

Leadership Competencies for Community Organisations

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Abstract

Community organisations work tirelessly to serve communities and enable a social impact in Aotearoa New Zealand. The technological advancements, legislative changes, and the onset of COVID-19 have posed severe challenges to these organisations. The disruptions and new working norms have amplified the problems. It is the responsibility of the leadership in these organisations to ensure that they manage these challenges without affecting their services to their communities.

This qualitative study explores the understandings of experienced community organisation leaders regarding the leadership competencies required by future leaders in navigating the challenges of the changing work environment. Their views collectively represent decades of knowledge and experience in community organisations. To build a context for the questions on leadership competencies, it was important to know what they perceived as the challenges of the changing work environment. A secondary focus of this study, explored their views on the strategies/opportunities to develop those leadership competencies.

Nine participants were recruited through purposive sampling, and semi-structured personal interviews were conducted to collect data. The participants identified challenges in the changing work environment related to engagement, resources and governance. They highlighted the different leadership competencies – which were classified under skills, behaviours, traits and styles – future community organisation leaders would need to address those challenges. Participants also shared actions (strategies and opportunities) to develop those leadership competencies.

This is a small-scale, exploratory, qualitative study. Consideration of the findings and recommendations must take this into consideration. In future, a larger-scale study of leadership competencies for community organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand might help to better inform the diverse leadership challenges of the not-for-profit sector.

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Chapter 1: Orientation to the Study

Overview of the chapter

This chapter introduces the context of leadership in the changing work environment and the nature of community organisations in New Zealand. The rationale and significance of this study, the research question and the methodology are briefly discussed.

1. Leadership in the changing work environment

Organisations having a conventional hierarchical structure with workers performing laid-out tasks and a few leaders taking strategy decisions at the top, have successfully survived the passage of time because the work environment was non-complex and slow-moving (Bryson & Rusten, 2011). A centralised decision-making process ensured clarity in the execution of tasks, and success was measured at the end of the financial year in the profit and loss statements. The advancement in technology, unlimited access to information, demographic changes and globalisation have redefined how we work (Doogan, 2009). In today's *VUCA* (V – volatile, U – uncertain, C – complex, A – ambiguous) world, to remain competitive, organisations have to continuously evaluate and redefine their leadership structures and working relationships (Millar et al., 2018). The acronym *VUCA* was first coined by the United States Army in the late 1990s to elucidate the post-cold-war situation and is now widely used by professionals from various disciplines to describe today's work environment. In *VUCA*, *volatility* encompasses the increasing pace with which the organisations are undergoing change; *uncertainty* stands for the lack of understanding of variables (technology, consumer demand, pandemics like the COVID-19, etc.) affecting the change, *complexity* signifies the high degree of interdependence of the variables, and *ambiguity* refers to difficulty in interpreting these variables (Huang, 2022; Millar et al., 2018). To manage these workplace challenges, organisations are moving away from hierarchical to more linear and inclusive structures that function as an ecosystem of interconnected entities that work in tandem with each other in a complex environment (Velsor et al., 2010). New ways to enhance thinking patterns are being developed to perform the operational processes differently with a focus on adaptability. Besides restructuring, the focus is also on hiring employees or leaders who have the necessary leadership competencies and intellectual wherewithal to perform tasks of an amorphous nature, as demanded by the complex ecosystem (Doogan, 2009; Velsor et al., 2010). For an organisation's success, future leaders will need to have a higher level of commitment towards

the organisation and should be willing to go the extra mile. It means that their roles and responsibilities might change with the change in market or environmental conditions, which normally happens, and they will have to act independently, without any conventional oversight (Doogan, 2009). Quick decision-making is now the need of the hour to remain competitive – which also means greater autonomy. They will not only need to be well trained in their area of expertise but should also be prepared to make decisions that are not in line with their routine work by demonstrating situational leadership (Millar et al., 2018). Besides leadership competencies, organisational culture is another important aspect of the changing work environment (Stanford, 2014). As culture defines an organisation's creativity, energy and spirit, it means creating a fairer workplace for future leaders by focusing on individual development and building a deeper sense of purpose (Tewarie & Escalante, 2016). A Deloitte (2016) survey found that seven in ten executives consider organisations' culture as a driving force in accomplishing their organisational mission. Therefore, organisations need to achieve the right mix of humans and machines, and drive a culture that manages highly fluid, geographically dispersed and hybrid teams.

2. New Zealand context

Recent research concludes that, by 2030, nearly 46% of the jobs in New Zealand could be at risk from automation (Sustainable Business Council, 2019). Among these, low- and medium-skilled jobs such as those of labourers, machine operators, etc., are at a greater risk. However, another Government issue paper indicates that technological improvements could lead to innovation in goods and services, which, in turn, would create demand for new forms of labour (New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2020). Improvement in technology may also reduce the cost of production which may bring prices down and increase demand, resulting in more jobs in existing roles (New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2020). This means a greater demand for a skilled workforce, and leadership that can manage the workplace challenges. Do the organisations in New Zealand have access to this human capital? A recent survey on New Zealand's Directors and CEOs found that majority of them consider labour quality and capability as the biggest encumbrance to organisational growth as well as national economic performance, and the education system fails to provide the talent they seek (New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2020). Young people are encouraged to move directly into the workforce instead of continuing with formal education, whereas the system is not ready to provide training and upskilling (New Zealand Government, 2019). Public funding for job

training programmes has also fallen by 32% since 1993 (Manyika et al., 2017). So, private organisations will have a significant role to play in both training and retraining workers.

2.1 Community organisations

A community organisation is a non-profit organisation that is founded and run purely for the purpose of promoting social welfare and is primarily concerned with improving the community's common good and overall well-being (Dann, 2022; Lindeman, 2019). In general discourse, the terms *community organisations*, *community-based organisations* (CBOs), *not-for-profit organisations* (NPOs) and *non-governmental organisations* (NGOs) are sometimes used interchangeably. For the purpose of this research, the term *community organisation* will be used. Some sports and recreation organisations, schools and churches belonging to and representing communities are sometimes referred to as community organisations and will be excluded from this research.

In New Zealand, community organisations are active in collaborating with, criticising, and attempting to influence government policy in their respective fields. For example, New Zealand Forest and Bird is a significant national environmental organisation that has pushed for the repatriation of pastoral lease land into the public domain (Tennant et al., 2008). Marine reserves have been established, partly in reaction to New Zealand Forest and Bird action (Tennant et al., 2008). Similarly, the Save Happy Valley Coalition, a group organised around a specific campaign, invaded Happy Valley in January 2006 to prevent Solid Energy from opencast coal mining (Tennant et al., 2008). The repeal and replacement of Section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961 in 2008, which took away parents' statutory defence in using force to correct children's behaviour, clearly demonstrated non-profits' ability to contribute to, and influence, substantial legislative change (Tennant et al., 2008). A report by Stats NZ (2020) found that community organisations and the overall non-profit sector contributed \$8 Billion to the NZ economy in 2018. The report stated that the figures are expected to grow in the next assessment. Despite their rising social presence and great economic importance to the national economy, community organisations have faced major hurdles as they entered an age of severe competition for limited resources from both the public and private sectors (McMullin & Raggo, 2020). This funding competition exposes non-profits to risks and offers considerable operational hurdles, even as demand for their services grows in their communities (Morrow & McLeod, 2021).

3. Rationale for the study

This research takes place in Aotearoa New Zealand, where community organisations have an essential role in the country's social and economic fabric. These organisations are becoming a more common component of cultures worldwide. Their prominence is rising as societies become more reliant on them for a variety of services, regardless of their function (Lewis, 2006). These organisations are primarily engaged in either service functions, such as providing education, health, housing, community development, social services, or expressive functions, such as activities that provide avenues for the expression of cultural, religious, professional, or policy values and interests (Salamon et al., 2003). While they have been instrumental in driving social change, they are often faced with operational and institutional barriers that impede their function and growth, thereby affecting the desired impact. According to a survey conducted by the New Zealand Charities Service, almost 20% of board members from 200 NGOs were not cognisant of their governance roles and responsibilities (Centre for Social Impact, 2020). Another report by the Centre for Social Impact (2019) found that the NGO staff see the board as obstructive (rather than constructive) towards the values of governance and management. While there are many studies indicating leadership issues in these organisations, additional predicaments are amplifying the crisis further. A major barrier identified by Morrow and McLeod (2021) is the lack of availability of competent leaders in community organisations and a culture of growth. A recent Deloitte (2019) report emphasised the need to improve technology-driven decision-making competencies as a key enabler in the post-pandemic world. The Centre for Social Impact (2019) also observed that the leaders and board members lacked fundamental leadership competencies as a consequence of poor recruiting and induction methods and the absence of a supportive organisational culture resulting in abysmal board performance. Lack of availability of competent leaders was the highlight of the report and a major reason why many community organisations fail to achieve their objectives. The current societal and economic turbulences put greater emphasis on improvised leadership competencies. A common theme across these studies is a need for a quick response by leaders at the helm to the amorphous challenges.

4. Significance of the study

The polity and intelligentsia in Aotearoa New Zealand have primarily focused on the business and economy, whereas the not-for-profit sector has received little attention and

remained mainly invisible owing to a lack of adequate research in the field (Centre for Social Impact, 2019). Surveys conducted by private consulting firms such as Grant Thornton (2016), reports by JBWere (Morrow & McLeod, 2021) and the Centre for Social Impact (2019) gave valuable insight into the problems confronting the not-for-profit sector in general. These surveys and reports were generic in character and did not particularly address the competencies needed for the future leaders of community organisations. Reports seem to indicate that the challenges exist, preventing professionals from operating without hindrances to improving the financial, social and cultural well-being of the community.

The above points to the impact of change on culture and governance and the role of leadership in addressing it. The lack of knowledge of the competencies needed by future leaders of community organisations and the dearth of research in this field motivated the researcher to conduct this study. It was hoped that by gaining a better grasp of leadership in the context of change, culture and governance, and the views of leaders in community organisations, the study can present insights to enable educators and community organisations to make more informed choices about the types of competencies to be developed. An intended secondary outcome of this study was to identify the strategies for developing the competencies needed by future leaders of community organisations.

5. Research question

Knowledge gaps exist regarding the specific leadership competencies required in the changing environment of community organisations. The views of experienced leaders and professionals in these organisations were explored to address the following overarching research question:

What are the critical leadership competencies required of future leaders of community organisations in a changing work environment? Two secondary questions supported this question:

1. what are the challenges of the changing work environment for future leaders? and
2. what are the strategies and opportunities for developing those competencies?

6. Methodology

Different organisations and leaders have different perceptions of leadership which is based on personal characteristics and situational factors (Bass & Bass, 2008). Therefore, the

most suitable research design was exploratory. Based on a constructivist research paradigm and interpretivist epistemology, the most suitable approach was qualitative. Data collection was done through semi-structured, in-depth, personal interviews with nine experienced community organisation leaders who worked in different capacities. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis.

7. Thesis structure

The next chapter presents a literature review of the core concepts used in the research, followed by a discussion of the methodology in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents the findings, followed by a discussion of the findings and integration of the literature in Chapter 5. This chapter also outlines the main recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview of the chapter

In this chapter, I will first consider the elements of leadership: definitions of leadership, the evolution of different leadership theories, and leadership in different contexts, followed by a detailed discussion on leadership competencies. Later, the nature of community organisations and the changing work environment will be addressed.

1. The Elements of Leadership

1.1 Defining Leadership

Leadership has been intensively researched in different contexts and using various theoretical paradigms. The study of leadership has transcended time, culture, discipline, and theoretical views and continues to evolve. Due to the subject's complexity, it inspires intriguing and challenging discussions. Scholars have suggested multiple definitions and theories of leadership. In the early 1990s, Bass and Stogdill (1990) defined leadership as an interaction between members of a group where leaders act as agents of change and transformation by modifying the motivation of others in the group through acceptance of purpose and mission beyond self-interest. In more recent times, leadership is defined as a relationship of influence between leaders and followers who want meaningful changes that reflect their shared goals (Peltz et al., 2020). Northouse (2019) defines leadership as the process through which an individual encourages a group to work towards a common goal. These distinct definitions are premised on a leader's effect on the motivation of followers, influence on relationships, and the process of achieving the group's common goal respectively. While all of these definitions are valid in their respective contexts and timelines, it is difficult to single out one as the most appropriate. What is clear is that the understanding of leadership has evolved over time, which will be discussed in later sections. Before that, we need to understand the distinction or relationship between leadership and management, since these terms are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature.

1.1.1 Leadership/Leaders vs Management/Managers

Katz (2009) defined management as exercising authority and direction over a group or organisation through executive, administrative, and supervisory roles. Katz believed that

management functions are typically task-based and include training personnel, mentoring high-potential individuals, and settling disagreements while maintaining ethics and discipline. Northouse (2019) defined management as the process of planning, organising, directing, and controlling organisational resources to achieve definite set objectives. Another similar definition by Swanwick (2019) described management as the efficient and effective pursuit of organisational goals by integrating the work of individuals through planning, organising, leading, and controlling the organisation's resources. The reference points of these definitions are people and non-people resources, intending to achieve organisational goals. Whereas, in the discussion of the definition of leadership, all the scholarly sources refer to people only. Does that mean leadership is a constituent of management? Gulati et al. (2017) argued that leadership is a sub-process of the entire management process and that managers possess leadership qualities. This view was previously supported in the book, *Management: Leadership in Action*, which emphasised that leadership is an element of management and that management functions include planning, organising and controlling, in addition to leadership (Mosley et al., 1996). Another line of thought claims no difference between the two. In a research paper, "Leadership and Management are One and the Same", a group of authors concluded that there is no scientific evidence to support the notion that leadership and management are different (Azad et al., 2017). They claim that leadership and management are not only complementary, but also represent the same notion. Even though it is conceivable to separate these two concepts in theory, they argued that it is impossible to do so in practice. Endorsing this view, Kaehler and Grundei (2018), in their book *HR Governance: A Theoretical Introduction*, argued that it is impossible to isolate leadership from management functions like planning, organising and controlling and that the managers cannot be detached from leading people. The two authors advocate equating leadership with management and conceptualising these as a guiding force that handles both people and non-people issues. They conclude that the dualist view of management and leadership is misleading and should be abandoned.

However, the traditional approach to viewing this contrasts with the arguments of contemporary scholars mentioned earlier. In early writings on this, Bennis and Nanus (1985) highlighted the distinction between managers and leaders by stating, "managers are masters of routine, they accomplish, and they are efficient; but leaders are masters of change, they influence, and they are effective" (p. 21). They claimed that a manager is an accomplished master of routines and duties, while a leader influences people and creates a vision for change. This distinction was later advocated by Kotter (2008) in his book *A Force for Change: How*

Leadership Differs From Management. According to Kotter, leadership entails (a) defining a vision for the company; (b) aligning individuals with that vision through communication; and (c) inspiring people to action through empowerment and essential need satisfaction. Management, on the other hand, entails (a) planning and budgeting; (b) organising and staffing; and (c) controlling and issue resolution (Kotter, 2008). He asserts that leadership is about adapting to change, while management is about adapting to complexity. Even though Kotter highlights the distinctions between the two, he also emphasises their complementarity. Good management transforms a leader's vision into action and successful implementation, whereas exemplary leadership, in tandem with management, is able to handle nuanced complexities and manage change (Kotter, 2008). This complementarity links the differing views of scholars following the traditional and contemporary approaches on this topic. Thus, it becomes crucial for any informed research on leadership in organisations, to include the voices of all levels of leadership, including management. This study supports this stance and will explore the views of community organisation leaders by including managers in all capacities in the focus on leaders.

1.1.2 The evolution of leadership theories

The Great Man Theory was the origin of the emerging field of leadership studies. This theory assumed that leaders are born, not made, and their leadership aptitude is innate (Harrison, 2018). Researchers studied historical figures such as Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, Napoleon and others to understand leadership (Harrison, 2018). This theory had several problems, such as a lack of empirical evidence and is no longer a part of academic discourse.

In the 1930s, the trait theories evolved out of the Great Man theory and provided an early framework for leadership study (Northouse, 2019). The trait theories argue that the traits of successful leaders are inherent or can be acquired through training and practice (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). The focus of the research was on the mental, social, and physical attributes of leaders. The objective was to determine the optimal combination of cognitive, social, and physical traits that comprise an effective leader (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). These leadership traits are a focus of this study and will be discussed in the competencies section.

In the 1950s, researchers studied leaders' actions rather than their psychological traits. This gave rise to the behavioural theories of leadership (Harrison, 2018). The behavioural studies helped scholars to distance themselves from unsupported, older views. These studies

emphasised the leader's actual behaviour, but disregarded the situation and environmental context (Harrison, 2018). The ongoing focus on behaviour in leadership competencies today will be discussed later in this chapter.

It became increasingly clear that the environment played a crucial part in the leader-follower dynamic, and this notion dominated the discourse in the 1960s. Researchers focused on situational factors that affected a leader's behaviour, known as contingency theories (Northouse, 2019). This approach acknowledged the potential that the context in which the leader-subordinate relationship occurred might be more important than the leader. There was a demonstrable understanding that a leader had to adapt to the situation (Harrison, 2018). The recognition of adaptability to situational factors brought about a revival of *trait* in the conception of leadership. It was believed that factors such as personality, behaviour, influence, and the situational environment were crucial to effective leadership (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). Although the contingency theory had some strengths, it failed to adequately explain why different leadership styles are beneficial in some contexts but not others. It also failed to sufficiently explain how to address a leadership–situation mismatch in the organization.

In the early 1980s, there was a great deal of disenchantment with leadership theory and research. It was widely accepted that leadership models explained only a tiny proportion of the variance in performance-related outcomes (Bass & Bass, 2008). This pessimism spawned a new wave of alternative approaches to leadership. Instead of emphasising rational processes and leader behaviours such as leader–follower exchange interactions, new leadership models started to emphasise emotions, values, and symbolic leader behaviour (Northouse, 2019). Across all these leadership theories from the past, to the vast majority of the present, the focus on the leader and the characteristics that give rise to leadership has a place in studies of leadership and will also be highlighted in discussing competencies for this project.

However, in an increasingly complicated and demanding society, leadership theories that support situations of rapid change, disruptive technology innovation, and expanding globalisation have become important. This has ushered in a new era of leadership, a departure from the aforementioned classic conceptions of leadership, which characterise leadership as a unidirectional, top-down influencing process with a clear distinction between leaders and followers (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). Since the 21st century, transformational leadership theories have generated tremendous empirical research interest (Northouse, 2019). More

studies have been conducted on this leadership style than on all other significant leadership theories combined. Transformational leadership allows leaders and followers to mutually develop motivation and ethical conduct (Northouse, 2019). Within this approach, the leadership responsibility is shared by all group members working towards a common objective (Mengel, 2021). This concept is applied when an organisation requires revitalisation, is undergoing considerable change, or requires a new direction. It is particularly essential in the technological industry of today, where innovation and adaptability may build or ruin an organisation (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). This theory, like others, has been subject to criticism as well. One complaint is that transformative leadership is elitist and antidemocratic and that the heroic characteristics of leadership are overemphasised (Northouse, 2019). Since transformational leaders construct and express a vision to effect change, it may give the impression that they are acting independently of their followers.

Many contemporary views on leadership contain components of different theories as they evolved through the course of history. There is still no universally accepted approach to leadership, even though it is the most researched subject in management courses (Mengel, 2021; Northouse, 2019). But the focus on the characteristics that give rise to leadership, including traits, behaviours, skills and leadership styles, remain as important today as in previous decades. Accommodating all of these important components of different theories, is the competency model of leadership (Ruben, 2019). Psychologist David McClelland is credited with developing the contemporary concept of competencies. McClelland (1973) argued that testing for personality factors or competencies of life outcomes, such as patience, moderate goal-setting, communication skills, and ego development, might be a reliable predictor of an individual's talents. He suggested that competencies such as measures of knowledge, abilities, traits and skills should be adopted as a more suitable approach to the measurement of personal aptitude. McClelland's approach has been instrumental in establishing the present understanding of leadership competencies (Croft & Seemiller, 2017). This view has been endorsed by Ruben (2019). He stated that using the term *competency* would convey the sense of knowledge, skills, and abilities in personal and organisational areas. Therefore, competency was the most suitable for assessing leadership in this study. This approach and its elements will be discussed later in the chapter.

A review of leadership literature demonstrates that the concept of leadership has evolved over time and remains dynamic. Many contemporary authors accept though, that the

leadership function depends on context. If the context changes, the leadership will also be different (Avolio, 2007; Oc, 2018). The next section will focus more on this contextual understanding of leadership.

1.2 Context of Leadership

Leadership does not occur in a vacuum and is fundamentally driven by the larger context within which the leaders function (Bass & Bass, 2008). Oc (2018) stated that context can serve as an important situational moderator of the effectiveness of leadership, provide cross-level effects, be a configuration of stimuli for leadership processes, and reflect the time or place where leadership occurs. The traditional approaches often associate contingency or situational variables with context, whereas the contemporary approach lays some emphasis on social construction (Bryman et al., 1996). In addition to the situational element, leadership is often seen as a socially constructed, identifiable pattern of influence and order (Bass & Bass, 2008). However, in a systematic review of the contextual factors, Oc (2018) concluded that there was no agreement on the contexts that give a final shape to the concept of leadership. What constitutes the contexts of leadership will be determined by the focus of the study. The discussion in Chapter 1 highlighted how the changing work environment had impacted the organisational culture and governance in community organisations as well as the overall not-for-profit sector. Thus, before studying leadership competencies, it is crucial to understand how leadership is affected by the change and its relationship to culture and governance.

1.2.1 Leadership and organisational culture

Organisational culture is learned and passed on through social interactions, and it sets the rules for behaviour within an organisation (Baron, 1995). As the understanding of leadership evolved with the passage of time, its relationship with culture was popularised as a theoretical point-of-view by researchers like Schein (2004). It has been used by some organisational scholars and managers over the last several decades to refer to the climate and practices that organisations develop around their human resource management, as well as to the organisation's espoused values and credo. According to this viewpoint, challenges relating to organisational culture must be clearly identified for leaders to be effective. For instance, one identifier of culture is change, and as the environment shifts and evolves, leaders must be adaptive to change as a standard practice based on the organizational culture (Schein, 2004). The most alluring part of culture as a notion is that it directs our attention to phenomena that

exist under the surface, are powerful in their impact but are intangible and, to a large extent, unconscious (McMurray & Pullen, 2020). Culture, in this sense, is to a community what personality or character is to an individual. Therefore, managing the organisational culture becomes imperative and an important component of leadership. Baron (1995) discovered that institutions that attempted to leverage on new opportunities in the environment successfully changed and evolved their culture. Additionally, Baron discovered that the emergence of professional managers and thought leaders over the last several decades indicates that improving and diversifying management and leadership competencies is a priority for effective culture management. Culture management is concerned with leaders' competency to discern and understand what the organisational culture is, as well as adapt that culture to match the demands of the organisation as it progresses (McMurray & Pullen, 2020). Thus, while culture as a notion is an abstraction, its behavioural and attitudinal effects are rather concrete. Culture plays a significant role in community organizations, as their leaders show a genuine commitment to the cause they work for. Consequently, it is necessary to explore the organisational environment and culture in which community organisation leaders operate, which will give an accurate assessment of the leadership competencies required of them to navigate change. The right organisational culture becomes instrumental in an organisation's acceptability and adaptability to change (Abdul Rashid et al., 2004).

1.2.2 Leadership and change

Change is inevitable. We are all impacted by climate change, natural disasters, pandemics like the recent COVID-19, and the passage of time. Human-activity-related changes such as inventions, migrations, wars, government regulations, new marketplaces, and new values – have an impact on both organisations and individuals. Change is necessitated by threats and opportunities (Oreg et al., 2011). It can also be planned or unplanned, depending on the external and internal environment. Without good change management, organisational changes can be difficult and costly in time and resources (Halkias et al., 2017). Although a substantial body of research on leadership and change has developed over time, this field of study still lacks a conceptual framework for guiding research and integrating existing findings. Stogdill (1974) as well as House and Aditya (1997), provided evidence in the 1990s about the characteristics and behaviours of effective leaders but, arguably, did not shed enough light on their specific competencies in the context of organisational change. However, more contemporary studies have a strong emphasis on change. Schein (2019), Oreg et al. (2011) and Halkias et al. (2017) enlighten us on what causes change and how it occurs in organisations

and the role of leaders in the context of change. Ajmal et al. (2012) and Mansaray (2019) identified the role of transformational leadership style as critical for implementing effective change management. Oreg and Berson (2019) highlight three broad key functions of leadership behaviour as well as process, that shape the organisational response to change. The three underlined key functions are:

- 1) effective communication;
- 2) support and attention to the concerns of your followers; and
- 3) involving your followers in the process (e.g., participative leadership);

These functions of leadership behaviour shaping organisational response to change, form a part of the overall governance function (Crowther & Seifi, 2017; Deloitte, 2019).

1.2.3 Leadership and Governance

Governance refers to the processes and structures employed to direct and manage the operations and activities of an organisation, and its response to change (Glaeser, 2002). It develops methods for achieving responsibility among stakeholders, management, and the board by defining the division of authority, goals, limitations, and frameworks (Deloitte, 2019; Glaeser, 2002). Hence, effective governance becomes crucial to the success and achievement of the desired impact of the community organisations (Centre for Social Impact, 2019). Effective governance is critical in today's complex environment. The exceptional historical circumstances at the turn of the 20th century rekindled interest in good governance, as it serves as the pivot upon which socio-political and economic systems are built (Gandossy, 2004). Throughout history, the distinction between success and failure in governance has been primarily attributed to leadership at the helm (Gordon, 2001). Leadership either creates or ruins a group, and the attitudes and behaviours of leaders have a significant impact on the group's performance and level of satisfaction. Successful organisational governance requires fostering an atmosphere that is inclusive, sensitive to, and responsive to, the demands of its members, as well as effective in addressing the numerous difficulties it faces (Gandossy, 2004). Without strong governance at all levels in private, public, and community organisations, it is probably nearly impossible to achieve and sustain effective administration, accomplish goals, maintain quality, and deliver quality services (Gandossy, 2004; Northouse, 2019; Sacchetti & Borzaga, 2020).

While there is evidence that governance mechanisms are crucial, it is the quality of processes with which they are established and implemented that defines their success, and not

the mere existence of policies and procedures (Micklethwait & Dimond, 2017). Governance supports leadership through arrangements and frameworks, by providing strategic directions for leaders (Crowther & Seifi, 2017). These frameworks clarify roles and responsibilities, foster shared objectives and establish accountability (Crowther & Seifi, 2017; Gandossy, 2004). To bring governance alive and integrate it into organisational attitudes, ethics, beliefs, and actions, the board of directors and senior management must establish an enabling culture that prioritises ethical behaviour (Gstraunthaler et al., 2008). This is the point at which leadership becomes critical. Effective leadership contributes to effective governance by promoting cooperation, building shared understanding, boosting collaboration, and strengthening commitment at all levels (Löffler & Kopel, 2012). Industry, regulators, and academics all agree that leadership is critical to the successful implementation of an organisational governance system. There was, however, little consensus on the types of leadership styles and competencies that contribute to the development of a culture of good governance (Mair et al., 2015; Sacchetti & Borzaga, 2020).

After examining the literature on the organisational culture, change and governance, their inter-relationship, and their relationship with the theories of leadership, there is a need to identify foundational leadership competencies required to execute leadership functions. Leadership competencies will be explored in the next section.

1.3 Leadership Competencies

As per the study conducted by the American Management Association in the 1980s, leadership competencies were defined as underlying characteristics of an individual that are causally associated with successful or outstanding job performance (Croft & Seemiller, 2017). They are a definable pattern of leadership styles, skills, behaviours, and other traits that a leader needs to successfully carry out professional tasks or occupational functions (Battilana et al., 2010; Brownell, 2006; Dai et al., 2011; Sydänmaanlakka, 2003). Building on this, Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) observed that the effectiveness of leadership competencies is dependent upon the context and strategies that are undertaken for the development of these competencies. This view has been previously endorsed in the leadership development literature, which attributes leadership effectiveness to the process and actions taken for its development (Kets de Vries & Korotov, 2010; Vardiman et al., 2006). As a secondary focus of this study, exploring participants' views on the strategies for developing leadership competencies will provide a firm foundation for future studies as well as practice implications for organisations. However,

studies on developing leadership competencies have focused on different elements depending on the context. While some authors have focused on traits and behaviours, some have chosen to study styles and skills to explain the context-specific phenomena. I will briefly discuss each of these four elements of leadership competencies.

1.3.1 Traits

As mentioned earlier, the focus on leadership traits in the early approaches to leadership theories highlighted the characteristics and personal attributes shared by leaders and individuals in positions of power (Stogdill, 1974). Leadership traits remained a focus across different views of leadership and often include physical, emotional, social, and intellectual characteristics (Bryman, 1992). Research supports the notion that some personal characteristics are inherent in leaders and may be discovered and analysed. Throughout the 20th century, scholars have examined leadership from a trait-based perspective, which also constitutes the first comprehensive examination of the subject. Stogdill (1974), Bryman (1992), Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), Bennis and Nanus (1985), and Bass and Bass (2008) are just a few of the authors who have devoted their work to searching for the ideal traits required of a leader in the early decades of the 20th century. After 1950, this school of thought waned in popularity, but the study into the characteristics, abilities, behaviours, and styles of effective leadership has progressed and evolved and is still very much part of the thinking about leadership competencies today. Individuals exhibit a variety of traits, including personality, temperament, abilities, needs, reasons, disposition, and values (Mouton, 2019; Northouse, 2019; Shalini, 2015). They are fundamental characteristics of all leaders that contribute to consistent leadership effectiveness regardless of the organisational environment. However, rather than viewing them in isolation as was done in the trait theory, this is now regarded alongside other characteristics as part of leadership competence.

1.3.2 Behaviour

A second component of competence also had its roots of approaches to leadership, namely behavioural approaches. In the 1950s, as Stogdill and others cast doubt on the trait approach to leadership, many researchers turned their focus to a behavioural approach, concentrating on the behaviours and actions of successful leaders to uncover their behavioural patterns. These behavioural patterns are distinct from leadership traits because they may be acquired and strengthened (Bryman, 1992). Behavioural theories of leadership place a premium on a leader's actions, implying that the strongest predictor of leadership effectiveness is how a

leader behaves. This method is centred on action (Demircioglu & Chowdhury, 2020). The behavioural theory offers numerous advantages, chief among which is that leaders may learn and choose which actions to take in order to develop into the type of leader they desire (Demircioglu & Chowdhury, 2020). It enables leaders to be adaptable and flexible in response to changing situations. This approach draws close parallels with the contingency theories highlighted in the first section. While it allows flexibility, it does not directly suggest which behavioural patterns to adopt in a given situation (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Northouse, 2019; Zaccaro et al., 2018).

1.3.3 Styles

Along with evaluating leaders' traits and behaviours, researchers also looked at leadership styles as part of the contemporary thinking about competencies. These styles are regarded as repeated patterns of behaviour that leaders exhibit while interacting with followers (Shalini, 2015). Sometimes in general discourse, the terms *leadership style* and *behaviour* are used interchangeably. However, leadership style refers to a combination of leadership traits and behavioural theories that aid in the development of an individual's style (Zaccaro et al., 2018). This individual style aims to include an approach that motivates followers and guides future leaders towards organisational success. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) in the 1990s categorised leadership styles as transactional and transformational. This is still used today, albeit with a more contemporary focus. Transformational leadership is defined as one that fosters change in individuals and organisational systems through individual influence, intellectual stimulation and spiritual encouragement (Prasad & Junni, 2016). Whereas the transactional leadership style is premised upon the system of rewards and punishment depending on the performance, with a sole focus on the task-at-hand (Bass & Bass, 2008). The application of these leadership styles requires a rational understanding of the situation.

1.3.4 Skills

Leadership skills, as the final component of competency, are the understandings that a leader possesses and employs to accomplish goals and objectives successfully (Northouse, 2019). Mumford et al. (2000) suggested a skills-based model of leader effectiveness that does not ignore the importance of traits, behaviours and styles. According to this model, skills have a more direct and immediate effect on leadership performance than traits. Within this model, leadership is defined by an individual's capacity to solve the type of novel, ill-defined challenges that people in organisational leadership roles are confronted with. Leaders must

determine important challenges, collect data, generate ideas, and prototype solutions. These sophisticated, creative, problem-solving abilities imply a requirement for expertise relevant to both the nature of the problem and the type of leadership function in question (Mumford et al., 2000). Unless leaders are able to identify key organizational challenges and devise solutions to those challenges, no amount of planning or persuasion will be effective (Northouse, 2019). Viable solutions to leadership challenges must be contextualised within the organisation, and leaders must look beyond themselves, assessing the implications of a solution within the organisation's context (Bass & Bass, 2008; Mumford et al., 2000). As critical as it is for leaders to develop contextually viable solutions, they must also be able to motivate others to do the same, which frequently necessitates the use of sophisticated social skills. In this context, social skills encompass, not only traditional abilities such as persuasion and bargaining, but also abilities such as social judgement and decision-making, which enable leaders to adapt to others and develop consensus around a goal or vision (Mumford et al., 2000). Hence, this skills-based model to leadership proposes three important skills:

- creative problem-solving;
- solution construction; and
- social judgement skills.

Another skills-based model by Katz (2009) focused on the skills required by leaders at different organisational levels and were broadly categorised as (1) Cognitive skills; (2) Technical Skills; (3) Interpersonal skills; and (4) Conceptual Skills.

- **Cognitive skills:** They are the basic foundation of the leadership skills requirements and are the abilities associated with basic cognitive capacities, such as gathering, processing, and disseminating information (Zaccaro, 2001). These skills include oral communication for effectively conveying information (such as what needs to be accomplished and why), active listening skills for comprehending and questioning appropriately in order to achieve a complete understanding, written communication skills for effectively communicating specific messages, and reading comprehension skills for comprehending voluminous and complex written information (Mumford et al., 2007).
- **Technical skills:** These skills encompass knowledge of an organisation's operations, structure, and norms; competency in specific activities; and a working knowledge of the methods, processes, and equipment utilised by organisational units (Katz, 2009).

Technical skills can be learned in a variety of ways such as through formal education, or on-the-job training and experience. Katz (2009) noted that technical abilities are critical for supervisory and middle management leaders, but less so for senior leaders and those in top management roles.

- **Interpersonal skills:** While technical skills require interaction with materials, interpersonal or human skills require interaction with people. Interpersonal skills enable leaders to collaborate with subordinates, peers, and superiors, as well as constituents and collaborators (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Zaccaro, 2001). Interpersonal skills involve awareness of others' reactions and understanding of why they react the way they do (Katz, 2009). One critical component of the interpersonal skill set is empathy – the capacity to comprehend another person's values, motivations, and feelings (Katz, 2009; Zaccaro, 2001). As a leader, the ability to choose an acceptable influence approach is contingent upon the understanding of what their followers desire and how they view a situation (Bass & Bass, 2008). Leaders who are always monitoring their own conduct gain a greater understanding of their own behaviour and how it affects their followers (Katz, 2009). Leaders with good interpersonal skills foster group cooperation, encourage the pursuit of common goals, and are adept at influencing and managing their audience's perceptions (Bass & Bass, 2008; Katz, 2009; Northouse, 2019; Zaccaro, 2001).
- **Conceptual skills:** Just as technical skills require interaction with material things and interpersonal skills require interaction with people, conceptual skills require interaction with ideas and concepts. Conceptual skills encompass a range of attributes, such as judgement, intuition, creativity, and foresight (Katz, 2009). Certain conceptual skills, such as inductive or deductive reasoning, logical reasoning, analytical ability, and concept generation, are required in order to adopt a systems perspective to comprehend complexity, cope with ambiguity, and exert influence within the organisation (Yukl & Gardner, 2019). These skills are required at the higher levels of leadership to understand how their organisations operate and where the organisations should be going (Katz, 2009). Effective strategic planning – a critical function in determining an organisation's future, particularly during economically challenging times, requires leaders to be able to forecast the future based on a critical analysis of present trends (Katz, 2009; Northouse, 2019; Yukl & Gardner, 2019). Leaders must be able to manage a diverse range of constituents and intricate connections. They must grasp how various

organisational components interact and how changes in one area may have an effect on elements in other areas (Bass & Bass, 2008; Zaccaro, 2001). Without excellent conceptual skills, senior leaders risk jeopardising the entire organisation (Katz, 2009).

While reviewing the literature on leadership competencies – traits, behaviours, styles and skills – it was observed that all of these are interlinked and cannot be viewed in isolation from each other.

2. Community Organisations

2.1 The nature of community organisations

Community organisations build mechanisms to address a community's needs and objectives, and in doing so, they develop and encourage collaborative and cooperative attitudes in the community (Dann, 2022). According to a study done by the Centre for Social Impact (2019), community organisations are effective at forming networks and ties between local residents, groups, and private and non-profit organisations. These organisations play an important part in the process of empowering community assets because many people benefit from skills training and knowledge development provided by local organisations to their members. With the knowledge and skills gained by the members of the community, along with the culture of collaboration, these community organisations are successful in addressing the problems pertaining to social welfare within those communities (Coatham & Martinali, 2010). According to Alexander and Weiner (1998), these organisations prioritise values such as participation, due process, and community service and maintain that these organisations have a strong “collective conscience” that ensures that their ideals are upheld. The sole relationship between community members and their willingness to enhance their skills and resolve issues regarding income and social well-being has forever remained a big challenge for community organisations (Bird & Westley, 2011). Consequently, community organisations confront issues in terms of sustainability, in part because the obligation for driving these programmes rests with employees, trustees, and volunteers, who lack the requisite competencies to execute their functions (Dann, 2022). Furthermore, there has been relatively little research on the leadership competencies required in community organisations, which is the focus of this study. The next discussion will make this link by focusing on the role of leadership in these organisations.

2.2 Leadership in community organisations

Those in positions of leadership in the top and senior management team of community organisations are expected to demonstrate an appropriate natural propensity towards ethics, quality of life, compassion, camaraderie, and community welfare for both internal and external stakeholders (Lindeman, 2019; McMullin & Raggo, 2020). Owing to the voluntary nature of community organisations, the leadership structure is relatively decentralised, and employees do not view the organisation's leader in the traditional sense, nor do they expect the person who would normally be the chief executive officer to be in control (Lindeman, 2019). In line with this, Ghosh (2015) concludes that a strong and positive orientation towards welfare issues, as defined by benevolent leadership, can be deemed beneficial for leadership development in community organisations. Hudson and Rogan (2009) asserted that community organisations are most effective when their stakeholders share common beliefs and assumptions about the organisation's mission and operating style. Dann (2022) claimed that managing a community organisation is more challenging since leaders are expected to be competent in their work while also standing up for the organisation's beliefs and objectives. Additionally, managing or leading a community organisation may be challenging because a portion of the workforce is employed while others labour freely, resulting in difficult-to-manage disputes. Clearly, the pace of social, economic, and technological change compels community organisation leaders, regardless of size or mission, to modify their mentality and habits. Taliento and Silverman (2005) interviewed leaders from both community organisations and businesses, and concluded that it is more difficult to succeed in the non-profit sector because the goals are more difficult to achieve and measure since they are typically behavioural in nature. While the demand for community organisations is growing, it is a matter of concern that leadership skills are dwindling (Hudson & Rogan, 2009). Due to the increasing unavailability of managers and leaders, many workers in community organisations are propelled into managerial and leadership roles without the appropriate expertise and abilities. Many current community organisation leaders recognise their leadership limitations and seek new approaches and leadership skills to help them expand their organisation's ability in areas such as restructuring and organisational change, resource development, collaboration and integrative services, technology and decision-making tools, diversity and inclusion, and evidence-informed practises (Bird & Westley, 2011; Dann, 2022; Hopkins et al., 2014). Despite this, few community organisations provide in-house leadership training for their employees, and, while the number of community leadership degree and training programmes has grown in recent

years, leadership development for not-for-profit organisations has lagged behind (Hopkins et al., 2014). For instance, despite the critical need for community leadership, related degree programmes are lagging in their approach to both management and leadership education, resulting in an insufficient number of social and community workers being prepared to become future administrators or leaders (Dann, 2022; Henley, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2014).

While some data indicate that progress has been achieved in broadly identifying leadership competencies for community organisations, there is still ambiguity around the most suited specific competencies (Centre for Social Impact, 2019; Dann, 2022; Henley, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2014, Schmid, 2009), especially in the uncertainties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. The significance of these leadership competencies becomes crucial in the changing work environment, given the challenges and opportunities that it brings.

3: The changing work environment

The changing work environment constitutes a collection of interdependent, disruptive forces, such as digitisation and globalisation, pandemics and conflicts between nations, that are transforming the nature of work, workforces, and workplaces (Meehan & Watson, 2021; Nankervis et al., 2020). It is easy to become distracted by the wide range of forecasts and scenarios generated by academic research, consulting reports, and government and industry statements about the changing work environment, but one thing appears to be abundantly clear: we are entering an unprecedented period of workplace disruption, both in speed and impact (Nankervis et al., 2020). Economic realities imposed by COVID-19 compelled leaders to expedite their digital transformation efforts or completely refocus their organisations on meeting technological disruptions (Meehan & Watson, 2021). While it is critical to understand the long-term net impact of technology on jobs, the process of disruption and turbulence in the workplace along that perilous journey is of significant concern to future managers and leaders (Morgan, 2020). Leaders are tasked with the responsibility of selecting which technologies to employ and comprehending how these technologies alter the nature of specific positions inside the organisation (Bolden & O'Regan, 2016). These disruptions compelled the leaders to get trained as well as integrate the new technologies into the system without delays and errors, which required processing cognitively complex and amorphous information, posing an incomprehensible level of challenges (Morgan, 2020; Zeike et al., 2019). Transitioning to offsite work exposed not only role gaps, but also cultural barriers, communication, and

infrastructure. Organisations are ensuring that their physical environment aligns with the aims of the people who work there. Cubicle configurations used prior to the pandemic may become obsolete, allowing space for areas of collaboration, creativity, and community-building (Bolden & O'Regan, 2016).

Leaders are expected to think creatively about distributed and remote workflow, communicate with all employees on a regular basis, provide empathy and support from a distance, and address internal and external demands linked to diversity and inclusion (Antonacopoulou & Georgiadou, 2021; Kochan & Dyer, 2021). Leaders are now struggling to strike a balance between organisational and team priorities, and the individual requirements of their team members (Meehan & Watson, 2021). Employees demand certainty about future work arrangements, and it is up to organisational leaders to map the course for managers and employees. Leaders are also faced with the challenge of attracting and retaining personnel who are dissatisfied, especially in the wake of “the great resignation” (Sull et al., 2022). Organisations must develop significantly more sophisticated human resource and leadership strategies for systematically attracting the right mix of employees, followed by a career-long journey of renewal that increases the chance that these employees will remain engaged in their work and proficient in their skills, even as the workplace demands evolve rapidly (Kochan & Dyer, 2021). Due to the complexity of today’s digitalised environment, traditional leadership approaches no longer work; leading, mentoring, and managing personnel in this era of expanding human-machine partnerships require new understandings of leadership competencies (Antonacopoulou & Georgiadou, 2021; Kochan & Dyer, 2021; Morgan, 2020).

The lack of clarity around specific leadership competencies required of future leaders in the changing work environment is the knowledge gap identified after the literature review. This is illustrated in Figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1: Core concepts and focus of the study

The intersection of the three circles is represented by point 'a', which is the focus of this study. Point 'a' denotes the specific leadership competencies – traits, behaviours, styles and skills that the future community organisation leaders will require to navigate through the challenges of the changing work environment. The next chapter will present the methodology to investigate these knowledge gaps.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview of the chapter

This chapter outlines various methodological decisions related to the project on identifying the leadership competencies required of future leaders in community organisations. The researcher's ontological and epistemological position, and the research design will be discussed. I also elaborate upon the sampling and participant selection strategy for the community organization leaders participating in this research. This is followed by a discussion on the instrument and a plan for data collection, before the method of data analysis and ethical considerations relevant to this study are discussed.

1. Ontology and epistemology

As observed in the previous chapter, the range of perspectives on leadership and leadership competencies highlights that reality, or the nature of reality around leadership, is not absolute. "There are almost as many distinct definitions of leadership as there are people who have sought to define the term" (Stogdill, 1974, p. 259). Also, the evolving nature of leadership indicates that leadership is a social construct rather than a scientific phenomenon (Harrison, 2018). The knowledge about leadership has developed over centuries and within the framework of human interaction, which serves as the foundation for conducting this research. Correspondingly, I have chosen a constructivist research paradigm congruent with my beliefs about the nature of reality and the objective of this research. According to the constructivist worldview, people/subjects actively construct the meaning of new knowledge in light of their prior experiences, knowledge, attitudes, and values (Given, 2008). Therefore, the new challenges of the changing work environment in the context of community organisations require exploring new knowledge of leadership competencies.

Deriving from the works of Cohen et al. (2018) on interpretivist epistemology, this study employs and embraces constructivism and tends to place a premium on how individuals understand the world. According to the interpretivist viewpoint, knowledge is contingent on human perception and is never devoid of individual factors such as beliefs and attitudes (Creswell, 2009). The rationale for employing the use of this particular method is that it helps to understand the perceptions and views of community organisation leaders around the

challenges or opportunities posed by their changing work environment. As the individual and organisational context of every community organisation leader is unique in their understanding of leadership competencies, the interpretivist epistemology helps to determine their particular interpretation of the subject. Consequently, an epistemological viewpoint for research that offers flexibility and an openness to discovery was essential to this work. Accommodating these, the interpretivist epistemology presumes multiple realities and views, laying significance on the research participants' unique perspectives and attitudes within their context as suggested by Given (2008).

2. Qualitative approach

Within an interpretivist epistemology, qualitative enquiry was the most appropriate research approach for this study since it allowed for exploring each participant's experiences and personal knowledge about their perspectives on leadership competencies for future leaders. Qualitative research generates holistic understandings of the rich, unique, and typically unstructured, non-numerical data by engaging in naturalistic interactions with research participants in a natural setting. According to Klenke et al. (2016), a qualitative approach to the study of leadership may be fruitful not only because the participant's perspective is the central focus, but also because it may bring to the surface issues and topics that are important but are omitted by relying on the researcher as the source of what is relevant. The challenges or opportunities of the changing work environment that community organisation leaders face, as well as them exercising their leadership, are unique and relevant to their context. It would not have been as effective to explore leadership competencies for future leaders without gaining qualitative insights into first-hand information through unstructured or semi-structured personal interactions, which could not fully be achieved through quantitative tools or empirical testing. Alignment between the research approach's underlying belief system, the research question, and the research approach itself is a necessary condition for conducting qualitative research (Given, 2008). Correspondingly, the central theme of this study's research question, critical leadership competencies required of future leaders, seeks to explore, instead of explaining a cause-effect relationship or establishing any comparison between variables. A qualitative approach is predicated on the notion that individuals are best equipped to describe their own experiences and situations. Researchers strive to understand how participants make meaning of their own behaviour and the norms that govern their actions by observing them and listening to their descriptions (Creswell, 2009; Given, 2008). Researchers gain access to their

social reality by taking into account their informants' objectives and motives. In this study, the personal knowledge and subjective reality the community organisation leaders reported were probed with the help of the above-stated research methods. Given the evolving nature of leadership and the subjective reality of every community organisation leader, this study only seeks to develop an insight into the leadership competencies required of future leaders, and not to provide any conclusive explanations. Therefore, an exploratory qualitative research design was the most appropriate method for acquiring pertinent background information (Saunders et al., 2011; Thomas, 2020). It was deemed necessary to emphasise the research participants' perspectives, experiences and interpretations when conducting this study.

3. Participants

Generally, participants are defined as individuals or groups that consent to participate in a research procedure (Given, 2008). The participants in this research were required to be subjects with a considerable amount of leadership experience (>2 years), working in community organisations based in New Zealand. Their experience is defined by their exposure to leadership roles in one or more organisations and different settings.

3.1 Sampling and recruitment

Sampling in qualitative research is the process of identifying data sources referred to as *population*. Samples of participants are selected from available data sources to address the research objectives (Cohen et al., 2018). The population i.e., the community organisation leaders are spread across New Zealand and are difficult to access in their entirety. Thus, the logical step is to select members from the population who will be included in the sample as participants. Recruitment, in qualitative research, refers to the process by which the researcher invites participants to take part in the study (Creswell, 2009). A well-designed sampling approach and recruitment strategy will aid in maximising discovery and understanding of the phenomena being studied. However, there was no readily available list of community organisation leaders to be invited to participate in this research. Also, considering the objective of the study, i.e., to explore the leadership competencies required of future leaders of community organisations, a random selection of participants is inappropriate, since only experienced community organisation leaders qualify as participants. Thus, given the scope, time constraints and difficulty in locating participants who meet the eligibility criteria, a non-probability sampling technique was best suited for this study (Given, 2008). It is a sampling

strategy in which the researcher selects samples based on their subjective judgement rather than random selection, which is most useful in exploratory studies (Creswell, 2009). For this study, the best-suited non-probability sampling strategy was purposive sampling.

Targeted or purposive sampling is an effective method for pursuing purposive sampling goals when locating individuals of the population relies on a limited pool of initial informants or well-situated people to assist with identifying more participants who fulfil the study's eligibility criteria (Given, 2008). For this study, the well-situated person was the programme leader of a community leadership programme at the University of Auckland, who shared the advertisement and the participant information sheet (wording approved by the University of Auckland's Ethics Committee) via direct email to the community leaders in his professional network.

3.2 Participant selection

Nine community organisation leaders who responded to the invitation and provided consent to participate were interviewed (discussed in the next section). In line with Whiting's (2008) recommendation to find a "good informant" to ensure that the participant profile is compliant with the aim of this study, screening questions were asked before confirming participation to ensure that:

1. potential participants were currently working for a community organisation; and
2. that they had at least two years' experience as a community leader to ensure adequate experience.

As a result, the participation of experienced community organisation leaders from a spectrum of organisations involved in different areas of social welfare captured diverse views and made sure that the findings are rich, unbiased and reliable (Given, 2008; Patton, 2014). The participants' profile are as follows:

1. six women and three men;
2. two leaders with more than 20 years, three leaders with 10 years, two leaders with 5 years and two leaders with 2 years of experience of working in community organisations across different fields.

The profile of participants will be covered in the findings chapter.

4. Data Collection

Considering the distinct nature of this research, data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth personal interviews. These lasted for one hour on average and were audio-recorded. The semi-structured interview is a qualitative data-collection strategy in which the researcher asks informants a sequence of predetermined (but open-ended) questions, and exerts greater control over the discussion's subjects while allowing for more spontaneous responses and narratives from the respondent (Given, 2008). As suggested by Patton (2014), a few interview questions were prepared in advance, utilising open-ended questions and generic language, in order to elicit detailed information about the research participant's perceptions, experiences, and knowledge regarding the research question. An interview guide (see Appendix B) with carefully worded questions was developed to ensure that the interview remained centred around the research question and the phenomenon under study (Given, 2008).

In-depth interviews elicited information on each participant's perceptions of leadership and leadership competencies for future leaders of community organisations. After the completion of all interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were also shared with the participants upon their request for checking before the commencement of data analysis.

One major challenge for conducting these interviews was the COVID-19 pandemic. This did not allow for in-person interviews. Hence, the interviews were conducted online via Zoom. Johnson et al. (2021) argued that, compared to in-person interviews, online interviews yield less rich information. They observed that online interviews have lesser rounds of turn-taking and, as a result, a lower word count. This was overcome by a higher degree of engagement by the researcher through frequent probes and follow-up questions.

5. Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is defined as the process of systematically searching and organising interview transcripts, observation notes, and other materials accumulated by the researcher in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon by identifying significant patterns and consequently building a logical chain of evidence (Cohen et al., 2018; Patton, 2014). For this study, thematic analysis was used to analyse the outcome

of the semi-structured interviews. It is a data reduction and analysis approach that involves segmenting, categorising, summarising, and reconstructing interview transcripts in a way that captures the key concepts (Given, 2008). A distinctive feature of thematic analysis is that it is not bound to a particular paradigmatic orientation, and is adaptable to various theoretical and epistemological frameworks and to a wide range of study questions, formats, and sample sizes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Many researchers have written descriptions and recommendations on conducting different forms of thematic analysis. However, this study adopts the method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), as it has become the most extensively used method in the qualitative literature (Lochmiller, 2021). Their method consists of six steps that are recursive instead of linear, which means that subsequent steps may prompt the researcher to revisit earlier steps in light of new data or emerging themes that require additional enquiry.

The following six steps of thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) were used in this study:

1. Familiarising myself with the data: The first step was to get familiar with the entire number of transcripts which entailed repeated and active reading. The transcripts were saved as Microsoft Word files and uploaded to NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. It was tempting to begin coding transcripts immediately and search for patterns, but familiarising myself with the complete transcripts first gave an invaluable orientation to the raw data and provided a foundation for all subsequent steps (Lochmiller, 2021).
2. Generating initial codes: Nowell et al. (2017) described code as the smallest segment, or element, of raw data that can be meaningfully assessed in relation to a phenomenon. It helps to organise data at a granular level. From the transcripts, the potentially interesting phrases were highlighted using NVivo software's allocate to code function, which allowed me to allocate the phrases to the initial categories – challenges of the changing work environment, competencies needed, and strategies for developing competencies (Woolf & Silver, 2018). Identifying these categories and the form their codes took (words and phrases) was the first major step toward sorting data and defining the coding framework (Given, 2008). These categories were subject to further refinement after continuous re-reading. Once the coding framework was defined, the phrases from the transcripts were allocated to the initial codes. They were sufficiently

demarcated so that they do not overlap with other codes and fitted logically within the framework.

3. Searching for the themes: This step entailed examining codes and collated categories in order to identify potentially significant themes. Themes are the characteristics of participants' narratives that describe certain perceptions and experiences that are pertinent to the research question (Given, 2008). Through inductive analysis whereby comparing, combining, and analysing how codes related to one another, themes were constructed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some initial codes went on to form main themes while some formed sub-themes. This step ended with the identification and construction of potentially relevant themes, sub-themes and some extracts of data that were coded against them. Nothing was discarded at this step of data analysis.
4. Reviewing themes: This step has been described as a "two-level analytical process" by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first level of analysis was about ascertaining that relevant codes and data extracts were placed within each theme, as well as ensuring that themes were distinct enough to merit separation and data within each theme was coherent. Once the coherence was established, a thematic map through pen and paper was made to visualise the relationship between themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Memos were maintained to capture the thought process during this step and the decisions made regarding the identification, construction and modification of themes. As highlighted by Nowell et al. (2017), these memos helped make connections between themes and also created an audit trail ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings (Patton, 2014). In the second level, the entire transcripts were re-read to re-examine the themes and subsequently re-coded for additional data under the modified and newly identified themes. Consequently, the thematic map was also revised.
5. Defining and naming themes: After refining the thematic map, this step was about further defining and naming each theme in the NVivo software, as well as describing its relevance to the research question. It was critical not to attempt to do too much with a theme or to make it too diversified and complex by revisiting the collated data extracts for each theme and structuring them into a logical and internally consistent account with a supporting narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Importantly, the names of the themes were also reviewed to ensure they were brief as well as sufficiently descriptive.
6. Producing the report: The last step entailed composing the final analysis. The following discussion chapter deepened the analysis by connecting the themes to wider topics and

discussing the implications of the findings. There were both collective and individual themes that emerged from the analysis. One or two participants had some aspects of the experiences that were unique to them and varied from others. These unique experiences accounted for individual themes whereas collective themes occurred across all participants (Patton, 2014). Exploring the deeper meaning of these themes allowed for interpretive analysis and some generalisation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis described participants' perspectives on leadership competencies for future leaders of community organisations using both narrative descriptions and representative data extracts (such as direct quotations from participants), thereby answering the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

6. Ethical Considerations

This study respects the principles of partnership, participation and protection that underpin the relationship between the university and Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The ethics approval was sought from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) and was received on the 18th of November 2021 for a period of two years, under the reference number 024305 (See Appendix A). This study also adheres to the principles of autonomy and non-maleficence (Macfarlane, 2009; Orb et al., 2001).

The principles of autonomy and anonymity were honoured through informed consent as suggested by Macfarlane (2009). The Participant Information Sheet (PIS)(See Appendix C) that was shared prior to their consent to participate, outlined information pertaining to this research including anonymity, security of data and their right to withdraw. Consent Forms (See Appendix D) with names and signatures were collected before conducting interviews. Participants were also given the option to edit the interview transcripts. The principle of non-maleficence which means protecting participants from any harm was honoured by ensuring that any information shared by the participants is non-traceable and anonymous (Cohen et al., 2018; Macfarlane, 2009). Pseudonyms were used in the findings and all the responses mentioned in the thesis were non-identifiable.

7. Limitations

Considering the sample size and number of participants, I cannot make generalisations about leadership competencies for community organisations in New Zealand. That is not the

intention of a qualitative study though, so the applicability of these findings must be considered in this context. Also, considering the short time frame of this study and the limited time with the participants, responses to the interview questions were necessarily limited. For example, the challenges of the changing work environment mentioned by the participants and the question on competencies could not focus on challenges particular to each organisation. The responses were therefore largely generic. Future research with more substantial time and access to participants in different contexts can produce more nuanced findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

Overview of the chapter

This chapter presents the findings from the data collection and analysis processes as outlined in the previous chapter. Participants' responses within the thematic framework are presented. The major and subordinate themes include supporting quotes from the transcripts.

1. Introduction

The analysis of interview transcripts generated 109 initial codes. Based on the interview questions, these codes were first arranged into three categories to create a coding framework. Each participant was asked four interview questions along with follow-up questions to fill gaps and capture data addressing the research question. The interview questions and the corresponding categories will be discussed later in the chapter. The 109 initial codes were then re-examined to find similarities and were subsequently merged. Once the codes were refined, potential themes were identified through inductive analysis. Codes were then merged to form major and subordinate themes. The three categories of the coding framework then became the thematic framework. As illustrated in Table 1, a total of 10 major themes were identified with two to three subordinate themes per major theme. They are presented in the order of their frequency in responses.

Table 1. Thematic Summary of the Findings

Thematic Framework	Major Themes	Frequency	Subordinate Themes
Challenges in the changing work environment	Engagement	8	Within the organisation Outside of organisation
	Resources	7	Finance Staffing Technology

	Governance	6	Operational issues Legislative and societal barriers Conflict
Competencies required of future leaders	Skills	9	Conceptual Interpersonal Technical
	Behaviours	7	Supporting staff and giving opportunities Receptive to feedback Flexibility in situations
	Traits	6	Able to relate to others Able to regulate emotions Able to accept diversity
	Styles	6	Servant Leadership Authentic Leadership
Actions for Developing Leadership Competencies	Tertiary education	7	Content and Structure Programme Leaders
	Organizational Strategies	6	On the job experience In-house learning

	Self-development	4	Self-study Observing and volunteering
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These major and subordinate themes in the thematic framework will now be discussed in the following sections. All references made to participants use pseudonyms, and no identifiable information is shared. The table below highlights the participant profile.

Table 2. Participant Profile

Name	Profile	Years of experience
Cynthia	Works as a community engagement advisor in an educational institute.	Two
Derek	A leader in a community organisation working for LGBTQ rights.	Ten+
Ethan	A general manager at a charitable trust in New Zealand and had previously worked in Asia for 20 years.	Twenty+
Lucy	A manager for an organisation that provides disability support services.	Six
Megan	A quality manager in a community organisation working for children.	Ten+
Sarah	A leader at an organisation that supports tertiary students.	Two
Sean	A member of a senior leadership team at a charitable organisation giving healthcare services to children, as well as providing grants for similar projects.	Twenty+
Tracy	A manager for a community organisation providing career support.	Ten+
Vanessa	A financial well-being coach for low-income earners.	Five

2. Challenges of the changing work environment

The changing work environment is the context of this leadership study, and the views of the participants around it were critical before exploring their perspectives on leadership

competencies required of future leaders. The first interview question, “*What challenges do the community organisation leaders face in the changing work environment?*”, was aimed at gathering responses regarding the same. Some participants wanted clarity on the reference to the changing work environment. This was addressed by informing them about the key points highlighted in the first and the third chapters, such as the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and technological advancements. The participants then shared various views and experiences depending on their individual and organisational contexts. The analysis of their responses created three major themes – engagement, technology and governance.

2.1 Engagement

The participants mentioned the issues they faced when it came to engaging with different entities and stakeholders. The responses were varied. Some of them felt disconnected with their own team members due to the work-from-home arrangements, while some could not communicate or engage with the target audience of their welfare schemes and programmes. Some faced issues in connecting and establishing a relationship with both – internal and external – stakeholders. All of these responses were clubbed together under “engagement” as one major theme, whereas “within the organisation” and “outside of organisation” were two subordinate themes.

2.1.1 Within the organisation

Here the participants highlighted how the changing work environment impacted their engagement within the organisation. They spoke about the problems arising out of being disconnected and not being able to share the same working space. Ethan shared in detail how the internal team dynamic changed for him during COVID-19 and how the “personal touch” and “human bond” were missing:

We don't get together as a team as often, and always have to rely on zoom. So we lost that kind of bonding, you know, that human bonding, that personal touch that we used to have before the COVID-19. You know, like besides working in the office, you will have meetings, catch-up after work, during break time and so on. We don't have that anymore. So, you feel like you are more cut off from your team members.

Cynthia, echoed the same sentiment around feeling “disconnected” from the team:

I think we particularly found it difficult to manage the disconnect that the new working environment kind of brought about. There's an interpersonal connection in-person, like when you're physically there. I think it probably was quite difficult to navigate being disconnected from the people that you're working with, the people that you're trying to nurture.

Sarah too joined the chorus:

I think that when it comes down to the stuff that makes our souls happy is being together and spending, time over food – lunch, like that kind of stuff. You get separated from being able to discuss things in person, so I think that that is changing.

This also resonated with Sean, who added that despite feeling disconnected, “zoom fatigue” had also set in and how that reminded him of being productive while working together in one office space:

So, we are working remotely a lot, and that puts a challenge, I think, as leaders on our well-being. You are finding a lot of zoom fatigue, a lot of exhaustion, and, an additional lack of connection, as opposed to what you get in an office environment. We're only just kind of re-engaging in that space and starting to be reminded of how productive you can be when you're together and how quickly you can resolve the problems as they emerge by being in the same space.

Participants also focused on the engagement challenges with external stakeholders. However, they predicted similar future challenges and established the need to develop skills that will enable them to engage with all stakeholders and achieve the desired impact. Those responses will be mentioned in the later sections.

2.1.2 Outside of organisation

Tracy highlights the struggle she and her organisation has to go through in reconnecting after being “cut-off” from the community they serve:

A lot of those relationships were kind of severed because of COVID-19, and a lot of them were just cut off completely. You need to be re-establishing the connections. So yeah, just starting back up, getting, moving again within the community, making the connections with the people, is a challenge for leaders at this point in community.

This was echoed by Lucy too, who went on to add that how she was unable to “coach” her staff on the job because a lot of them contracted COVID-19, which ultimately restricted them from engaging with the community and providing quality initiatives:

I have about 25 support workers whom I manage and work with them, coaching them. Being unable to see the problems with the people in our services and how we can address those, and not being able to go in at that time was really challenging. We have many people contracting covid in our services, and then they go into quarantine, so it makes it harder to give support as a community organization to the people we serve in the community. Since we can't physically go in and do things the way we used to, lots of our quality initiatives have been put on hold.

Besides the difficulty in reconnecting with the community and not being able to provide quality services due to COVID-19, some participants mentioned encountering push-back from the community in other forms. Derek spoke about the difficulty in engaging with the community and navigating conversations around vaccine mandates and health issues. He also mentioned dealing with negative mindsets such as racism and homophobia, as well as refusal to accept any help:

In New Zealand, we're not very good at acknowledging tough conversations and how to approach them. Particularly around vaccine mandates and things like that, which is challenging, but then more post-pandemic when we start to re-engage with the community. Then there are structural barriers where people will stop you because of their own, in this case, homophobia, transphobia, but, you know, in many other cases, racism. We also come across people actively denying that they need help. That may be the third kind of barrier when people don't want to connect, even though you know that there's something you could offer them that would help them to be happier.

Talking on similar lines, Vanessa discussed various challenges the leaders from her organisation faced. The first issue she spoke about was not being able to reach the right audience for their schemes. She mentioned how the figures around low-income data of all the communities was not matching with the profile of people availing their services:

If you look at the statistics on financial hardship and poverty in New Zealand, it is the highest among Pacifica and Māori communities. And then I see that most of our clients in New Zealand are European, second Māori and third is the Pacifica community. So that got me to

question, are we actually filling up the gap? Is there a better way of doing it? Because [it] looks like the channels are not covering our clients that are in need.

Being from the indigenous community herself, she observed that the reason for such disengagement was the fact that the channels of communication were phone and email only. The prospective recipients from the indigenous communities were not equipped to send emails, and it was culturally inappropriate on the part of her organisation to discuss the issues of financial well-being over the phone:

They're not confident with emails, and it's not only about computer literacy, but it's also the nature of the person. Māori and Pacifica people don't open up to everyone unless they trust you. And obviously, money is not a very popular topic that you talk about openly within the culture. And when you're talking to a stranger over the phone, who is asking for your financial information, to them, it's like too personal. It's culturally not appropriate.

When discussing the challenges of the changing work environment, eight participants spoke about various issues they faced regarding engagement within their contexts. They ranged from feeling disconnected because of COVID-19, to not being able to engage because of the collective mindset. All the above responses were recorded under one major theme. According to them, future leaders, too, will have to deal with these disruptions and obstacles, and they will have to be competent to manage these contingencies. They highlighted certain competencies which are presented in the later sections. The next most highlighted challenge was around managing resources.

2.2 Resources

The participants mentioned several challenges related to money and managing personnel as well as issues related to coping with technology. They faced these challenges in different contexts and considered them an impediment in their leadership. These responses informed resources as a major theme, and finance, staffing and technology as subordinate themes.

2.2.1 Finance

Some participants spoke about the difficulties in obtaining funds for their projects, while some mentioned their issues with pay differences and utility of funds. These money-related responses were merged under one subordinate theme of finance.

Sean talked about the challenge he faced with fundraising, referring to the overall state of the economy which is compelling the high-net-worth donors to withdraw their support from some of the initiatives Sean's organisation was undertaking:

We've had other challenges around the economic climate, I guess, and how that's impacted our fundraising. You know, some of our high-net-worth donors have been supplementing what the government should be doing in terms of providing services to the community. They've now been withdrawing their support in some areas.

Echoing the same sentiment around the financial situation affected by COVID-19 and its impact on funding, Ethan said how difficult it was to be sustainable now:

And then the third thing is about the financial situation during the process of the COVID-19. It's not as easy to get funding as before. So it is a difficult situation of how we could figure out ways to fund the programs. Like getting fundings for doing new programs and at the same time being sustainable. I think that I see as a big challenge.

Vanessa raised concerns regarding fundraising as well, but mentioned the lack of ability of her organisation's leaders to procure funds for their projects:

Another challenge would be the funding bit of it. While they have the heart to serve the people, they don't know how to approach, you know, in terms of reporting in terms of applying for funds and all that.

Lucy too, shared the same concern: *"funding is constantly a challenge when it comes to people we support and making sure that we are securing the right funding for them"*. This was also endorsed by Tracy who stressed the extra time being spent by leaders to secure the necessary funding: *"a lot of time is spent thinking about funding and, you know, it's hard to get the work done as well as think about the funding"*.

Megan talked about other financial issues like pay-gaps in the whole sector and how her organisation cannot cope with it:

Same role in the government department gets paid trivial amount, compared to the sector, that's another real problem. And then we've got that challenge as well that we can't compete with what Oranga Tamariki for example, is paying for their social workers because we don't have that money to pay for it.

She also mentioned the need for and importance of external training and professional development, but also the inability of the organisation to bear the training costs:

External training I think is really required but there's always a challenge of course, who's going to pay for that? I think professional development is key as well, but there's always a challenge on, you know, the costs for those kinds of courses that you could take because the majority of the courses that are of good quality are really expensive. I just looked into something for myself the other day, and it was about 10,000 grand. My agency is never going to pay for it. There are good programs out there but managing the costs is a challenge.

Out of all the money-related issues faced by the community organisation leaders, funding dominated the conversation. The next big resource-related challenge was staffing.

2.2.2 Staffing

Some of the issues like staff shortages, finding the right people with the right skills, employee retention and recruitment that came up in the discussion were clubbed together under staffing. There was an overlap with technology and governance, but the broad nature of the subject demanded a separate theme.

Lucy spoke about the functional issues her organisation was facing because not enough people were joining the workforce, making it a challenge to recruit people: *“something that's been quite challenging for us is recruitment, as a result, less people are coming into the workforce”*. Derek also endorsed this by pointing out: *“what I think is changing post-pandemic is the ability to recruit the right people with skills”*.

Building on this, Megan talked about the staff shortages and a position that has been vacant for more than 8 months because her organisation couldn't find the right candidate for the job. Besides that, she mentioned the extra workload this brought and created a health issue.

She also stressed the lack of relevant experience among the candidates who applied for the leadership roles in her organisation:

I think another problem really is staff shortages. We've been advertising for one year, and one of my positions for my team is vacant for over eight months or something, so it's really hard to find skilled people. Since you have fewer staff to do the work, you need to find other resources in the team so your team might be overloaded and overworked. That's a big problem because it's not healthy and it's not safe as well.

Tracy highlighted the issue around staff retention and how even finding volunteers is difficult during COVID-19 times: “*what's current with me at the moment is staffing. Staff are moving because there's opportunities out there. We've lost a lot of our volunteers too during the COVID period.*” Sean, however, spoke about the engagement scores his organisation has developed which indicated employee retention problems and that the staff were quitting for new jobs. He also mentioned the importance of creating the right culture to retain staff:

We've seen a great, rather much greater flight risk in terms of our engagement scores. We know for certain that a lot more staff are looking for new jobs. That's what our engagement scores are telling us. That's somewhat not surprising as the border is open. So, staff retention is a big thing and creating the right culture to retain staff is the challenge.

Some of the participants who mentioned staff-related issues were talking in the context of technology, which was an equally important theme during the interviews.

2.2.3 Technology

During the interviews, references were made about digital applications and software like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet and others that facilitated work-from-home or remote working arrangements for leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic. The references were made to highlight concerns regarding the use of technology, how it affected the functioning of the organisation and impacted their leadership. While some participants spoke about the need to understand technology, others indicated how it failed to achieve its purpose, posing a different level of challenge altogether.

Sean highlighted the importance of technology in his work and how it is also an issue: “*the technology space is significant for me in my work, as well as a challenge. Since we are*

now in a hybrid working model and only require our staff to be in the office two days a week". Tracy resonated with Sean on this and talked about the struggle with using technology every day:

Technology is huge, especially at the moment, you know, the struggle is that it's just, there's so much of it. Like being able to understand technology, and use it effectively, that's been a challenge.

Derek pointed out the challenge of data privacy and security, and some specific instances of how that can get compromised if leaders are not well versed with technology and its usage:

You know, Microsoft Teams is fine. It's just the program you use and figure it out. But a lot of people needed more specific training to be able to use tools like that. Maintaining privacy of the client list or something like that, when you know you're sitting in a work building and that you don't share a PDF that's sitting on the wall. The indicators for people are not there around about I shouldn't be sharing this information.

Ethan too made a reference to the above-mentioned applications but was comparing it with the benefit of presenting in-person, and how that changed post-COVID:

We have to make use of technology with zoom, Microsoft teams, or Google Meet, whatever. for presentation. But before, you could have physical products, physical things that you show to the person. You could take that person to the location to show them, to demonstrate and explain what you mean to do. But doing that with technology, I think is a challenge after COVID.

Lucy, too, pointed out the success of in-person interactions and how technology failed in the middle of the pandemic, which brought into question their reliance on it:

When we have technology go down like we had, UKG workforce Kronos, went down in the middle of the pandemic, we were really stuffed, and it added a lot of extra time. So, being that reliant on technology has its hazards as well.

The above-mentioned issues and challenges around technology, staffing and finance overlap with governance. However, their implications on organisational growth as well as particular competencies required to manage them were the rationale behind creating separate

themes, as they also dominated the interviews. These challenges, as articulated by the participants and discussed in the following chapter, have significant future implications.

2.3 Governance

The responses to the question on challenges included operational issues, conflict, as well as some legislative and societal barriers. All these issues directly impacted on the overall governance of their respective organisations and thus, informed one major theme.

2.3.1 Operational issues

Participants spoke about a range of operational issues that included some elements of staffing, funding, training, use of technology, decision making as well as other problems involving adaptability and compatibility. These issues individually and collectively affected the organisation's operations and were identified as a challenge by the community organisation leaders.

Ethan highlighted how it was a challenge for him and other leaders to adapt to the new working norms enforced by the pandemic and simultaneously address the issues arising out of it, by equipping the staff with knowledge, directions, and solutions:

I think that one of the challenges for the leaders joining in these two to three years period, is that we ourselves have to adapt to the challenges. Then we have to find ways to equip our staff with knowledge, provide them with solution and lead them into a direction, with an aim to solve the functional issues.

Building on this notion of new working norms, Sean mentioned the pushback he witnessed in his organisation as the staff felt entitled to work from home: *“we've found that actually there's been a bit of a pushback from staff around returning to the office. They've developed a little bit of a sense of entitlement to be at home now”*. He went on to add that it became harder to keep oversight and fix accountability in such working arrangements: *“I think there's a dependency on a high trust arrangement with remote working. Ultimately, we have got roles that are difficult to have oversight of and keeping people accountable is harder”*.

Talking along similar lines, Megan mentioned the uncertainty COVID-19 brought into the functioning where juggling between working from home and office was a challenge:

You have to drag all the people with you as well, it might look that one day you are working from home and then the other day you have to adjust to the office environment. Again, you know the whole team is undergoing constant changes.

Managing these changes became a priority and was overwhelming for the leaders in her organisation. Lucy, too, referred to the operational issues taking precedence over the quality of life which also made decision-making a bit difficult:

We've had more of a focus on like kind of operational issues like covering shifts because people are getting sick and spend less time on the quality of life. I suppose stopping people from doing things, or doing things in certain ways, has kind of inhibited their quality of life, although has kept them like physically safe. So, I think that decision making is really challenging.

Derek too identified some issues with working remotely and difficulty in bringing uniformity regarding the same, where it was a challenge to convince some staff to come to the office as their work required them to be face-to-face:

... some people needed to be a lot more face to face. We can't treat everybody the same, because your job is computer-based which doesn't matter where you are. While your job relies on seeing clients, so you need to be here four days a week.

Managing these nuances became challenging for Derek, and he stressed the need for greater soft skills to manage these.

2.3.2 Legislative and societal barriers

Participants revealed that the challenges related to governance were also amplified by government policies and rules, as well as some socio-cultural issues. Working around these obstacles was a big challenge for the leaders in their individual as well as organisational contexts.

Sean revealed that his organisation being in healthcare for children has been working closely with Crown entities. This has put an obligation on his organisation to be structurally aligned with Crown mandates, particularly around health reforms. Managing this strategically whilst maintaining their own identity had been a challenge:

There are lots of challenges around working closely with crown organisations but not being a crown organisation. So, they often have clear mandates around how they're going to

be organizationally, or kind of structurally. And a lot of changes are going on in the health reforms at the moment, which is having a huge impact on my area of work. So, as a foundation, we are trying to see how we can align to it, or support that strategy, but recognize that we are also separate, and we must have our own identity.

Lucy also experienced snags related to government policies: *“there are some like legislative barriers that we have to, like, employing good staff. That's challenging”*. She also mentioned that the visa and wage policy impacted the inflow of talent in her organisation:

We have a lot of issues around visas to staff. There are certain requirements like they must get paid a certain amount. But they get paid minimum wage for it, and their sleepover hours don't get accounted for, which actually reduces the overall rate of pay for them. This impacts their visa.

Along similar lines, Megan talked about the problems her organisation faced regarding placements for her caregivers who were not from the indigenous communities as the government mandates changed: *“we're struggling to find placements for our non-Māori caregivers, because what we're seeing clearly is that Oranga Tamariki declines caregivers who aren't from the same culture”*. She also highlighted the domino effect of the policy changes and the uncertainties it brought for the organisations working in the same space:

Oranga Tamariki roles are on hold. They don't employ new people coming into the agency. All of their protocols policies and practices are changing, and that's going to have a flow-on effect for us as service providers who are getting paid from Oranga Tamariki and getting our contracts from them. You don't know what the service is going to look like in three months' time because Oranga Tamariki might go with a different provider instead of us. It's really uncertain at the moment.

Other than legislative issues, some of the social barriers were impacting the organisations. For instance, Derek revealed how, until recently, homophobia or transphobia in society was an impediment to getting funds: *“People who are opposed to LGBTQ made a big fuss about it, and then potentially the funders would have looked down on their team, and you wouldn't get the money”*. Talking about other issues, Lucy pointed out how the societal norms have changed, and some professions are not lucrative anymore: *“Perhaps our societal values are shifting, where being a nurse, a teacher and, a health worker used to be quite prized, but*

not anymore. Finance and marketing are kind of more valued professions”. She attributed the shortage of staff and other functional issues to these changing societal values:

I've been doing my research on work-life balance, and it looks the flexible working arrangements are really prized. I think for 80% of New Zealanders, that was one of the top priorities when they're searching for a job. So, this sector just doesn't allow for that. We have to manage an uncalled phone in case of emergencies. We also cover overnights, and early in the mornings, as well as weekends. So, I think a lot of people In New Zealand are just not willing to compromise on that.

It can clearly be observed from these accounts how such legislative and societal barriers collectively affect the governance of any organisation, and thus, were made a subordinate theme.

2.3.3 Conflict

The conflict between the different levels of leadership in an organisation was stated by a few participants. One of them was Derek, who talked about the friction between leaders and governing boards regarding various governance matters:

A clash between yourself as a leader and another leader or maybe the governing board of the organization, where they think they know how the services should be delivered or programs should be done, and what messaging needs to go out there.

Even though he made a case for what board member can bring to the organisation, he still believed that it is mostly the paid leaders who had a better grasp of things: *“Board members can bring a lot of valuable knowledge, but oftentimes they're only there one hour a week to be a governor; then you know the manager or the paid leader will have to have a much deeper understanding”*.

Sean, on the other hand, was more diplomatic when talking about the challenges that came with managing expectations of a board that spent a limited amount of time on governance matters but came with experience and reputation:

Certainly there can be some expectations that as leaders we should be doing better. But taking your board on that journey is a huge challenge. And there's actually a lot of complexity around it. The fact that those board members are voluntary, and they have quite significant

corporate profiles and reputational risk is very high for them as well. That's really a challenging area. He went on to mention the opportunity of co-governance this relationship with the board brought about for the leaders: *“and making the organization to transition or exploring kind of governance and co-governance models and things like that, would be interesting to look at”*.

These different challenges, ranging from engagement, staffing, technology, finance, and governance, elucidated by the participants, had future implications on the community organisations as well as the non-profit sector. Thus, it built the foundation or the context for the next question on the competencies needed.

3. Competencies required of future leaders

Building on the previous responses, the next interview question for the participants was: *“What do you see as the critical leadership competencies required to navigate through these challenges?”* The answers to this question were also varied and were subjected to their individual and organisational contexts. They spoke about the different leadership approaches that applied to their situations. Informed by the literature review, those responses were categorised under *Skills, Behaviours, Traits and Styles* as major themes.

3.1 Skills

The participants talked about a range of leadership skills such as business acumen, change management, intermediating, digital marketing, time management, and more. These responses were further categorised into *Conceptual, Interpersonal, and Technical* as subordinate themes.

3.1.1 Conceptual

Referring to the uncertainties of the changing world, Megan stressed on the importance of change management and how important it is for future leaders to manage that change in the organisation:

I think change management is a big component, so they need to be able to manage change because the agency is undergoing constant change. They need to be willing to adapt and go with the flow and then bring their team along as well. In terms of the changing world out there.

This was endorsed by Ethan who laid importance on gaining knowledge of this change. He said that managing the change was only possible if leaders are aware of the nuances of global trends and their impact locally: *“So like actually you do need to be more aware of the world situation, the changing geopolitics and how it is impacting your local location”*. He mentioned that the routine functions of the leader within an organisation are not divorced from global events, so relevant research and critical thinking were needed before executing any plan:

As a leader, you have to be aware of the factors that might affect you as a manager, or the CEO in an organization to execute the plan because of the geopolitical influence. You have to actually do more research to get information from different platforms to analyze a certain situation, and then not just rely on one source. So, as a good leader, you have to be more informed and be more critical and analytical in your thinking.

Another important conceptual skill talked about was supervision. Derek mentioned communicating once a month and discussing navigating challenges, and how good supervision plays a role in executing that: *“I’m talking to somebody once a month or once every two months just to discuss some of these challenges I’m having and how to navigate them and that supervision piece was really important”*. Megan spoke as well about the importance of supervision and how it is ignored in many organisations: *“You also need to have really good skills in terms of supervision, I think, because that’s a challenge as well in lots of agencies like ours and is ignored. The managers don’t have any kind of supervisory skills”*. Tracy, who is also a registered social worker, endorsed it too:

Supervision is a, a big one for me because I’m a registered social worker and I’m required to have supervision. So I feel lucky in a way that I’m actually forced by my profession to have supervision, because if I wasn’t required to have it, I might not choose to have it right. As a leader, definitely supervision is something that really builds the skills.

Vanessa highlighted the importance of being business-minded, with a reference to creativity and innovation to manage funding in non-profit organisations:

Future leaders have to [be] business minded as well. Because at the end of the day there’s funding involved, there’s money involved. And then there’s no creativity and innovation involved to grow and to expand because it’s not about growth and expansion for profit, because it’s a non-for-profit organisation, but it’s a growth and expansion to help more people, more people to attract.

These conceptual skills as per the participants' remarks were needed to handle the complex challenges they faced around managing resources and governance matters.

3.1.2 Interpersonal

The different interpersonal skills discussed by the participants were in reference to managing their functional relationships with other leaders, superiors, and subordinates as well as other, external stakeholders.

Derek spoke about the importance of interpersonal skills in building a consensus in the group around a decision: *“it is the interpersonal skills, and the ability to facilitate and lead a group of people through to a decision”*. Referring to these skills, he added how he thought a leader can avoid disharmony among the team members: *“I think by just talking to the team and getting their ideas as well as being really open with the team so there's not any dissatisfaction or disharmony between the team members”*.

Sean placed importance on interpersonal skills by talking about how leaders can build trust and a positive healthy relationship of the governing board with the organisational staff at all levels:

So playing an intermediary in terms of helping the boards connect with staff at all levels and build a collective sense that everyone has good intentions. I think, making and affirming the positives is important because a lot of negativity can brew between those groups.

He also maintained that managing expectations and fulfilling the expectations gap of all the stakeholders was critical to achieving success:

Donors and staff have more of a social kind of contract between the organizations and their expectations. So often it's, um, there's an expectation gap, for staff as well around their experience and what it will be like. So, managing that can be interesting.

Sean went on to add the importance of communication and the suppositions attached to it: *“Despite our best endeavors as a leadership team to overcommunicate to our staff, we're still told we're not communicating enough. Adding that as a skill, there's a huge expectation of being kept in the loop”*. This was also affirmed by Sarah who found communication to be a

critical skill: *“Not everyone has all the skills under their belt, but I think communication is a huge one for leaders”*.

Another major component of interpersonal skills that came up during the interviews was the ability to relate to other cultures or cultural competency. Tracy mentioned working with people from diverse cultures in the community and stressed the importance of being competent to do so: *“You know we’re getting a lot of different cultures within our community. So, working with diversity can be a challenge. I think as a competency that’s important, more important for us now”*. Vanessa, too, referred to the cultural diversity of the Auckland region and highlighted the rationale for cultural competency: *“One of the main characteristics, especially of Auckland is its multi-diverse multi-cultural nature. So, having cultural competency or understanding the different cultures, and coming up with a solution that is culturally appropriate because it’ll be more effective”*. Referring to this, Lucy shared the importance of cultural competency in building and maintaining healthy relationships with multiple stakeholders:

The ability to relate to other people from different cultures, different ages, and different socio-economic groups, I think that’s critical for building and maintaining relationships, whether it’s with staff, with people who use our services, with their whanau, with other stakeholders, like the funders.

Sean talked about the recruitment of their new CEO and why the understanding of treaty (The Treaty of Waitangi) principles, as well as cultural competency, was critical to it: *“There’s a lot more complexity now around exploring cultural competence. We are recruiting for a new CEO of our organisation and critical to that recruitment will be understanding treaty principles and being able to work with iwi”*. He added that even though there was progress in the cultural competency space, managing the stakeholders was still a challenge: *“We are already kind of progressing in that cultural competency space. But at the same time there are groups, people that are working at different speeds. And so I think, managing stakeholders is quite challenging.”*

3.1.3 Technical

The challenges around the use of technology were presented in the earlier section, but some participants talked about the skills needed for it. Some other types of technical skills related to staffing, governance, and research were also discussed.

Tracy shared her struggles with technology and raised the need to learn hard skills to be effective in her day-to-day work: *“I think for me personally, just recognizing that you need hard skills around technology, knowing to navigate your way around technology and apps and stuff like that because you just use it day to day”*. Ethan also talked about the organisational need to equip with technology: *“We have to equip ourselves with technology, but first we have to know as leaders that we can't do everything ourselves”*. He then stressed the importance of finding people with the skills to execute different tasks involving the use of technology: *“We have to look for people who are competent in different platforms. Like marketing on social media, website design, you know, all kinds of new technologies that could help to execute our projects”*.

While discussing her leadership role, which also involved working with various clubs, Sarah talked about developing and growing the leadership of club leaders by equipping them with certain skills:

For me, it's about supporting club leaders to be the best leaders they can be, by equipping them with skills that they can use such as governance, finance and technology. Hoping to inspire the next generation of people who are interested in community service, even if they don't do it as a full-time job.

Taking a systems view of things, Derek shared that the reason for the downfall of community organisations is the absence of core skills. Even though they are founded by well-intentioned and qualified people with social science degrees:

One thing I've seen is that a lot of community organizations fall down on as you know a lot of them are founded by well-meaning people who have an Arts and Social Sciences background, which is great and amazing, but every organization, also needs an understanding of, you know, operations, finances, technology, and I think some of those core skills are often missing from community organisations.

As is evident from the personal accounts of each participant, every skill is applied differently in their individual contexts, with some overlaps between the technical and conceptual skills, given their nature. As discussed in the literature review chapter, conceptual skills are a tool for strategic decisions, whereas technical skills provide support for the same

but are more nuanced. All participants mentioned during the interviews that the particular skills they identified would enable future leaders to address the challenges regarding governance, managing resources and improving engagement, depending on the situational factors.

3.2 Behaviours

In their responses to the question on competencies, participants also talked about specific actions or behaviours expected from leaders in particular situations. These actions included being flexible and supportive in their approach, stepping back, and being receptive to feedback. All these behaviours or actions have further been categorised into subordinate themes.

3.2.1 Supporting staff and giving opportunities

Venessa was talking about the struggles of the staff in executing their tasks and how a leader can see the gaps, give support and provide training if needed:

Having a leader that sees where you are, where the gap is with your skills, where you need to grow, and then provide support and training so that you can grow within your role or learn how to deal with the clients.

She also mentioned how people in the organisation can become “assets” if the leader can be supportive by giving them the space to grow and the opportunity to lead:

Leaders within the organisation can help you to be better and lead better by giving you the opportunity and space so that you grow. It may be challenging but having that support is important. At the end of the day, people are your greatest assets.

This was also endorsed by Sean who spoke about supporting the team members and giving them the opportunities to take lead: *“Support and give opportunities to your team, to be leaders themselves. With that comes an obligation to also support them from a mentoring point of view.”*

Ethan, while referring to the new challenges, stressed the role of leaders in supporting the staff with, not just with organisational tasks, but also in their personal lives:

Our staff and our volunteers, they are all facing the challenges, so as leaders, we also have to understand how we can manage or how we can support our staff through executing the

task, with their time management, with the use of technology, and also their personal life considering what's happening in the world.

Cynthia, too, referred to the challenges and mentioned the need for leaders to be supportive of their team members: *“I think as a leader it is critical to be a supportive team member. To support them but also make sure that they are ok because it is a difficult time for everyone.”*

Another aspect of supportive leadership was highlighted by Lucy while she was talking about creating a psychologically and emotionally safe working environment for people to grow:

Where people feel psychologically and emotionally unsafe, they are less likely to grow and flourish. It could be because they have a poor relationship with the manager, or it could be because there are a lot of internal dynamics between team members.

For her, making team members feel safe by exhibiting supportive behaviour is a critical leadership competency.

3.2.2 Receptive to feedback

Another critical leadership behaviour as reported by some participants is to acknowledge different perspectives and be receptive to feedback. These responses were merged into one subordinate theme.

Derek talked about being able to “recognise that you don’t have all the answers” and went on to elaborate: *“It's your staff team or your board that is more important than you getting your way or your opinion. So, to have the ability to step back and get somebody else to come in and give a different perspective”*. Sarah, too, spoke about stepping back, considering different perspectives, and coming to the table with an “educated and considered plan or response”. Lucy mentioned that she would prefer to work with leaders who are willing to receive feedback and don’t “pull the manager card”, and further said that *“people are equally valuable and that their opinions are important”*.

Tracy also laid a premium on hearing different perspectives and considered this to be a “binding thing” that keeps an organisation together: *“Constantly focusing on hearing the voice*

of the staff, the people we work with, the people in charge, the governance board, you know, and hence being that glue, the binding thing that sticks it all together and makes it work”. This was seconded by Vanessa who considered it important to give space to people in the team to share their thoughts and opinions.

3.2.3 Flexibility in situations

Two participants found being flexible to be another critical behaviour. Ethan was talking about the unexpected challenges leaders face nowadays and how having flexibility in their approach as well as problem-solving can help them navigate the uncertainties:

We have to leave ourselves with more flexibility to include unexpected factors, more timelines, so there's more time for us to complete a task, to plan a project. I think being flexible also means problem-solving skills. Even more now because of what's happening in the world.

For Lucy, flexibility is "number one" as a competency. To have flexibility in thinking as well as problem-solving. Giving an example of her situation as a manager where she has to provide flexible solutions to dynamic problems:

I think the top one is like flexibility. Being flexible in your thinking in the way that you approach problem-solving and the way that you react to different situations. Rather than being inflexible and unwilling to change your path based on what you're confronted with. Like we've had to come up with a lot of flexible working solutions around shifts and staffing, and how do we manage these things, to make sure we have good continual services for people we support.

Leaders talked about situations they face in the changing work environment and, with examples, shared different leadership behaviours that help (or might help) future leaders manage those situations.

3.3 Traits

Participants also shared their views on certain characteristics or traits that leaders are expected to have. According to them, with these traits, future leaders are better equipped to deal with the challenges of the changing work environment. Prominent among them were being emotionally balanced, empathetic, and having a sense of equity.

3.3.1 Able to relate to others

According to Cynthia, empathy is a “huge characteristic” of a “productive and efficient” leader who “nurtures and grows” the team. She also stated that empathy enables leaders to understand “why the team members are feeling the way they are feeling” and is instrumental in “resolving conflicts”. For Lucy, empathetic leaders are “approachable and open to listening”, which builds trust between members of the team. Whereas for Sarah, being empathetic allows leaders to “see things from multiple perspectives” and enables them to be “pragmatic” in their approach whilst dealing with the challenges.

Vanessa talked at length about this, and said that empathy is most important in social service as you must “see through the lenses” of the people you are supporting. She stated that empathy allows leaders to provide individual solutions to individual problems without being judgemental about it:

Being empathetic, especially if you're in a social service, is a very important. To see through the lenses of your clients and not be judgemental about it. The main reason [for] the existence of a social service is because of the social problem where no one size fits all.

She also linked cultural competency with empathy: *“If it is culturally appropriate, then it all comes down to empathy, because you understood them and saw it through their lens”.*

3.3.2 Able to regulate emotions

Participants talked about channeling emotions in different contexts. For Lucy, it was about emotional resilience, without which one would quit:

You can't consistently deal with those kinds of barriers and problems that we're confronted with without being emotionally resilient, because you would just like to quit. So, you need to be emotionally resilient to be able to deal with that on a regular basis while maintaining your own life outside of work.

Ethan seconded that while referring to the importance of work–life balance and how one cannot function without it: *“You cannot function if you don't have a good work–life balance. As a result, your good mental and emotional health will help you to do the things”.*

Megan was talking about how her organisation looks for calm personalities as a trait when hiring leaders, and considered this to be a critical competency for future leaders:

What we really like to see is someone who is calm from a personality perspective. It doesn't help when you are in a crisis and that you get flustered and can't stay calm. That's a key component as well that we are always looking out for, calm personalities that can manage the uncertainties and challenges.

3.3.3 Able to accept diversity

Two responses also included equity as a leadership trait. Sarah had positive thoughts to share about the working environment in New Zealand when it came to “being inclusive” and recognising equity”. However, she still considered it to be an area where leaders must “remind each other to be more inclusive and open to all genders, sexuality and race”. On the other hand, Lucy was sharing the “value differences” leaders have with people they work with and stressed the importance of having “good relationships” with equity in order to serve the beneficiaries better:

Sometimes you have value differences with people, but in the end, you still need to work together. Considering that you're there to work towards good outcomes for people who access services, you need to maintain those relationships. So, an element of equity and fairness is important, in treating people the same, despite differences you might face.

3.4 Styles

Six participants shared their views around different leadership styles, which were applied in their own contexts, or/and they viewed these as a critical leadership competency. While some participants made a brief reference, others went on to elaborate. Servant and Authentic are the two leadership styles that came up during the interviews.

3.4.1 Servant Leadership

Derek was sharing his views around susceptible leadership behaviour when he made a reference to Servant Leadership, equating it with the ability to step back: *“What is it called, certainly that is servant leadership. I quite like that. And that would be one”*. Lucy, while discussing the role of leadership in team dynamics, also made a reference to Servant Leadership and that she relates to it personally: *“For me, that I've always been related to, is servant leadership.”*

Cynthia personally values Servant Leadership and was referring to the “Kiwi culture” where she witnessed it mostly and considers it to be the ideal leadership style in these times:

I think I really see it a lot differently where people here really value leaders that are basically servant leaders. They are not there to dictate, but rather to serve you, to support you, to grow, as opposed to making sure that you are doing the eight hours of work that you're meant to do.

Vanessa was talking about the social service sector and referred to the qualities of a servant leader. She said that only the leaders with the intention to serve and who are not driven by money can work in this sector: *“It all comes back to the quality of a person and what they value. Someone who’s passionate, who’s driven and motivated by the difference they make in people’s lives, rather than money.”*

For Megan, servant leadership is the one she is “most drawn into”. She was referring to the CEO of her organisation, a servant leader “who puts himself back” and his “team in front”. She also goes on to say that is something inherent and cannot be learnt: *“But this is really hard to find, because it’s something that you can’t learn. It’s part of your personality”*. Sean, too, highlighted the importance of servant leadership while referring to the chair of this organisation:

The servant leader approach, I think is important as well. From my experience of working with our chair, for example, is that he admits that he doesn't know a lot about cultural competence. But he has a humble inquiry, a great kind of nature to him around being willing to learn. Whereas I see other board members who are holding on to their opinion and aren't willing to really open up to new thinking.

3.4.2 Authentic Leadership

Vanessa referred to Authentic Leadership while sharing her views around authenticity and “to lead with example”. She said that leaders need to demonstrate what they expect out of their team, giving examples of being positive and empathetic: *“To be authentic is to lead with example. If I want to build a positive team, that means I must be positive. Similarly, if I expect my team to be empathetic, I have to be that towards my team”*. Whereas Sean was talking about the importance of communication and transparency, and made a reference to authentic leadership wherein a leader who “talks the right talk” and also “walks the talk” is needed in the

current scheme of things. He further elaborated that an authentic leader could make the team succeed by giving them the opportunities to contribute:

I think as long as authentic kind of leadership is coming out, there's that idea of seeing your team succeed, um, as being the reward of good leadership. So, I think just continuing to have that approach and giving the team opportunities to contribute, and to be exposed to the challenges and risks around that.

The varied responses by participants around leadership competencies were rooted in their experiences as leaders in different settings, as well as their perceptions. The enriching insights demanded further elucidation, but time was a constraint.

4. Actions for Developing Leadership Competencies

Building on the momentum of the interview and participants' chain of thought around the leadership competencies, it was time to ask them the final question: *“What, according to you, are the strategies for developing leadership competencies in future leaders?”* The objective of this question was to explore what they perceived as the appropriate actions as well as well knowledge required for developing those leadership competencies. To ensure responses in both the areas (actions and knowledge), a follow-up question was asked to some participants: *“What should educational programmes focus on in developing leadership competencies?”* The varied responses to both questions have been categorised into three major themes – *Tertiary education, Organisational strategies, and Self-development.*

4.1 Tertiary Education

Based on the experience and insight into the subject matter, participants spoke about the educational content and structure that they considered apt for developing leadership competencies. Some even questioned the courses being offered at present, whereas some had positive feedback about a particular course they undertook. Other than the content, they even shared their views on the educators or leaders offering/conducting the programmes.

4.1.1 Content and Structure

According to Sean, educational programmes “tend to focus on the individual as a leader” and sometimes fail to understand that leaders do not “operate in isolation”. He suggested that programmes can look at “developing operating models for effective leadership and

organizations” to better “contextualise the challenges that leaders face”. He attributed this to the experience and learning from a community leadership course he attended at a university. During the course, he was supposed to contextualise his leadership using a metaphor and develop his own leadership model. He also shared that he “retains that model” and has “operationalised the metaphor” into his leadership. He went on to say that more programmes can look at adopting this model and improvising with time. On similar lines, Tracy suggested that programmes should “focus on the delivery rather than just giving lectures” by including something like “role-playing”. She, however, had apprehensions because of her experience where people “weren’t really into it”, but the programme leaders could be more creative with the “practical aspect” of it.

As per Venessa, programmes should focus on contemporary issues and solutions, instead of “problems and theories from the 90s”. She suggests that the “education system” should change to “cater to the current problems” rather than learning “theories and issues from ages ago”. Being an immigrant, Megan, too, had similar opinions about the “education system in New Zealand”, comparing it to the education she received. She was sharing her experience with people joining her organisation after university where they needed “education first before they could actually do the job because they hadn’t heard anything about trauma and attachment”. She said that the education system around social work “needs to improve big time”. She stressed the need to include the “supervision component” in the curriculum for social work. She also shared how it will become compulsory to have a supervision degree in future:

The Social Worker Registration Board and NZW are currently looking into the supervisory roles, and there is some talk about potentially making it compulsory for managers who are supervising social workers if they have to have a supervision degree. That's a good opportunity for the universities to look into their supervision papers. Though every single University offers some sort of programme, I think that's going to be a key component moving forward for the education sector in order to put more attention to their supervision papers.

4.1.2 Program Leaders

Some participants shared their views about the people delivering the programme or the programme leaders. Cynthia spoke about how the course directors can “lead by example” when it comes to being empathetic and supportive: *“I think the course directors can really show to you the impact of them being empathetic, supportive and patient with you, especially if you are*

a struggling student.. She affirmed that doing this “can really drive home a message for the student”. Along these lines, Lucy said that the programme leaders should “display those leadership competencies” to illustrate how “people actually apply that in their lives or workplace”. She also proposed that the programme leaders should ideally be from “different community organisations” so that what they teach and say, “is relevant”. She further elaborated:

Hearing from different leaders with different styles, would be really interesting. Like you can read academic texts and you gain a lot from them but having conversations with different people who have different ways of approaching different things, it's really useful. You can use things that you find to be applicable to you and to fit within your own lifestyle. And, you know, utilize that in future.

Derek also said, “*if I were going to send someone on a leadership course, I'd want to know that the course was developed and run by people who would run community organizations*”. Talking further, he laid importance on diversity and inclusiveness: “*I'd want to know what their values were in terms of diversity. Not just diversity across the board, but the diversity of thoughts, you know inclusiveness particularly being in New Zealand*”. Echoing the same sentiment, Tracy observed that it would be “good to see people from diverse backgrounds and cultures delivering the programmes”. After her experience at the university, this is the most important aspect for her.

4.2 Organisational Strategies

Participants talked about different steps that can be taken by organisations for developing leadership competencies, such as giving opportunities to lead in different roles, sending prospective leaders to learn from temporary roles in other organisations, involving them in different projects, and providing coaching and other learning courses within the organisation. These responses have been categorised into two subordinate themes – *On-the-job experience* and *In-house learning*.

4.2.1 On-the-job experience

Lucy talked about “providing people with opportunities to train and upskill”. She shared her experience where she got secondment for the role she currently holds and was eventually invited to apply for the job. Secondment, according to her, gives leaders the opportunity to “engage with people at different levels and learn new skills” through practical experience. On

similar lines, Megan mentioned the importance of “practice knowledge” without which a leader cannot “relate to a role or navigate tricky situations”. She stated that a good way for the “leaders to learn is to do the role their team would do for a couple of months”. This way they can “relate to their team” and “lead by example”. Cynthia, too, spoke about how people holding leadership positions “should first understand the work their team is doing”. She further elaborated that will allow leaders to “develop empathy” and enable them to “be efficient team players”.

Derek referred to a strategy where staff and volunteers are given “part-time roles or project roles” and sometimes, a role in the governance board, which gives opportunities to young people to learn about decision making and become capable leaders:

There are part-time roles or project roles which they all employ people into. Even the governance board offers opportunities so its members which are basically that group of lead volunteers and other people. You can be appointed to the governance board, which is an opportunity, that not a lot of young people get to experience. You get exposed to working directly with the executive director. They report to you, and they tell you what's going on, and you have to have discussions and make decisions.

Sean took a similar position regarding giving the opportunity to people to take lead and contribute, as well as “be exposed to the challenges and risks around it”. He felt that the staff are always “sheltered from the political aspects of work” and they “don’t see the full picture”. He then talked about “giving them a vertically cross-functional view of organisational hierarchies”. This, according to him, will be “exposing them” to the context, and the “challenges the board and the leadership team” deal with. He further elaborated:

Knowing that I have their back entirely, giving them the freedom to step up in the microenvironments and different projects. Where I will be intentional about sitting back and letting them take the lead. But also making sure of a regular feedback loop around it and the fact they are supported. I'm wanting them to step into those uncomfortable spaces, you know, and just find where they're comfortable as well.

4.2.2 In-house learning

Besides giving opportunities to lead or take-up a role or a project, two participants also shared how leadership competencies can be developed through learning arrangements within an organisation.

Megan proposed that prospective leaders should be provided “coaching from the manager above”. She was particular about the use of the word “coaching”. She said that a “manager who is skilled and bright” can be appointed to “coach” as well as supervise “someone to get there”.

However, Ethan talked about bringing “education programs to the organisation” and arranging for training for the whole team. He further elaborated:

Instead of an individual person going out to school or doing an online program to study and learn, rather have the instructors or resource person coming into the organization. Then arrange for training for the staff, the whole team, and learn about time management or the use of social media, how to use technology, how to run things in the new environment and in different sectors.

4.3 Self-development

Other than tertiary and organisational actions, some participants also stressed self-development strategies to develop leadership competencies such as self-study, reflecting, observing, researching, and volunteering. These responses were subsequently divided into two subordinate themes – *Self-study* and *Observing and volunteering*.

4.3.1 Self-study

For Ethan, continuing education was important. He said that a leader should “continue to study” and “equip themselves”. It did not matter if it was a “part-time course, a diploma, or a master’s degree”. Lucy seconded this notion and talked about “self-directed self-development”, wherein leaders should pursue their further studies and grow their skills:

Self-directed self-development is really important, like going and engaging in additional studies or training and being willing to upskill yourself. It shows an open-mindedness that's required to develop those leadership competencies.

Megan, too, stressed the need for leaders to do “research on their own” and “read articles” to keep themselves aware of the happenings “in the sector”. She also said that this is something driven by self and cannot be forced: *“I mean you need to be willing to learn and grow as well. You can't just force someone to do something if they're not up for it.”*

4.3.2 Observing and Volunteering

Tracy mentioned “observation and listening” as another way to learn about leadership competencies: *“Just being able to observe and look kind of maybe be a bit insightful, see what's beneath the surface. I think listening is a part of that too”*. Echoing the same thoughts, Lucy said how “willing exposure” to people such as observation is important. She benefited just through observing her colleagues and managers, by “borrowing their attitudes and approach” towards matters and utilising them in her own work.

Ethan, however, suggested that joining different community organisations as volunteers is a great way to “learn different skills” and meet new people:

Through volunteering in different organizations, you get to meet different people, and then you get to learn different skills. You also get to learn about different communities, and the things happening in the sector.

5. Summation

The findings presented in this chapter are a thematic summary of community organisation leaders’ views of the challenges of the changing work environment, the leadership competencies needed to navigate those challenges, and the actions required to develop these competencies. Leaders’ organisational and individual contexts determined their perceptions of challenges and leadership competencies. The responses show distinct differences as well as similarities. Some were brief, while others were more elaborate. A comparison of these responses with the existing literature in the following discussion chapter will give a clearer picture of the leadership competencies required of future community organisation leaders.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview of the chapter

In this chapter, the findings are discussed in the context of the existing literature in an attempt to answer the research questions posed in chapter 1. Consideration was given to integrating literature in the previous chapter to avoid repetition. However, this would have partly distracted from the participants' voices and complicated the focus across the different dimensions of the data. So, this chapter is dedicated to integrating the literature with the core findings. The chapter starts with an analysis of the challenges of the changing work environment for future leaders, as reported by the participants. The focus will then be on the overarching research question, namely, the critical leadership competencies required of future leaders of community organisations. This is followed by a brief discussion on actions in response to the question on the strategies and opportunities for developing these competencies. The chapter ends with concluding comments and recommendations in the context of the study's limitations.

1. Challenges of the Changing work environment

It was highlighted in the literature review chapter that leadership does not exist in a vacuum and that it is driven by the context within which the leaders function. The different challenges community organisation leaders discussed gave context to the questions on leadership competencies. Corroborating these challenges with the relevant literature will give a firm foundation for the discussion of the critical leadership competencies.

1.1 Engagement

Participants discussed engagement as a challenge within and outside of the organisation. The responses around engaging within organisations included "feeling disconnected," lack of "personal touch," and "zoom fatigue" while working from home. An exploratory study investigating workplace well-being during COVID-19 in New Zealand highlighted the disconnect between the management and employees during work-from-home arrangements, which also affected the organisational culture (Quifors et al., 2021). The study also mentioned employees' stresses and struggles with using Zoom and Microsoft Teams for remote working while highlighting the need to develop individual capabilities to address the same. Another

research that studied the impact of COVID-19 on business travel practices in New Zealand too identified a disconnect between managers and teams (Becken & Hughey, 2021). This study also discussed the competencies needed to manage the changes enforced by the new culture and future challenges.

The responses around engaging with the community or stakeholders outside the organisation also included being disconnected, with a lack of communication and issues related to mindset and multiculturalism. A recent community-based study on flood hazards in New Zealand recognised poor information distribution as a reason for ineffective community engagement, significantly amplified after the COVID-19 pandemic (Auliagisni et al., 2022). Another study focusing on co-designing health promotions with indigenous communities in New Zealand discussed constraints regarding community engagement with multiple cultures (Harding et al., 2021). Managing all perspectives and cultural values was seen as a challenge in this study, along with the need for community engagement skills.

1.2 Resources

The responses about managing resources as a challenge included lack of funding, pay gaps, staff shortages, lack of skills, and issues regarding the use of technology. Validating these claims, a 2021 report published by JBWere reported performance parameters of the not-for-profit sector in New Zealand (Morrow & McLeod, 2021). It highlighted the financial crunch most community organisations face and how their leaders work more with less pay compared to their counterparts in the government and corporate sectors. Lack of funding is not allowing these organisations to hire paid staff, and not many volunteers are also coming forward (Morrow & McLeod, 2021). It also mentioned the dearth of technology-related skills like digital skills in the leadership of the community organisations. As per the report, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened these issues, and the onus is now on the leadership to manage these challenges.

1.3 Governance

The challenges related to governance raised by the participants included several operational issues arising from working remotely, including culture change, certain legislative and societal barriers, and conflict between the board and the organisation's management. A research paper by Huang (2022) sheds light on the changing workplace culture after the

outbreak of COVID-19 and the inability of the leadership in many community organisations in New Zealand to establish governance mechanisms to deal with various operational issues and disruptions. The paper also mentions the growing conflict between the board members and the management team in recent times. Another report on New Zealand's not-for-profit sector by financial consulting firm Grant Thornton confirmed participants' claims and predicted challenging times for community organisations (Grant Thornton, 2022). This report highlighted how the community organisations are ill-prepared to adapt to new legislations and are struggling to meet their reporting obligations. It also stressed the need for the right skills and experience in the governance boards. The participants talked about the different challenges exclusive to their individual and organisational contexts. However, the main challenges highlighted in the findings are not uncommon in the literature.

2. Competencies required of future leaders

Participants' responses regarding the competencies were categorised into skills, behaviours, traits, and styles – common approaches to leadership theories.

2.1 Skills

In consideration of these skills across different categories – conceptual, interpersonal, and technical, in the context of the other findings, it was decided to only discuss seven core competencies highlighted by the participants that are relevant to the community organisations in the changing work environment.

2.1.1 Change Management

Some participants identified change management as a necessary conceptual skill to navigate the complexities brought about by the “constant changes” in the sector. Change management is the comprehensive strategy used in an organisation to transition from the present to a desired (or undesired) future state utilising a planned and structured approach in conjunction with stakeholders (Halkias et al., 2017). These changes can be planned or can be induced as a result of changing work environment. The latter applied in this context and was articulated by the participants. The role of leadership in the context of change was briefly discussed in the literature review chapter. The reports on New Zealand's not-for-profit sector mentioned in the previous sections, too, laid importance on managing change by the leadership and boards. Reviewing some more literature on change management in relation to leadership

revealed the role of leadership styles. Ajmal et al. (2012) highlighted that the leadership style influences the process of change in an organisation while giving precedence to the “transformational leadership style.” Mansaray (2019) studied different leadership styles concerning change management, including authoritarian, transformational, laissez-faire, servant, transactional, democratic, strategic, bureaucratic, consultative, and participative leadership. They, too, identified the transformational leadership style as the most appropriate to address the issues arising out of the change management process, and it also reduces resistance to change. Therefore, it can be implied that change management, as a conceptual skill, relies upon a particular leadership style for effective implementation and may point to developing particular skills.

2.1.2 Digital and Information Technology

There were ubiquitous references to technology during the interviews. Most of them were detailed, and a few were brief. The responses mostly revolved around using applications like Zoom and Microsoft Teams for remote working. At the same time, some spoke about digital marketing, using social media for promotion and fundraising, and using digital technology to manage finance and accounts. Most participants talked about the absence of such skills in the community organisation leaders compared to their corporate counterparts. Ahmed (2022) stated that, with information technology (IT), non-profit leaders can monitor compliance, improve communication, enhance community connection, and find innovative ways to secure funding. The 2021 New Zealand Cause Report highlighted that, although many organisations lack the “scale and resources” to cope with digitisation, they can maximise their value addition using digital tools (Morrow & McLeod, 2021). The 2022 report on growing digitisation in New Zealand stresses that leaders with digital skills can maximise collaboration, improve supervision, boost performance and, as a result, enhance organisational output (Yashiro et al., 2022). Another 2021 report on digital technology in the not-for-profit sector of Australia and New Zealand stated that developing digital capability in handling IT operations and digital marketing can support engagement, open new avenues for financing, and measure social impact (Infoxchange Group, 2021). The country is moving towards digitisation, so community organisations cannot be left out.

2.1.3 Communication

Some participants referred to the outcomes of effective communication by leaders as indicators of competent leadership. Among these responses were building consensus within the

teams, diffusing tensions, avoiding disharmony, building trust, and managing expectations through communication skills. The literature on communication skills validates these claims that effective communication is crucial at all levels of an organisation. In their book, *Communication in Organisations*, Van der Molen and Gramsbergen-Hoogland (2019) talk about the communication skill-sets required of leaders in an organisation. They claimed that leaders within an organisation can manage discord, improve collaboration, facilitate innovation, build relationships, and increase engagement. Given the structure and nature of community organisations and the overall non-profit sector, communication skills are crucial for governance functions (Dann, 2022). A recent study on communication strategies for increasing funding for non-profit organisations identified communication as the most critical competency for leaders to ensure organisational viability and effectiveness (Mirville, 2021). It concluded that communication skills are needed to manage internal dynamics and to have greater engagement with external stakeholders to ensure unhindered funding for its operations. The change management literature mentioned in the earlier section also focused on communication as an essential tool for transformational leadership to address the challenges of organisational change (Mansaray, 2019). Thus, communication as a skill identified by the participants has broad theoretical underpinnings.

2.1.4 Supervision

Some participants conveyed the importance of supervision skills for the managers in their organisations, especially when some of their staff are working remotely. Megan also mentioned that this “critical skill was missing” in the managers her organisation was hiring. While several definitions exist of supervision, in the context of community organisations, it is a process that supports, motivates, and enables social workers to build good practices (Bara, 2021). Consequently, this enhances the organisation’s service quality. It allows leaders or managers to be flexible and creates a mutually supportive team environment, which helps transition employees into leaders (Harris, 2020). Since participants talked about supervision in the context of their organisational focus and practice, Harris (2020) underscored the contextual nature of supervision and how the need for supervision is contingent on corporate and environmental factors. For New Zealand, supervision differs across different fields and disciplines and has other implications (O’Donoghue, 2022). O’Donoghue (2022) recommended that the regulatory bodies in New Zealand should clearly define and separate professional supervision for social work practice from managerial supervision.

2.1.5 Cultural Competency

Another component of interpersonal skills identified by four participants was cultural competency. Referring to the nuances of the multi-cultural environment in New Zealand, they talked about how leaders were required to be competent in handling cultural sensitivities and expectations. The literature on the subject reveals that organisations must, first be aware of multicultural sensitivities, and have access to accurate data on different racial, religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups in their country of operation (Remington, 2018). This was endorsed by an author in the context of New Zealand, who stated that cultural competency in a community organisation could be achieved by integrating the knowledge of cultures and groups into the organisational policies, attitudes, documentation, and formal greetings (Disley, 2020). Bass (1999) argued that cultural competency is an essential constituent of transformational leadership, which aims to manage growing diversity and to envisage a culturally competent organisation. The community organisation leaders who effectively implement the cultural competency framework have successfully improved the quality and implementation of their initiatives (Remington, 2018).

2.1.6 Critical Thinking

One participant identified critical thinking as a crucial skill for leaders while stressing the need for leaders to keep themselves “aware” of the world situation and geopolitics. According to him, leaders should use critical thinking skills to evaluate the global situation and ascertain its impact on their organisations – this is the ability to make reasoned judgments by objectively analysing information (Kinchington, 2019). Discussing the process of change, Kinchington (2019) highlighted the importance of critical thinking to explore the “hidden drivers” that are hidden beneath the layers of organisational culture, leadership actions, and environmental factors. These hidden drivers can act as barriers to the change process. Jenkins and Cutchens (2011), in their study, linked critical thinking skills to “situational leadership” style and flexibility as leadership behaviour. They argued that critical thinking allows a leader to be aware of the situational factors and to apply appropriate leadership styles accordingly, as well as be flexible and open-minded in their decision-making. Elicor (2017) stated that critical thinking helps organisational leaders to make essential decisions, resolve issues, and channel resources toward change. They concluded that every leader in an organisation needs critical thinking skills – irrespective of their position. Thus, community organisation leaders can simplify and address the complexities of the changing work environment through critical thinking.

2.1.7 Creativity

While discussing the lack of funding in the sector, a participant stressed the importance of creative thinking in leaders –to become “business-minded” and creative in their approach to secure funding for their organisations. The 2021 New Zealand Cause Report also mentioned the creative and innovative strategies needed to obtain funding (Morrow & McLeod, 2021). Leaders often face dynamic and complex challenges, and creative problem-solving skills are required to address them (Mumford et al., 2000). Creativity as a conceptual skill has applications in different contexts. Guo et al. (2016) asserted that domain-specific knowledge and experience are prerequisites for leaders to be creative. They also proclaimed that a “creative climate” through transformational leadership, where creativity and innovation are fostered is also needed within the organisation. Another study endorsed the view that creativity, as an individual skill, can be developed through transformational leadership by creating a system of team-knowledge sharing (Dong et al., 2017). Thus, creativity as a conceptual skill is also contingent upon the organisational environment of the community organisations.

2.2 Behaviours

After consideration of the literature on leadership behaviours and the responses of the participants, the following have been identified as critical to the future leaders of community organisations:

2.2.1 Supportive

Five participants elaborately discussed supportive leadership behaviour in different contexts. The responses included supporting the staff by giving them opportunities and training, providing them with an environment where they feel safe, and helping them with their personal life issues. Schmid (2006) argued that community organisation leaders who exhibit supportive behaviour during the change process successfully navigate the challenges. They also assert that organisations can adapt to the changes in the environment if supportive leaders ensure that everyone in the team has the necessary skills and training and is empowered to make decisions. A 2020 study on transformational leadership’s effect on volunteers’ intentions to remain in not-for-profit organisations concluded that volunteer coordinators and leaders who provide support with skills development, intellectually stimulate volunteers through two-way communication, and actively address volunteer concerns will ensure higher volunteer commitment and retention

(Almas et al., 2020). The subject has been researched extensively in the past and has more significant implications after the onset of COVID-19. A recent study on the impact of supportive leadership behaviour on the well-being of nurses revealed that the pandemic had brought tremendous stress to work as well as the personal lives of the nurses (Um-e-Rubbab, 2021). It was reported that the leaders were empathetic, lent support in their time of need, listened to their queries, and kept them informed with regular feedback. The study observed that nurses felt safe, hopeful, optimistic, and motivated when their leaders were supportive, which, as a result, improved their performance (Um-e-Rubbab et al., 2021). Another study on the subject in the hospitality sector identified supportive leadership behaviour as critical to achieving job satisfaction and greater commitment levels (Bourini et al., 2019). The paper also mentioned that supportive leaders identify the developmental needs of the employees through regular supervision and provide necessary training, which leads to organisational efficiency and improved service delivery. In the context of the collaborative leadership model in non-profit organisations, Osula and Ng (2014) observed that supportive leaders can reduce conflict by promoting healthy interpersonal relationships through a culture of collaboration, which improves organisational efficiency. Thus, supportive behaviour exhibited by leaders of community organisations will have far-reaching positive implications on employee engagement and on governance.

2.2.2 Receptive

Regarding leaders' behaviours, four participants talked about their willingness to receive feedback and allow space for different perspectives. Hynes and Mickahail (2019) asserted that giving space and enabling team members to share ideas is dependent on the organisational culture and leadership behaviour. They claimed that senior leaders, through their actions, create a culture where employees feel safe to experiment, fail, learn, and share experiences. This, according to them, builds collaboration, improves performance, and brings innovation. Hynes and Mickahail (2019) attributed this receptive behaviour to transformational leadership. Participants in this research also shared how leaders can step back when needed and give room to others in the team to share their thoughts. This, according to them, would help leaders in making informed decisions. Substantiating these responses, Dann (2022) mentioned that those non-profit organisation leaders who step back and actively listen to their team members are committed to the growth of the organisation and community they serve. He, however, ascribed this behaviour to servant leadership. A study on the *caring leadership* identity stated that leaders who step back and allow subordinates to take the lead could improve

collaboration and service delivery (Levay & Andersson Bäck, 2022). The paper also observed that leaders considering differing perspectives came up with more refined solutions. Therefore, the findings on receptive behaviour can be attributed to different leadership styles.

2.2.3 Flexible

Two participants found flexible leadership behaviour the most critical competency in the current scenario. They referred to the uncertainties of the changing work environment and attached problem-solving abilities to flexibility. A 2010 study of flexible leadership behaviour regarding leadership effectiveness observed that flexible leaders could assess the situation and direct their response to overcome challenges and improve organisational performance (Kaiser & Overfield, 2010). Highlighting the situational factors and the role of governance, Akingbola et al. (2019) discuss that boards of non-profit organisations should assess the indicators of change and be flexible in responding to any contingency that arises. They asserted that flexible behaviour in decision-making would support the governance response to the shift in the external environment. Hence, the participants' accounts are congruent with several authors' views on this subject.

2.3 Traits

Empathy, emotional resilience, and equity are some of the critical leadership traits identified from the responses of the participants and after reviewing the relevant literature.

2.3.1 Empathy

Empathy is referred to one's ability to understand personal feelings communicated verbally or non-verbally, to provide emotional support when needed, and to understand the links between behaviour and emotions (Polychroniou, 2009, as cited in Holt & Marques, 2012). Participants regarded it as critical to achieving a productive team. They also felt that empathetic leaders were approachable and competent to provide individual solutions since they could see things from multiple perspectives. Dann (2022) mentioned that empathetic leaders make employees feel heard and understood and create a culture within non-profit organisations to resolve issues and work through conflict. Armstrong and Ashraf (2011) identified empathy as one of the critical competencies for not-for-profit sector leaders to think beyond their own lived experiences and adequately respond to the diversity of their team members. One of the

participants also found empathy to be critical to developing cultural competency. This finding is supported by research that found a positive correlation between the two, where participants with more extraordinary empathic ability showed a higher degree of cultural competency (Yang et al., 2013). Empathy has been found to be embedded in different leadership theories. It was first mentioned in the initial, trait-based theories of leadership, where it was exclusive to extraordinary individuals (Holt & Marques, 2012). As scholars across the spectrum rejected the trait theories, empathy later found a place in the contingency theories of leadership. It was identified as an essential characteristic to assess the situation, consider multiple perspectives, and respond accordingly (Northouse, 2019). Dann (2022) considered empathy to have a central place in servant leadership. He asserted that empathy goes beyond evaluating a situation and gives servant leaders the ability to understand an individual as a whole person and value them from their perspective. It also has been mentioned as a critical competency in transformational leadership. Bass and Riggio (2006) endorsed that transformational leaders who envisage a culturally competent organisation are mindful of the diversity of their team members, empathetic towards their individual needs, and are able to use intellectual stimulation to achieve participation. In the context of change management, Mansaray (2019) asserted that, through empathy, transformational leaders can improve engagement by creating a sense of commitment and urgency towards the change process. He adds that leaders can motivate employees and get them involved by empathising with their individual needs and incentives. Hence, as a competency, empathy has broad theoretical underpinnings and influences leadership behaviours and styles.

2.3.2 Emotional resilience

Three participants identified emotional resilience as necessary for leaders in dealing with the challenges of the changing work environment. They expected leaders to remain calm in times of crisis and maintain a good work–life balance. This finding, too, is supported in the leadership literature. Galvin et al. (2014) stated that emotionally resilient leaders can balance the needs and concerns of their team members in stressful situations. They assert that such leaders remain focused on their tasks even when challenged or criticised. Another study on clinical leadership in the times of COVID-19 observed that the emotional resilience of leaders enabled them to be courageous, persistent, and efficiently lead their teams in challenging circumstances. The study concluded that emotionally resilient leaders, not only improve organisational performance, but also ensure better staff engagement (Danquah, 2022).

2.3.3 Equity

Equity as a competency was discussed in the context of the multicultural and diverse demography of New Zealand. Two participants expected leaders to be accepting of genders, races, religions, and cultures within the organisations and the communities they serve. Even though the participants could not explain how equity would help community organisation leaders, the literature on the subject sheds some light. Beard (2013), in their study, addressed equity as a critical leadership trait developed over time with education and experience. They connected equity to authentic leadership and mentioned how it was needed to build trust with the followers. Stephens (2022) observed that leaders who valued diversity and equity could implement DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) initiatives effectively to enhance the knowledge and motivation of their employees. They also stated that such leaders become examples for colleagues to respect and value their diverse co-workers. In the context of the not-for-profit sector, West (2022) stated that organisations that integrate equity and inclusion into their culture and governance can improve their ability to engage and retain their staff.

2.4 Styles

Participants regarded two leadership styles as critical during the interviews: servant and authentic.

2.4.1 Servant Leadership

Six participants found the servant leadership style ideal for future leaders of community organisations. They had witnessed this leadership style in their careers and emulated it in their leadership model. Allen et al. (2018) observed that servant leadership could create a structurally empowered working environment in not-for-profit organisations. The study also stated that servant leaders are able to create an organisational culture where the staff feel empowered and display more outstanding commitment towards organisational goals. Dann (2022) considered the servant leadership style suitable for non-profit organisations because it aligns with its approach and service-centred principles. In line with the findings of this research, Dann (2022) states that the motivation and purpose behind the leadership practice of servant leaders is service to the organisation and community. In the context of governance, Harris (2021) concluded that servant leadership, when embodied by not-for-profit board presidents, leads to governance effectiveness, improved motivation, a higher degree of engagement, and mission fulfilment. One participant stated that servant leadership is something that is inherent and

“cannot be learned.” However, the available literature contradicts this particular statement. A study on developing servant leadership in tertiary education in New Zealand stated that it can be learned in the classroom but should be applied outside (Polley, 2021). The study also found that servant leadership development can happen in a learning space that supports reflective learning embedded in theoretical frameworks that encourage practice.

2.4.2 Authentic Leadership

Two participants mentioned authentic leadership while talking about “leading by example”, transparency, participation, and empowerment. Caza and Jackson (2011) stated that authentic leadership promotes a positive ethical climate and relational transparency and fosters greater self-awareness and self-development. These outcomes are attributed to improved communication, positive role modelling, greater social exchange, and positive identification with leaders and the organisation (Caza & Jackson, 2011). Another study found that authentic leadership positively impacted employees’ performance, higher engagement, and retention, even in volatile and uncertain circumstances (Kleynhans et al., 2021). The study also highlighted that employees trusted their leaders due to a positive and empowering organisational environment.

The findings and the supporting literature reveal that the leadership competencies identified in this study are interconnected. The leadership traits influence behaviours or actions taken by the leaders. Those leadership behaviours are contingent upon an organisational culture determined by adopting a particular leadership style. At the same time, implementing the leadership styles depends on the individual leader’s skills. The challenges regarding engagement, resources and governance can be addressed by leaders in particular contexts through the competencies mentioned above. Corroborating the participants’ responses with the literature also pointed toward transformational leadership as a critical competency for leaders and organisations. The significant elements of discussion on skills, behaviours, and traits connected with transformational leadership style to address the nuances of the changing work environment. Dong et al. (2017), Ghasabeh et al. (2015) and Dann (2022) are some of the contemporary authors to identify transformational leadership as instrumental in fostering individual leadership development, steering organisational growth, and creating a culture of creativity and innovation within community organisations. These and several other studies have credited the transformational leadership style for changing organisational attitudes to accomplish collective goals and greater social impact. However, this particular style was not

mentioned by any participants. Similarly, the collaborative leadership style is credited with creating a culture of support and collaboration within non-profit organisations (Osula & Ng, 2014). The recent literature points toward the importance of collective or collaborative leadership styles to ensure “an integrated collective intelligence” in organisations (Spiller et al., 2020, p. 519). This integrated collective intelligence aims to address the prevailing issues faced by organisations and society by realising the maximum potential of the present and future leaders (Spiller et al., 2020). Participants did not share views on this recent development in leadership.

3. Actions for Developing Leadership Competencies

After understanding the participants’ perspectives regarding the leadership competencies for future leaders of community organisations, it was important to know their views on the strategies for developing these competencies. As highlighted in the literature review chapter, the effectiveness of leadership competencies is contingent upon how they are developed. Thus, the developmental aspect becomes crucial for addressing the challenges of the changing work environment. A brief corroboration of the findings with existing literature will provide a direction for future research.

3.1 Tertiary Education

The participants identified tertiary education as a means of developing leadership competencies. Their views on the educational content included practice knowledge and supervision components. They also stated that the content should evolve with time. The earlier discussion on servant leadership and supervision supports these views of the participants. Polley (2021) highlighted how practice outside the classroom and reflection with the correct knowledge framework could develop servant leadership. Hempsall (2014), too, concluded that an integrated leadership programme grounded in practical knowledge is crucial for equipping leaders to deal with the challenges of the future. Some participants also shared their views on the credentials of programme leaders or tutors, such as their diverse backgrounds, experience, and role modelling. Connaughton et al. (2003) asserted that the interaction of learners with experienced leaders as educators from diverse organisations will enhance their experiential and application-oriented knowledge. Endorsing these claims, Zulfqar et al. (2021) also supported learning from experienced leaders and role modelling as instrumental in developing leadership behaviours. They stated that tutors or guest faculties, through formal and informal sessions,

can demonstrate to their students the critical behaviours of a transformational leader in challenging situations. Thus, tertiary education providers play an important role in developing future leaders.

3.2 Organisational Strategies

Participants emphasised leadership development through experience at work in different capacities and opportunities. They also talked about developing learning mechanisms within the organisation, like training programmes as well as coaching and mentoring. The leadership development literature endorses participants' views on organisational strategies. Hannay (2009) stated that organisations with a servant leader at the helm empower employees to take the lead in different roles and develop their leadership behaviours and problem-solving abilities in the process. Holt et al. (2018) identified experiential learning at work through leadership opportunities, role play, and individualised coaching as critical components of leadership development. Garvey and Stokes (2022) found coaching and mentoring essential in developing role-specific competencies and interpersonal skills and allowing opportunities to create better employee engagement. Kets de Vries and Korotov (2010) also emphasised “action learning” by giving opportunities to future leaders to develop skills through on-the-role experience, followed by critical reflection. They also asserted the role of training modules and classroom-like developmental sessions at the workplace in developing leadership competencies. Although the findings of these studies can be applied to community organisations, the present challenges post-COVID-19 and the unique context of New Zealand's cultural diversity will require further research to draw appropriate conclusions.

3.3 Self-development

Four participants spoke about the need for self-driven development in future leaders. The responses included self-study, observation, and volunteering. Kets De Vries and Korotov (2010) placed a premium on self-study, observation, self-reflection, and learning and considered it to be the first step towards leadership development. Boyce et al. (2010), too, stressed the importance of self-development initiatives by leaders to develop skills and knowledge. However, they found it to be contingent upon organisational support and individual motivation. They observed that, without organisational support, people show less propensity towards self-development. Validating the participants' views on volunteering, Stewart and Kuenzi (2018) stated that some non-profit boards are selecting candidates to serve on boards

as volunteers. With this, the boards intend to give opportunities for leadership development to junior professionals with credible educational qualifications to apply and grow.

4. Recommendations

4.1 For the community sector

The discussion on findings points toward technology as a major impediment in achieving organisational effectiveness for community organisations. There was unanimous reference to the absence of technical skills like IT and digital competency with existing leaders. This affected not only governance, but also the engagement with the communities they needed to serve (Morrow & McLeod, 2021). Since work-from-home is becoming a new normal and the use of digital technology in the country has grown manifold, the digital presence of community organisations has become mandatory to remain competitive and find new funding avenues (Infoxchange Group, 2021). Thus, the leadership and governing board in the community organisations need to consider ways to train and upskill their staff and future leaders with the necessary technical skills to maximise organisational capabilities and navigate future challenges.

Participants' views and the relevant literature point towards servant leadership as a desired approach for the not-for-profit sector. Contemporary literature on competencies highlights the importance of both a transformational leadership style and collaborative or collective leadership. The change management literature finds transformational leadership as the most suited leadership style for creating an organisational culture that fosters skills development and individual growth in its employees (Ajmal et al., 2012; Almas et al., 2020; Mansaray, 2019). It was also identified in the discussion that organisations supporting such leadership styles were better equipped to adapt to the planned or unplanned changes due to technological shifts, legislative changes and other uncertainties of the changing work environment to achieve maximum social impact. Similarly, the renewed focus on collaborative or collective leadership encourages consideration of leadership that comprises a network of dynamic relationships between individuals and collectives (Spiller et al., 2020). Therefore, it is recommended that the not-for-profit sector also consider more contemporary leadership style in its approach to serving communities.

4.2 Future Research

This study provides a foundation for future research to inform the diverse challenges of the not-for-profit sector and to develop an in-depth understanding of leadership competencies. These findings apply to researchers studying individual leadership development, organisational strategies for leadership development, as well as educational strategies to build leadership competencies. The participants' views on educational content, course structure, and the credentials of programme leaders can be considered by educators to study the feasibility and applicability of such a leadership course in the future. Organisational researchers can utilise these findings in studies to develop internal training modules for their employees and future leaders. The participants' responses on coaching, mentoring and supervision have research implications for both - organisational researchers and tertiary education providers. The studies focusing on individual leaders can consider findings on volunteering and self-development to find conclusive evidence of their growth and development with such self-directed actions.

5. Conclusion

This exploratory study identified critical leadership competencies required of future leaders of community organisations. Those competencies comprise different leadership skills, behaviours, traits and styles and cannot be viewed in isolation from each other. The discussion revealed that certain styles and behaviours shape the organisational culture that fosters the growth of future leaders. Those leadership skills and traits allow leaders to implement a leadership style which creates a culture of collaboration and improves governance within an organisation. The discussion also showed that particular competencies could enable leaders to engage with stakeholders and communities in times of crisis. Despite the limited sample size of this research, the findings and the supporting literature provide insight into the challenges faced by the community organisations in New Zealand and how particular competencies can address these challenges. Thus, these competencies can not only equip community organisation leaders to navigate the changing work environment but also to achieve maximum social impact.

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Appendix A – UAHPEC Letter of Approval



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Auckland, New Zealand
Telephone 86356
Facsimile +64 9 373 7432

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

18/11/2021

Prof Christa Fouche

Re: Request for Amendment of Ethics Approval (Our Ref. UAHPEC21247): Amendment(s) Approved

The Committee considered the amendment request for your study entitled "**Leadership skills in Community organisations (024305)**".

Approval was granted for the following amendment(s):

- To broaden the scope of this project from "Leadership in Māori Organizations" to "Leadership in Community Organizations". This requires the following minor amendments:
 - change in focus from Māori Organizations to Community Organizations.
 - change in recruitment strategy – from purposive sampling using an organisation working with Māori colleagues only, to snowball sampling using professional networks of the researcher and supervisor.
 - allow the option of interviews to take place via zoom if needed.

Amended documents:

- Participant Information Sheet (PIS)
- Consent Form (CF)
- Advertisement
- Interview Questions

****The current restriction of contact in person with participants due to the COVID-19 lockdown may make the proposed methodology impractical. The Committee would like to remind researchers that they should check guidance updates and submit an amendment request if any changes need to be made to an approved ethics application to enable you to continue with your study.

The Committee would like to remind researchers that they should frequently check guidance updates, at the following sites:
<https://covid19.govt.nz/>

<https://www.staff.auckland.ac.nz/en/research-gateway/research-support-gateway/manage-ethics-and-regulatory-obligations/human-ethics-approvals.html>

Research continuity:

<https://www.staff.auckland.ac.nz/en/human-resources/staff-support-services/covid-19-coronavirus-outbreak/researcher-support-and-information.html>

If you have any questions about research continuity, not answered by the pages linked above, please contact your Faculty/Institute Research Service Team representative, your Faculty/Institute Business Continuity Lead, or mail researchcontinuity@auckland.ac.nz.

Research storage:

<https://www.staff.auckland.ac.nz/en/news-events-and-notice/news/news-2020/covid-19/drop-in-virtual-help.html>

The ethics approval for this project expires on **28/05/2023**.

Completion of the project: In order that up-to-date records are maintained, you must notify the Committee once your project is completed.

Further amendments to the approved project: Should you need to make any further changes to the approved project, please follow the steps below:

- Send a request to the UAHPEC Administrators to unlock the application form (using the Notification Tab in the Ethics RM form).
- Make all changes to the relevant sections of the application form and attach revised documents (as appropriate).
- Change the Application Type to "Amendment request" in Section 13 ("Submissions and Sign off").
- Add a summary of the changes requested in the text box.
- Submit the amendment request (PI/Supervisors only to submit the form).

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Additional information:

- Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets, Consent Forms and/or advertisements, giving the dates of the initial approval and the reference number before you use them or send them out to your participants.

All communications with the UAHPEC regarding this application should indicate this reference number: **UAHPEC21247**.

UAHPEC Administrators

University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. , Abhinav Mishra

Appendix B – Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Project Title: Leadership Competencies for Community Organisations
Student Researcher: Abhinav Mishra

Section 1: Introduction

- Make sure your recording device works and that you have a back-up in case it doesn't
- Thank the participants for their participation and time
- Check that they have read the PIS and ask if they have any questions about it.
- Remind them that the interview will be recorded.
- It will take up to 60 minutes, but will be informal and we can stop as needed.
- A reminder that the privacy of the participants will be protected by using pseudonyms.
- Are you willing to now sign the consent form (if not signed already)?
- Any questions before proceeding?

Section 2: Research question and benefits of participation

Research Question: What are the critical leadership competencies required of future leaders of community organisations in a changing work environment?

Benefits of participation:

- contribute to the research that aims to identify critical leadership competencies required of future leaders of community organisations
- contribute to studies that may impact programme design with leadership education providers and enlighten key stakeholders, including government and community organisations

Section 3: Questions

Theme	Question
Leadership Experience	1. Tell me briefly about your leadership experience and your professional journey so far?
Challenges in the changing work environment.	2. What challenges do the community leaders face in the changing work environment?
Competencies needed	3. What do you see as the critical leadership competencies required to navigate through these challenges?
Developing leadership competencies	4. What, according to you, are the strategies for developing leadership competencies in future leaders?

Section 4: Closure

- Thank the participants for their time and participation.

Appendix C – Participant Information Sheet (PIS)



**EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK**

Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: Leadership Competencies for Community Organizations
Researcher: Abhinav Mishra

My name is Abhinav Mishra. I am a student at The University of Auckland, pursuing a Master's degree in Social & Community Leadership. I would like to invite you to participate in this research. The aim of this study is to identify leadership competencies for the future leaders of community organizations.

What is the purpose of this research?

This study explores the views of experienced community leaders around a) the leadership competencies required by future leaders and managers in the changing work environment; b) the strategies and opportunities to develop those competencies.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified as a leader based on your experience of working with community organizations. Your views are important for this research.

What will happen in this research?

If you wish to participate in this research, you will be asked to give up to 60 minutes of your time for one face-to-face interview with the researcher at a mutually convenient time and place or online via Zoom. Up to 10 eligible individuals who consent to the project will be interviewed, so not everyone who expresses an interest might be interviewed. You may be asked to help identify other prospective participants from your professional networks, whose views may be relevant to this research.

What are the benefits for participating in this research?

Your participation in this study will advance understanding of leadership in community organizations and inform future initiatives to develop leaders in a changing work environment. There are no costs to participate in this study.

How will my privacy be protected?

We request that the interview be audio recorded so that discussions can be transcribed verbatim (i.e., word-for-word) for analyses. You have the right to withdraw from participation or request that the recording device be switched off at any time without giving a reason. If you withdraw, the information you have contributed up to that point will be erased. You have the option to review the transcript of the

audio recording and the right to withdraw any information you provided up to two weeks after receiving the transcript. No individuals or organisations will be identified in the research. Pseudonyms will be used as appropriate and no identifiable information will be collected. After each interview has been accurately transcribed, the digital recording will be erased. All data, including consent forms, will be kept in the Principal Investigator's locked office, inside a locked file cabinet for a period of 6 years. After 6 years, all the paperwork will be shredded.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher: Abhinav Mishra

Email: amis964@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Principal Investigator: Professor Christa Fouche

Email: c.fouche@auckland.ac.nz Tel: +64 9 373 7599 extension 48648

Head, School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work: Associate Professor Allen Bartley

Email: a.bartley@auckland.ac.nz Tel: +64 9 373 7599 extension 48140

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of Research Strategy and Integrity, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 12/11/2021 for three years. Reference Number 024305

Appendix D – Consent Form (CF)



**EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL WORK**

Epsom Campus
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T +64 9 623 8899
W education.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92601
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Auckland 1135
New Zealand

CONSENT FORM

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project Title: Leadership competencies for Community Organizations
Principle Investigator: Professor Christa Fouché
Student Researcher: Abhinav Mishra

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without giving reasons, and to withdraw any data traceable to me within two weeks after the interview or receipt of the transcript.
- I agree to being audio recorded and understand that I may request to have the recording device switched off at any time without giving a reason
- I wish/do not wish to receive a transcript of my interview for review.
If yes, please provide below an email address below for communication about this:
- I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of findings.
If yes, please provide below an email address below for communication about this

Name: _____ Email address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 12/11/2022 for three years. Reference Number 024305