

Enhancing Leadership Effectiveness: The Role of the People Leader Effectiveness Survey in Identifying Gaps in the QA Department at Abc Company

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) serves as a tool for identifying and addressing leadership gaps within the Quality Assurance (QA) department. The research aimed to answer four key questions: (1) how employees perceive the effectiveness of the PLES in identifying leadership gaps; (2) what specific leadership areas need improvement based on employee feedback; (3) how improved leadership practices influence employee engagement and team performance; and (4) what specific actions leaders should take in response to the PLES results.

A mixed-method research design was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data was collected through structured survey questionnaires to measure employee perceptions of the PLES, while qualitative data from open-ended responses and short interviews provided deeper insights into leadership behaviors and employee experiences.

Findings reveal that employees perceive PLES as an effective and valuable tool for identifying leadership strengths and weaknesses. Quantitative analysis indicated a high level of agreement that the PLES provides meaningful data for leadership development.

Qualitative feedback highlighted communication, feedback quality, decision-making, and employee recognition as critical areas for improvement. Based on these findings, action plans were formulated to guide QA leaders in enhancing their leadership practices.

The study concludes that integrating quantitative and qualitative results provides a more comprehensive understanding of leadership effectiveness. Regular use of the PLES promotes continuous leadership improvement, fosters stronger employee engagement, and enhances overall team performance within the QA department.

Keywords: Quality performance, HMLV manufacturing, explanatory sequential mixed methods, DPU, FPY, PPM, turnaround time TAT, aerospace manufacturing.

INTRODUCTION

In the highly regulated and precision-driven aerospace industry, maintaining exemplary quality standards is not just a requirement but a critical determinant of organizational success and safety. The Quality Assurance (QA) department is at the vanguard of ensuring that aerospace products meet stringent

regulatory and performance benchmarks. Effective leadership within the QA department is essential for strategic initiatives, maintaining operational excellence, and ensuring compliance with industry standards. Identifying leadership gaps in this context is crucial for preventing quality lapses and fostering continuous improvement.

Effective leadership is critical in achieving high performance and fostering employee satisfaction, particularly in departments where attention to detail is paramount, such as Quality Assurance (QA). ABC Company has historically used a Pulse Survey to identify leadership gaps across its organization. While this broad-based survey provides valuable insights into overall organizational sentiment, it fails to address the specific performance and impact of immediate supervisors on their direct reports (Smith, 2021). This generalized approach can overlook key nuances in leadership dynamics that affect employee engagement and departmental effectiveness.

In response to these limitations, ABC Company is introducing the People Leaders Effectiveness Survey (PLES), which aims to offer a more targeted assessment of leadership effectiveness. Unlike the Pulse Survey, PLES is specifically designed to evaluate the performance of immediate leaders or supervisors from the perspective of their direct reports (Johnson & Lee, 2020). By focusing on the individual interactions between supervisors and employees, PLES seeks to uncover specific leadership challenges and areas for improvement that are not captured by broader surveys.

This shift to a more granular survey tool like PLES aligns with recent research emphasizing the need for detailed assessments of leadership effectiveness. Studies have shown that targeted surveys can provide deeper insights into leadership issues, enabling more precise and actionable feedback (Daniels et al., 2019). By implementing PLES, ABC Company aims to enhance its ability to identify and address leadership gaps at a more specific level, thereby improving both employee satisfaction and overall departmental performance (Miller & Carter, 2024). This transition represents a strategic move towards a more refined approach to leadership evaluation, reflecting best practices in contemporary organizational management.

Research Questions and Objectives

This research seeks to enhance leadership effectiveness within the QA department at ABC Company using the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES). The following research questions guide the study:

1. How do employees perceive the effectiveness of the PLES in identifying leadership gaps within the QA department at ABC Company?
2. What specific leadership areas have been identified as needing improvement based on the PLES results in the QA department, according to employee feedback?
3. How do improved leadership practices influence employee engagement and team performance within the QA department at ABC Company?
4. What specific actions should leaders in the QA department take in response to the results of the PLES?

The research questions outlined above are designed to support the study's objectives. Below are the research objectives aligned with these questions:

1. To assess employee perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) in identifying leadership gaps within the QA department at ABC Company.
2. To analyze PLES results and employee feedback to pinpoint specific leadership areas in the QA department that require enhancement.
3. To examine the anticipated outputs of improved leadership practices, including increased employee

engagement and enhanced team performance within the QA department, by implementing action plans based on PLES findings.

4. To formulate targeted action plans for QA department leaders based on identified gaps, aimed at improving leadership practices and fostering a more effective work environment.

Research Framework

The conceptual framework for enhancing leadership effectiveness in the QA department at ABC Company follows the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory by James MacGregor Burns. This framework illustrates how the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) can be utilized to identify and address leadership gaps, ultimately improving employee engagement and team performance.



Figure 1. Framework Diagram

The conceptual framework follows the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model to systematically enhance leadership effectiveness within the QA department at ABC Company. The inputs consist of the PLES results, employee feedback, and the overall organizational context, which collectively provide a foundation for understanding the current level of leadership effectiveness. These inputs help capture employees’ perceptions and experiences regarding leadership practices, allowing the organization to gain insights into existing strengths and areas that require improvement.

The process involves analyzing the survey results to identify specific leadership gaps within the department and developing targeted action plans to address these gaps. Through this analysis, strategies are formulated to improve leadership behaviors and practices among QA department leaders. The expected output is a targeted action plan that aims to strengthen leadership practices and create a more effective work environment. Guided by Transformational Leadership Theory and supported by the PLES, this framework promotes a systematic approach to understanding employee perceptions, addressing leadership gaps, and fostering a more engaged and high-performing team.

Significance of the Study

Theory. This study supports Transformational Leadership Theory, developed by James MacGregor Burns and later expanded by Bernard Bass, which focuses on how leaders can inspire and motivate their followers to achieve higher levels of performance and engagement. Transformational leaders foster an environment of trust, encourage innovation, and support personal and professional growth. By applying Transformational Leadership Theory, the research can explore how effective leadership not only identifies gaps but also drives positive organizational outcomes in employee engagement and team performance.

Practice. By using the PLES, the study identifies specific gaps in leadership effectiveness within the QA department. This provides actionable insights for improving leadership practices, which can lead to more effective management and better team performance. Addressing the identified leadership gaps can lead to improved employee engagement, as leaders become more effective in creating meaningful work environments, supporting team members, and managing resources effectively. Effective leadership directly impacts team performance. By improving leadership practices based on PLES findings, the QA department can experience enhanced productivity and performance.

Policy. The results from the PLES provide valuable data that can inform HR policies related to leadership development, performance evaluation, and employee engagement strategies. This ensures that policies are based on concrete evidence rather than assumptions.

The study can help establish benchmarks for effective leadership within the organization. These benchmarks can be used to develop standards for evaluating and promoting leaders, ensuring that leadership practices are aligned with organizational goals and employee needs. Implementing policies that integrate PLES results into performance evaluations can create a culture of accountability among leaders. By tying leadership effectiveness directly to performance outcomes, ABC Company can incentivize leaders to continuously improve their practices. This alignment not only drives productivity but also ensures that the QA department meets its quality and efficiency standards, enhancing the company's competitive edge and profitability.

Social Action. By addressing leadership gaps, the study contributes to creating a more supportive and positive work environment. Effective leadership fosters a culture where employees feel valued and engaged, which aligns with Kahn's theory of engagement. Improved leadership practices lead to better psychological safety and job satisfaction. This supports employees' well-being and aligns with the broader goal of creating a healthier and more engaging workplace.

Scope and Limitations

This study will be conducted within the Quality Assurance (QA) Department of Business Unit Z (BU-Z) of ABC Company, focusing on QA Inspectors from Incoming Quality Control (IQC), Material Review Board (MRB), and Line QA to ensure a representative range of perspectives. Data will be collected primarily through questionnaires, including open-ended questions for additional insights. The scope is limited to BU-Z QA employees and excludes other Central QA functions such as Calibration and Supplier Quality, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Potential limitations include selection bias from voluntary participation in the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES), possible low response rates, and the influence of internal factors like restructuring or leadership changes. External conditions such as economic fluctuations, as well as changes in industry standards and competitive environments, may also affect employee perceptions and responses, potentially impacting the accuracy and interpretation of the results.

Review of Related Literature

Employee engagement has become a strategic priority for organizations, as it directly influences retention, productivity, and overall performance (Wellable, 2023). Recent trends show a shift from traditional annual reviews to continuous feedback systems, supported by advanced technologies such as AI and data analytics, along with a stronger focus on employee well-being (Deloitte, 2023; Wellable, 2023). Effective feedback systems now emphasize real-time, data-driven, and personalized approaches to better understand

employee needs and improve performance (Deloitte, 2023; Cisco, 2023). In this context, traditional surveys are increasingly viewed as limited due to delayed feedback and response biases, while pulse surveys provide more timely, accurate, and actionable insights (Emerald Insight, 2023; Harvard Business Review, 2023). Studies show that frequent pulse surveys enhance engagement, capture real-time employee sentiment, and enable organizations—particularly QA departments—to identify and address leadership gaps more effectively (Journal of Organizational Behavior, 2019; Vreede, 2024).

Further literature highlights that survey frequency and methodology significantly affect data quality and employee perception. Pulse surveys are generally preferred because they are shorter, more relevant, and encourage more honest feedback, whereas traditional surveys may lead to fatigue and lower participation (CultureMonkey, 2023). Continuous feedback mechanisms help organizations identify issues early, improve communication, and build trust, ultimately boosting morale and workplace satisfaction (Vreede, 2024). High employee engagement is also linked to increased productivity, stronger retention, higher profitability, and greater employee initiative (Stone, 2023). Overall, integrating pulse surveys with modern feedback systems enables organizations to create a more responsive, supportive, and high-performing work environment.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

According to Creswell (2018), research design refers to the plan that guides the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data in a research study. In this investigation, a Mixed-Methods Sequential Explanatory Design was employed, consisting of two phases: a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase. This design was chosen to first measure employees' perceptions of the effectiveness of the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) in identifying leadership gaps, and then to further explore and explain the reasons behind those perceptions. The quantitative phase provided measurable data on leadership effectiveness and perceived leadership gaps, while the qualitative phase helped clarify and contextualize the results obtained from the survey, ensuring a more comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of leadership effectiveness within the QA department.

In the first phase, a structured survey instrument was administered to employees in the Quality Assurance department to gather quantitative data related to leadership effectiveness and potential leadership gaps. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics and other relevant quantitative methods to determine patterns and identify priority areas for improvement. In the second phase, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with selected QA employees to obtain deeper insights into the survey findings. These qualitative methods helped explain employees' perceptions, explore their experiences with leadership practices, and capture insights that were not fully reflected in the numerical data. Finally, the findings from both phases were integrated to provide a holistic interpretation of leadership gaps, which informed the development of targeted recommendations to enhance leadership effectiveness and improve the PLES process within the QA department.

Research Locale

The research was conducted at ABC Company in Batangas, specifically within the Quality Assurance (QA) department of Business Unit Z. This unit provides a suitable setting for examining the effectiveness of the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) in identifying leadership gaps. The study involved QA inspectors, QA engineers, supervisors, and managers to ensure a broad perspective on leadership practices

and the usefulness of the survey. Although each unit operates under different conditions, they share common QA objectives, making it an appropriate environment for collecting and analyzing data related to leadership effectiveness.

Population and Sampling Design

This study used both quantitative and qualitative sampling methods to assess how QA Inspectors perceived the effectiveness of the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) in identifying leadership gaps. Stratified sampling based on tenure (0–4 years, 4–10 years, and more than 10 years) was applied to ensure representation across experience levels, with 19 respondents selected from a population of 20 using proportional allocation. For the qualitative part, purposive sampling was used to select six experienced QA Inspectors based on their expertise and involvement in leadership or training activities. Data was collected through surveys and interviews or focus groups to provide both broad and in-depth insights into the effectiveness of the PLES.

Research Instruments

Quantitative data were collected through Likert scale surveys administered via Google Form where employees rated statements on a 5-point scale to measure their perceptions and identify specific leadership areas needing improvement. Statistical analysis was used to identify trends and overall insights from the responses. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and action planning workshops involving selected QA Inspectors and leaders, allowing for deeper exploration of employee experiences and the development of actionable strategies. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or virtually, recorded, and analyzed using thematic analysis, while workshops facilitated discussions on survey findings and generated concrete action plans. This combined approach provided both broad and in-depth insights, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of the PLES and its role in improving leadership effectiveness.

Data Gathering Procedure

A survey was distributed to 19 QA Inspectors using a 5-point Likert scale to assess how effectively the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) identifies leadership gaps within the QA department at ABC Company. The survey was administered through Google Forms for ease of access and participation. Prior to distribution, approval was obtained from the HR department by submitting a formal proposal outlining the study's purpose, methodology, and benefits, while also addressing any ethical considerations and feedback. The survey targeted all selected QA Inspectors in BU-Z, ensured anonymity to encourage honest responses, and remained open for three weeks to allow sufficient time for participation and follow-up.

Management and Treatment of Data

This study used several data analysis methods to examine how the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) helps identify leadership gaps in the QA Department of ABC Company. To understand employee perceptions of the survey's effectiveness, a Likert scale questionnaire and interviews were conducted. Employees rated the effectiveness of PLES in identifying leadership gaps, and the results were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and average. Interview responses were also reviewed to identify common themes that explain employees' views about the survey.

To determine leadership areas that require improvement, the existing company survey was analyzed to

identify leadership attributes with the lowest scores. Descriptive statistics and visual tools such as charts were used to highlight key leadership gaps within the department.

Based on these results, an action planning workshop was conducted with leaders to develop strategies for improvement. The proposed actions were documented and categorized into short-term and long-term plans. To evaluate the impact of these actions, team performance metrics such as inspection efficiency, defect rates, and productivity were compared before and after implementation to determine improvements in leadership effectiveness and team performance.

Table 1: Data Analysis Plan

Research Objectives	Instrument	Analysis Plan
1. To assess employee perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) in identifying leadership gaps within the QA department at ABC Company.	· Likert scale	· Descriptive statistics
	· Interview	· Thematic analysis
2. To analyze PLES results and employee feedback to pinpoint specific leadership areas in the QA department that require enhancement.	· Likert scale	· Descriptive statistics
	· Interview	· Thematic analysis
3. To examine the anticipated outputs of improved leadership practices, including increased employee engagement and enhanced team performance within the QA department, by implementing action plans based on PLES findings.	· Interview	· Thematic analysis
4. To formulate targeted action plans for QA department leaders based on identified gaps, aimed at improving leadership practices and fostering a more effective work environment.	· Likert scale	· Descriptive statistics
	· Interview	· Thematic analysis

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presented and discussed the results of the study, guided by the research questions and objectives outlined in Chapter 1. Its purpose was to determine how the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) helped identify leadership gaps within the QA department of ABC Company, based on employee perceptions. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of PLES’s role in enhancing leadership effectiveness.

The results were presented following the order of the research questions: employees’ perceptions of PLES effectiveness, leadership areas needing improvement, the influence of improved leadership on engagement and team performance, and recommended leadership actions based on PLES results. By integrating numerical findings with narrative insights, the study provided a balanced interpretation that addressed the research objectives.

For Research Question 1, the quantitative results showed that employees perceived the PLES as an effective and reliable tool for identifying leadership gaps in the QA department, reflected in a high overall mean score of 4.38. Respondents agreed that the survey identified leadership areas needing improvement (4.47), provided useful feedback for understanding gaps (4.42), and reflected current leadership challenges

(4.37). The perceived adequacy of survey frequency (4.11) and the high effectiveness of action plans based on PLES results (4.53) further indicated that the survey led to practical leadership improvements. These findings confirmed that employees viewed PLES as relevant and useful, supporting evidence-based leadership development and aligning with previous studies (Smith & Lewis, 2021; Adams & Morris, 2021; Garcia & Roberts, 2019; Jones & Lee, 2020). Overall, the results confirmed that PLES was a credible and effective tool for identifying leadership gaps and supporting leadership improvement within the QA department.

Table 2. Employees’ Perceptions of the Effectiveness of PLES

No.	Statement	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1	The PLES effectively identifies areas where leadership within the QA department needs improvement.	4.47	Strongly Agree
2	The feedback provided by the PLES is useful for understanding the specific leadership gaps in the QA department.	4.42	Agree
3	The PLES results accurately reflect the current leadership challenges faced by the QA department.	4.37	Agree
4	The frequency of the PLES administration is sufficient to capture ongoing leadership issues within the QA department.	4.11	Agree
5	The action plans developed based on PLES findings effectively address the leadership gaps identified in the QA department.	4.53	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean		4.38	Agree

The findings not only affirmed the effectiveness of the PLES but also highlighted important implications for leadership practice within the QA department. The consistently high mean scores indicated strong employee trust in the survey process, suggesting that inspectors felt their perceptions were accurately captured and translated into meaningful leadership actions. This trust is particularly important in quality-driven environments, where leadership effectiveness directly affects compliance, decision-making, and risk mitigation. The high-rating for-action plan effectiveness (4.53) further suggested that the PLES served not just as a diagnostic tool but also as a catalyst for visible leadership improvements, supporting sustained employee engagement and a strong quality culture.

However, the results also revealed areas for caution. Although the survey frequency received a positive rating (4.11), it was the lowest among the five indicators, implying potential gaps in capturing rapidly evolving leadership issues. In the dynamic QA environment, where operational pressures and regulatory requirements frequently change, there may be value in exploring more frequent pulse-style assessments to complement the PLES without causing survey fatigue. Additionally, the uniformly high ratings may reflect a positive response bias, influenced by the small sample size (n = 19) or employees’ awareness of ongoing management-driven improvement initiatives. This could limit the survey’s ability to capture nuanced or dissenting perceptions of leadership effectiveness.

The literature suggests that survey-based tools are most effective when combined with qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups (Brown & Carter, 2020). In this sense, the PLES may be best viewed as a foundational assessment rather than a standalone solution. Integrating qualitative feedback can provide richer insights into the root causes of leadership gaps and enhance the interpretive depth of the survey results. In summary, while the quantitative findings strongly support the PLES’s effectiveness in identifying leadership gaps, they also highlight the importance of complementary assessment approaches and ongoing refinement of survey frequency to ensure continued relevance and impact.

Table 3. Summary of Qualitative Data

Theme	Category	Codes	Participant Narrative	Thematic Analysis/ Interpretation
Theme 1: PLES as a Catalyst for Leadership Awareness	Leadership awareness and transparency	Open communication between leaders and QA inspectors. Understanding the impact of leader actions. Encourages reflection and accountability.	“The PLES will make it easier for leaders and QA Inspectors to talk and share feedback. It will also help supervisors understand how their actions affect the team.” (Employee 4)	The codes indicate that PLES facilitates dialogue and reflection between leaders and employees. Grouped under “Leadership awareness and transparency,” this theme demonstrates that the survey helps leaders recognize how their behavior affects team performance and dynamics. By promoting reflection, the PLES encourages accountability, prompting leaders to align their actions with team needs. This finding aligns with Uhl-Bien (2018), who emphasizes that relational transparency and open communication strengthen trust, collaboration, and overall leadership effectiveness. In practice, this means that the PLES serves not just as an assessment tool, but also as a mechanism for developing self-aware and responsive leaders.
Theme 2: Strengths of the PLES Process	Transparency and employee voice	Opportunity for all employees to share opinions. Management listens and takes action. Builds trust and engagement.	“The survey is helpful and lets everyone share their opinions. It’s great that management listens and takes action on the feedback.” (Employee 14)	The codes show that employees feel heard and see management responding to their feedback. Grouped under “Transparency and employee voice,” this theme illustrates that PLES strengthens engagement and trust by validating employees’ opinions. The process encourages open communication, making employees feel that their input matters and can influence leadership practices. This reinforces organizational commitment and morale, consistent with Deloitte (2023), which highlights that active listening and responsive feedback improve employee engagement. Effectively, this shows that the PLES not only identifies leadership gaps but also enhances participative leadership practices.
Theme 3: Gaps and Limitations in Capturing Leadership Challenges	Limitations in survey design	Survey questions are too general. Do not address specific daily challenges. Limited identification of improvement areas.	“Sometimes the questions are too general and don’t talk about the real issues we deal with every day.” (Employee 2)	The codes suggest that while the PLES is useful, its broad questions fail to capture context-specific challenges. Grouped under “Limitations in survey design,” this theme highlights that some leadership gaps remain unidentified because the survey does not probe day-to-day operational issues. This indicates a need for more targeted, contextual questions to provide actionable insights. Smith and Lewis (2021) emphasize that feedback tools must be context-specific to generate meaningful results. In practical terms, this theme shows that improving survey design could enhance the accuracy of identifying leadership gaps and ultimately improve leadership effectiveness in operational settings.
Theme 4: Impact of PLES on Leadership Practices and Employee Engagement	Leadership responsiveness and continuous improvement	Leaders follow up on feedback. Adjustments made to meet team needs. Enhances motivation and engagement	“After the survey, our leader checks with us about our needs and how to improve our work.” (Employee 6)	The codes indicate that leaders respond to feedback and take tangible actions to address team needs. Grouped under “Leadership responsiveness and continuous improvement,” this theme illustrates that PLES creates a feedback loop that fosters continuous improvement. Employees perceive that their input leads to meaningful changes, which strengthens motivation, engagement, and performance. This aligns with Wilson and Patel (2020), who argue that consistent feedback and leader follow-up sustain engagement and growth. Overall, this theme demonstrates that PLES does not merely highlight gaps but actively drives improvements in leadership practices, supporting a culture of responsive and accountable leadership.

Through thematic analysis of the qualitative data, the researcher found that the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) plays a significant role in identifying leadership gaps and reinforcing effective leadership practices within the QA department. The survey was observed to enhance leadership awareness by encouraging reflection and accountability among people leaders, helping them recognize how their behaviors affect team dynamics and performance. Employees also reported feeling valued when their feedback was actively solicited and addressed, which strengthened trust, morale, and organizational commitment. Rather than serving only as an evaluation tool, the PLES emerged as a developmental mechanism that supports self-awareness and responsive leadership.

The analysis also revealed areas for improvement in the survey design. Some participants noted that certain questions were too broad to capture the specific leadership challenges faced in daily QA operations, suggesting the need for more context-specific and operationally grounded items. Despite these limitations, PLES demonstrated a tangible impact on leadership practices, as leaders’ actions in response to survey

feedback were linked to increased employee motivation and engagement. Overall, the findings indicate that the PLES enhances leadership effectiveness by promoting transparency, accountability, and employee participation, while also highlighting opportunities to refine the instrument to more accurately identify actionable leadership gaps.

To address Research Question 2, which examined specific leadership areas needing improvement in the QA department based on PLES results and employee feedback, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches as outlined in the data analysis matrix. Quantitative data from the PLES were analyzed using mean scores, while qualitative responses were coded and categorized to identify recurring themes related to leadership challenges. The integration of these datasets allowed for triangulation, providing a more robust and valid understanding of the leadership areas requiring enhancement.

The quantitative results, drawn from the responses of 19 QA employees using a 5-point Likert scale, highlighted specific aspects of leadership perceived as needing improvement. These findings were complemented by qualitative insights, which provided context and explanations for the numerical trends. Together, the combined analysis offered a comprehensive view of the leadership gaps within the QA department and informed targeted strategies for development and improvement.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics Relevant to RQ2

No.	Statement	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1	The PLES effectively identifies areas where leadership within the QA department needs improvement.	4.47	Strongly Agree
2	The feedback provided by the PLES is useful for understanding the specific leadership gaps in the QA department.	4.42	Agree
3	The PLES results accurately reflect the current leadership challenges faced by the QA department.	4.37	Agree
4	The frequency of the PLES administration is sufficient to capture ongoing leadership issues within the QA department.	4.11	Agree
5	The action plans developed based on PLES findings effectively address the leadership gaps identified in the QA department.	4.53	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean		4.38	Agree

The overall mean score of 4.38 indicated strong employee agreement that the PLES is an effective tool for identifying leadership gaps in the QA department. However, the slightly lower mean for survey frequency (4.11) suggested a potential area for improvement, highlighting the need for further exploration through qualitative data. The 2025 PLES results for the QA Department of BU-Z at ABC Company showed a score of 85%, equivalent to 4.25 on a 5-point Likert scale, reflecting a high level of perceived leadership effectiveness. Employees generally expressed satisfaction with leadership performance, noting opportunities for further improvement in specific behaviors or practices, while comments remained overwhelmingly positive, emphasizing appreciation for their leaders. Compared to 2024, these results indicated an overall improvement in leadership perception.

Qualitative data from open-ended survey responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. Employee statements were coded, grouped into categories, and consolidated into overarching themes to identify recurring insights about leadership strengths and gaps. This approach provided context to the quantitative findings, revealing how employees interpreted leadership behaviors, highlighting areas for development, and offering richer insights into the practical impact of the PLES on leadership awareness and improvement initiatives within the QA department.

Table 5. Thematic Analysis of Employee Responses

Codes	Categories	Emerging Themes
Questions are too general.	Lack of specificity	Communication Consistency
Did not reflect daily challenges	Operational misalignment	Communication Consistency
Missed the real issues we deal with	Contextual gaps	Communication Consistency
Feedback not fully acted on	Limited follow-through	Feedback Responsiveness
Leadership challenges are not fully shown.	Incomplete feedback translation	Feedback Responsiveness
Misses adaptability and creativity	Dynamic leadership demands	Frequency of Evaluation
Fast-evolving contexts overlooked	Timing limitations	Frequency of Evaluation

Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data revealed three primary leadership areas requiring improvement within the QA department: communication consistency, feedback responsiveness, and frequency of evaluation. Although the overall PLES results indicated strong leadership performance, thematic analysis of employee feedback highlighted concerns that survey questions were often too general, limiting their relevance to daily QA operations. Employees noted that clearer and more consistent communication from leaders was needed, aligning with Uhl-Bien (2018) and Adams and Morris (2021), who emphasized that effective leadership relies on relational dynamics and context-specific communication. Similarly, while employees found PLES feedback useful and action plans effective, qualitative responses revealed delays or limited follow-through on leadership feedback, indicating a need to strengthen feedback responsiveness, as supported by Smith and Lewis (2021) and Garcia and Roberts (2019).

The frequency of PLES administration received the lowest quantitative score, and employees expressed that current evaluation intervals did not always capture leadership performance in fast-changing operational contexts. This aligns with Jones and Lee (2020) and Garcia and Roberts (2019), who highlighted that continuous or more frequent assessments provide timely insights into quicker interventions. Integrating quantitative scores with qualitative insights suggested that these leadership gaps are interconnected: inconsistent communication, delayed feedback responses, and infrequent evaluations together reduce the effectiveness of leadership improvement initiatives. Addressing these areas—by refining survey specificity, increasing evaluation frequency, and enhancing feedback follow-through—can strengthen trust, team dynamics, and overall leadership effectiveness, enabling the PLES to function as both a measurement and a developmental tool within the QA department.

To address Research Question 3, which explored how improved leadership practices influence employee engagement and team performance within the QA department at ABC Company, a thematic analysis was conducted on the open-ended survey responses. Employee statements were systematically coded, grouped into categories, and synthesized to identify recurring patterns and emerging themes. This analysis provided

insights into how employees perceived the impact of the PLES on leadership behaviors and its subsequent effects on team dynamics and engagement. The resulting themes, summarized in Table 6, highlighted keyways in which enhanced leadership practices contributed to motivating employees, fostering collaboration, and improving overall team performance.

Table 6. Thematic Analysis of Employee Responses on the Influence of PLES

Codes	Categories	Emerging Themes
Leaders review feedback closely.	Action on feedback	Increased Engagement
Leaders follow up on employee needs.	Leader responsiveness	Increased Engagement
Leaders became more self-aware.	Reflective leadership	Increased Engagement
Improved communication	Communication improvement	Enhanced Collaboration
Better teamwork and coordination	Team cooperation	Enhanced Collaboration
Reduced tension	Positive work climate	Improved Morale
Leaders reflect on leadership style.	Accountability and reflection	Improved Morale
Targeted training and coaching	Leadership development	Improved Morale

The analysis of qualitative responses revealed three dominant themes showing how PLES results influenced leadership practices: **increased engagement, enhanced collaboration, and improved morale**. Employee engagement improved as leaders actively reviewed feedback and took visible actions based on the survey results, making employees feel heard and valued. Participants noted that leaders became more attentive, reflective, and responsive, with statements such as, “Feedback is reviewed closely, and corrective measures are taken based on it” and “After the survey, our leader checks with us about our needs and how to improve our work.” These findings align with Uhl-Bien’s (2018) relational leadership theory, which emphasizes that trust, open communication, and leader responsiveness enhance employee involvement and commitment.

Based on the PLES results, several targeted actions were recommended for leaders in the QA department to enhance their effectiveness. Employees suggested conducting regular feedback sessions to discuss survey results, clarify concerns, and outline improvement actions. Increasing the frequency of the PLES, such as implementing semi-annual surveys, was also recommended to maintain progress and allow continuous monitoring. Leaders were encouraged to customize survey items to address QA-specific challenges, including communication during inspections and workload management. Following through action plans and maintaining transparent communication by sharing summarized results with the team were seen as essential for reinforcing accountability and building trust.

Additional recommendations focused on practical implementation and sustainability. Leaders were advised to prioritize actions with the greatest impact on trust and engagement, develop a phased implementation roadmap following an Assess → Align → Act → Review cycle, and integrate established leadership models like Transformational or Situational Leadership to guide coaching and team development. Anticipating organizational barriers, continuously evaluating effectiveness through both quantitative and qualitative measures, and linking survey findings to individualized development plans were also emphasized. Together, these actions provide a structured, evidence-based approach to translating PLES results into meaningful improvements in leadership effectiveness and overall team performance within the QA department.

Overall Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) is an effective tool for identifying and addressing leadership gaps within the QA department at ABC Company. Employees generally viewed the survey positively, noting improvements in communication, engagement, and teamwork. These findings align with existing literature highlighting the value of employee feedback and open communication in effective leadership (Smith & Johnson, 2020; Brown & Clark, 2021). The PLES encourages reflection and feedback, supporting transformational leadership principles that emphasize employee empowerment, accountability, and continuous growth (Bass & Riggio, 2019; Uhl-Bien, 2018). The study was grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978) and structured using the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, which allowed the survey inputs—PLES data and employee feedback—to be systematically analyzed and translated into actionable outputs. This approach enabled the identification of specific leadership gaps and informed targeted action plans aimed at fostering a more collaborative, accountable, and high-performing QA environment. Quantitative and qualitative analyses highlighted areas for improvement while also providing clear insights into current leadership practices, forming the basis for meaningful interventions.

Critical insights from the study include three main effects of the PLES: enhancing communication and engagement, promoting self-reflection and accountability, and emphasizing the need for continuous improvement. Employees felt recognized and valued, leaders became more reflective and responsive, and suggestions for refining the survey underscored the importance of follow-through and ongoing assessment. Practically, the study equips QA leaders with structured tools to improve team performance and collaboration. It also contributed to the professional growth of the researcher and provides a foundation for knowledge sharing within the department. Overall, the study demonstrates that implementing PLES cultivates a culture of continuous improvement, accountability, and empowerment, while offering a replicable model for leadership development and professional learning.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study emphasize the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) as a powerful, data-driven tool for leadership development. Beyond identifying leadership gaps, the PLES fosters continuous communication, employee inclusion, and mutual accountability between leaders and their teams, promoting a culture of openness where feedback drives collaboration and improvement. Proper implementation encourages leaders to reflect on their practices and take actionable steps, ensuring their behaviors align with both employee expectations and organizational goals.

For ABC Company, particularly within the QA Department, these results have practical implications for leadership development, human resource management, and overall organizational effectiveness. Institutionalizing the PLES can guide performance appraisals, training programs, and succession planning while supporting a feedback-oriented culture that strengthens engagement, trust, and productivity. The survey not only identifies areas for improvement but also provides a framework for continuous leadership growth and sustainable organizational performance.

Summary of Significant Findings

Research Question 1: How do employees perceive the effectiveness of the PLES in identifying leadership gaps within the QA department at ABC Company?

- Employees perceived the PLES as highly effective, with an overall weighted mean of 4.38. They

agreed that the survey accurately identifies leadership areas that need improvement and that it provides useful feedback for understanding leadership gaps. Qualitative responses confirmed that the PLES encourages open communication and allows employees to voice their opinions freely. These results address Objective 1 by affirming that employees view PLES as a credible and valuable tool for assessing leadership effectiveness.

Research Question 2: What specific leadership areas have been identified as needing improvement based on the PLES results in the QA department, according to employee feedback?

- Findings revealed that while leadership in the QA department is generally effective, there are areas requiring improvement, particularly in communication consistency, feedback responsiveness, and survey frequency. Employees recommended refining the survey to include more specific questions related to their daily tasks and QA operations. This fulfills Objective 2 by pinpointing the specific leadership dimensions that require attention and enhancement.

Research Question 3: How do improved leadership practices influence employee engagement and team performance within the QA department at ABC Company?

- The study found that leadership improvements following PLES implementation positively affected employee engagement and teamwork. Employees observed better coordination, reduced tension, and stronger collaboration after leaders acted on survey feedback. They felt more motivated and valued, resulting in higher morale and improved work relationships. These findings address Objective 3 by demonstrating that enhanced leadership practices derived from PLES data contribute to higher engagement and better team performance.

Research Question 4: What specific actions should leaders in the QA department take in response to the results of the PLES?

- Employees suggested that leaders should conduct regular post-survey feedback sessions, increase PLES frequency, and customize survey items to reflect QA-specific leadership concerns. They also emphasized the importance of transparency and visible follow-through on action plans. These findings address Objective 4 by identifying concrete leadership actions that can sustain improvement and accountability within the department.

Conclusions

The study concludes that the People Leader Effectiveness Survey (PLES) is a reliable and insightful tool for identifying leadership gaps within the QA department. Employees perceive it as fostering meaningful feedback, open dialogue, and mutual understanding between leaders and team members, highlighting the importance of structured feedback in promoting transparency, communication, and accountability. The survey results specifically identified communication, responsiveness, and consistency as critical leadership areas needing improvement, suggesting that enhancing these competencies enables leaders to be more adaptive, supportive, and effective in guiding their teams.

Improved leadership practices, when informed by PLES feedback, were found to positively influence employee engagement, morale, collaboration, and trust. Leaders who actively respond to feedback demonstrate behaviors such as active listening, timely responsiveness, and equitable decision-making, which directly strengthen team cohesion, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness. To sustain these improvements, it is essential to regularly administer the PLES, communicate results transparently, and follow up with concrete developmental actions. By institutionalizing these practices, ABC Company can leverage the PLES not only as a diagnostic tool but also as a strategic instrument for leadership

development, fostering a culture of continuous learning, accountability, and shared responsibility that can extend beyond the QA department to enhance organizational performance company-wide.

Recommendations

1. Organizational and Leadership Development

- Institutionalize PLES: Conduct the survey semi-annually with clear guidelines, automated reminders, and anonymized responses. HR and QA leaders coordinate administration and reporting.
- Expand survey scope: Include department-specific, open-ended questions to capture operational differences.
- Ensure transparency and follow-through: Share results and action plans with employees and reinforce accountability.
- Integrate into performance management: Use PLES results to guide leadership development, training, coaching, and succession planning.
- Complement with other feedback tools: Incorporate peer reviews, 360-degree feedback, or interviews for a fuller view of leadership effectiveness.

2. Employee Engagement and Team Development

- Foster ongoing dialogue: Hold regular feedback sessions, team huddles, or check-ins to address concerns from PLES.
- Empower employees: Encourage staff to propose solutions to leadership gaps and monitor outcomes.
- Targeted training: Offer programs focused on communication, responsiveness, consistency, and conflict resolution.

3. Policy and Governance

- Establish a PLES Oversight Team: HR, senior management, and department heads monitor survey implementation and action plans.
- Track progress: Provide quarterly updates on actions, outcomes, and lessons learned, using metrics like engagement, retention, and performance.
- Conduct long-term evaluations: Periodically assess the lasting impact of PLES-driven leadership initiatives.

4. Recommendations for Future Research

- Include other departments to compare leadership perceptions.
- Track long-term effects of PLES on leadership practices and team performance.
- Explore links between PLES scores and productivity, quality, or retention.
- Review and improve PLES questions to ensure relevance and accuracy.
- Compare PLES with other tools (pulse surveys, 360-degree feedback) for validation.
- Study additional factors like employee tenure, team structure, or leadership style to understand influences on survey ratings.

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