013) sets out separate performance expectations with regard to communication for team leads and managers. These expectations reflect the shared use and importance of communication as a leadership skill but also the slightly greater emphasis assigned to managers. However, the 2017 GPTW Trust Index Survey results demonstrated room for improvement in the area of communication within the CBI (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a).

Acknowledgement is a third key leadership skill practiced by team leads and managers. Of interest, this leadership skill received equal significance by both grades with respect to change, teamwork and collaboration, as well as motivating followers. This result supports the findings of Heifetz and Laurie (2001) in focusing on staff needs during change. It also connects with Nohria et al. (2008) in terms of acknowledgement through creating an appropriate rewards system and culture.

The following leadership skills were shared across team lead and manager levels but to a lesser degree compared to understanding, communication and acknowledgement. These leadership skills are honesty, trust, collaboration, clarity, encouragement, building confidence, emotional intelligence, inclusiveness, listening, outcome focus and openness. Honesty, as an important leadership skill, links in with Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) and Zenger and Folkman (2014). Trust connects to research by Katzenbach and Smith (1993), Edmondson (2012) and the Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013). The significance of collaboration ties in with Gratton and Erickson (2007), Central Bank of Ireland (2013) and Zenger and Folkman (2014). The importance of clarity connects to the findings of Yukl (2006) who discussed the promotion of a clear vision. Encouraging followers as an important leadership skill ties in with Edmondson (2012). The importance of emotional intelligence practised as a leadership skill was viewed equally at both grades and ties in strongly with work by Goleman (1998; 2000a; 2000b) and intellect as a leadership skill connects with Zenger and Folkman (2014). Both levels demonstrated equal leadership skills in terms of inclusiveness, listening, outcome focus and openness. This

both supports (Edmondson, 2012) and contradicts previous literature. Indeed, Blankenship and Miles (1968), Heller and Yukl (1969) and Jago and Vroom (1977) demonstrated participativeness increases with hierarchy. Furthermore, the results of this thesis showed managers place greater importance on collaboration as a leadership style. However, in terms of leadership skills, both grades demonstrated collaboration, openness, inclusiveness and listening with their followers. In connection to an outcome focus, it is interesting that team leads placed slightly more emphasis on resolution in terms of conflict management, which perhaps suggests closer connectedness to team members. However, the 2017 GPTW Trust Index Survey results demonstrated low staff involvement (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a). In addition, the importance of informalities in leadership was not last among team leads and managers in the CBI, which feeds into work by Finkelstein (2018).

The researcher also identified differences in leadership skills demonstrated at team lead and manager grade levels. Focusing first on team leads, the results showed developing others was an important leadership skill at this level. This skill involved coaching, leading by example, ensuring followers take ownership of their work, mentoring, on the job training, offering advice and lifelong learning. This result supports previous literature including findings by Goleman (1998), Earley and Mosakowski (2004), Yukl (2006), Edmondson (2012), Kotter (2012), Zenger and Folkman (2014), Central Bank of Ireland (2018a) and Centre for Creative Leadership (2018). Interestingly, the Behavioural Competency Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013) expects managers to lead by example, ensure ownership and develop individuals and teams. However, the findings of this thesis show team leads place more emphasis on leading by example and ensuring correct ownership of work. These results also contradict Saxena et al. (2017) who discovered middle managers are involved more in coaching.

Managers also demonstrated tailoring, encouragement and included rationale more as leadership skills over team leads. Tailoring featured as part of communication, encouragement under motivation and rationale in change. A greater use of tailoring perhaps reflects a wider level of interaction within the organisation e.g. with senior managers, team leads and team members. Furthermore, Clampitt et al. (2000) suggest adapting an organisation's communication strategy during times of uncertainty. Nohria et al. (2008, p. 82) specifically recommend companies 'encourage sharing of best practice' as an action under culture. In addition, the Behavioural Competency

Framework (Central Bank of Ireland, 2013, p. 8) includes the specific expectation for managers as follows: ‘makes and justifies difficult decisions for the wider benefit of the Bank.’

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the researcher identified similarities and differences in leadership styles and skills based on grades within the CBI, which both supports and contradicts literature. In terms of similarity in styles, both managers and team leads demonstrated authority and an outcome focus. In terms of differences, managers were more flexible and collaborative in their leadership style over team leads who were more affiliative and focused on the development of staff. In terms of leadership skills, the researcher discovered similarities and differences in relation to the skills identified as most important and skills most practiced at both levels. Intellect, integrity and trust were the most important leadership skills in the shared opinion of team leads and managers. In addition, managers believed communication, vision and strategy were important skills for leaders to possess. This contrasts with coaching and elements of emotional intelligence, which team leads believed were important leadership skills. In focusing on leadership skills as most demonstrated and practised by both grades in the CBI, the researcher identified understanding, communication and acknowledgement. These skills were identified prominently across both grades, although their level of importance varied slightly between both team leads and managers in the case of understanding and communication. The following practised leadership skills were also identified across both grades, although they were less prominent: honesty, trust, collaboration, clarity, encouragement, building confidence, emotional intelligence, inclusiveness, listening, outcome focus and openness. The researcher also identified differences in most practised leadership skills at team lead and manager grades. Development of staff as a leadership skill was most practised by team leads including coaching, leading by example, ownership of work, mentoring, on the job training, advice and lifelong learning. In contrast, managers practised tailoring, encouragement and rationale more than team leads. The researcher looked at other variables including age and years spent working in the CBI to see any formation of patterns within the findings. No patterns were discovered in this instance but a deeper examination time permitting would be valuable.

These findings have particular relevance to the Bank's response to the 2017 GPTW Trust Index Survey Results (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a). As discussed previously, strategy and direction, along with change ready were the top two areas identified for improvement (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a). It is interesting to note that the findings of this thesis showed, as expected, managers consider strategy and vision more important leadership skills compared to team leads. In terms of change, responses by team leads and managers produced in general similar results across both grades. This suggests a possible shared targeting of response in terms of change ready, but a tailored response to strategy and direction across the two grades. In addition, communication and involvement were among the top five critical areas identified by the GPTW results (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a). Both grades recognised the importance of communication as a leadership skill in this thesis but the results also demonstrated that managers practise communication more as a leadership skill than team leads. The findings from this thesis also demonstrated the importance of inclusiveness across both grades. Again, these findings suggest a tailored GPTW response in terms of communication but a possible joint response across both grades for involvement. Furthermore, these results have implications for the design of career development programmes within the CBI and with regard to supporting transition and succession planning i.e. ensuring the skills at team lead level are met but also developing the necessary skills required at manager level. Where similarities are identified across both grades such as an outcome focus, integrity and understanding, career development programmes at both levels could merge. However, where differences were observed, for example with regard to flexibility and collaboration, a tailored career development plan would benefit both grades.



## **Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations**

The aim of this thesis was to investigate in what ways leadership styles and skills differ dependant on grade in the CBI. This thesis discovered both similarities and differences at team lead and manager grades with respect to leadership styles and skills. The researcher conducted ten semi-structured interviews with five team leads and five managers in the CBI focusing on style and skills under the areas of change, teamwork and collaboration, conflict management, communication, emotional intelligence, motivation and teaching.

Focusing first on leadership style and in particular similarities, managers and team leads both demonstrated authority and an outcome focus. In terms of differences, team leads were more affiliative and focused on developing staff as part of their leadership style, while managers were more flexible and collaborative.

Focusing next on leadership skills, similarities and differences were discovered among the most important skills identified and practised combined by team leads and managers in the CBI. Intellect, integrity and trust were identified as the most important leadership skills in the shared opinion of team leads and managers. In addition, managers considered communication, vision and strategy as important skills for leaders to possess. In contrast, team leads believed coaching and elements of emotional intelligence were important skills for a leader to embody.

Next in focusing on similar leadership skills as best demonstrated and practised across both grades, understanding and acknowledgement were standout themes among CBI team leads and managers. Differences in the most practised leadership skills at team lead and manager levels included development of staff by team leads and tailoring, encouragement and rationale by managers. Of interest, both grades considered communication as an important skill for leaders. However, managers applied this skill more than team leads.

These results provide more insight into the ways leadership differs at different grades. In focusing particularly on the CBI, the findings have implications for the design of career development programmes within the organisation, succession planning and the Bank's response to the 2017 GPTW Trust Index Survey Results (Central Bank of Ireland, 2018a).

## **Limitations**

The researcher acknowledges limitations within this thesis. The main limitation was time constraints, which restricted the number of interviews conducted, prevented the use of multiple methods of researching and full application of grounded theory principles. As this thesis involved qualitative research, the researcher acknowledges the limitations associated including subjectivity, accuracy, interpretation, researcher bias and replication concerns. The researcher also acknowledges that conducting a cross-sectional study provides a snapshot only. Furthermore, generalisation is not applicable due to convenience sampling applied.

## **Recommendations for further research**

The researcher examined leadership at two levels within the CBI. As leadership occurs at all levels, further study could compare leadership across the four levels within the Bank or involve a longitudinal study. In addition, from examining leadership style within the CBI, it was unclear from the results if the findings were based on skill requirements at a specific level or on personality. Using a personality test such as Myers Briggs would assist such further research. The findings also identified differences between leadership skills considered most important versus leadership skills most practised. Further research could explore these differences. The researcher also suggests focusing on possible gender differences in leadership and exploring potential dissimilarities between the public and private sectors under the theme of leadership. Leadership training at different levels could be explored further also.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 – Interview Guide**

This study is investigating in what ways leadership styles and skills differ in the CBI dependant on grade, i.e. between team lead and manager levels. This research is included as part of an MSc in International Business in the National College of Ireland. The results are for academic purposes and participation is voluntary and anonymous. The interview is not recorded but notes will be taken.

1. How would you describe your leadership style?
2. What are the most important skills a leader should possess in your opinion?
3. How do you introduce change to your teams and overcome any resistance to it as a leader?
4. How do you promote/encourage teamwork and collaboration as a leader?
5. How do you manage conflict within your teams as a leader?
6. How would you describe your leadership communication style and what mechanisms do you use?
7. What is your opinion of emotional intelligence as a necessity in leadership?
8. How do you motivate your teams?
9. How would you describe your teaching style as a leader?

**Appendix 2 - Table 4 – Table of Codes**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub themes</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Code description</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
LST – Leadership Styles	Outcome focused	LST-O	Outcome focused	Outcome focused leadership style
	Flexibility	LST-F	Flexibility	Flexible leadership style
	Collaboration	LST-CO	Collaboration	Collaborative leadership style
	Affiliative	LST-AF	Affiliative	Affiliative leadership style
	Authoritative	LST-AU	Authoritative	Authoritative leadership style
	Development	LST-DEV	Development	Leadership style is to develop others
	Leading by example	LST-LBE	Leading by example	Leadership style is to lead by example
LSK – Leadership Skills	Communication	LSK-COM	Communication	Communication as a leadership skill
	Trust	LSK-T	Trust	Trust as a leadership skill
	Vision	LSK-V	Vision	Visionary as a leadership skill
	Intellect	LSK-IN	Intellect	Intellect as a leadership skill
	Strategy	LSK-ST	Strategy	Strategic as a leadership skill
	Integrity	LSK-I	Integrity	Integrity as a leadership skill
	Coaching	LSK-COA	Coaching	Coaching as a leadership skill
	Emotional Intelligence	LSK-EI	Emotional Intelligence	EI as a leadership skill
CHG - Change	Rationale	CHG-RAT	Rationale	Explain rationale as part of change process
	Communication	CHG-COM	Communication	Communicate as part of change process
	Challenges	CHG-C	Challenges	Challenges of introducing change
	Fatigue	CHG-FA	Fatigue	Recognise change fatigue

				as part of change process
	Understanding	CHG-U	Understanding	Understand others as part of change process
	Inclusiveness	CHG-INC	Inclusiveness	Including people in change process
	Acknowledgement	CHG-AC	Acknowledgement	Acknowledge concerns as part of change process
TWC - Teamwork and collaboration	Leading by example	TWC-LBE	Leading by example	Lead by example to promote teamwork and collaboration
	Communication	TWC-COM	Communication	Communicate to promote teamwork and collaboration
	Trust	TWC-T	Trust	Create trust for teamwork and collaboration
	Understanding	TWC-U	Understanding	Understanding as part of teamwork and collaboration
	Collaboration	TWC-CO	Collaboration	Collaborate as part of teamwork and collaboration
	Acknowledgement	TWC-AC	Acknowledgement	Acknowledge work and achievements as part of teamwork and collaboration
	Outcome focused	TWC-O	Outcome focused	Outcome focus in teamwork and collaboration
CM - Conflict management	Understanding	CM-U	Understanding	Conflict management requires understanding
	Communication	CM-COM	Communication	Conflict management requires communication

	Resolution	CM-RES	Resolution	Conflict management requires a resolution
	Types of conflict	CM-TOC	Types of conflict	Different types of conflict
	Urgency	CM-UR	Urgency	Urgency of addressing conflict management
	Neutrality	CM-NEU	Neutrality	Staying neutral as part of conflict management
COMM – Communication	Openness	COMM-OP	Openness	Open communication
	Personal	COMM-PER	Personal	Personal communication
	Tailoring	COMM-TA	Tailoring	Tailoring communication
	Informal	COMM-INF	Informal	Informal communication
	Listening	CS-L	Listening	Listening as part of communication
	Clarity	COMM-CL	Clarity	Clear communication
	Honesty	COMM-H	Honesty	Honest communication
EI - Emotional Intelligence	Importance	EI-IMPO	Importance	Importance of EI
	Understanding	EI-U	Understanding	Understanding as part of EI
	Development	EI-DEV	Development	EI can be developed
	Natural	EI-NAT	Natural	EI can occur naturally
	Balance	EI-BAL	Balance	Balanced EI
MO – Motivation	Understanding	MO-U	Understanding	Understanding different motivations
	Acknowledgement	MO-AC	Acknowledgement	Acknowledge achievements as part of motivation
	Encouragement	MO-ENC	Encouragement	Encouragement as part of motivation

	Openness	MO-OP	Openness	Openness as part of motivation
	Ownership	MO-OWN	Ownership	Ownership of work as part of motivation
TE - Teaching	Informal	TE-INF	Informal	Informal teaching
	Coaching	TE-COA	Coaching	Coaching as part of teaching
	Mentoring	TE-MEN	Mentoring	Mentoring as part of teaching
	Development	TE-DEV	Development	Develop others as part of teaching
	Confidence	TE-CONF	Confidence	Build confidence as part of teaching
	Intellect	TE-IN	Intellect	Grow intellect as part of teaching
	Encouragement	TE-ENC	Encouragement	Encouragement as part of teaching
	Advice	TE-ADV	Advice	Offering advice as part of teaching
	On the job	TE-OTJ	On the job	On the job teaching
	Student	TE-STU	Student	Teaching involves being a student

Appendix 3 - Table 5 – Data set overview

#	Areas	Themes									
1	LST	Outcome focused	Flexibility	Collaboration	Affiliative	Authoritative	Development	Leading by example			
		B	M	M	TL	B	TL	TL			
2	LSK	Communication	Trust	Vision	Intellect	Strategy	Integrity	Coaching	EI		
		M	B	M	B	M	B	TL	TL		
3	CHG	Rationale	Communication	Challenges	Fatigue	Understanding	Inclusiveness	Acknowledgement			
		M	B	B	B	B	B	B			
4	TWC	Leading by example	Communication	Trust	Understanding	Collaboration	Acknowledgement	Outcome focused			
		TL	M	B	B	B	B	B			
5	CM	Understanding	Communication	Resolution	Types of conflict	Urgency	Neutrality				
		TL	B	TL	B	TL	TL				
6	COMM	Openness	Personal	Tailoring	Informal	Listening	Clarity	Honesty			
		B	B	M	B	B	B	B			
7	EI	Importance	Understanding	Development	Natural	Balance					
		B	TL	TL	TL	TL					
8	MO	Understanding	Acknowledgement	Encouragement	Openness	Ownership					
		M	B	M	B	TL					
9	TE	Informal	Coaching	Mentoring	Development	Confidence	Intellect	Encouragement	Advice	On the job	Student
		B	TL	TL	TL	B	B	M	TL	TL	TL

M - Minimum of 3/5 managers responded, TL - minimum of 3/5 team leads responded, B - team leads and managers responded. Areas: LST – leadership style, LSK – most important leadership skills identified by team leads and managers, CHG – change, TWC – teamwork and collaboration, CM – conflict management, COMM – communication, EI – emotional intelligence, MO – motivation, TE – teaching.