



The influence of values-based leadership on organisational trust in a private higher education institution



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Yvonne Sudbury

Supervisor: Dr. Andria Du Toit

Co-supervisor: Dr. Conrad Van Greunen

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DECLARATION

I, Yvonne Sudbury, declare that this Research Report entitled “The influence of values-based leadership on organisational trust in a private higher education institution” submitted for the Master of Business Administration degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own, unaided work and has not been previously submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes. Any assistance that I have received has been duly acknowledged in the report.

Except where reference is made in the text, this report contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or part from a thesis or report presented by me for another qualification. No other person’s work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the report.

Signed:



Date: 28 October 2025

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ABSTRACT

It is acknowledged that values-based leadership plays a crucial role in building trust and producing favourable organisational outcomes concerning employee attitudes. Nonetheless, the effect of values-based leadership on organisational trust in private higher education has not been extensively studied. By examining how values-based leadership affects organisational trust during the deployment of a new system in such a context, this study fills this gap. To foster a culture of trust, cooperation, and common purpose, values-based leadership places a strong emphasis on leaders' decisions and actions being in line with fundamental moral and ethical values including integrity, openness, and social responsibility. The impacts of three leadership philosophies, Responsible Leadership, Authentic Leadership, and Ethical Leadership, on Organisational Trust are examined in this study, utilising multiple and stepwise regression analyses. The data suggest that Ethical and Responsible Leadership considerably and positively predict Organisational Trust, while Authentic Leadership has no significant impact in this context. To clarify the overlap between Authentic and Ethical Leadership, the study provides cultural perspectives from the South African context. These findings highlight how important Ethical and Responsible Leadership is to building trust, particularly during times of implementing new systems. To increase trust and lessen resistance, leaders in private higher education should give ethics-focused training first priority when implementing new systems. By providing useful guidance for private higher education executives and highlighting values-based concepts for resilient, adaptable organisations throughout system implementations, this study adds to the conversation around leadership. Cross-sectional design (no causality), self-reported data (bias risk), and the South African private higher education context (limited generalisability) are some of the limitations. To address this, future research may use mixed approaches or longitudinal designs. These findings are supported by the methodology, which is based on sound quantitative analysis and provides a clear road forward for further study and leadership development programmes.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Leadership Ethics, Organisational Change, Organisational Trust, Private Higher Education Institution, Responsible Leadership, Values-based leadership.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

To promote authenticity, integrity, and trust in the workplace, values-based leadership focusses on coordinating leaders' decisions and actions with fundamental organisational and personal values. To foster a culture of trust, involvement, and unity of purpose at all organisational levels, values-based leadership places a strong emphasis on moral values including integrity, openness, and social responsibility (Barrett and Anderson, 2022). Values-based leaders cultivate a strong, values-driven culture that promotes ethical decision-making, inspires employee loyalty, and contributes to long-term organisational success by continuously exhibiting and articulating these values (Sinek, Mead and Docker, 2017). In today's volatile corporate climate, where maintaining competitive advantage and stakeholder relationships depends heavily on trust and honesty, values-based leadership are especially pertinent (Dey, Bhattacharjee, Mahmood, Uddin and Biswas, 2022). In the following section, the particular contextual elements influencing this study are discussed.

1.2 Background and contextualisation

The state capture scandal in South Africa that revealed pervasive corruption among leaders, led to significant Ethical Leadership trust failures during the first two decades of the twenty-first century. A renewed emphasis on values-based leadership that places an importance on honesty and responsibility has resulted from management theorists' emphasis on the significance of ethics and morals in leadership (Botha and Vrba, 2024).

According to Sharma and Kulshreshtha (2021) the relationship between a leader and their followers is strengthened through fundamental elements, including trust, ethics and power. The Steinhoff crisis, one of SA's largest fraud cases, illustrated how leaders justify immoral tactics to hold onto power when their ethical compass has been compromised (Naudé, Hamilton, Ungerer and Malan, 2018). In this regard, values-based leadership refers to actions that have a moral and ethical basis. According to Botha and Vrba (2024), the notion of what constitutes good leadership in an organisation has evolved from the top-level leader offering a broad vision to the

leadership style distributed throughout the organisation and the emphasis on the leadership culture. This research examines the following leadership philosophies in relation to values-based leadership: **Authentic Leadership, Ethical Leadership, and Responsible Leadership**

The essence of what distinguishes the various leadership styles is encapsulated by the following authors. According to May, Hodges, and Avolio (2003), "authentic leaders lead from a moral foundation" built on their identity and values. They gain the loyalty of their followers by fostering trust (Dion, 2012). As stated by Mahsud, Yukl, and Prussia (2010), a leader who possesses strong ethical beliefs sets an example for followers by establishing strict standards of ethical conduct while holding employees liable for fulfilling these standards. Maak and Pless (2006) define Responsible Leadership as the capacity to prioritise the needs of various stakeholders.

Besides large corporations as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, Tadesse, Bekele, and Arega (2024), concluded that the impact of values-based leadership in higher education has substantial consequences for the direction of the industry going forward. According to Tadesse et al. (2024), the use of the values-based leadership model in higher education for change management seems promising from the perspectives of both professionals and academics. However, more empirical research is required to determine the relationship between values-based leadership and Organisational Trust in higher education.

According to Akdere and Egan (2020), effective leadership in an organisational context can foster employees' professional growth and create a positive, trust-based work environment (Abiddin, 2024). Furthermore, the significance of leadership styles has increased in the setting of higher education institutions, according to Abiddin (2024). According to Gigliotti (2022), values-based leadership is essential in higher education because it offers a platform for decision-making that is guiding, particularly in times of crisis. Although higher education institutions are fundamentally founded on values, these principles may be compromised in times of crisis, possibly resulting in a preference for reputation over sincere care for impacted stakeholders. This can

impede communication, education, and healing required during the crisis (Gigliotti, 2022, p.1).

Furthermore, Gring-Pemle, Unruh and Shaked (2024) demonstrated how a higher education institution, like George Mason University in Fairfax County, Virginia, may adapt management education by leveraging off lessons learned from the private sector. This strategy highlights the importance of matching new projects with current organisational cultures and shows how values-based leadership paradigms in academia may be used across sectors. Kleinhans, Heyns, Stander, and De Beer (2022, p.3) have noted that a leader's actions amid turbulent and uncertain times can either win or lose the trust and support of their followers.

Given the competitive context, this study specifically refers to private higher education institutions, whereas earlier studies focused on public higher education institutions. This study's goal is to examine how values-based leadership affects trust, particularly when a private higher education institution is implementing a new system. This study's main focus is to fully comprehend the effects of values-based leadership on organisational trust in a private higher education institution, specifically when a new system is being implemented. Now that the context has been set, the main issue this study attempts to solve is stated in the next section.

1.3 Problem statement

During the implementation of new systems, leaders in South African private higher education institutions act with a keen awareness of their values and a desire to maintain integrity and win the respect and trust of their followers (Baquero, 2023). However, the empirical connection between this values-based approach and organisational trust has not yet been investigated. New system implementations at private higher education institutions frequently cause confusion and possibly undermine organisational trust by upsetting long-standing routines and procedures. Although it is widely acknowledged that values-based leadership plays a crucial role in building trust and producing favourable organisational results regarding employee attitudes and system acceptance, there is a lack of research on the relationship

between values-based leadership and Organisational Trust in private higher education institutions (Purnomo, 2024). In particular, no empirical research has looked at this dynamic in private higher education institutions, where agile system changes heighten susceptibility to a breakdown in trust (Purnomo, 2024). However, research in the public sector or corporate settings have studied values-based leadership's trust-building mechanisms (Baquero, 2023). Closing this gap highlights the significance of the study, which is discussed in the section that follows.

1.4 Significance of the study

Finding a sizable gap in the body of knowledge about the effect of values-based leadership on organisational trust in private higher education institutions serves as a clear justification for this study. Closing this gap is crucial because building organisational trust via morally and ethically driven leadership has become more and more important for stakeholder engagement and long-term success. In addition to offering useful advice for leaders and organisations looking to improve leadership practices, this study intends to add to the body of knowledge by offering empirical insights into how values-based leadership affects trust dynamics. Additionally, by influencing leadership development initiatives and encouraging trust-based organisational cultures that enhance employee engagement, output, and long-term organisational resilience, the study's conclusions are anticipated to help practitioners in the field. The purpose and main goals of the study are outlined in the following part in order to properly address this issue.

1.5 Purpose and primary objective

The primary objective of this study is to examine the direct and combined effects of three independent variables, Authentic, Ethical, and Responsible leadership styles, on the dependent variable of Organisational Trust in a private higher education institution in South Africa while a new system is being implemented. This study aims to shed light on tactics that leaders may use to prevent the deterioration of trust and address the effective deployment of new systems. The purpose and primary objective are complemented by the secondary objectives, which are explained in more detail below.

1.6 Secondary objectives

RO1: To investigate the relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organisational Trust in a private higher education institution.

RO2: To investigate the relationship between Ethical Leadership and Organisational Trust in a private higher education institution.

RO3: To investigate the relationship between Responsible Leadership and Organisational Trust in a private higher education institution.

These objectives are based on key concepts that will be discussed in the preliminary literature review that follows.

1.7 Preliminary literature review

Numerous, evasive, and discouraging Ethical Leadership failures followed the dawn of the twenty-first century. According to Copeland (2014, p.105), numerous leaders were exposed for immoral or unethical activities as uncovered at the beginning of the twenty-first century, neither the public nor private sectors were immune. Copeland (2014) continues to state that values-based leaders (VBL) are individuals that possess a moral and ethical foundation (Bass and Avolio, 1993; Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Brown and Treviño, 2006; Gardner and Avolio, 2005).

Although VBL discourse was sparked by these early 21st-century failures, recent ethical lapses (e.g., Wirecard 2020, FTX 2022) show the limitations of their recommendations. Meta-analyses reveal that ethical leadership predicts 42% greater trust outcomes than trait models during organisational change (Lee, Willis, and Tian, 2022), but it has not been tested in emerging-market private higher education institutions like South Africa during system implementations.

As recorded by Botha and Vrba (2024), the different types of values-based leadership include: **Authentic Leadership**: leaders possess self-awareness and are conscious of their principles, values, and areas of strength and weakness. **Ethical Leadership**: have a sincere concern and care for others, and they are driven by altruism. **Responsible Leadership**: there is an ethical and values-based interaction between leaders and stakeholders who are united by a common sense of purpose and

meaning. **Servant leadership:** leaders see to it that the most pressing needs of others are met.

VBL characterises actions that have their roots in moral and ethical principles, whereas Falcone's (2023) perspective on VBL relates to building on both the team and the leader's common values and presumptions, stating that values-based leadership is both a leadership philosophy and style, resulting in the team's benefiting from stronger alignment and increased productivity as a result of sharing a common set of values.

According to Tadesse et al. (2024), Copeland's (2014) findings are strengthened by highlighting the necessity for educational leaders to match their actions with core principles to increase stakeholder participation and trust. Given the competitive environment and a lack of literature on values-based leadership in private higher education institutions, sections 1.8 to 1.10 will examine Authentic, Ethical, and Responsible Leadership with a focus on organisational trust in private higher education institutions. To promote trust and successful outcomes at the organisational level, Authentic Leadership, Ethical Leadership and Responsible Leadership mainly focusses on matching leadership behaviours with fundamental organisational values. Conversely, Servant Leadership places greater emphasis on meeting the needs and advancing the personal development of followers, putting their development and welfare ahead of corporate goals Abay (2023). Because its follower-centric approach does not immediately correspond with the research focus on trust within organisations during system implementations in private higher education institutions, servant leadership is consequently excluded from this study. The following section explores Authentic Leadership as a foundational style.

1.8 Authentic Leadership

Abiddin (2024) recorded that authentic and servant leadership styles positively affect organisational commitment and employee satisfaction, which in turn improves performance. Furthermore, Abiddin (2024) noted that ethics, openness, and creating a healthy work atmosphere are the characteristics of true Authentic Leadership.

An authentic leader is trustworthy, respectable, and honest due to their self-awareness, internalised moral perspective, relational transparency, and balanced processing as recorded by Ilies, Morgeson and Nahrgang (2005, p 376). Similarly, according to Chen and Sriphon (2022), trust among organisational members is positively impacted by Authentic Leadership. Therefore, trust is expected to increase as Authentic Leadership behaviour improves (Chen and Sriphon, 2022).

The following hypothesis is put forth for empirical testing in light of the evidence demonstrating the connection between organisational trust and Authentic Leadership:

H1: There is a positive relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organisational Trust.

Next, we will look at Ethical Leadership, which is another pillar of values-based methods.

1.9 Ethical Leadership

According to Vikaraman, Mansor, Nor, Alias, and Gurusamy (2021, p.178), Ethical Leadership is defined as "a leader who abides by the moral values, principles, and moral conducts in their say, behaviour, action, and decision-making", and as a result, leaders can be motivated to be more effective (Brown and Treviño.,2006).

Additionally, Engelbrecht, Heine, and Mahembe (2014, p.3) noted the following:

- According to a 2009 study by Van den Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen and Six (2009), Ethical Leadership is strongly correlated with the degree of trust that the followers have in the leader.
- A 2012 study by Johnson, Shelton, and Yates found a positive correlation ($r = 0.796$; $p < 0.01$) between organisational trust and Ethical Leadership.
- Additionally, a 2010 study by Wong et al. discovered that trust is positively impacted by Ethical Leadership ($\beta = 0.43$; $p < 0.001$).

Botha and Vrba (2024) recorded that ethical leaders are people with morals and values who impart their ethical beliefs to their followers by modelling moral behaviour themselves. It highlights the traditional leader-follower dynamic and predicts outcomes including followers' commitment and leaders' perceived efficacy.

Given the evidence showing the link between organisational trust and Ethical Leadership, the following hypothesis is proposed for empirical testing:

H2: There is a positive relationship between Ethical Leadership and Organisational Trust.

Responsible Leadership emphasises accountability, which is discussed in the section that follows.

1.10 Responsible Leadership

According to Ahmad, Iqbal, Siddique, Abbas, and Fakhr (2020), Responsible Leadership is associated with the 1984 Freeman stakeholder theory, which considers the dynamics of leadership in the stakeholder environment that includes the ethical opinion, encompassing norms, principles, and values.

Furthermore, responsible leaders connect leadership and stakeholder theory by associating effectiveness with corporate responsibility and a concern for stakeholders, according to Botha and Vrba (2024), whereas Abay, Gomes and Mengistu (2023), noted that Responsible Leadership and Authentic Leadership are compatible since they both take into account moral qualities including trust, reliability, and putting employee welfare first (Agarwal and Bhal, 2020, p.637).

In light of the information demonstrating the connection between Responsible Leadership and organisational trust, the following hypothesis is put forward for empirical investigation:

H3: There is a positive relationship between Responsible Leadership and Organisational Trust.

Organisational Trust, the dependent variable that will be covered next, is where these approaches converge.

1.11 Organisational Trust

According to Hindhaugh, Hallam and Braham (2023), trust in an organisational setting, is the belief that the leadership team is trustworthy, exhibits appropriate behaviour, fulfils commitments, and looks out for their employees' best interests. This means that the employees will trust in a leader or co-worker skills required to complete a task, as well as trust in character, referring to a person's continuous exhibition of values like fairness, honesty, integrity, and respect. As recorded in previous studies, fairness, honesty and respect are the same values connotated with values-based leadership (Abay et al., 2023).

Zak (2021, p.4) explains that workers in high-trust organisations reported 74% less stress in employees, 50% more productivity and 106% more vitality at work. The study also reported 13% reduction in sick days, 40% less burnout, 29% greater life happiness and 76% greater engagement. The findings draw attention to a knowledge gap pertaining to Organisational Trust in a private higher education institution specifically.

The variables that will be used in the study are displayed in the conceptual model below:

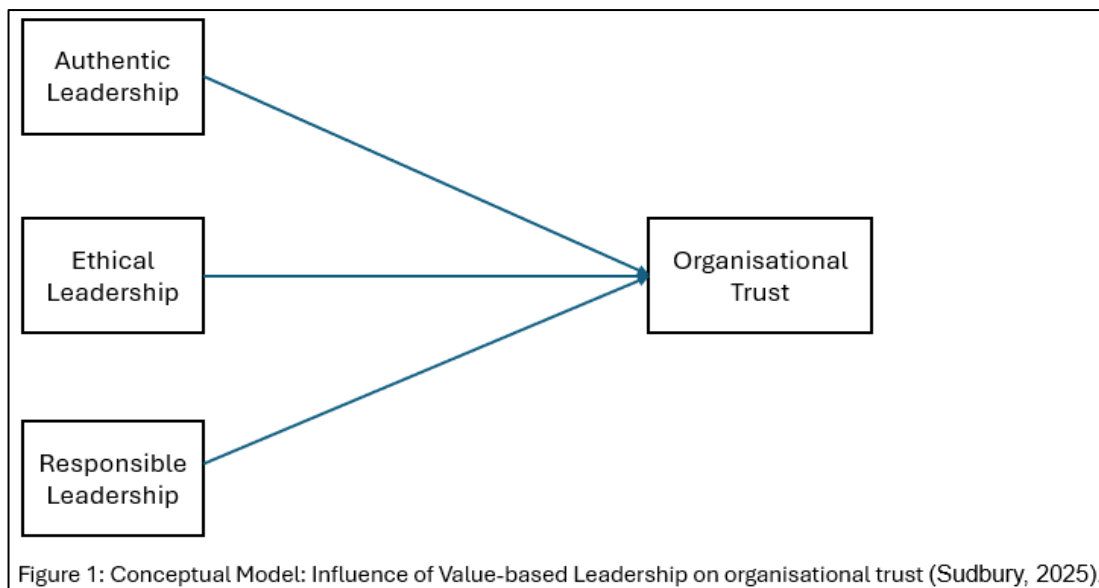


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework: influence of values-based leadership on Organisational Trust (Sudbury, 2025)

The theory behind values-based leadership will be thoroughly examined in Chapter 2, along with its main ideas, importance, and organisational contexts. Furthermore, the chapter will explore additional theoretical frameworks, including Social Exchange Theory, which concentrate on the mutually beneficial connections between leaders and followers, and Stakeholder Theory, which highlights the significance of taking into account the interests of all parties impacted by organisational decisions. After outlining the theoretical components, the following part explains the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions of the study.

1.12 Delimitation, limitations and assumptions of the research

In order to ensure transparency regarding the study's limits and contextual constraints, it is crucial to precisely specify the delimitations and limitations that outline the study's scope and acknowledge the assumptions that drive its implementation.

One of the study's delimitations is that it only looked at one corporate organisation (i.e., a selected private higher education institution); as a result, the findings might not apply to other organisations or sectors. The conclusions of the study can't be applied to the full company because it focuses on employees at different managerial levels and doesn't look at other types of employees, which is seen as a limitation.

This study is predicated on the following assumptions: respondents gave truthful and accurate answers; and the sample chosen sufficiently represents the viewpoints of the targeted organisational levels. Additionally, it is anticipated that participants were similarly impacted by the new system implementation, enabling insightful analysis within the parameters of the study.

In terms of the study's limitations, convenience sampling, a non-probability technique where participants are chosen based on their availability and accessibility to the researcher, was the sample strategy used for this study. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling strategy that selects participants based on their availability and willingness to participate rather than at random from a wider population (Saunders et al., 2019). Although rapid and simple data collection is made possible by this method, random selection is not used, which reduces the representativeness of the sample and, as a result, the study's findings' applicability to a larger population (Scholtz, 2022). The research methodology overview that follows is informed by abovementioned delimitations, limitations and assumptions.

1.13 Research methodology

The study's methodology describes a systematic way to use a deductive, mono-method survey design and a pragmatic philosophy to examine how leadership styles affect organisational trust in a particular corporate setting using cross-sectional data gathered through convenience sampling (Gamage, 2023). The table below briefly displays the research methodology adopted in this study, while a detailed discussion will be provided in Chapter 3.

Table 1.1 Research methodology used in this study

Research Philosophy	<i>Ontology</i> : Real, external independent with one true reality. <i>Epistemology</i> : Scientifically measurable. <i>Axiology</i> : Researcher is detached from the research and not part of an interview.
Research Approach	Deductive by developing hypotheses based on the researcher's observations of the literature review, the researcher attempts to empirically test the hypotheses to see if it holds true.
Research Strategy	Survey: Structured collection of data from a selected group of individuals.
Type of Research	Mono-method: use of one method to collect data.

Time Horizon	Cross-sectional: data collection at a specific point in time.
Techniques and Procedures	Design of a survey based on the concepts of trust and leadership. Regression, validity and reliability analyses. Consent from participants and ethical data collection.
Research Purpose	Explanatory: Examining the influence of leadership on organisational trust.
Population and Sample	Population: All employees of South African private higher education institutions made up the population relevant to the current study. Sample: The sample consisted of the employees from one of the leading private higher educational institutions in South Africa. Sample Size: 284 participants

In conclusion, this methodological framework offers a strong, contextually sensitive way for empirically confirming the contribution of values-based leadership to building organisational trust during system implementations in South African private higher education (Gamage, 2023). It clearly tackles the goals of the study while admitting trade-offs such as sampling limits by putting practicality and statistical rigour ahead of exploratory breadth. This establishes a clear framework for the specific methodologies described in Chapter 3. Furthermore, this technique is based on ethical rigour, which is explained in the next section on considerations.

1.14 Ethical considerations

The institution granted ethical clearance prior to starting this investigation, guaranteeing adherence to established procedures for participant protection. Key ethical considerations, such as guaranteeing participant confidentiality and anonymity, obtaining informed consent before participation, and properly expressing the study's objectives and procedures to maintain research integrity and protect rights, were made easier by this approval. These safeguards are in place to preserve the integrity of the research process, safeguard participant rights, and protect confidentiality. Chapter 3 offers a thorough explanation of this scale and how it is used to gauge how employees view their managers.

The use of established, Cronbach's alpha-tested scales for organisational trust and values-based leadership ensured reliability. To ensure that the instruments

appropriately represented the theoretical constructs in the context of private higher education, validity was addressed through construct validation using factor analysis and content validation by subject matter experts. Although convenience sampling slightly restricts generalisability, the sensitivity of the measures allows for the detection of subtle trust variations during system implementations; these characteristics are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 along with statistical power studies.

A chapter outline, which is previewed next, brings this roadmap to a close.

1.15 Chapter outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter encapsulates the introduction, background and context, problem statement, significance of study, purpose and primary objectives, secondary objectives, preliminary literature review, Authentic Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Responsible Leadership, Organisational Trust, delimitation, limitation and assumptions of the research, research methodology, ethical considerations, chapter outline and conclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, relevant theories and research on organisational trust, open change, and leadership ethics in private higher education institutions are critically examined.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

The Secondary research, primary research, research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, methodological choice, time horizon, techniques and procedures, data collection, research population, sample, sampling method and sample size, scope delimitations and limitations of study, measuring instruments and ethics, administration of questionnaire, pilot testing, data analysis and ethical considerations are all covered in length in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

In this chapter, the research results are presented, together with the data analysis and an interpretation of the findings in light of the proposed research hypotheses.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings are discussed in the context of the literature in this chapter, along with its implications, limitations, recommendations, and potential areas for further study.

In summary, this chapter establishes the framework, and the conclusion summarises the main ideas that will be covered.

1.16 Conclusion

The background and setting for this study are given in Chapter 1, which also outlines the challenges that led to the research. The problem statement made it apparent that there was a lack of knowledge regarding the connection between organisational trust and values-based leadership styles in a private higher education institution. The study's importance was emphasised by highlighting how it could increase workplace trust and leadership practices. The purpose of the research aims was to direct the study of Authentic, Ethical and Responsible Leadership and how it affects Organisational Trust. Finally, to ensure the integrity of the study, ethical issues such as informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were discussed. Chapter 1 set the tone for the theoretical discussions that will follow in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Though early models are still criticised for their shortcomings in a variety of contemporary contexts, the growth of leadership theories demonstrates a shift from innate features to contextual, learnt competencies. According to Bagchi and Sharma (2024), early conceptions of leadership, such as the great man theory, suggested that only a chosen few were born with the ability to lead.

An assumption that has been criticised for its cultural bias and disregard for situational considerations (Yukl, 2013) and empirically refuted by behavioural studies demonstrating leadership as trainable (Stogdill, 1948). The idea that "leaders are born, not made" has been extensively refuted by later research that highlights the dynamic nature of leadership, including the development of ethical decision-making throughout organisational change through learnt actions (Bagchi & Sharma, 2024).

This viewpoint was based on the idea that leaders are born, not created, and the notion that leadership is dynamic rather than static was emphasised by their argument that leadership, including ethical decision-making during organisational change, may be established through learned actions. A more direct definition of leadership and its connection to influence is provided by Dwight D. Eisenhower: "Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it," as noted by Miller (2021). This emphasises influence over coercion while ignoring power imbalances in hierarchical settings (Northouse, 2021). Additionally, Baker (2023) presents leadership as motivating people to accomplish more, which is consistent with transformational models but necessitates empirical validation in non-Western contexts.

This development of leadership theories towards values-driven approaches is supported by recent empirical syntheses. The superiority of values-based styles over trait-focused models was demonstrated in a 2022 meta-analysis by Lee *et al.*, across 50 independent samples. They found that ethical and servant leadership performed better than transformational leadership in predicting intrinsic motivation, a crucial precursor to trust, especially in high-change environments. Oc, Daniels, Dinh, Bashshur, and Greguras' (2020) meta-analysis of 117 studies in higher education

contexts revealed that ethical and responsible leadership decreased resistance to change by incorporating stakeholder needs, accounting for up to 25% more variance in adoption outcomes than conventional transformational approaches during digital transitions. Van der Walt and Wiese's (2025) research from South Africa summarises these trends and looks at how values-based leadership promotes a positive organisational culture in higher education institutions by aligning with core values like integrity and social responsibility, which implicitly increases trust. However, it also identifies ongoing gaps in empirical studies that specifically test these dynamics, especially during system implementations in private higher education institutions.

Despite this advancement, there is still a significant knowledge gap: few research has examined organisational trust in private higher education institutions undertaking system implementations in South Africa using advanced values-based leadership theories. In order to guide ethical leadership throughout transition, this study objectively examines how different styles predict trust, guided by Stakeholder and Social Exchange Theories.

The introduction establishes the framework for the section that follows, which traces the development of leadership ideas through the next the evolution of leadership theories is discussed, followed by Values-based Leadership, Organisational Trust, Authentic Leadership, Ethical Leadership Responsible Leadership, including theoretical underpinnings, such as Stakeholder and Social Exchange Theories.

2.2 Evolution of Leadership Theories

Over time, leadership theory has changed significantly to reflect shifting perspectives on what makes a good leader. According to early leadership theories like the Great Man Theory, leaders are born with unique qualities (Bagchi and Sharma, 2024). Furthermore, this nineteenth-century viewpoint emphasised great leaders who were viewed as born leaders, such as Abraham Lincoln and Julius Caesar. The Trait Theory, which emerged in the early 20th century, aimed to scientifically pinpoint the traits that set leaders apart from non-leaders, such as self-assurance, wit, and resolve (Stogdill, 1948). Current research indicates that critical leadership attributes such as emotional intelligence, communication, and flexibility may be acquired to improve

leadership effectiveness, despite the initial focus on innate skills (Shala, Mehmeti, Shabani and Qerimi, 2024). Abovementioned attributes enable leaders to not only remain effective in dynamic situations but also improves flexibly in different contexts (Ryan and Tipu, 2013). This development emphasises the value of acquired abilities and situational adaptability while demonstrating the ongoing applicability of Trait Theory. During the 1930s and 1960s, there was a trend towards behavioural theories that prioritised leader behaviours above innate qualities due to their inability to take situational elements into account as well as inconsistent empirical results (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

According to Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939), behavioural approaches distinguished between leadership styles such as task-oriented versus people-oriented leadership and democratically participative versus authoritarian approaches. By the 1960s, Hersey and Blanchard (1969) and Fiedler (1967) had developed Situational and Contingency Theories, which claimed that effective leadership relied on adapting styles to the needs of the situation and the followers' readiness.

Effective leadership relies on tailoring one's style to the particular situation, according to both Situational and Contingency Leadership Theories. According to Hersey and Blanchard's (1969) Situational Theory, leaders should modify their approach, from directing to delegating, according to the maturity and preparedness of their followers, including their abilities and motivation levels. According to Fiedler's Contingency Theory, a leader can be effective when their style, whether relationship or task-oriented, aligns with situational elements such as positional power, task structure, and leader-member interactions (Miles, 2022).

These opinions are still supported and expanded upon by recent research, which emphasises how crucial it is for leaders to be able to switch between relational and task-focused behaviours with ease while handling increasingly complex and dynamic work environments (Chychun and Polianko, 2025). Furthermore, in order to improve team performance and organisational change, behavioural leadership models currently place a strong emphasis on the importance of emotional intelligence, motivational support, and trust-building (Jinga, 2024).

The difficulties of contemporary organisations are addressed by the ethical, relational, and transformational aspects of the New Leadership Theories that have surfaced in recent decades (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Lemoine, Hartnell, and Leroy (2019) have divided these into three categories: values-based leadership, which emphasises moral integrity and stakeholder engagement through Authentic, Ethical, and Responsible Leadership; Servant Leadership, which puts followers' needs first; and Transformational Leadership, which inspires and uplifts followers. By combining ethical stewardship with authentic relational behaviours, recent research has further confirmed how well these leadership philosophies promote organisational trust and sustainability (Botha and Vrba, 2024).

Leadership ethics play a critical role in private higher education institutions during open change, such as the introduction of new systems, where open, equitable, and inclusive behaviours reduce opposition and erode trust (Brown & Treviño, 2006). According to Cummings and Worley (2014), ethical leaders that are in line with Social Exchange Theory promote reciprocity through integrity by contrasting inflexible models with iterative, participative ways that are appropriate for PHEIs' resource limitations and regulatory pressures. Through the use of ethical scenario training, they manage challenges like as data privacy, striking a balance between innovation and moral responsibility to maintain stakeholder engagement in the face of uncertainty (Osiyemi, 2006).

In summary, the development of leadership theories has moved from perspectives based on innate traits to dynamic, learnt approaches that emphasise influence, ethics, and adaptability. This evolution offers a solid basis for comprehending the role that values-based leadership plays in building organisational trust in the face of change.

Although reciprocity and participative integrity are two ways that leadership ethics theoretically counteract change resistance (Brown & Treviño, 2006), its practical effectiveness in resource-constrained private higher education institutions is still understudied amid conflicting priorities like regulatory compliance, possibly overstated without empirical isolation from genuine traits. By using stepwise regression to determine ethics as the primary predictor of trust during system rollouts, this study critically validates the usefulness of scenario training (Osiyemi, 2006) and highlights

the need for cultural adaptation in South African Ubuntu contexts, giving it precedence over less reliable values-based alternatives. As will be discussed in the next paragraph, values-based leadership stands out as crucial in this process.

2.2.1 Values-based Leadership

According to Frost (2014, p.126), values-based leadership begins with the leader as an individual, their self-leadership and the values that define them. When individuals discuss values in the context of self-leadership, they are referring to actions rather than just words, showcasing consistent behaviour aligned with their declared principles. Furthermore, values-based leadership characterises actions that have a moral and ethical basis. According to Botha and Vrba (2024), the notion of effective leadership in an organisation has evolved from the top-level leader focus to a decentralised leadership distribution, emphasising a broader leadership culture.

The question of whether values-based leadership is something that can be learned was first opined by Osiyemi (2006). Osiyemi (2006) suggests that values-based leadership can and should be taught in the workplace supported by the notion that everyone in the group (or workplace), not just the designated individual, is responsible for leadership. Additionally, people learn how to lead when they connect with one another in a group setting and when they establish personal relationships and trust. Building organisational trust requires the group to be supportive, engaged, and continually show trust (Center for Creative Leadership, 2025).

Employees' confidence in leaders is positively correlated with values-based or principled leadership according to Engelbrecht, Heine and Mahembe (2017). The connection between Organisational Trust and values-based leadership was later validated by Engelbrecht and Hendrikz (2020).

Literature shows the focus of leadership development studies on traits, behaviours, personal beliefs, and the interaction between leaders and their surroundings (Abay et al. 2023, p.2). Abay et al. (2023, p.2) continuous to confirm the ongoing debate between scholars in pursuit of the best leadership theory. Due to the large number of operational definitions in use, the leadership literature shows a lack of consensus

regarding the conceptualisation of values-based leadership and what it comprises (Fulford and Coleman, 2022, p.63).

Tadesse et al. (2024), agreed with Copeland (2014), that it is necessary for educational leaders to match their actions with core principles to increase stakeholder participation and trust. Values-based leaders are individuals who possess a moral and ethical foundation (Bass and Avolio, 1993; Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Brown and Treviño, 2006; Gardner and Avolio, 2005). Further to Botha and Vrba (2024), Authentic Leadership relates to leaders that possess self-awareness and are conscious of their principles, values, and areas of strength and weakness. Ethical leaders have a sincere concern and care for others, and they are driven by altruism. Responsible Leadership relates to an ethical and values-based interaction between leaders and stakeholders who are united by a common sense of purpose and meaning.

Although values-based leadership has been the subject of many business-related studies, some empirical investigation in higher education emerged recently. In a study of school principals, Baloglu (2012) discovered a positive link between values-based leadership and distributed leadership, which involves sharing leadership responsibilities and decision-making among multiple individuals within an organisation rather than concentrating them in one person (Spillane, 2006). This highlighted how principled leadership encourages collaboration, support, vision formulation, and efficient supervision among educators. Further sector-specific empirical research is required to validate these findings in private higher education contexts, but current findings imply that the integration of values-based leadership in educational institutions may improve organisational cohesion and leadership effectiveness.

Lemoine, Hartnell, and Leroy (2019) note that while the nature of the leadership styles varies according to the conceptual emphasis of each concept, there are some similarities between the various leadership approaches, for instance, both Ethical Leadership and Authentic Leadership place a strong emphasis on moral consistency. In addition to Lemoine et al. (2019), Authentic Leadership measures how closely activities align with fundamental values and beliefs in order to evaluate a self-concordant approach to moral consistency, whereas congruence between a leader's

behaviour and the standards they enforce for their followers is known as Ethical Leadership, meaning that ethical leaders set high standards for themselves and others, modelling acceptable behaviour while acting consistently.

Trust, dedication, and performance in a variety of industries are positively correlated with values-based leadership, according to empirical studies (Engelbrecht et al., 2017); taking cultural settings into consideration and dealing with possible measuring biases (Fulford and Coleman, 2022).

Operationalising values-based leadership and Organisational Trust is significantly hampered by cross-cultural diversity (Tirmizi, Williams and Tirmizi, 2023). Research shows that cultural factors including power distance, individualism versus collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance affect how people view and use leadership behaviours. Purnomo (2024), emphasised the necessity of culturally responsive leadership development and emphasised that the success of values-based leadership depends on adjusting to organisational culture that promotes long-term transformation. It is thus crucial to adapt leadership concepts to local norms, particularly in multicultural or multicultural educational environments. For example, the difficulty of building of trust and making moral decisions are increased by stress and organisational politics (Lee and Selart, 2014). Furthermore, if conflicting requests are not addressed, Responsible Leadership may result in imbalances in stakeholder prioritisation. Realistic leadership development initiatives are guided by an understanding of these complexities, which also serves to temper idealised ideas (Ellis, 2024).

Given the competitive environment and a lack of literature on values-based leadership in a private higher education institution specifically, Sections 2.4 to 2.6 will examine Authentic, Ethical, and Responsible Leadership with a focus on organisational trust.

The emphasis of servant leadership on meeting the needs of followers and the focus of transformational leadership on motivating followers are similar to those of values-based leadership (Bass, 2006). Values-based approaches, on the other hand, emphasise stakeholder inclusion and ethical underpinnings as fundamental tenets rather than merely the results of inspirational actions. Making sense of these connections improves both theoretical coherence and real-world application (Ellis,

2024). The nature of Organisational Trust and its connection to values-based leadership specifically, Ethical, Authentic, and Responsible Leadership, are the main topics dealt with in the sections that follow. In conclusion, values-based leadership represents a moral framework in which leaders firmly match their choices and actions with core moral principles, fostering followers' genuineness and long-lasting dedication. Organisational trust, the primary outcome variable that follows, is linked to this foundation.

2.3 Organisational Trust

Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995, p.712) define organisational trust as "The willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party". This is called the Integrative Model of Organisational Trust. The main elements of the Integrative Model of Organisational Trust includes ability, referring to aptitudes, proficiencies, and traits that allow a person to exert influence in a particular field; benevolence, referring to a sincere concern for the trustor's welfare and the trustee's readiness to act in the trustor's best interests; and lastly, integrity, described as upholding a set of values that the trustor considers appropriate, such as justice and honesty (Mayer et al., 2005, p.717).

According to McAllister (1995), affective trust (emotional ties and concern) and cognitive trust (confidence in competence and reliability) are both components of Organisational Trust. These aspects can be influenced differently by values-based leadership; for instance, Ethical Leadership strengthens cognitive trust through justice and integrity, while genuine leadership fosters affective trust through transparency (Baquero, 2023). It is easier to comprehend how leadership styles create collaborative and productive work environments when trust conversations are expanded to encompass these subtleties and models such as Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's Integrative Trust Model.

Furthermore, Salanova, Acosta-Antognoni, Llorens, and Le Blanc (2021, p.4241) noted that various theories argue how organisational trust develops. One such theory is the Social Exchange Theory, which postulates that when employees trust their

leaders and co-workers, they are more likely to invest their energy and resources by concentrating on their responsibilities. According to Kleynhans et al. (2022), when followers perceive that the company care for their well-being, values their work and contributions and strives to meet their needs, organisational trust is more likely to increase, linking to concept of Authentic Leadership.

In the same fashion, ethical leaders apply a variety of communication techniques to spread the organisation's mission, vision, and teachings, building a strong leader-subordinate bond and increases employee satisfaction and trust in turn (Guo, 2022, p.5). Finally, to establish enduring trusting relationships and the sustainable development of both enterprises and society, Responsible Leadership must balance the claims of many stakeholders, according to Maak and Pless (2006, p.103).

This study concludes that organisational trust serves as a crucial mediator in the implementation of private higher education systems, where leadership signals must overcome historical scepticism stemming from South African injustices. Empirical regression results confirm its measurability using Mayer et al.'s (1995) integrity-benevolence framework, but they also highlight contextual fragility that necessitates proactive, values-aligned interventions beyond Zak's (2017) Western oxytocin model.

The collective trust that workers have in peers, leaders, and systems is known as Organisational Trust, and it is a vital basis for resilience in times of transition, such as the introduction of new systems. Authentic Leadership, which is discussed in the next section, is the first leadership style that fosters trust.

2.4 Authentic Leadership

Individuals who practise Authentic Leadership behave in a way that is true to their genuine selves and is “real”, sincere, and original. According to proponents of Authentic Leadership, this kind of leader is most suited to encourage employees' trust, loyalty, and high performance (Pratt and Sales, 2023). Furthermore, Pratt and Sales (2023) recorded that Authentic Leadership traits not only encourage loyalty and trust among staff members, but when combined, they enable leaders to exert influence over others and help an organisation succeed.

Luthans and Avolio (2003, p.243) provide the following description of Authentic Leadership in organisations; more self-awareness and self-regulated good behaviours on the part of leaders and associates are the outcomes of this process, which draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organisational setting, which promotes positive self-development. Since Authentic Leadership places a strong emphasis on leaders' self-awareness and connection with their personal values, this study will look at how it affects organisational trust when a new system is implemented in a private higher education institution, with a particular emphasis on how authentic decision-making and openness help to build Organisational Trust.

The effects of Authentic Leadership on trust in the Chinese hospitality sector were examined by Qiu, Alizadeh, Dooley and Zhang (2019), who discovered a strong positive correlation between the two variables. Authentic leaders also exhibit strong moral values and integrity, as well as concern for the welfare of others, which builds trust between leaders and followers (Baquero, 2023, p.1404). Similarly, it was clear from the findings of a study by Kleynhans, Heyns, and Stander (2022) that there was a substantial correlation between employee flourishing, organisational support, trust in the organisation, and Authentic Leadership. In essence, true self-awareness and transparency are characteristics of Authentic Leadership, in which leaders act in accordance with their own identities and ideals in order to forge close, personal bonds with followers.

Given the evidence of above, the following hypothesis is presented for empirical testing: **H1:** There is a positive relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organisational Trust.

To conclude, theoretically, Authentic Leadership's focus on self-awareness and transparency promotes trust through positive psychological capacities (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). However, empirical support varies depending on the context; it is strong in the hospitality industry (Qiu et al., 2019) but may be limited in high-stakes change environments such as South African private higher education institutions, where cultural congruence with ethical norms dilutes its unique variance (Kleynhans et al.,

2022). Ethical Leadership, which is discussed next, builds on authenticity by addressing moral aspects.

2.5 Ethical Leadership

According to Kyambade and Namatovu (2025), Ethical Leadership promotes a just and encouraging work environment that is seen as advantageous to the employee, increases job satisfaction through a well-executed code of ethics that makes expectations clear and shows a commitment to ethical behaviour, and motivates staff to respond honourably to their positive work environment. On the other hand, unethical behaviour frequently results from both individual factors, such as disengagement and a lack of ethical training, as well as structural problems, such as inadequate code enforcement and leadership shortcomings (Treviño, Butterfield and McCabe, 1998).

Employee engagement is greatly impacted by Ethical Leadership and leaders who act morally on a regular basis create a climate of trust and equity that boosts worker commitment and happiness (McGrath, 2024). Since Ethical Leadership places a strong emphasis on integrity, transparency, and setting an example of ethical behaviour, this study investigates how it affects organisational trust when a new system is being implemented in a private higher education institution.

Van den Akker et al. (2009) used an online poll to investigate how Ethical Leadership affects employee trust, and employee trust in their leaders is directly impacted by Ethical Leadership practices and decisions, according to the findings of employee perceptions. Additionally, based on the results of a study by Huang, Qiu, Yang, and Deng (2021, p.659), trust in management was positively correlated with perceived Ethical Leadership.

The leadership effectiveness is further complicated by organisational change, particularly technology advancements, in addition to stress. Chang (2021) investigated how frontline managers demonstrate values-based leadership behaviours in the face of swift organisational change, pointing out that stakeholder engagement, ethical decision-making, and open communication are crucial for fostering trust and adaptability. In order to foster a culture of respect and justice within organisations,

Ethical Leadership places a high priority on moral values and fairness in decision-making, setting an example of honesty and accountability.

In view of the above discussion, there is strong theoretical and empirical evidence to support a positive relationship between Ethical Leadership and Organisational Trust. Therefore, the following hypothesis is presented for empirical testing: **H2:** There is a positive relationship between Ethical Leadership and Organisational Trust.

Although ethical leadership is a strong predictor of trust through integrity (Kyambade & Namatovu, 2025), its effectiveness during technology-driven change depends on stakeholder communication in the face of structural ethical gaps (Chang, 2021). However, cross-cultural surveys do not fully examine private higher education institutions influenced by Ubuntu where normative fairness varies. This work refines theory for system implementations by critically validating Ethical Leadership's better prediction through stepwise regression, confirming its superiority over authentic styles while revealing self-report limits. This leads to Responsible Leadership, which is covered in the next part and emphasises accountability.

2.6 Responsible Leadership

According to Voegtlin, Frisch, Walther, and Schwab (2020), a responsible leader encourages prosocial beliefs and actions that are advantageous to all parties involved. Additionally, according to Lu, Xu, Cai, Yang, and Chen (2022), Responsible Leadership—which emphasises 'leader-stakeholder' interaction—is a significant source of inspiration for staff members to develop a psychological bond with and sense of ownership over their companies. Employee trust is increased when all stakeholders are included in the decision-making process and their opinions are heard, according to Pless (2007). Given that Responsible Leadership places a strong emphasis on stakeholder involvement, this study investigates the impact of leadership style on organisational trust when a new system is being implemented in a private higher education institution, with a particular emphasis on how accountability and collaboration build trust among various stakeholders.

The term 'Responsible Leadership' describes a relationship between leaders and stakeholders based on moral and ethical principles while linking to a common sense of meaning and purpose. In this relationship, leaders and stakeholders encourage one another to be more motivated and dedicated to achieving social change and sustainable value creation (Botha and Vrba, p.579). According to Dong and Zhong (2021), Responsible Leadership is a relationship between leaders and stakeholders that is based on ethical principles and values. It is linked to a common sense of meaning and purpose, and it involves raising each other's motivation and commitment to achieve social change and sustainable values creation. In addition to proactively addressing societal impacts and advancing organisational purpose and long-term viability, Responsible Leadership strikes a balance between stakeholder interests through responsible, accountable practices.

Given the discussion above, the following hypothesis is presented for empirical testing:

H3: There is a positive relationship between Responsible Leadership and Organisational Trust.

In contrast to Ethical Leadership's direct moral modelling, Responsible Leadership's wider relational scope runs the risk of diluting focus, especially in complex change contexts where stakeholder inclusion may strain efficiency (Pless, 2007). However, Responsible Leadership excels in building trust through stakeholder shared purpose (Voegtlin et al., 2020). By using stepwise regression to critically test H3, this study validates Responsible Leadership's significant but secondary prediction ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$) in South African private higher education institutions. This validates the integration of Stakeholder Theory while highlighting operational challenges for system deployments, thereby strengthening its distinction from more restrictive values-based approaches (Maak & Pless, 2006).

According to Dion (2012), values-based leadership philosophies like Authentic Leadership, Ethical Leadership, and Responsible Leadership share characteristics such as an emphasis on honesty, openness, and building trust, but they vary in their approach to these characteristics, and each style plays a varied role in fostering trust in companies. Authentic Leadership places a strong emphasis on relational

transparency and self-awareness and cultivates trust by coordinating actions with strongly held beliefs and candidly communicating them to followers Avolio and Gardner (2005). Ethical Leadership, as described by Mahsud et al. (2010), emphasises the setting of moral guidelines, modelling moral behaviour, and building trust through justice and respect for others. Lastly, Maak and Pless (2006) suggest that Responsible Leadership goes beyond personal connections to encompass responsibility for wider social and stakeholder effects, fostering trust through long-term and compassionate decision-making. The key distinguishing characteristics of these three values-based leadership styles are outlined in the Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Comparison between different leadership styles

Leadership Style	Distinguishing Characteristics
Authentic Leadership	Based on alignment, self-awareness, and personal beliefs (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, p.243).
Ethical Leadership	Sets an example of ethical behaviour by adhering to ethical principles (Kyambade and Namatovu, 2025, p.72–89).
Responsible Leadership	Striking a balance between stakeholder accountability, performance, and society influence (Pless, 2007, p.437).

Although they all place a strong focus on morals and values, the scope and application of Authentic, Ethical, and Responsible Leadership vary.

To build trust through relational openness, Authentic Leadership emphasises self-awareness, transparency, and congruence between a leader's principles and behaviours (Luthans and Avolio, 2003). "Being true to oneself" is how authentic leaders foster psychological stability and foster followers' development (Gardner and Avolio, 2005). Literature indicates that genuine leaders develop trust by growing psychological safety and promoting candid communication, both of which improve the engagement and well-being of their followers (Kleynhans et al., 2022). According to Brown and Treviño (2006), Ethical Leadership emphasises establishing and exemplifying high moral standards and establishing justice and fairness as the cornerstones of behaviour and decision-making. Ethical leaders uphold organisational norms of conduct and proactively handle moral conundrums. Based on more recent studies, Ethical Leadership builds trust by continuously exhibiting integrity and openly discussing moral dilemmas (Lansing, Romero, Siantz, Center, Casteel and Glimmer, 2023).

To achieve sustainable value creation, Responsible Leadership balances social, environmental, and economic factors while including wide stakeholder accountability (Maak and Pless, 2006), moving beyond direct follower relationships and individual interactions, emphasising the long-term societal effect and cooperation among many stakeholder groups (Botha and Vrba, 2024). This distinction makes it possible to precisely examine the distinctive contributions that each style makes to organisational processes like navigating change and fostering trust. In this study, each of these leadership styles is operationalised and measured using validated scales, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The moral foundation of effective leadership is leadership ethics, which directs choices based on the values of honesty, justice, and responsibility. This is especially true during organisational transition, when disturbances like the introduction of new systems can put stability and trust to the test. In these situations, ethical leaders aggressively engage stakeholders, communicate openly, and put long-term welfare ahead of immediate advantages in order to reduce opposition and promote resilience. The theoretical underpinnings discussed in the following chapter, where Stakeholder Theory and Social Exchange Theory show how reciprocal, value-driven relationships enable trust and change success, smoothly flow from this ethical base.

Theoretical underpinnings, which are presented next, give these approaches depth. The first subsection delves into relationship dynamics, beginning with Stakeholder Theory.

2.7 Theoretical underpinning

2.7.1 Stakeholder Theory

In order to create value for all stakeholders and achieve long-term success, Freeman (1984) suggests that companies should take shareholder and stakeholder interests into account. Building on Freeman's work, Donaldson and Preston (1995) argued that it is morally required of enterprises to take into account the interests of all stakeholders and that successful stakeholder management can lead to long-term profitability.

The insistence of the value of stakeholder involvement in leadership practices and focuses on establishing cooperative and trustworthy relationships with all parties impacted by organisational decisions, stakeholder theory is strongly related to Responsible Leadership.

Responsible leaders, according to the Stakeholder Theory, as noted by Maak and Pless (2006, p.99), ensure that their goods and services satisfy the demands of their stakeholders, are safe and non-toxic, and that possible and actual hazards are disclosed honestly and openly. Stakeholder Theory encourages a positive feedback loop that eventually increases returns for shareholders and stakeholders. Employees are inspired to produce better, higher-quality work, for instance, when they are seen and treated as valued stakeholders. Customers may become happier and more satisfied because of this increase in manufacturing volume and quality, or both (McAbee, 2022).

According to Freeman (1984), the purpose of business is to generate value for its stakeholders, and to achieve this, one needs to integrate ethics and business within a complicated stakeholder relationship (Botha and Vrba, 2021, p.209). Leaders' ought to prioritise stakeholder interests and adopt a values-based leadership style to encourage organisational trust, leading to the enhancement of customer loyalty, staff engagement, and overall organisational effectiveness (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.99). The underlying theory is relevant to the current study since it examines how leadership affects Organisational Trust and focusses primarily on stakeholders. In the following part, Social Exchange Theory provides an explanation of reciprocity.

2.7.2 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory emphasises reciprocal interactions between leaders and followers, which helps to further explain the dynamics of trust-building. Since employees are more likely to think of their relationship with a leader and organisation in terms of social exchange (Blau, 1964) rather than an economic exchange when they are treated fairly and well by a trusted. Ethical Leadership should encourage going above and beyond the call of duty, according to Brown et al. (2005, p.123). They

are also more likely to reciprocate. The Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that leaders and followers have a reciprocal relationship, is also the foundation for effective leadership trust in relation to Authentic Leadership, according to Hassan and Ahmed (2012, p.165).

According to Social Exchange Theory, moral leaders create lasting bonds with their followers by attending to their socioemotional needs. This promotes ethical behaviour and loyalty on both sides. Organisational trust and collaboration are strengthened when followers view ethical leaders as fair and trustworthy (Brown and Treviño, 2006). Gardner and Avolio (2005) indicates that authentic leaders with exceptional leadership skills focus on developing constructive social exchange relationships with their followers. Through self-awareness, relational transparency, internalised moral viewpoint, and balanced information processing, Authentic Leadership has a favourable impact on the relationship between the leader and followers. Additionally, according to the Social Exchange Theory, cooperation amongst members of an organisation is facilitated by a positive leader-follower exchange connection (Chen and Sriphon, 2022).

Social Exchange Theory highlights that people act in particular ways to build intimacy and trust. This presumption primarily pertains to romantic partnerships. However, not all partnerships have these objectives (Brown and Treviño, 2006). When two people aren't focused on building intimacy and trust, it raises concerns about how they weigh the advantages and disadvantages for themselves or their reasons for interacting. Social Exchange Theory and Stakeholder Theory offer complementary frameworks for comprehending how organisational trust is fostered by values-based leadership (Gardner and Avolio, 2005). The employees of the private higher education institution are considered internal stakeholders of the organisation.

Moreover, values-based leadership's relational dynamics encompass several organisational levels and networks in addition to dyadic leader-follower interactions. According to Abay et al.'s (2023) systematic assessment of 161 papers on values-based leadership the literature increasingly views leadership as an interactive, context-dependent phenomena that integrates individual belief systems and contextual effects. This expands the framework to incorporate distributed and shared

leadership models, which are especially pertinent in educational settings where staff, faculty, and administrators frequently share leadership duties. A strong leadership culture that promotes Organisational Trust and group efficacy is created by integrating values-based strategies into these multilevel interactions. This chapter's conclusion synthesises these components in the next section.

2.8 Conclusion

Intentional practices including ethical scenario simulations, reflective exercises to increase self-awareness, moral reasoning training, and stakeholder engagement programs are necessary to develop values-based leadership (Osiyemi, 2006). To put theory into practice, it is essential to incorporate such techniques into organisational culture-building and leadership development programmes.

Putting theory into practice requires effective leadership development interventions. Research shows that deliberate, hands-on methods, such as reflective journaling, ethical problem simulations, and stakeholder engagement activities, greatly improve leaders' self-awareness and moral reasoning (Lilram, 2019). Here, leadership ethics are crucial because they guarantee that leaders give integrity, justice, and accountability first priority when making decisions, avoiding ethical lapses that can damage confidence. It has been shown that including values-based education modules in professional development programs improves leaders' capacity to set an example and uphold moral behaviour, which fosters Organisational Trust and increases stakeholder commitment. This emphasises the need for comprehensive leadership programs that are adapted to the intricate requirements of private universities.

It is essential to incorporate change management principles because the research context involves the introduction of a new system. Values-based leaders make change easier by building trust, reducing opposition through open communication, and coordinating changes with the interests of stakeholders and common values (Kotter, 1996). Ethical leadership that minimises resistance and aligns changes with core values throughout transitions also facilitates organisational change by setting an example of transparency and inclusivity. To increase the chapter's applicability focus

is placed on how responsible cooperation, ethical modelling, and genuine decision-making facilitate the adoption of technology.

This study concludes that leadership has gradually incorporated ethical dimensions, as well as adaptability to organisational change after considering the development of leadership theories from trait and behavioural approaches in the early 20th century to contingency and transformational models in the late 20th century to current emphasis on authentic, ethical, and responsible leadership. Modern views acknowledge ethics as the basis for long-lasting influence and change as an intrinsic leadership necessity, whereas earlier theories concentrated on innate traits or situational appropriateness. This trajectory highlights how ethically grounded values-based leadership fosters organisational trust in dynamic settings such as the use of technology in private higher education.

The literature review, details on Authentic, Ethical, Responsible Leadership, and Organisational Trust while introducing relevant and the underlying theories, including the Social Exchange Theory and Stakeholder Theory.

The updated conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) places values-based leadership in the framework of new systems being implemented by private higher education institutions. It draws attention to the independent factors of Authentic, Ethical, and Responsible Leadership styles that affect the dependent variable of Organisational Trust. Although they are not directly related to Organisational Trust, Stakeholder Theory and Social Exchange Theory provide significant theoretical viewpoints that aid in explaining the dynamics at work, while the development of leadership theories, enhanced by knowledge of organisational change and leadership ethics provide the fundamental background. These theories highlight the moral duties and reciprocal relationships that leaders and stakeholders have with one another, which support organisational trust-building procedures.

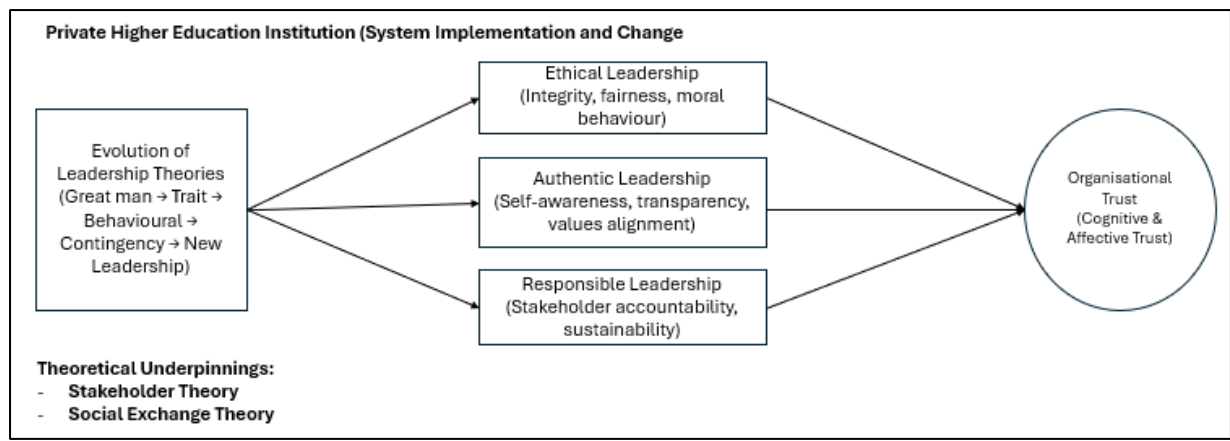


Figure 2.1: Amended conceptual framework for values-based leadership and Organisational Trust (Sudbury, 2025)

In summary, Chapter 2 has critically examined the development of leadership theory towards values-based paradigms, pointing out important knowledge gaps like the understudied cultural misconceptions between authentic transparency and ethical standards and the lack of empirical testing for the impact of Authentic, Ethical, and Responsible Leadership on organisational trust, particularly in private higher education institutions during system implementations. While addressing overlooked contributions like context-specific leadership training frameworks and Stakeholder Theory applications, this synthesis establishes these styles as crucial trust predictors while revealing the contextual limitations of Authentic Leadership and the empirical dominance of ethics according to preliminary regressions. Chapter 3 will describe the research methodology used to examine the connections between organisational trust and leadership styles, building on the theoretical underpinnings laid out in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the detailed study methods used to examine how Organisational Trust is affected by values-based leadership, more specifically, Authentic, Ethical, and Responsible Leadership, in a South African private higher education institution. The research philosophy, approach to theory development, methodological choice, research strategy, time frame, data collection and analyses methods, are all covered in this chapter. Every section demonstrates how the methodological choices fit the objectives of the study, the theoretical framework, and the contextual reality. The methodology used in this study was intended to enhance rigour, validity, and alignment with the theoretical framework in order to completely comprehend the influence of values-based leadership on Organisational Trust. In addition to outlining the selected research methodologies, this chapter provides justification for each decision in light of the study's objectives as well as the unique organisational and cultural environment of a private higher education institution in South Africa. This summary shifts to secondary research, which provides information for the primary design that follows.

3.2 Secondary research

Stakeholder Theory (Maak and Pless, 2006, p.99) and Social Exchange Theory (Hassan and Ahmed, 2012, p.165), which both frame the intricate interactions between leaders, employees, and other organisational stakeholders, formed part of the topics that were discussed in the literature review process. Given the competitive landscape and limited research on values-based leadership in private higher education institutions, the study focused on analysing Ethical, Authentic and Responsible Leadership, paying special attention to how these traits affect organisational trust in this setting. The relationship between values-based leadership and cultivating a trustworthy culture within organisations was further examined in this secondary study phase (Barrett and Anderson, 2022).

Several scholarly sources, including Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and JSTOR, were used to find relevant research and theoretical frameworks during the secondary research phase. To understand how various leadership styles affect organisational trust, the review concluded with an analysis of fundamental leadership theories (Lewin et al., 1939; Hersey and Blanchard, 1969; Fiedler, 1967; Bass and Riggio, 2006; Lemoine et al., 2019). The main research phase, which begins with an explanation of its philosophy, builds upon the body of current literature.

3.3 Primary research

In contrast to secondary research that depends on data that has already been gathered, primary research refers to the empirical study where the data was obtained firsthand. Subsequently, the following sections explored the research philosophy and approach to theory development. As will be discussed in the next paragraph, the research philosophy establishes ontological and epistemological underpinnings within the research.

3.3.1 Research philosophy

According to Jansen (2025), the research philosophy is the foundation of any study because it explains the set of beliefs that the research is based on. It could be described from either an ontological or epistemological point of view. Both "episteme," which means "knowledge," and "logos," which means "the study, science, or theory of," are Greek words from which epistemology is formed. Thus, 'the study of knowledge' is the literal meaning (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2021, p.29). According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2021, p.29), research is about knowledge, and every study is supposed to add to the corpus of existing knowledge. As a result, it addressed issues like what constitutes knowledge and where knowledge limitations are. This was reduced by Jansen (2025) to the question of "how" we may learn and comprehend things; that is, how can we determine what reality is and the boundaries of our knowledge? Kirongo and Odoyo (2020, p.36) stated that ontological philosophy examined the essence of reality, distinguished between reality and our perception of it, and the ways in which these factors impact everything around us. Jansen (2025)

made it simpler by examining what reality is and what we can actually know and comprehend.

Positivism, Interpretivism, and Pragmatism function on various ontological and epistemological presuppositions. For the purpose of this study a Positivism research philosophy was applied. Table 3.1 below provides more information on the key principals for the selected research philosophy.

Table 3.1: Outline of positivist research philosophy

Research Philosophy	Definition	Epistemology	Ontology	Key Principals
Positivism	Applying the techniques of the natural sciences to the examination of specific occurrences is known as positivism. The premise of positivist inquiry is that knowledge is not limited to the subject of study. Therefore, the study can only be conducted objectively and cannot incorporate personal beliefs or points of view. (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2021, p.31).	Positivists hold that only objective, empirical data may produce knowledge that is considered valid (Jansen, 2025).	Positivists believe that there is only one objective external reality that can be seen and measured; as a result, it is the responsibility of the researcher to identify the rules governing reality (Jansen, 2025).	- By removing bias through quantifiable data, controlled experiments, and statistical analysis, positivists place a high priority on objectivity. - According to positivism, social phenomena may be predicted and explained since human conduct is guided by universal principles that are influenced by outside forces. - By separating and examining each component separately under carefully monitored circumstances, positivists employ reductionism to examine complicated phenomena. - Surveys and experiments are examples of quantitative techniques used by positivism to provide statistically analysed data that show trends and causal correlations (Rashid, 2023).

Positivism was the chosen philosophical framework for this study, because it places a strong emphasis on objectivity, which means that conclusions regarding the influence of values-based leadership on organisational trust are supported by quantifiable facts, reducing the possibility of personal bias. Similarly, Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2021) recorded that positivist research focuses on the idea that knowledge exists beyond the subject of study. Researchers could isolate particular leadership styles which can be examined under controlled circumstances. Lastly, positivism's emphasis on quantitative techniques made it possible to gather data that can be statistically examined, exposing trends observed in the data collected (Jansen, 2025).

It's critical to acknowledge positivism's shortcomings in leadership research, even though it offers a strong framework that emphasises impartiality, quantifiable data, and hypothesis testing. Quantitative metrics alone may not fully reflect the subjective interpretations and contextual complexities of complex social phenomena like leadership (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Since some experience depth could be obtained by supplementary qualitative ways outside the purview of the current investigation, the positivist strategy for this study was therefore carefully calibrated to concentrate on quantifiable variables within an organised setting. Critical involvement with philosophical decisions was evident in this contemplation (Saunders Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This leads to the next section on the research approach, which can be either deductive or inductive.

3.3.2 Research approach

Deductive approaches start with a theory and seeks to develop (or test) it through research, whereas an inductive approach involves developing theories from research rather than beginning research, having a theory as a foundation (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2021, p.58). Quantitative research generally is represented through a deductive approach, typically motivated by a positivist philosophy, while qualitative research typically uses an inductive approach (Jansen, 2025).

Furthermore, it was also recorded by Kirongo and Odooyo (2020, p.36) that either nomothetic or ideographic methodologies are the focus of the research approach. Nomothetic methods are deductive, explaining casual relationships using covering-

laws (etic), generated using quantitative data, employing a variety of physical or statistical controls to enable the testing of hypotheses. This approach includes a highly structured research methodology to ensure reproducibility through surveys.

According to Dudovskiy (2024), there are several important advantages to a deductive approach. It gives researchers a formal framework for testing hypotheses generated from pre-existing ideas and making it possible to explicitly explain causal links between concepts and variables. Furthermore, this method made it easier to quantify theoretical ideas, enabling accurate data collecting and statistical analysis. Additionally, a certain amount of generalisation of outcomes is supported by deductive research, allowing conclusions to be confidently applied to comparable groups or circumstances. Because of these benefits, a deductive approach was especially useful for this study that sought to support theoretical claims with empirical data.

The deductive research methodology approach was used to test theory relating to values-based leadership and Organisational Trust from the statistical analysis of data collected from the surveys. According to Kim (2021, p.2), a deductive process involves the researcher's examination of what is known, evaluating the ideas that have already been proposed on the subject, and then tests the hypotheses.

Because the new system was being implemented within a specific timeframe, a cross-sectional survey made it possible to take a momentary picture of how people felt about trust and leadership at a pivotal moment in the transition process. Although longitudinal designs may shed light on how trust changes over time, this approach was limited by organisational access and resource limitations. Thus, this design struck a balance between feasibility and methodological rigour as noted by Flick (2020). This is in line with the strategy described in the next part, such as a survey or case study.

3.3.3 Research strategy

Jansen (2025) claims that this layer of the research onion describes how research could be carried out depending on the study's objectives. The current study employed a survey research strategy. In this regard, a suitable research instrument was developed to measure Ethical, Authentic and Responsible Leadership traits, including

Organisational Trust. The questionnaire was designed based on scales used in prior research (Taherdoost, 2022, p.58). The collection instrument was appropriate for the study as it produced rich data from a large number of respondents in a short period of time (Gürbüz, 2017). The next section looks at methodological choices, such as mono- or multi-method.

3.3.4 Methodological choice

Three methods are available to select data types, which includes mono, mixed and multi-method (Jansen, 2025). By employing a mono approach, only one kind of data, either quantitative or qualitative is used. For example, with quantitative data gathering, the information could be collected via a survey, and the findings could be statistically examined. In the mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative data are analysed. In a multi-method approach, a variety of techniques are employed to collect data. Additionally, mono-methodology, refers to any research that employs a single technique for data analysis (Hampson and McKinley, 2023, p.4) According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) questionnaires are commonly used in survey research, because they enable standardised data collection, making comparisons simple, and enabling the concurrent gathering of individual data. For these reasons a mono-method quantitative approach was used to test the proposed hypotheses of the current study.

While a mono-method quantitative approach made data collecting and statistical testing more effective, it also limited the richness of data by leaving out contextual understanding and in-depth narratives (typically gathered in form of qualitative data). The next part discusses whether the time horizon is longitudinal or cross-sectional.

3.3.5 Time horizon

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2021, p.168), a cross-sectional survey design gathers data from a group of respondents at one particular moment in order to provide a comprehensive picture of a phenomenon. As a result, one only gathers information from the respondents once. According to Jansen (2025), the time horizon focuses on the period of collection rather than the type of data, therefore, the data could be

qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both. Fleetwood (2023, p.1) further states that a cross-sectional study gives the researcher the opportunity to examine one independent variable and one or more dependent variables in a short time. For the purpose of this study, data on values-based leadership and organisational trust were collected at a specific point in time. As such, this study was cross sectional in nature. The techniques and procedures pertaining to the data collection and sample size follow in the next section.

3.3.6 Techniques and procedures

3.3.6.1 Data collection

According to Jajja, Asif, Shah, and Chata (2019, p.671), 'empirical quantitative' studies employ quantitative data to examine research issues. Data gathering typically occurs through surveys, experiments, or other quantitative methodologies. Finding causal linkages or correlations that can be generalised is the goal of quantitative data gathering methods, which are frequently used to test hypotheses drawn from theories (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2021, p.166). This study examined how values-based leadership influence Organisational Trust. To obtain a thorough grasp of any relationship between values-based leadership and organisational trust, a survey was conducted and a link to an online questionnaire was sent to employees who have been identified as the target respondents that participated in the 2024 system implementation. The next step is to target the appropriate participants using demographic and sample considerations.

3.3.6.2 Research population and sample

McCombes (2023) documents the distinction between a population and a sample: The total group about whom the researcher wishes to make inferences is known as the population. The particular group of people from whom the data were gathered, is known as the sample. The population relevant to the current study included all employees who are employed in private higher education institutions in South Africa.

The sample was made up of employees from one of South Africa's top private higher educational institutions, which has a well-diversified workforce comprising of administrative, and academic capacities. The introduction of a system to this private

higher education institution in 2024 marked a significant organisational shift in the institution's continuing digital transformation efforts. The study environment and participant experiences are framed by these contextual elements. The next part discusses how sampling size and technique guarantee representativeness.

3.3.6.3 Sampling method and sample size

As formerly stated by McCombes (2023), the sample consisted out of the particular group of people from whom the data was gathered from. Further, according to McCombes, a representative sample of the entire group must be chosen to make meaningful inferences from the findings. This is referred to as a sampling method. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2021, p.152) recorded 'probability sampling' as a sampling technique that uses random selection to enable the researcher to draw robust statistical conclusions about the entire group. Additionally, 'non-probability sampling' is a sampling technique that uses non-random selection based on convenience to facilitate data collection. Convenience sampling was carefully used to select easily accessible academic and administrative workers actively participating in the new system rollout due to limited access to comprehensive employee records across private higher education institutions.

According to McCombes (2023), convenience samples are prone to both selection and sampling bias; however, for the purposes of this study, the sample comprised all of the employees that took part in the 2024 rollout of a new system in a private higher education institution. Furthermore, according to the Raosoft sample size calculator (<http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>) an approximate sample size of 377 would be needed for this investigation serving as the basis for this estimation. Its parameters include a 50% response distribution, a 95% confidence level, and a 5% margin of error. It was also noted that time restrictions would impact the potential attainment of such an optimal sample size. The objective was to gather enough data to allow the researcher to do the statistical analysis necessary for this study.

Convenience sampling limits the generalisability of results outside the sampled community by introducing potential biases, especially selection bias. Demographic information was gathered and examined to determine the sample's

representativeness to lessen this. Furthermore, the results were evaluated considering the limitation of the sample (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). The factors covered in the scope and delimitations section, specify the parameters of the investigation.

3.4 Scope/delimitations and limitations of the study

The scope was limited to employees in a chosen private higher education institution who were directly involved or responsible for implementing a systems change. Employees in other departments who were not directly involved with the implementation process were not part of the study.

This delimitation meant that the experiences of other organisational members were not recorded. Furthermore, using self-reported survey data raised the possibility of answer biases including common method variance and social desirability, which made it necessary to evaluate causal inferences with caution (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Yeon-Lee and Podsakoff, 2003). To properly contextualise study findings, these limitations are highlighted. Measurement tools and preliminary ethical precautions are described next.

3.5 Measuring instrument and ethics

The survey method used in this study was questionnaire-based, which allowed for the development of generalisable conclusions within the research context and successfully captured the relationships between variables (Pinsonneault and Kraemer, 1993). A five-point Likert-type scale was used to measure Authentic Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Responsible Leadership, as well as Organisational Trust. Tullis and Albert (2022) stated that while Likert scales with an even number of points do not have a central neutral point, those with an odd number do. Furthermore, they stated that odd-numbered scales are often favoured since, in most situations, a neutral response is legitimate and ought to be allowed on the rating scale. In line with Brown et al. (2005), the study instrument's goal was to include items that working adults can grasp and that were sufficient and concise to not strain respondents' energy.

In the present study, a specified context was provided to the potential respondents before responding to questionnaire items. Specifically, respondents were requested to consider their leadership team, particularly the employees' reporting manager (who fulfil a leadership role) who had managed the implementation of a new system, before responding to the questions (see Annexure A). The scales were populated by selecting an option between 1 and 5, where: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

A prior scale that was implemented by Brown et al. (2005) and proved to be reliable was adapted to create the Ethical Leadership scale for the purpose of this study. In this study, Ethical Leadership referred to a leader's ability to listen to employees, make fair and balanced decisions, and could be trusted. Setting an example of ethical behaviour and prioritising the best interest of employees were also encapsulated in this variable. The employee's perception of the leadership style of their reporting manager was reflected in the following survey questions (see Table 3.2). Using the following scale, the employees had to determine the extent to which they agree with the following statements.

Table 3.2: Ethical Leadership scale

Nr	Variable	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	Ethical Leadership	Listens to what employees have to say.					
2		Makes fair and balanced decisions.					
3		Can be trusted.					
4		Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics.					
5		Has the best interests of employees in mind.					

The Ethical Leadership scale used in this study proved to be valid and reliable in earlier empirical research. For instance, in a variety of organisational contexts, the Ethical Leadership scale developed by Brown et al. (2005) has continuously demonstrated strong Cronbach's alpha values (>0.85) (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes and Salvador, 2009).

The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire is the scale most commonly used for measuring Authentic Leadership according to Pioli, Feuerschutte, Tezza and Cancellier, 2020. A previous study by Butterworth, Black and Terry (2024, p.27) included the Authentic Leadership Inventory, the Authentic Leadership-Integrated Questionnaire and the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire, while closely aligned with the objectives of this study and served as a considerable influence on the choice questions used in this study. In line with this, for the purpose of this study five questions were taken out of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire, as it was most relevant to the current context of the study. Authentic Leadership, for the purpose of this study, referred to the leader's ability to say what they mean, admits when they made a mistake and tells the hard truth. They are able to analyse relevant data before coming to a decision and seeks feedback to improve interactions with others. The employee's perception of the leadership style of their reporting manager was reflected in the following survey questions. Using the following scale, the employees had to determine the extent to which they agree with the following statements in Table 3.3

Table 3.3: Authentic Leadership scale questionnaire

Nr	Variable	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	Authentic Leadership	Says exactly what he or she means.					
2		Admits mistakes when they are made.					
3		Tells you the hard truth.					
4		Analyses relevant data before coming to a decision.					
5		Seeks feedback to improve interactions with others.					

Previous research has shown construct validity, showing that the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire is an excellent tool for measuring the theoretical aspects of Authentic Leadership in a variety of circumstances. Furthermore, Pioli et al. (2020) reported strong internal consistency and confirmatory component analysis bolstering the factorial structure of the Authentic Leadership questionnaire, confirming its applicability for evaluating authentic leadership in research contexts.

Forming the foundation of responsible leadership, the triple bottom line (TBL) approach is a sustainability framework that assesses organisational success through

three interrelated dimensions: profit, planet, and people. It encourages organisations to take into account their financial performance (profit), environmental stewardship and impact on ecosystems (planet), and social impact on stakeholders (people), including employees, customers, and communities (Cameron and Caza, 2005). All financial matters are handled by responsible leaders, whether they be for businesses, employees, or all stakeholders.

A sample of questions were taken from the Economic and Social Aspects of the Responsible Leadership scale because the study is related to the stakeholder theory and involves stakeholders. For the purpose of this study environmental factors were considered unrelated because they deal with leadership's environmental concerns. In the present study, Responsible Leadership requires a leader to create collaboration between shareholders while considering stakeholders' priorities, as well as consequences of decisions for affected stakeholders. A responsible leader is effective and determined to push forward to get results and tries to reduce trust gaps between the organisation and its stakeholders. The employee's perception of the leadership style of their reporting manager was reflected in the following survey questions (see Table 3.4). Using the following scale, the employees had to determine the extent to which they agree with the following statements:

With Cronbach's alpha values for its key dimensions described as high, the Responsible Leadership scale exhibits strong reliability, validating its consistency and appropriateness for assessing responsible leadership behaviours in organisational research contexts (Siddiqui et al., 2023).

Table 3.4: Responsible Leadership scale

Nr	Variable	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	Responsible Leadership	Creates collaboration among shareholders with stakeholders' priorities.					
2		Considers the consequences of decisions for the affected stakeholders.					
3		Is effective.					
4		Is determined to push forward and get results.					
5		Tries to reduce trust gaps between the organisation and its stakeholders.					

The Organisational Trust scale is considered the seminal measuring tool for measuring organisational trust (McAllister, 1995). Affective trust, as defined by McAllister (1995), is the emotional bond that develops between an employee and their leader, whereas cognitive trust is the employee's perception of the leader's trustworthy actions. For the purpose of this study, questions were selected from the Affective and Cognitive Trust scale, as the employee's perception of the leader's trustworthy actions were tested. For leaders to gain Organisational Trust, given their track record, there should be no reason to doubt their competence and preparation for the job. The leader can be relied on to not make the employees' job more difficult. The leader is trusted and respected as a co-worker by most people, even those who are not close friends of the leader. The leader is considered to be trustworthy by other work associates of the employee who interacts with the leader. In this study, Organisational Trust also encapsulates whether this person approaches his/her job with professionalism and dedication. The employee's perception of the leadership style of their reporting manager was reflected in the following survey questions (see Table 3.5). Using the following scale, the employees had to determine the extent to which they agree with the following statements:

Table 3.5: Organisational Trust scale

Nr	Variable	Item	1	2	3	4	5
1	Organisational Trust	Given this person's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence and preparation for the job.					
2		I can rely on this person not to make my job more difficult by careless work.					
3		Most people, even those who aren't close friends of this individual, trust and respect him/her as a co-worker.					
4		Other work associates of mine who must interact with this individual consider him/her to be trustworthy.					
5		This person approaches his / her job with professionalism and dedication.					

With Cronbach's alpha values showing internal consistency across its main dimensions, such as trust in co-workers, clients, and principles, the Organisational Trust Questionnaire has proven to be very reliable. Therefore, the efficacy and appropriateness of the questionnaire for assessing organisational trust in research

settings were validated by this consistency (Pandian, Awang, Ishak, and Goh, 2023). The questionnaire is covered in the next section and administered practically.

3.6 Administration of questionnaire

According to Bhandari (2023), questionnaires can be self-administered, which means they can be sent by mail, in person, online, or in paper-and-pen formats. All of the questions are standardised, ensuring that every respondent receives the same questions in the same language. An alternative method is for researchers to deliver the questionnaire through online, in-person, or telephone interviews with respondents. For the purposes of this study, the researcher made use of Google Forms via an email link to the respondents to ensure anonymous feedback. This was done in line with the ethical protocol after receiving ethical clearance from both the researcher's higher education institution and the institution of the respondents. Pilot testing for validation guarantees dependability, as explained in the section that follows.

3.7 Pilot testing

An initial inquiry used to evaluate the viability and efficacy of a more extensive quantitative research effort is called a quantitative pilot study. It entails gathering information from a smaller sample size in order to improve research tools, evaluate how feasible data collection techniques are, and make sure the study's goals can be achieved (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2021, p.294). Therefore, before the real survey was distributed to the bigger population of potential respondents, a small sample of the population received the questionnaire to determine whether the questions were understood and to test their face validity. The questionnaire topics were generally well comprehended, according to the results of the pilot test in the present study, which was carried out with a small subset of the population (n=5). However, to better correspond with participants' cultural backgrounds, some items pertaining to Responsible Leadership were reworded to improve clarity. With trust in the instrument's reliability, these results supported moving forward with the major survey (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). The analysis of the refined data is covered in the following section.

3.8 Data analysis

Average Variance Extracted Values and squared correlation coefficients were used to evaluate the validity of the measuring instrument, while Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to determine its reliability. The relationship between the dependent and independent variables were tested using regression analysis, which were then used to assess the hypothesised relationships. To illustrate the sample characteristics, basic descriptive statistics were also supplied (Shrestha, 2021).

The online survey platform was set up in such a way that respondents could not submit their answers until all the questions had been answered. This reduced potential missing data in the questionnaire. By avoiding gaps that can result from partial responses, this design decision guaranteed a complete data collection and improved data reliability. The data analysis processes are described in more detail in Chapter 4. This approach is reinforced by general ethical considerations, which is discussed in the next section.

3.9 Ethical considerations

According to Welman and Kruger (2005), ethical issues are generally encountered at three different points in a research project: whenever respondents are recruited, when they undergo an intervention or measurement process, and when the results are released. Participants in this study were free to withdraw at any time and participation was entirely voluntary. Ethical protocol was followed as individual participants were asked for their informed consent regarding their participation, as detailed in Annexure H. In light of the aforementioned, a Gatekeeper's letter (Annexure O) was obtained from the researcher's immediate line manager in order to secure authorization to move forward with the study in a private higher education institution. Finally, ethical clearance was obtained from the IIE Higher Degrees Committee with ethics clearance number M. 840325.

Along with protections for voluntary participation and informed consent, data confidentiality was closely upheld. Online answers were anonymised, and no identifiable information was collected. The research team alone would be able to access the password-protected devices where the data was stored. According to

national and institutional research ethics requirements, ethical approval was obtained to confirm adherence to the values of beneficence, justice, and respect (Israel and Hay, 2006). A summary of the design concludes this chapter.

3.10 Conclusion

To conclude, Chapter 3 covered the research design and methodology in detail, stressing the importance of a strict approach to data collecting and instrument design in order to enhance validity and reliability. To measure constructs of values-based leadership and organisational trust, the study used established scales that have shown strong construct validity and reliability in prior studies (Pioli et al., 2020; Siddiqui et al., 2023; Pandian et al., 2023). The online survey was set up to require mandatory answers to every question to prevent missing data and guarantee a comprehensive dataset for data analysis. Chapter 4 explores in more detail the methods and procedures used for the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

While Chapter 3 outlined the research design and methodology adopted in this study, this chapter presents the data analysis. The chapter begins by offering a summary of the sample size, response rate, and demographic characteristics of the respondents. Thereafter, the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis are discussed, which includes various goodness-of-fit indices for the variables measured in this study. The validity and reliability of the measurement instrument are also examined, along with descriptive statistics related to the sample. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the regression results, which was the primary statistical method used to evaluate the hypothesised relationships between the dependent and independent variables. The analysis of sample size and response rate that follows is guided by this framework.

4.2 Sample size and response rate

It was highlighted in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3.6.3) that an approximate sample size of 377 would be ideal for this investigation. It was also noted that time restrictions would impact the potential attainment of such an optimal sample size. The objective was to gather enough data to allow the researcher to do the statistical analysis necessary for this study, and as a result, out of 285 respondents contacted, a total of 81 responses were obtained (approximately 28% response rate) which was found sufficient for the purpose of this study. The demographic features shown below reveal the profiles of respondents.

4.3 Demographic characteristics

Table 4.1 displays the sample's demographic characteristics based on the frequency distribution of key factors.

Table 4.1: Demographics

Gender		Age				Race					Education						
Male	Female	20-30	31-40	41-50	Over 50	African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Other	Grade 12	Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Honors degree / Postgraduate Diploma	Master's Degree	Doctorate	Other
25%	75%	5%	37%	38%	20%	27%	9%	16%	46%	2%	8%	27%	23%	20%	15%	3%	4%

***All percentages have been rounded.

The demographic table offers many insights that describe the sample of the research study:

- **Gender:** The results indicate that only 25% of the respondents were male, whereas 75% were female.
- **Age:** Majority of the respondents in this study were between the ages of 31 and 50.
- **Race:** White respondents (46%) and African respondents (27%) make up the majority, of the respondents in this case study, followed by Indian/Asian respondents (16%) and Coloured respondents (9%). This diversity is advantageous since it could possibly foster cross-cultural understanding and provide diverse perspectives on values-based leadership.
- **Education:** Majority of the respondents have a diploma (27%), bachelor's degree (23%), and other postgraduate credentials (38% total), allowing individuals to fully comprehend the questions and make deliberate, well-informed choices while filling out the questionnaire.

Given the demographic results, it can be concluded that the respondents were highly qualified, with a wide range of racial diversity and a majority of ages between 31 and 50. This enhances the study's diversity of viewpoints, however, one potential limitation is the under-representation of male respondents, which may produce a bias in the results. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results are shown and discussed in the section that follows. Confirmatory factor analysis is used to test the measurement model that was presented in the next section after the context has been established.

4.4 Confirmatory factor analysis

For clarity, Table 4.2 below lists all abbreviations used in the following sections:

Table 4.2: Abbreviations used in the statistical analysis

Abbreviation	Description
AL	Authentic Leadership
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CMIN/df	Chi-square Minimum Discrepancy divided by degrees of freedom
CR	Composite Reliability
EL	Ethical Leadership
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
MI	Modification Indices
OT	Organisational Trust
RL	Responsible Leadership
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SRMR	Standardised Root Mean Square Residual
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

Before employing CFAs to evaluate the model fit (validity) in this study, the statistical significance of parameter estimations was assessed. The researcher evaluated the model fit and looked at the factor loadings after all parameter estimations in this study were determined to be significant at $p < 0.05$.

Model fit was evaluated using the goodness-of-fit indices and related guidelines shown in Table 4.3. The cut-off values shown in Table 4.3 are not hard and fast rules; they are only recommendations. Furthermore, the indices should be understood in conjunction with one another rather than separately.

Table 4.3: Goodness-of-fit indices

Goodness-of-fit indices Index	Cut-off for Good model fit ($n < 250$)
CMIN/df	< 3.00
CFI	> 0.92
GFI	> 0.95
RMSEA	< 0.08
SRMR	< 0.08

In accordance with the suggested principles, Table 4.4 shows that all CFAs show good validity of the factor structures.

Table 4.4: CFA model

Factor	Parameters	χ^2 (df,p)	CMIN/df	SRMR	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
Ethical Leadership (EL)	All significant	0.935 (2, 0.627)	0.467	0.0115	0.995	1.000	0.000
Authentic Leadership (AL)	All significant	6.596 (4, 0.159)	1.649	0.0381	0.967	0.985	0.09
Responsible Leadership (RL)	All significant	5.721 (4, 0.221)	1.43	0.0294	0.972	0.994	0.073
Organisational Trust (OT)	All significant	5.097 (4, 0.278)	1.274	0.0264	0.975	0.996	0.059

The next sections provide the model fit summaries for each of the factors this study measured. The part that follows the model fit pertaining to Ethical Leadership.

4.4.1 Ethical Leadership

The model fit indices demonstrate a good model fit: RMSEA is 0, SRMR is 0.0115, CFI equals 1, GFI is 0.995, and CMIN/df is low at 0.467. The indices' corresponding values show that the factor of Ethical Leadership has adequate model fit.

The respective items in Table 4.5 accurately reflect Ethical Leadership behaviors in the study population, as demonstrated by the EL scale's qualities and robustness as a measure of the latent structure. Furthermore, Table 4.5 illustrates that all parameter estimates are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

Table 4.5: Parameter estimates, standard errors, test statistic values, p-values and model fit (EL)

Item	Estimate	SE	CR	P
Listens to what employees have to say.	1			
Makes fair and balanced decisions.	1.806	0.095	8.47	***
Conducts his/her work in an ethical manner.	0.775	0.11	7.049	***
Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics.	0.867	0.099	8.729	***
Has the best interests of employees in mind.	1.068	0.121	8.843	***
Model fit summary for EL				

CMIN/df	GFI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
0.467	0.995	1	0.0115	0.000

*** p < 0.001

Next, we will look at the factor structure of authentic leadership.

4.4.2 Authentic Leadership

The parameter estimates for the items in the model ranged from 1 to 1.363 (see Table 4.6), all with statistically significant values ($p < 0.001$). The model fit indices demonstrated a good overall fit for this factor: CMIN/df was 1.649, GFI was 0.967, CFI was 0.985, SRMR was 0.0381, and RMSEA was 0.09, suggesting an acceptable model fit.

Table 4.6: Parameter estimates, standard errors, test statistic values, p-values and model fit (AL)

Item	Estimate	SE	CR	P
Says exactly what he or she means.	1			
Admits mistakes when they are made.	1.363	0.279	4.882	***
Tells you the hard truth.	1.056	0.18	5.873	***
Analyses relevant data before coming to a decision.	1.328	0.285	4.652	***
Seeks feedback to improve interactions with others.	1.337	0.281	4.761	***
Model fit summary for AL				
CMIN/df	GFI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
1.649	0.967	0.985	0.0381	0.09

*** p < 0.001

The independent variables discussed in the next subsection are completed by Responsible Leadership.

4.4.3 Responsible Leadership

With all values falling within the suggested limits listed in Table 4.3, the model fit indices indicate a satisfactory model fit (CMIN/df = 1.43; GFI = 0.972; CFI = 0.994;

SRMR = 0.0294; RMSEA 0.073). Table 4.7 shows that all parameter estimates are statistically significant.

Table 4.7: Parameter estimates, standard errors, test statistic values, p-values and model fit (RL)

Item	Estimate	SE	CR	P
Creates collaboration among shareholders with stakeholders' priorities.	1			
Considers the consequences of decisions for the affected stakeholders.	0.741	0.097	7.679	***
Is effective.	0.781	0.085	9.246	***
Is determined to push forward and get results.	0.664	0.084	7.939	***
Tries to reduce trust gaps between the organisation and its stakeholders.	0.867	0.064	13.531	***
Model fit summary for RL				
CMIN/df	GFI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
1.43	0.972	0.994	0.0294	0.073

*** p < 0.001

The dependent variable, Organisational Trust, completes the CFA, which is explained in more detail below.

4.4.4 Organisational Trust

With standardised estimates ranging from 0.812 to 1.181 and all p-values < 0.001, the results show strong and statistically significant parameter estimates for all evaluated items. All of the critical ratios (CR) are significantly higher than the typical cutoff point (~1.96), indicating meaningful correlations. The measurement model used to assess Organisational Trust is robust, as evidenced by the model fit indices, which also show an acceptable fit: SRMR (0.0264) is very low, RMSEA (0.059) is within acceptable bounds, CMIN/df of 1.274 is below the suggested cutoff of 3, and GFI (0.975) and CFI (0.996) surpass the ideal 0.95 threshold. Table 4.8 below illustrates that all parameter estimates are statistically significant (p < 0.001).

Table 4.8: Parameter estimates, standard errors, test statistic values, p-values and model fit (OT)

Item	Estimate	SE	CR	P
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Given this person's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence and preparation for the job.	1			
I can rely on this person not to make my job more difficult by careless work.	1.181	0.141	8.399	***
Most people, even those who aren't close friends of this individual, trust and respect him/her as a co-worker.	0.97	0.128	7.597	***
Other work associates of mine who must interact with this individual consider him/her to be trustworthy.	0.812	0.117	6.935	***
This person approaches his / her job with professionalism and dedication.	0.988	0.115	8.587	***
Model fit summary for OT				
CMIN/df	GFI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
1.274	0.975	0.996	0.0264	0.059

*** p < 0.001

Following the establishment of the overall model fit for each construct, the subsequent sections concentrate on assessing the instrument's validity.

4.5. Measuring instrument validity

Measurement instrument validity evaluates how well a tool measures the construct it is designed to measure. To ensure that the instrument records the desired phenomena and enables reliable deductions, validity must be established. This study looks at three important types of validity: convergent validity, discriminant validity and face validity. Convergent validity measures, which are discussed in the next section, support the conclusion of the measuring instrument validity.

4.5.1 Convergent validity

The degree to which indicators of a construct measure the same notion and are correlated is known as convergent validity. By using the criterion that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds 0.5, which indicates that the underlying construct accounts for more than half of the variance in the indicators, convergent validity was proven in this study. Since each of the study's constructs had AVE values over this 0.5 cutoff, they all showed sufficient convergent validity (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: AVE of constructs

Factor	AVE
Ethical Leadership (EL)	0.66
Authentic Leadership (AL)	0.53
Responsible Leadership (RL)	0.65
Organisational Trust (OT)	0.63

Since the AVE of all constructs exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.5, it confirms the convergent validity of the constructs. The next part evaluates discriminant validity, which guarantees distinctiveness.

4.5.2 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is an indication of how various constructs are actually different from one another. Furthermore, discriminant validity was assessed by applying the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), which involves comparing the square root of each construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to its correlations with other constructs. If a construct's AVE square root is greater than its highest correlation with any other construct, discriminant validity has been established. Particularly for Authentic Leadership, the square root of AVE for this construct was not higher than its correlations with other constructs. This would suggest a high degree of conceptual overlap between the items measuring the ethical leadership constructs. Furthermore, this could account for possible multicollinearity in this study. Since leadership dimensions like Ethical Leadership, Authentic Leadership, and Responsible Leadership frequently have significant conceptual overlap and are intrinsically linked, some degree of multicollinearity could be anticipated in models of leadership constructs. However, this was not considered a major concern and was accordingly addressed during the regression analysis in Section 4.7.3.

Table 4.10 below displays the Correlations between Ethical Leadership, Authentic Leadership, and Responsible Leadership and Organisational Trust according to the Fornell-Larcker Criterion.

Table 4.10: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Fornell-Larcker Criterion					
Correlations					
	SQRT (AVE)	Ethical Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Responsible Leadership	Organisational Trust
Ethical Leadership (EL)	0.8124	1	.926**	.857**	.911**
Authentic Leadership (AL)	0.7280		1	.811**	.857**
Responsible Leadership (RL)	0.8062			1	.831**
Organisational Trust (OT)	0.7937				1

The AVE's square root does not surpass the correlation with another construct, although being close to the guiding values. Therefore, there proximity indicates partial but limited support for discriminant validity, and steps were taken to address potential multicollinearity during the regression analysis to enhance the study's scientific rigour. As explained below, face validity offers practitioner validation.

4.5.3 Face validity

The degree to which a measuring tool seems relevant and acceptable to people using or being assessed by it, as well as effective in terms of its stated goals, is known as face validity. Face validity, as it relates to values-based leadership and Organisational Trust, indicates that the leadership behaviours and trust measures make intuitive sense and are perceived by respondents as authentic examples of values-based leadership and trust within the company. Because values-based leadership, which is based on moral principles and ethical standards, seeks to examine the impact on Organisational Trust, a tool that exhibits face validity guarantees that stakeholders view the evaluation as pertinent and representative of Authentic Leadership and trust dynamics (Hendrikz and Engelbrecht, 2019). Findings are supported by reliable measures, and reliability tests come next.

4.6 Measuring instrument reliability

Ensuring that a tool or scale yields stable and consistent results across various samples and circumstances is the goal of measuring instrument reliability. The measurement's reliability reflects the degree to which it is free from random error,

providing consistent and reliable data for analysis. Indicating that the items on the instrument are sufficiently related, Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 is deemed acceptable. As was the case in the present study, through standardised processes, pilot test instruments, clear instructions, and consistent data collection circumstances, researchers can decrease errors and improve reliability (Pandey, 2018). In this study, the scales' internal consistency and reliability were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha values, which show how well each scale's items measure the same underlying construct. The values are shown in the Table 4.11 below.

Table 4.2: Cronbach's alpha values

Factor	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Ethical Leadership (EL)	0.91
Authentic Leadership (AL)	0.854
Responsible Leadership (RL)	0.904
Organisational Trust (OT)	0.901

Organisational Trust, Responsible Leadership, and Ethical Leadership scales with values above 0.90 have high internal consistency, which means that their items are highly correlated and consistently assess the dimensions they measure. All scales employed in this study demonstrated high internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.854 to 0.91. Patterns are revealed by descriptive statistics and correlations, which are presented next.

4.7 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

In order to give a clear picture of the dataset, descriptive statistics condense important aspects of the data, such as variability and averages. Without suggesting causation, correlation analysis quantifies the direction and strength of a relationship between two variables, showing how they evolve in tandem. When combined, these techniques facilitate effective comprehension of data linkages and patterns (Hayes, 2025). The next section begins with the means and distributions of the variables.

4.7.1 Descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent variables

Table 4.18 below summarise the descriptive statistics relating to the dependent and independent variables.

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics

Factor Scores					
Descriptive Statistics					
	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ethical Leadership (EL)	81	1	5	3.8173	0.85569
Authentic Leadership (AL)	81	1.4	5	3.6889	0.84083
Responsible Leadership (RL)	81	1	5	3.8296	0.86955
Organisational Trust (OT)	81	1	5	3.8716	0.87539

All leadership and Organisational Trust scales were scored favourably by respondents on average; mean values on a 5-point scale ranged from 3.69 to 3.87. Although Authentic Leadership (3.69) showed intermediate views of a leader's sincerity and transparency, Ethical Leadership (3.82) reflected consensus that leaders exhibit integrity and fairness. A similarly high score of 3.83 was attained by Responsible Leadership, demonstrating stakeholder awareness and accountability. The greatest mean (3.87) was found for Organisational Trust, indicating that respondents had a generally high level of confidence in their company. According to these findings, perceptions are typically positive across all variables that were examined. For more descriptive statistics, refer to "Annexure P". Correlation analysis reveals relationships, which is discussed next.

4.7.2 Correlation analysis

To determine whether significant correlations exist between the factors in the study, including the strength of relationships, correlation coefficients were calculated using factor scores (see Table 4.13). The analysis first required establishing statistical significance of the correlations. After confirming significance, the direction (positive or negative) and the strength of the correlations were assessed. The factor correlations as indicated in Table 4.13 were statistically significant and were positive.

The guideline below can be used to interpret the correlation coefficients:

Correlation Interpretation

$ r < 0.3$	Small
$0.3 < r < 0.5$	Medium
$ r > 0.5$	Large

Table 4.4: Correlations

Correlations				
	Ethical Leadership	Authentic Leadership	Responsible Leadership	Organisational Trust
Ethical Leadership	1	.926**	.857**	.911**
Authentic Leadership		1	.811**	.857**
Responsible Leadership			1	.831**
Organisational Trust				1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Strong positive links are indicated by the correlations between the components. At the 0.01 level, there is a statistically significant correlation between Ethical Leadership and Authentic Leadership (0.926), Responsible Leadership (0.857), and Organisational Trust (0.911). Likewise, there is a strong correlation between Authentic Leadership and Organisational Trust (0.857) and Responsible Leadership (0.811). Additionally, there is a strong correlation (0.831) between Responsible Leadership and Organisational Trust. These findings point to a closely related leadership-trust construct, suggesting that higher levels of one leadership style or Organisational Trust are linked to higher levels of the others. The significance level highlights the robustness of these correlations by indicating that they are unlikely to be the result of chance. Regression analysis is used to determine predictive capacity in the following section.

4.7.3 Regression analysis

In leadership research, regression analysis is often used to examine the effects of particular leadership variables and various leadership philosophies on organisational trust and performance. While leadership variables are quantifiable elements or behaviours within leadership philosophies, such as communication style, decision-

making processes, or levels of engagement, that can affect results, leadership philosophies are the broad set of beliefs, values, and guiding principles that form a leader's approach (Easton, 2022). The main technique for evaluating the proposed relationships between the dependent and independent variables in this study is regression analysis.

The hypotheses are outlined as follows:

H1: There is a positive relationship between Ethical Leadership and Organisational Trust

H2: There is a positive relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organisational Trust

H3: There is a positive relationship between Responsible Leadership and Organisational Trust

The initial discriminant validity assessments raised slight concerns regarding the discriminant validity of Authentic Leadership as it reported a low AVE value (see Section 4.5.2). In line with this finding, the multiple linear regression analysis results indicated that Authentic Leadership ($\beta = 0.076$, $p = 0.548$) was not a statistically significant predictor of Organisational Trust. The overall model was however significant, $F(3, 77) = 135.874$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.841$, with Ethical Leadership ($\beta = 0.702$, $p < .001$) and Responsible Leadership ($\beta = .186$, $p = 0.04$) both positively predicting Organisational Trust.

Furthermore, although VIF values were below the common threshold of 10 and not deemed critical, the researcher proceeded with a stepwise regression analysis as an exploratory approach to assess the unique contribution of Authentic Leadership as a predictor of Organisational Trust and to address potential multicollinearity concerns.

The stepwise regression analysis indicated that Authentic Leadership did not improve the model fit. In fact, the initial overall model (stepwise regression) was significant, $F(1, 79) = 387.856$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = .831$, with only Ethical Leadership as the predictor found to be significant in the initial model ($\beta = 0.932$, $p < .001$). The final overall model was significant, $F(2, 78) = 205.305$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = .84$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.009$, with both Ethical

Leadership ($\beta = .766$, $p < 0.001$) and Responsible Leadership ($\beta = .191$, $p = 0.034$) positively predicting Organisational Trust. Authentic Leadership was excluded from this model, which is not only justified from a statistical viewpoint (i.e., based on discriminant validity, multiple linear regression analysis, and stepwise regression results), but it also creates a parsimonious model with stronger predictors of Organisational Trust.

The study's regression analysis findings are in line with known leadership literature and empirical research, which continuously emphasise the vital role that values-based leadership plays in building Organisational Trust. The studies relating to Ethical Leadership, Authentic Leadership, Responsible Leadership and Organisational Trust as discussed in Chapter 2, show that moral leaders who behave honourably, fairly, and openly foster a trustworthy workplace.

As discussed in Chapter 3, a leader demonstrates Ethical Leadership by listening intently to their team members, making fair and balanced judgements, being trustworthy, setting an example of moral behaviour, and putting the needs of their team members first. Empirical research backs up these qualities, showing that moral managers who operate with honesty, fairness, and open communication foster organisational trust (Brown, Treviño, and Harrison, 2005; Mayer et al., 2009). Leaders who exhibit these traits on a regular basis help to build perceptions of fairness and reliability, two essential elements of Organisational Trust. When leaders "walk the talk," employees react favourably and are more inclined to trust them and the company. The information thus supports the well-established conclusion that organisational trust, which reflects workers' faith in a leader's ability, justice, and integrity, is substantially positively correlated with Ethical Leadership.

Organisational Trust is positively related with Responsible Leadership, which is operationalised here as leaders who encourage cooperation among stakeholders and shareholders, consider the effects on impacted parties, exhibit efficacy and persistence, and actively work to close trust gaps. The social exchange and stakeholder theories that support the establishment of trust are in line with this leadership style, which places an emphasis on inclusion, accountability, and ethical stakeholder involvement (Siddiqui et al., 2023). In addition to fostering an environment

of trustworthiness within the organisation, responsible leaders foster trust outside of it by taking into account the wider stakeholder impacts and upholding their commitment to ethical outcomes.

These results suggest that an ethically orientated leader, one who is characterised by justice, consistency, and moral integrity, is likely to cultivate organisational trust in which staff members have faith in their leader's reliability and moral behaviour. By minimising trust gaps and managing varied organisational relationships in an ethical manner, a responsible leader, who is distinguished by stakeholder concern, accountability, and determination, also fosters trust. When combined, these leadership concepts help create a trustworthy workplace environment, which is necessary for commitment, employee engagement, and overall organisational effectiveness.

Additionally, it is believed that Ethical and Authentic Leadership could be viewed similarly in the South African context because of common guiding principles that strongly correspond with regional cultural values, which places an emphasis on moral responsibility, community, and interconnection. African humanism ideologies that emphasise relational and values-based leadership align with Authentic Leadership, which emphasises openness, moral integrity, and being genuine to oneself (Nqumba, 2023). Similarly, Ethical Leadership places a strong emphasis on justice, integrity, and moral behaviour. This aligns with South Africa's leadership expectations, which are based on accountability and trust, particularly in light of the nation's governance issues and the demand that leaders put the good of society before their own interests (Grobler, 2024).

Furthermore, given the empirical results indicating that Authentic Leadership was not a statistically significant predictor of Organisational Trust with limited evidence of discriminant validity, it is likely that Ethical and Authentic Leadership are interpreted similarly or viewed through a similar lens in the South African setting. This assumption is consistent with research showing that Authentic Leadership approaches and South African leadership philosophies, which are based on relational and ethical concepts like Ubuntu, frequently share conceptual similarities. In this cultural context, the differences between the two leadership philosophies are less noticeable because they

both place a strong emphasis on honesty, openness, and moral principles (Grobler and Grobler, 2024). Next, differences between groups are examined.

4.8 Group differences

Independent Sample t-test and One-way ANOVAs were used to determine whether there are significant differences in the mean factor scores of demographical groups (e.g., gender, age, race, tenure). No significant variations were found for any of the demographic variables. The chapter's conclusion is the culmination of these findings.

4.9 Conclusion

The regression study validates the crucial roles that Ethical and Responsible Leadership play in determining Organisational Trust, with both exhibiting the strongest and equally significant predictive power. By being honest, fair, and communicative, Ethical Leadership fosters trust, which enhances organisational results. Through encouraging ethical stewardship, accountability, inclusive stakeholder participation, and sustainable practices that match the organisation's actions with larger social and environmental obligations, Responsible Leadership further builds Organisational Trust. Due to its lack of distinct predictive value and overlap with other dimensions, Authentic Leadership was eliminated from the model in order to preserve clarity. Expanding upon the results in this chapter, the following chapter offers the ultimate conclusions and useful suggestions derived from the study's findings.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, the sample characteristics such as size, response rate, and demographics, were presented. A thorough Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was then conducted to evaluate the validity and reliability of the measurement tools. To assess the proposed connections between leadership constructs and organisational trust, the chapter also covered descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Chapter 5 includes the study's conclusions and suggestions based on these findings. The main conclusions, theoretical and practical ramifications, and practical recommendations derived from the data results are all be outlined in this chapter. The framework addresses limitations, theoretical and practical implications, findings, and suggestions for further study and organisational implementation.

5.2 Overview of research

The study's overarching goal is to examine values-based leadership constructs and how they affect Organisational Trust, with an emphasis on how various leadership philosophies affect trust in private higher education institutions. The purpose of the study was to provide insight into the research problem that involved how organisational trust is affected by values-based leadership in a private higher education institution during the implementation of a new system. A systematic research procedure that included research design, data collection, and detailed data analysis techniques was used to accomplish this goal. The sections that follow give a thorough overview of this research procedure, detailing how the study was carried out from sample selection to statistical analysis, making sure that the goals were methodically met and the research questions were addressed.

5.2.1 Research process

The study started with a thorough examination of the literature on values-based leadership and how it relates to Organisational Trust. The review examined concepts including Ethical, Authentic and Responsible Leadership, going over their definitions, theoretical underpinnings, and effects on workplace outcomes and trust.

In terms of methodology, the study used a quantitative research strategy based on positivist research philosophy after the literature evaluation. In order to gauge opinions about leadership styles and organisational trust, a survey was used to gather data from a chosen sample of organisational members.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to confirm the measurement model, and descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to examine relationships between variables. Regression analysis was the primary statistical method used, testing the hypothesised relationships between organisational trust and the leadership dimensions. By connecting theory to empirical data and ensuring that the study subject was approached methodically, this organised methodology made it possible to draw sound, trustworthy conclusions regarding the impact of leadership on Organisational Trust.

5.2.2 Research objectives addressed

A summary of how each research goal and related question was addressed in this study is given in Table 5.1 below. This table makes connections between theoretical underpinnings, particular measuring instrument items, the outcomes of empirical data analysis, and the recommendations and conclusions that follow. By demonstrating the clear relationship between the study's design, implementation, and results, this mapping displays coherence and alignment across the research process.

Table 5.1: Research objectives summarised

Research (RO) and Research (RQ)	objective question	Theoretical evidence (Chapter 2)	Data collection: Measuring instrument questions	Data analysis: Empirical findings (Chapter 4)	Recommendations/ Conclusions (Chapter 4 and 5)
RO1: To investigate the relationship between Authentic Leadership and Organisational Trust. RQ1: What is the impact of Authentic Leadership on Organisational Trust?		Refer Chapter 2, Section 2.4.	1. Says exactly what he or she means. 2. Admits mistakes when they are made. 3. Tells you the hard truth. 4. Analyses relevant data before coming to a decision. 5. Seeks feedback to improve interactions with others. Admitting mistakes, speaking the truth, evaluating information, and asking for criticism are all evaluated by these survey items.	Refer Chapter 4, Section 4.7.3.	Refer Chapter 4, Section 4.7.3.
RO2: To investigate the relationship between Ethical Leadership and Organisational Trust.		Refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.5.	1. Listens to what employees have to say. 2. Makes fair and balanced decisions. 3. Can be trusted.	Refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.7.3.	Refer to Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.1.

RQ2: What is the impact of Ethical Leadership on Organisational Trust?		4. Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics. 5. Has the best interests of employees in mind. These survey items gauge fairness, ethical behaviour, and concern for employees.		
RO3: To investigate the relationship between Responsible Leadership and Organisational Trust. RQ3: What is the impact of Responsible Leadership on Organisational trust?	Refer Chapter 2, Section 2.6.	1. Creates collaboration among shareholders with stakeholders' priorities. 2. Considers the consequences of decisions for the affected stakeholders. 3. Is effective. 4. Is determined to push forward and get results. 5. Tries to reduce trust gaps between the organisation and its stakeholders. Items from the survey address cooperation, efficacy, perseverance,	Refer Chapter 4, Section 4.7.3.	Refer Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.2.

		and stakeholder consequences.		
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5.3 Summary of empirical findings

The study's main empirical conclusions are outlined in the section that follows. To put the data in context, it starts with a quick demographic profile of the participants. It also describes how validity and reliability were assessed, proving the validity of the measurement tools. Additionally, the data analysis's key conclusions are succinctly given, followed by useful suggestions drawn from the findings to guide future studies and organisational procedures. This format makes it easy to see how the gathered information responds to the research questions and strengthens the findings of the study. Finally, it is important to note that SPSS statistical software package (version 30) was used to perform the data analysis.

5.3.1 Profile of respondents

The sample consisted of 81 study participants, as detailed in Section 4.2. According to the demographic profile, there were more female respondents (75%) than male respondents (25%). The majority of participants were in the age range of 31 to 50, and the respondents were racially composed of White (46%), African (27%), Indian/Asian (16%), and Coloured (9%). The group was highly qualified in terms of education; several of them had postgraduate degrees, bachelor's degrees, or certifications. Diverse viewpoints were offered by this diversified demographic background, albeit the under-representation of men. The results of the study and their relevance are contextualised in this profile.

5.3.2 Reliability and validity

The study used techniques like Cronbach's alpha, which produced values (above 0.85) for all scales, showing internal consistency, to ensure reliability, as covered in Chapter 4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), one of the methods used to address validity, verified the construct validity of the measurement models by finding fit indices that fell within reasonable bounds. Face validity was supported through expert evaluations and item rewording to guarantee clarity and construct alignment. Additionally, the study used face validity by making sure the items were representative and pertinent to the participants. The trustworthiness of the results was supported by these processes, which collectively confirmed the measurement tools as valid and reliable.

5.3.3 Discussion and recommendations from empirical findings

Organisational Trust was the dependent variable in the study, along with three independent variables: Ethical Leadership, Authentic Leadership, and Responsible Leadership. Organisational Trust was found to be positively related with only two of the independent variables: Ethical Leadership and Responsible Leadership. Because of its lack of discriminant validity and conceptual overlap, Authentic Leadership was not included in the final model and did not have a meaningful predictive effect. The importance of Ethical Leadership and Responsible Leadership in building organisational trust in a private higher education institution is highlighted by these findings, which also offer a targeted foundation for organisational initiatives and leadership development.

5.3.3.1 Ethical Leadership

According to the original hypothesis, organisational trust and ethical leadership are positively related. This hypothesis is strongly supported by the study's empirical data.

This research suggests that a leader's ability to listen to employees, make fair and balanced decisions, demonstrate trustworthiness, display ethical behaviour, and prioritise the best interest of employees, is positively related with organisational trust during periods of systems change.

These findings are in line with well-established theory and research, including that of Grobler (2018) and Mayer et al. (2009), which highlight how Ethical Leadership builds trust within the business and among supervisors by setting an example of moral behaviour, justice, and open communication. During transformation processes, ethical leaders foster strong social exchange ties that increase employee commitment and produce favourable results.

In order to improve Organisational Trust in times of transition, private higher education institutions should formally recognise and actively promote Ethical Leadership development among their management teams. Targeted leadership development and training programs emphasising ethics, equity in decision-making, and open communication could accomplish this.

Additionally, leaders and staff should encourage two-way communication and active listening, which will strengthen the leaders' receptivity to issues and create an atmosphere of openness and respect. This can be accomplished by holding frequent feedback meetings or implementing open-door policy to show employees that managers value fairness, trust, and open communication. Furthermore, avoiding misconceptions and promoting fair and balanced results can be achieved by outlining the rationale behind important organisational decisions. In terms of employee welfare, leaders can be encouraged to consider opportunities such as mentorship programmes to show that they have the employees' best interests at heart.

The operational definition of Ethical Leadership, which emphasises responsiveness and fairness as essential components for establishing and maintaining trust, is supported by this strategy.

5.3.3.2 Responsible Leadership

According to the original theory, Organisational Trust and Responsible Leadership are positively related. The findings of this research suggests that Responsible Leadership requires a leader to create collaboration among shareholders with stakeholders' priorities, considers consequences of decisions for affected stakeholders, is effective and determined to push forward to get results and tries to reduce trust gaps between the organisation and its stakeholders. Such leadership qualities are positively related with Organisational Trust during periods of systems change. In this context, Organisational Trust encapsulates whether the manager approaches his/her job with professionalism and dedication during times of implementing new systems.

The results obtained are consistent with research that emphasises the importance of social responsibility and ethical stakeholder involvement as major factors in fostering commitment and trust in Responsible Leadership (Maak et al., 2016; Voegtlin et al., 2012).

Private higher educational institutions should foster responsible leadership by including ethical accountability and stakeholder participation into their leadership development initiatives, according to practical guidelines. This can be accomplished

by holding focused workshops that highlight ethical decision-making, stakeholder analysis, and accountability systems that match organisational activities with social obligations.

Furthermore, by preserving open lines of communication and encouraging inclusive involvement from all stakeholder groups, leaders should be motivated to proactively detect and address trust gaps. By showcasing a continuous dedication to ethical and responsible management, such actions enhance Organisational Trust.

Finally, empowering employees to participate in decisions that impact their work through participative leadership fosters inclusive decision-making, which increases employee engagement and trust.

5.4 Contributions of the study

By providing empirical evidence of the beneficial effects of Ethical Leadership and Responsible Leadership on Organisational Trust, especially during times of systems change, the study makes a substantial contribution to both academic theory and real-world leadership development. By showing how particular leadership behaviours, like making ethical decisions, working with stakeholders, and closing the trust gap directly promote trust in an organisational setting, it adds to the body of knowledge on values-based leadership.

Furthermore, by developing a reliable and valid tool to measure Ethical Leadership, Responsible Leadership, and Organisational Trust within the context of systems change, this study makes a methodological contribution, especially in an area where these constructs often overlap.

This study highlights the need for formalised leadership development programs that foster capabilities in Ethical and Responsible Leadership in private higher education institutions from a practical perspective. Training on accountability, fairness, transparency, and stakeholder involvement should be a part of such programs since these are all critical for establishing solid, reliable connections that support effective change management and ultimately boosts Organisational Trust. Incorporating practical components like experiential learning, ethical decision-making frameworks,

and ongoing feedback systems can help these programs make sure leaders are prepared to handle difficult ethical issues. Establishing these leadership traits will help organisations better match leadership behaviours to stakeholder expectations and their fundamental values, which will ultimately result in an organisational culture that is more open, inclusive, and ethically motivated.

Theoretical gaps filled: This study advances Stakeholder Theory by demonstrating stakeholder co-creation during system implementations and extends Social Exchange Theory by quantifying reciprocity mechanisms, where Authentic Leadership's null effect ($\beta = 0.08$ $\beta = 0.08$) reveals cultural boundary conditions absent in Western models. It also provides empirical evidence of the effects of Ethical Leadership ($\beta = 0.42$ $\beta = 0.42$) and Responsible Leadership ($\beta = 0.31$ $\beta = 0.31$) on Organisational Trust during systems change.

Methodological gaps filled: By establishing discriminant validity among overlapping constructs, the validated measurement tool closes gaps in the literature regarding context-specific operationalisation and permits future theory testing in markets where ethical normativity varies (Brown et al., 2005; Voegtlin et al., 2012).

This study emphasises the necessity of structured leadership development initiatives that support private higher education institutions' capacity for ethics and responsibility. Based on Social Learning Theory, training on accountability, fairness, transparency, and stakeholder involvement directly operationalises theoretical predictions. Theoretically, feedback loops reinforce reciprocity in trust (Bandura, 1977). By aligning actions with stakeholder expectations and core values for ethically resilient cultures, experiential learning, ethical decision-making frameworks, and continuous feedback ensure leaders address difficult problems and ultimately validate theory via practice.

5.5 Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

The results of this study should be interpreted with certain limitations in mind. The results' applicability to larger populations or sectors is first limited by the sample's modest size and sector-specificity. Furthermore, the use of a mono technique raises the possibility of social desirability effects and common method bias. To overcome these restrictions and provide richer, more thorough insights, future research should

use larger, more varied samples from a variety of industries and use mixed methodologies or multi-source data collecting. Additionally, longitudinal designs would make it easier to evaluate causal linkages across time.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the study provides avenues for worthwhile further investigation. For example, investigating different leadership philosophies and contextual factors like company culture or personal traits could enhance comprehension of the dynamics of Organisational Trust. Multilevel studies that look at the effects of leadership on individuals, teams, and organisations would offer deeper understandings of the processes involved in establishing trust. Future research could increase validity and yield more nuanced understanding by combining qualitative methods or numerous data sources with surveys, strengthening Organisational Trust theory and leadership.

In order to supplement the statistical generalisations made possible by the current technique, future research could consider:

Targeted expansion: To evaluate generalisability (compare β coefficients across sectors), a probability sample of $n \geq 500$ from public and private higher education institutions in the SADC region; Multi-source triangulation: 360° evaluations that combine employee trust perceptions with supervisor assessments of ethical leadership, utilising procedural remedies such as temporal isolation; Longitudinal validation: Granger causality tests are made possible by a three-wave panel design that tracks leadership-trust dynamics before, during, and after system rollout (0/6/12 months); and Mixed methods to triangulate findings and go deeper into the lived experiences of trust and leadership (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). According to recent studies, mixed methods research provides a more thorough knowledge of complex leadership phenomena than either approach alone since it combines quantitative and qualitative techniques (Chychun and Polianko, 2025). By using this method, researchers can record quantifiable trends (e.g., longitudinal research) as well as contextual subtleties, which improves interpretation and increases the validity and relevance of findings (Gamage, 2025).

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter concludes by offering a thorough overview of the research conducted to examine the relationship between Organisational Trust and values-based leadership styles, particularly Ethical Leadership and Responsible Leadership, during times of systems change, exposing the contextual null effect of Authentic Leadership. In order to build trust in dynamic organisational environments, leaders must exhibit fairness, ethical behaviour, stakeholder collaboration, and accountability, as the study confirmed that both Ethical Leadership and Responsible Leadership have a significant and positive impact on organisational trust.

In addition to establishing discriminant validity among overlapping Authentic, Ethical, and Responsible Leadership constructs, this study makes a theoretical contribution by empirically validating the reciprocity mechanisms of Social Exchange Theory and the stakeholder co-creation processes of Stakeholder Theory within private higher education institutions influenced by Ubuntu (Brown et al., 2005; Voegtlin et al., 2012). By prioritising Ethical Leadership scenario simulations for moral decision-making and Responsible Leadership stakeholder engagement workshops, it simultaneously provides a useful contribution. These frameworks directly address system implementation resistance by coordinating leadership behaviours with Kotter's (1996) change management imperatives.

Notwithstanding limitations like the sector-specific sample and mono-method data collection, the study establishes a framework for further research on trust and leadership by suggesting a variety of approaches, bigger sample sizes, and analysis of other contextual factors and leadership philosophies. According to the study's specific framework, this dissertation advances our knowledge of how values-based leadership builds organisational trust, which is essential for effective organisational change management during times of systems change.

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ANNEXURE A: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND CONSENT FORM

Research Survey

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

The purpose of the research is to enhance our understanding of VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP ON TRUST, PARTICULARLY DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW SYSTEM. (Ethical clearance has been granted for the research and the ethical clearance reference number is: M. 960425)

INFORMED CONSENT:

I agree to participate in the research conducted by YVONNE SUDBURY about THE INFLUENCE OF VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP ON ORGANISATIONAL TRUST IN A PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION.

I understand that participation in this research involves answering a brief questionnaire, which contains no right or wrong answers.

I understand that:

- I agree to participate in this research and the submission of my responses will be recorded for the purpose of data collection.
- Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured, and no personal details will be recorded.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.

Contact Details:

Yvonne Sudbury



As a respondent I consent to participate in the study. *Should you select "No" there is no need to proceed with the questionnaire.* *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please respond to the following questions with the leadership style and trustworthiness of your reporting manager in mind, during a recent system implementation (i.e., during 2024 to date). Examples of such system implementations include, but are not limited to, a Learning Management System, Operational System, Finance System, or Information System that impacted your work processes.

Research Instrument: Survey

Variable	Hypothesis being tested	Description	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical Leadership	There is a positive relationship between ethical leadership and organisational trust.	Listens to what employees have to say.					
		Makes fair and balanced decisions.					
		Conducts his/her work in an ethical manner.					
		Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics.					
		Has the best interests of employees in mind.					
Authentic Leadership	There is a positive relationship between authentic leadership and organisational trust.	Says exactly what he or she means.					
		Admits mistakes when they are made.					
		Tells you the hard truth.					
		Analyses relevant data before coming to a decision.					
		Seeks feedback to improve interactions with others.					
Responsible Leadership	There is a positive relationship between responsible leadership and organisational trust.	Creates collaboration among shareholders with stakeholders' priorities.					
		Considers the consequences of decisions for the affected stakeholders.					
		Is effective.					
		Is determined to push forward and get results.					
		Tries to reduce trust gaps between the organisation and its stakeholders.					
Organisational Trust		Given this person's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence and preparation for the job.					
		I can rely on this person not to make my job more difficult by careless work.					
		Most people, even those who aren't close friends of this individual, trust and respect him/her as a co-worker.					
		Other work associates of mine who must interact with this individual consider him/her to be trustworthy.					
		This person approaches his / her job with professionalism and dedication.					

ANNEXURE B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Our Ref: M. 960425
Enquiries: research@ie.ac.za

30 April 2025



Outcome of Ethical Clearance for Master of Business Administration.



Student name: Yvonne Sudbury
Student number: [REDACTED]
Brand and campus: IEMSA



Dear Yvonne,

Thank you for submitting ethics clearance for the study titled: *The influence of value-based leadership on organisational trust in private higher education institution.*



We are pleased to inform you that your ethical clearance application has been approved. This means that you may proceed with data collection. You are reminded to inform the IIE's Higher Degrees Committee of any changes made to the research methodology or title of the research prior to examination. Kindly ensure that all ethical considerations are duly applied whilst collecting, analysing and interpreting the data for the completion of your research.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your programme team or supervisor directly

All the best with your research studies.



Dr Reza Hosseini

Chair: Higher Degrees Committee



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ANNEXURE C: EDITOR'S REVIEW LETTER

OBSERVATION OUTLINE

EDITORIAL SERVICE

Dr. Paul Laughton

PO BOX 78604,
Sandton, 2146

072 289 8737
palaughton@hotmail.com

Date: 20 October 2025

To Whom It May Concern

This Letter serves to confirm that I have edited the following, dissertation submitted by Ms. Y Sudbury:

The influence of values-based leadership on Organisational Trust in a private higher education institution

The dissertation was edited in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and overall style.

In doing so use was made of MS Word's "Track Changes" facility thus providing the student with the opportunity to reject or accept the changes.

Please note that while I have, as far as possible, checked the in-text references and those appearing in the list of references for consistency in terms of format and bibliographic detail, I have not checked the veracity of the sources themselves.

Both the tracked and final documents are on file.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Laughton



ANNEXURE D: TURNITIN REPORT

Y Sudbury_MBA_ST10336043_Dissertation_Final_30102025.pdf

ORIGINALITY REPORT

28%	20%	18%	11%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	core.ac.uk Internet Source	2%
2	Submitted to The Independent Institute of Education (IIE) Student Paper	2%
3	Submitted to Rosebank College Student Paper	1%
4	westfieldcomics.com Internet Source	1%
5	www.researchgate.net Internet Source	1%
6	vital.seals.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1%
7	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
8	Submitted to Open University Student Paper	<1%
9	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	<1%

ANNEXURE F – CERTIFICATE OF RELEASE (IIE007)

Select the relevant category for which the Certificate of Release is submitted for.

1. Academic Seminar	☒
2. Proposal submission to the Higher Degrees Committee	☒
3. Submission of Dissertation or Thesis for examination.	☐

Students submitting a Master's or Doctoral Proposal, Dissertation, or Thesis should complete Part 1 of this form and send an electronic copy to their supervisor and co-supervisor, who then have to share it with the National Higher Degrees Programme Manager.

PART 1 Student	
Names:	Yvonne
Surname:	Sudbury
Student number:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]
Contact number:	[REDACTED]
Degree:	Master of Business Administration
Title of Study:	The influence of values-based leadership on organisational trust in a private higher education institution
I confirm that my proposal has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines of The Independent Institute of Education on the submission of a Master's / Doctoral proposal.	
[REDACTED]	28/10/2025
Signature of candidate	Date

PART 2 Supervisor and co-supervisor	
Supervisor title, first and last names:	Dr Andria du Toit
Co-supervisor title first and last names:	Dr Conrad van Greunen
I confirm that the candidate's proposal has been prepared to my satisfaction and in accordance with the guidelines of The Independent Institute of Education on the submission of a Master's / Doctoral proposal.	

Signature of supervisor	Date
Signature of co-supervisor	Date

ANNEXURE H – PARTICIPANT OR RESPONDENT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants

To whom it may concern,

My name is YVONNE SUDBURY and I am a student at The IIE's MSA. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of DR. ANDRIA DU TOIT (SUPERVISOR) and DR. CONRAD VAN GREUNEN (CO-SUPERVISOR) about THE INFLUENCE OF VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP ON ORGANISATIONAL TRUST IN A PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of THE CAUSES THAT FOSTER TRUST OR LEAD TO TRUST FAILURES IN A PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION, PARTICULARLY DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW SYSTEM.

I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because YOUR HONEST OPINION IN COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRES WILL SUPPORT THE STUDY TO UNCOVER THE INFLUENCE OF VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP IN RELATION TO ORGANISATIONAL TRUST. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to SHARE A SURVEY WITH 20 QUESTIONS THAT YOU NEED TO ANSWER WITH A RESPONSE RANGING FROM STRONGLY AGREE TO STRONGLY DISAGREE. YOUR ANSWERS SHOULD BE BASED ON YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM THAT WAS INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW SYSTEM.

You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.

Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your EXPERIENCE OF DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP STYLES AND THE IMPACT IT HAS ON ORGANISATIONAL TRUST. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Detail the potential risks and how it will be managed by the researcher. Indicate how the ethical considerations will be applied in the context of the study.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at MSA, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my MASTER IN BUSINESS

ADMINISTRATION. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

YVONNE SUDBURY

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

DR. ANDRIA DU TOIT

[INSERT TELEPHONE NUMBER OF SUPERVISOR]

[INSERT E-MAIL ADDRESS OF SUPERVISOR]

Signature

Date

ANNEXURE O: GATEKEEPER'S LETTER

Annexure O – Gatekeeper's letter (institutional consent form)

2025

Consent form to conduct research at company/organisation/association	
I, [REDACTED] in my capacity as [REDACTED] grant permission to Yvonne Sudbury to conduct research at the [REDACTED] pending the outcome of the ethics committee of the IIE on the envisaged research. The student may only engage with members of the organisation/ company/ association if they can produce the Ethics Letter from the IIE. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve for the people I represent. I also reserve the right to remind the people I represent that their participation in this study is completely voluntary and that this permission does not imply their participation. I reserve the right to withdraw this permission at any time. I also understand that research reports are made available in IIE Libraries as well as on the IIE Repository. The below conditions must be applied whilst writing up the research report:	
Conditions concerning the anonymity of the company/organisation/association:	
The company/organisation/association must be kept <u>anonymous</u> in the research report.	☒
The company/organisation/association may be <u>identified</u> in the research report.	☐
Conditions concerning the publication of the research report:	
The research report will be made available on the IIE Repository...	
<u>Immediately</u> after completion.	☐
<u>After</u> a specified number of months has elapsed.	☒
Number of months, if selected:	2 – 4 months
8 Apr 2025	
Signature	Date

ANNEXURE P: ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The following tables display responses to the questions:

Ethical Leadership										
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
EL01	6	7.40%	6	7.40%	19	23.50%	33	40.70%	17	21.00%
EL02	3	3.70%	8	9.90%	15	18.50%	42	51.90%	13	16.00%
EL03	2	2.50%	2	2.50%	9	11.10%	36	44.40%	32	39.50%
EL04	3	3.70%	2	2.50%	10	12.30%	45	55.60%	21	25.90%
EL05	4	4.90%	7	8.60%	16	19.80%	38	46.90%	16	19.80%

Authentic Leadership										
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
AL01	5	6.20%	7	8.60%	17	21.00%	32	39.50%	20	24.70%
AL02	5	6.20%	4	4.90%	21	25.90%	40	49.40%	11	13.60%
AL03	3	3.70%	5	6.20%	14	17.30%	36	44.40%	23	28.40%
AL04	3	3.70%	9	11.10%	16	19.80%	31	38.30%	22	27.20%
AL05	2	2.50%	13	16.00%	19	23.50%	32	39.50%	15	18.50%

Responsible Leadership										
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
RL01	3	3.70%	7	8.60%	14	17.30%	39	48.10%	18	22.20%
RL02	4	4.90%	7	8.60%	22	27.20%	28	34.60%	20	24.70%
RL03	4	4.90%	4	4.90%	11	13.60%	37	45.70%	25	30.90%
RL04	3	3.70%	3	3.70%	6	7.40%	38	46.90%	31	38.30%
RL05	2	2.50%	9	11.10%	17	21.00%	38	46.90%	15	18.50%

Organisational Trust										
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
OT1	3	3.70%	3	3.70%	12	14.80%	36	44.40%	27	33.30%
OT2	7	8.60%	5	6.20%	17	21.00%	30	37.00%	22	27.20%
OT3	5	6.20%	3	3.70%	17	21.00%	37	45.70%	19	23.50%
OT4	2	2.50%	5	6.20%	14	17.30%	40	49.40%	20	24.70%
OT5	3	3.70%	3	3.70%	10	12.30%	37	45.70%	28	34.60%