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REPORT

Global Leadership Report: What Followers Want



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Executive Summary



Leadership is fundamental to modern life, influencing everything from political power to family dynamics.

Today's leaders face profound and complex challenges, such as climate change, conflict and artificial intelligence, and must make decisions that affect the lives of their followers. In this changing world, it is crucial for leaders to understand the reasons people follow them.

Gallup's latest study, based on surveys conducted in 52 countries, builds on decades of our research into what people need from their leaders. More than anything, the data confirm that followers need a sense of hope from their leaders. Trust is the second most important need, followed by compassion, then stability. These four needs are consistent, irrespective of country, demographics or the type of leader in question. These needs are also linked to wellbeing: The more needs leaders meet, the more suffering is reduced.

To face the evolving challenges of our time successfully, leaders must ultimately know three things.

They must know the four needs of their followers: hope, trust, compassion and stability; they must know themselves and invest in their innate strengths as leaders; and they must know the demands of — and expectations attached to — their specific leadership role.




Key Findings

- 1 Hope is the primary need of followers around the world. Over half (56%) of all attributes linked to influential leaders in daily life speak to the theme of hope — far outdistancing the next most important need of trust (33%).
- 2 The need for hope is universal but emphasized in certain contexts: among the youngest generation (18- to 29-year-olds: 57%), in the Asia-Pacific region (59%) and in relation to organizational leaders (64%).
- 3 More people rate their lives poorly enough to be considered suffering when their leaders do not give them hope. Even though suffering is relatively rare, it is reduced as more of the four needs of followers are met. Among people who do not mention hope in relation to the leader with the most influence in their lives, 33% are classed as thriving and 9% as suffering. However, once the need for hope is met, thriving rises to 38%, and suffering dips to 6%.
- 4 Leaders in the world of work have a huge capacity to improve the lives of others. Those employed by an employer are only slightly less likely to name someone from their work environment (34%) as they are to name a family member (44%) as the leader who has the biggest positive impact on their lives.

Introduction





What makes a good leader? Is it bravery, compassion, innovation, inspiration?

The demands of leadership are complex, but the foundation of being a good leader is rooted in meeting the needs of those who follow them.

In recent years, profound changes — including armed conflict, climate change, pandemics, inflation and developments in artificial intelligence — have reshaped the world and society. Yet, the need for leadership continues to permeate all layers of modern life, from the corridors of political power to the home to workplaces large and small.

At its core, leadership is the interaction between leaders and followers within their environment. Today's leaders must navigate the challenges that arise from their rapidly changing environments and make decisions that will acutely affect the lives of their followers.

The high stakes of these decisions warrant a better understanding of the myriad factors that shape leaders and the reasons people follow them. There is extensive academic research on the topic,¹ and many leaders across all walks of life have written about key principles of leadership.

However, the voice of the people — the followers, constituents, adherents or employees — has largely been missing from the discussion. Two decades ago, Gallup decided that, to better understand the topic of leadership, more attention must be given to the views of those who *follow*.

Gallup research first uncovered the “four needs of followers” in a representative study of 10,000 adults from the United States in 2005. A second study in 2008 across 10 countries² confirmed the validity and stability of these four needs.

More recently, Gallup wanted to expand this research to understand leadership within the context of evolving demands on leaders and whether the four needs of followers remain fit for the future and apply to global populations.



A leader is a dealer in hope.

— **NAPOLEON BONAPARTE**

French military leader and statesman

¹ Google Scholar finds 5.5 million citations of articles and books on the topic of leadership.

² Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, United States. Both the 2005 and 2008 studies used random digit dialing (RDD) telephone surveys.

In 2024, Gallup sought to better understand how people worldwide perceive leaders and what they contribute to their lives. In a study of over 30,000 adults across 52 countries (see the [methodology](#) section for more details) — which account for approximately 76% of the world's adult population and more than 86% of its gross domestic product — Gallup posed **two simple questions**.

The first asked people to identify one leader who has positively affected their everyday lives the most.³ The second asked them to list three words that describe what this leader contributes to their lives.

1 What leader has the most positive influence on your daily life?

2 Now, please list three words that best describe what this person contributes to your life.

This approach focuses more on *substance* rather than descriptions of a leader's *style*. Taken together, these questions help inform the needs of followers.

To date, no other research has examined the needs of followers across such a large or global sample of people. The findings are pivotal not only for today's leaders as they evaluate their own performance and behaviors but also for many who aspire to lead. To be effective, leaders need to know what is expected of them. These expectations matter not only to individuals but also to the groups or teams of people that these leaders influence.

LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL:

To be effective, leaders need to know what is expected of them.


This research into followers' needs does not, on its own, answer the broader question of what makes a good leader. The answer lies in a holistic combination of leaders knowing themselves, the demands of their role and the needs of their followers. But if a leader does not first understand what followers expect and need, their ability to lead successfully is called into question.

³ As opposed to a leader they most admire, which tends to result in people naming major celebrities or politicians.

Section 1:

Which Leaders Make the Biggest Difference in People's Daily Lives?





Leadership comes in many forms, and different types of leaders are present across all spheres of life.

Family leaders are an integral part of people's daily lives: 57% of adults name a family member as having the most positive influence on their lives. Combined with those who name a friend (5%), just over three in five cite a loved one.

The next most influential leader is a manager (11%). Combined with organizational leaders (5%) and other colleagues (2%), slightly fewer than one in five mention a leader from a work environment. However, people who work for an employer are more likely to name workplace leaders as positively affecting their lives than those who do not.

In total, 34% of those working for an employer cite a manager, organizational leader or colleague as most influential, compared with 6% among those who do not work for an employer. Employer-employed workers are somewhat less likely to name a workplace leader (34%) as they are a family member (44%) as the leader with the biggest positive effect in their lives.

Leaders from other spheres of life, such as politics (7%) and religion (7%), round out the most frequently mentioned types of leaders. Celebrities, on the other hand, are rarely considered the most positive influence in people’s daily lives: Just 2% of adults name a celebrity.

LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL:

Leaders in the world of work have a huge capacity to improve the lives of others.

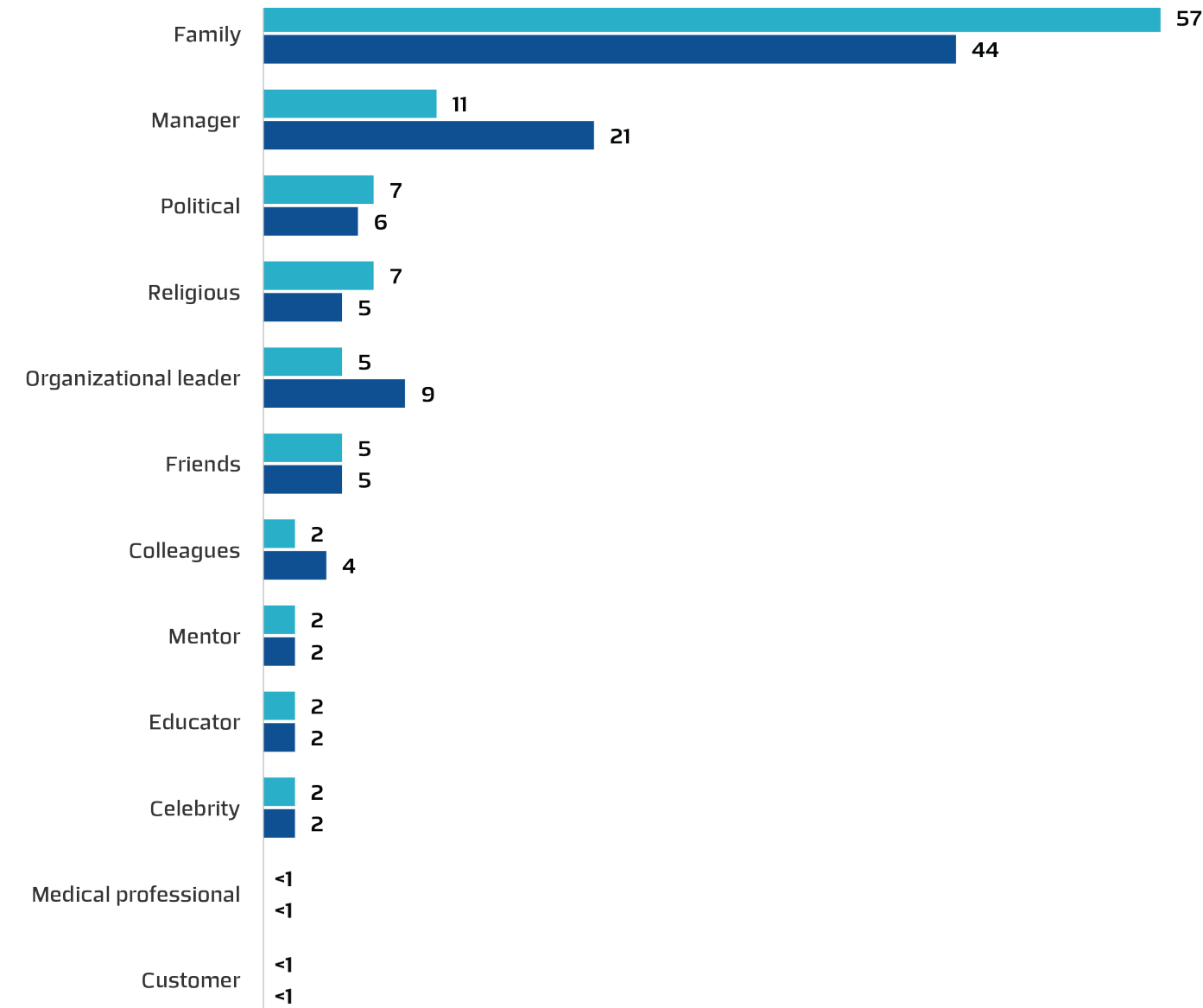
CHART 1

Types of Leaders With the Most Positive Influence on Daily Lives

Question: What leader has the most positive influence on your daily life?

% Who named each leader type

All adults Employed for an employer



Base: n=31,296 adults and n=13,842 employed for an employer across 52 countries and territories

Notes: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%; Mentions of “self” and “other” were excluded from the analysis

N.B. Wording changes and context could have altered the results. In particular, if the word “daily” had not been included in the question text, it is possible that family would not have been so prominent.





















The types of leaders that people mention vary considerably by country. Table 1 shows the five countries where people are most likely to cite workplace leaders, loved ones or political or religious leaders. People in China (70%), Germany (60%) and the UAE (52%) are most likely to name an influential workplace leader.

Respondents in Middle Eastern, Northern Africa and Eastern European countries skew significantly toward loved ones (predominantly family members). The countries most likely to name political leaders vary geographically, while several countries in sub-Saharan Africa rank highly for citing religious leaders as their most positive daily influences.

TABLE 1

Top 5 Countries Most Likely to Cite Certain Types of Leaders as the Most Positive Influence

Question: What leader has the most positive influence on your daily life?

% WORKPLACE LEADERS	% LOVED ONES	% POLITICAL LEADERS	% RELIGIOUS LEADERS
 China: 70	 Morocco: 99	 Tanzania: 38	 Costa Rica: 21
 Germany: 60	 Bosnia and Herzegovina: 97	 Israel: 33	 Botswana: 21
 UAE: 52	 Jordan: 96	 Türkiye: 22	 Israel: 20
 Australia: 49	 Slovakia: 90	 Poland: 19	 Chad: 18
 United Kingdom: 41	 State of Palestine: 89	 India: 18	 Democratic Republic of the Congo: 18

Base: n=31,296 adults across 52 countries and territories

Note: Mentions of “self” and “other” were excluded from the analysis

N.B. Wording changes and context could have altered the results. In particular, if the word “daily” had not been included in the question text, it is possible that family would not have been so prominent.



It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front ... You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.

— NELSON MANDELA

First president of South Africa,
Nobel Peace Prize winner

Leaders in all forms can positively influence people’s lives, but Gallup data show that adults worldwide perceive loved ones and workplace leaders as having particular influence on the lives of followers. But this raises more questions: *Why do people reference these types of leaders? And what does this suggest about the traits that matter most to followers?*

Section 2:

The Four Needs of Followers



People's expectations of leaders are closely tied to the types and roles of leaders who are most important in their lives. The ideas and expectations people carry of what a leader should be like — their implicit leadership theories⁴ — provide a template for how leaders, and followers, should behave.⁵

There are several models of implicit leadership theory. Existing research has shown that different models of “ideal leadership traits” are stable over time, even while some elements are sensitive to — and can change depending on — wider context.⁶ In other words, what people expect from their leaders tends to be consistent amid change.

Gallup's initial 2005 United States study uncovered the four “needs of followers,” which were reaffirmed by another study in 2008 across 10 countries.⁷

These four needs are:



Hope

The need to feel positive about the future and for leaders to provide a clear direction



Trust

The need for honesty, respect and integrity



Compassion

The need to feel cared about and listened to



Stability

The need for psychological safety and secure foundations during times of uncertainty

4 Offermann, L. R., & Coats, M. R. (2018). Implicit theories of leadership: Stability and change over two decades. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 29(4), 513–522. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1048984317304988>

5 Lord, R. G., Epitropaki, O., Foti, R. J., & Hansbrough, T. K. (2020). Implicit leadership theories, implicit followership theories, and dynamic processing of leadership information. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 7(1), 49–74. <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012119-045434>

6 Offermann, L. R., & Coats, M. R. (2018). Implicit theories of leadership: Stability and change over two decades. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 29(4), 513–522. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1048984317304988>

7 Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, United States

To arrive at these four needs, open-ended data (from the question that asks respondents to list three words that describe what their chosen positive leader contributes to their daily life) were coded and grouped into eight higher-level attributes. These attributes were also grouped together thematically and combined to form the four overall needs of followers.



Gallup’s latest research across 52 countries finds that the same four needs of followers — hope, trust, compassion and stability — are consistent and stable, even amid the rapidly evolving geopolitical, technological and natural environment.

Hope stands out as the dominant need across followers, with 56% of all attributes tied to positive leaders grouping into this theme — particularly the attributes of inspiration, vision and personal integrity. Hope is a powerful motivator; it gives followers something better to look forward to, enabling them to navigate challenges and work toward a brighter future.⁸ Without hope, people can disengage, lose confidence and become less resilient.

CHART 2

The Four Needs of Followers — Distribution

Question: Now, please list three words that best describe what this person contributes to your life. (open-ended)

% Of mentions

■ Hope ■ Trust ■ Compassion ■ Stability



Base: n=72,439 responses across 52 countries and territories

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%

N.B. People could give up to three responses, so this report provides statistics at the responses level rather than the respondent level. Any nonsensical responses that could not be grouped into one of the four codes were excluded from the analysis.

Trust is also fundamental for followers, accounting for 33% of all positive leadership attributes mentioned. Compassion (7%) and stability (4%) together account for about one in nine positive leadership traits mentioned.

LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL:

What people expect from their leaders tends to be consistent, even amid change.

A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader; a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves.

— ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

First lady of the United States, diplomat, activist

The four needs of followers — and the eight attributes that together form these needs — are consistent worldwide. However, there are important differences between some groups and among leader types that, if well understood, can guide leaders to act most effectively in their environments.

8 Pleeing, E., van Exel, J., & Burger, M. (2022). Characterizing hope: An interdisciplinary overview of the characteristics of hope. *Applied Research Quality Life*, 17(3), 1681–1723. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11482-021-09967-x>

Different Leaders, Slightly Different Emphasis on Hope

While the overall hierarchy of needs remains consistent regardless of the type of leader, the emphasis on these needs varies somewhat. “Personal” leaders in people’s lives, such as friends, family members and mentors/partners, are most likely to be valued for their trustworthiness relative to other leaders. However, these leaders rank lowest on filling the need of hope. Religious leaders, on the other hand, deliver on compassion but rank low on stability.

While followers’ needs from loved ones — friends and family members — are similar, there are differences in what they need from workplace leaders. People view organizational leaders through a different lens than they do managers and colleagues.

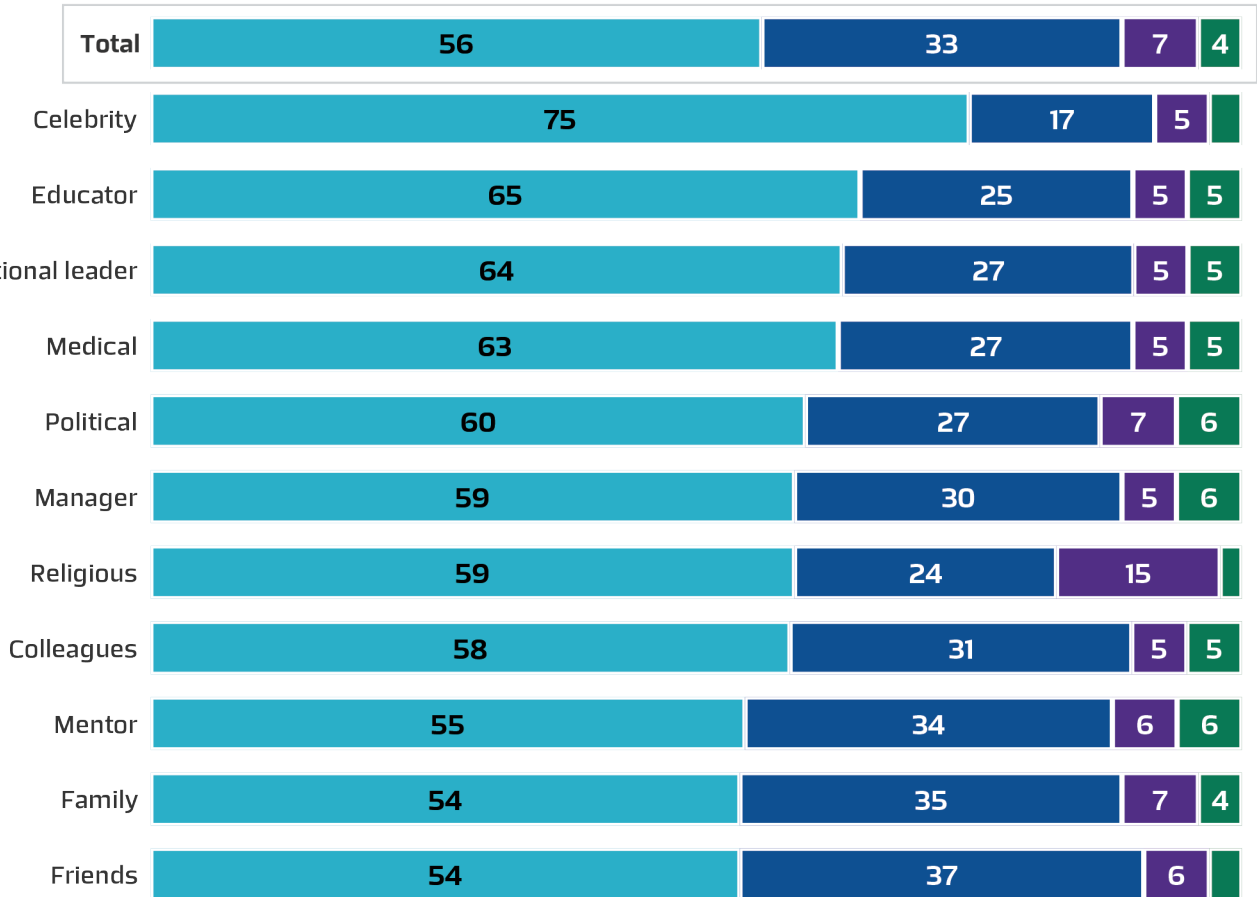
For example, followers are significantly more likely to say they need to see hope in those who lead organizations (64%) than among other leaders who might work within the same organization (e.g., managers (59%) and colleagues (58%)). In other words, the more senior a leader is within an organization, the more followers look to them for hope and inspiration.

CHART 3

Four Needs of Followers — Relative Percentage of Mentions by Leader Type

Question: Now, please list three words that best describe what this person contributes to your life. (open-ended)

■ Hope ■ Trust ■ Compassion ■ Stability



Base: n=72,439 responses across 52 countries and territories

Notes: Values under 4% are not displayed; Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%

Hope Is the Primary Need in Every Region and Country

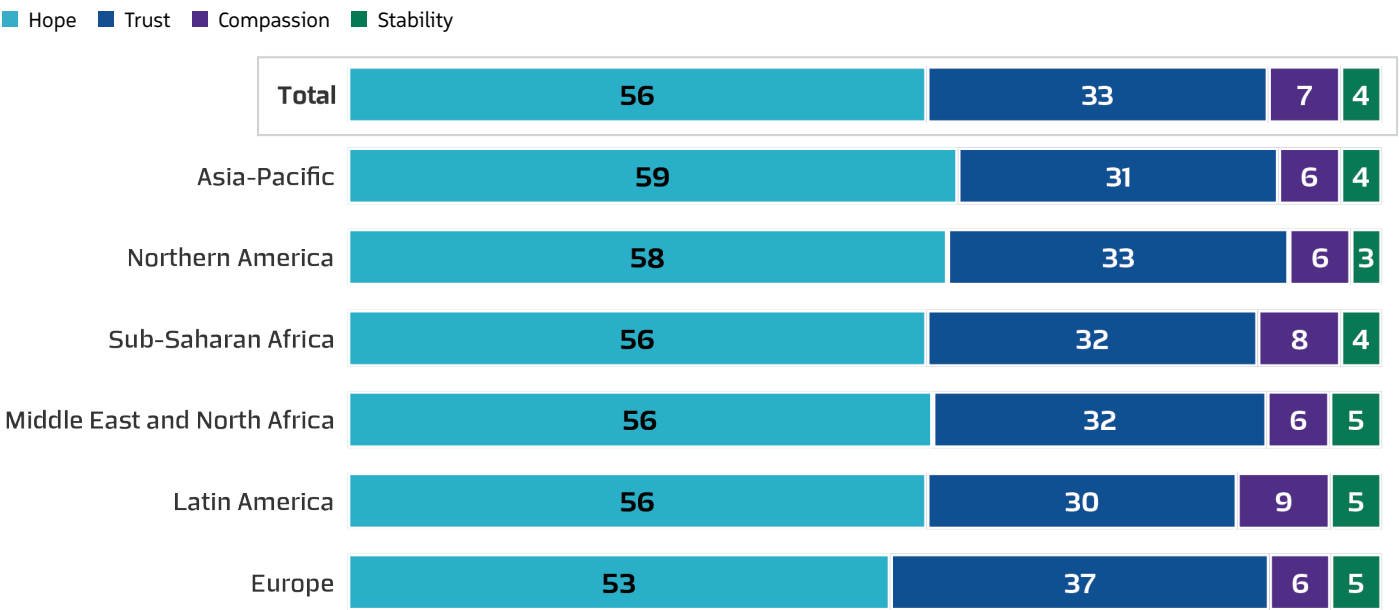
The needs of followers are consistent worldwide. Across the six main regions surveyed in this study, majorities everywhere mention hope more than any other leadership quality. However, there are regional variations. Respondents in Europe, for example, are significantly less likely to reference hope in their influential leaders (53%) relative to regions such as Asia-Pacific (59%).

In the mostly higher-income countries in Europe, people place relatively greater emphasis on trust (37%) in leaders.

While the majority of people in Latin America (56%) look for hope in their leaders, the region stands out for people’s greater need for compassion (9%), which relates to their greater likelihood of naming a religious leader as the most positive influence in their life.

CHART 4
Four Needs of Followers — Relative Percentage of Mentions by Region (medians)

Question: Now, please list three words that best describe what this person contributes to your life. (open-ended)



Asia-Pacific: Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam; **Europe:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, United Kingdom; **Latin America:** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico; **Middle East and North Africa:** Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates; **Northern America:** Canada, United States; **Sub-Saharan Africa:** Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%

Hope is also the primary need across all 52 countries surveyed, ranging from just over four in 10 in Bulgaria, Jordan and Lebanon to at least two in three in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Egypt. The importance of hope is constant across countries in all World Bank income groups: It is just as vital in the 19 high-income countries included in this survey (median of 55%) as it is in the 17 lower-middle or low-income countries (median of 53%).

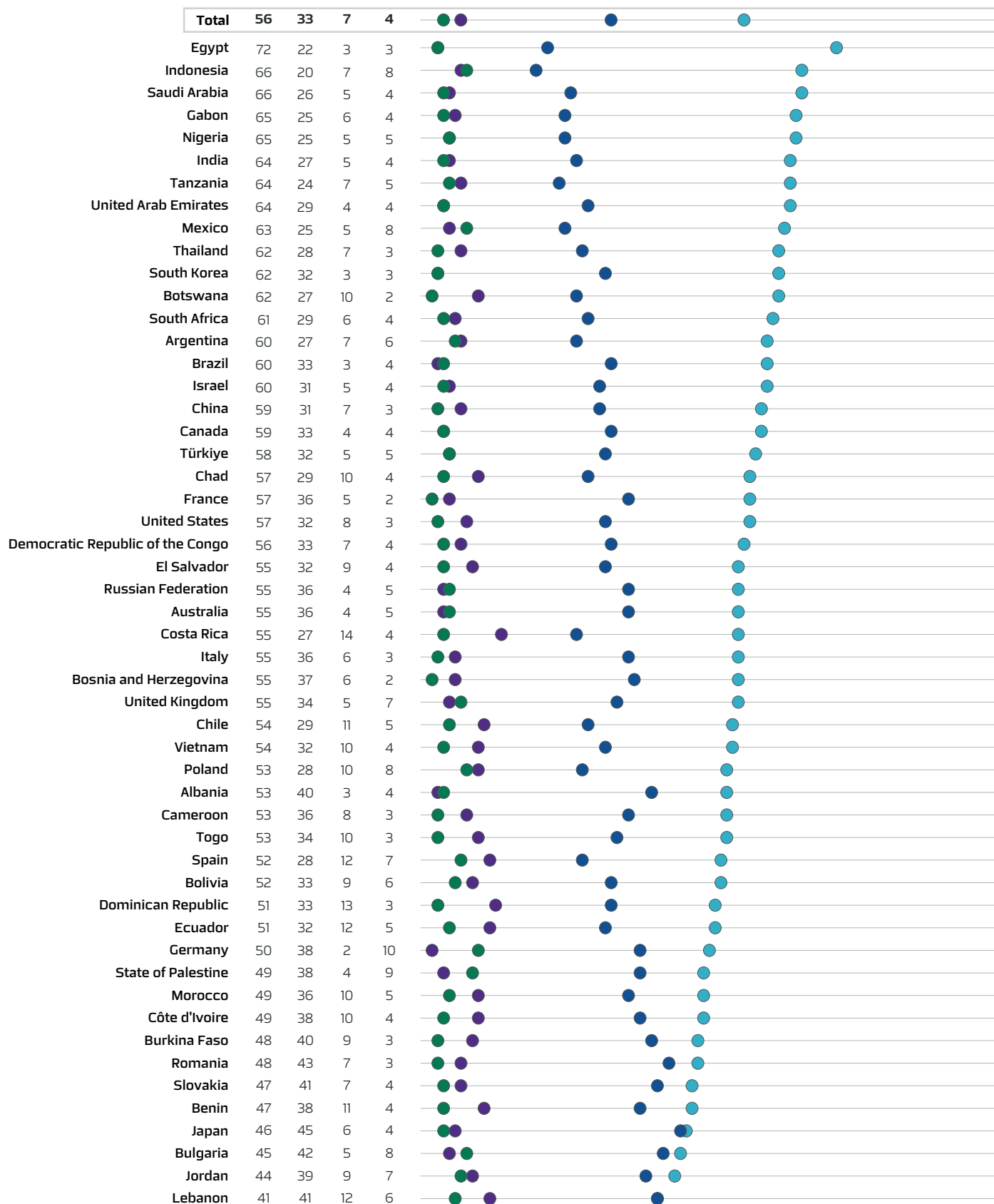
Notably, the same countries that place less emphasis on hope tend to put more on trust. Hope and trust are the dominant needs of followers in most cases, accounting for roughly 80% of all mentions, and when one is stronger, the other tends to be relatively weaker. There is no such relationship between compassion and stability.

CHART 5

Four Needs of Followers — Relative Percentage of Mentions by Country

Question: Now, please list three words that best describe what this person contributes to your life. (open-ended)

● Hope ● Trust ● Compassion ● Stability



Younger People Are More Likely to Look to Leaders for Hope

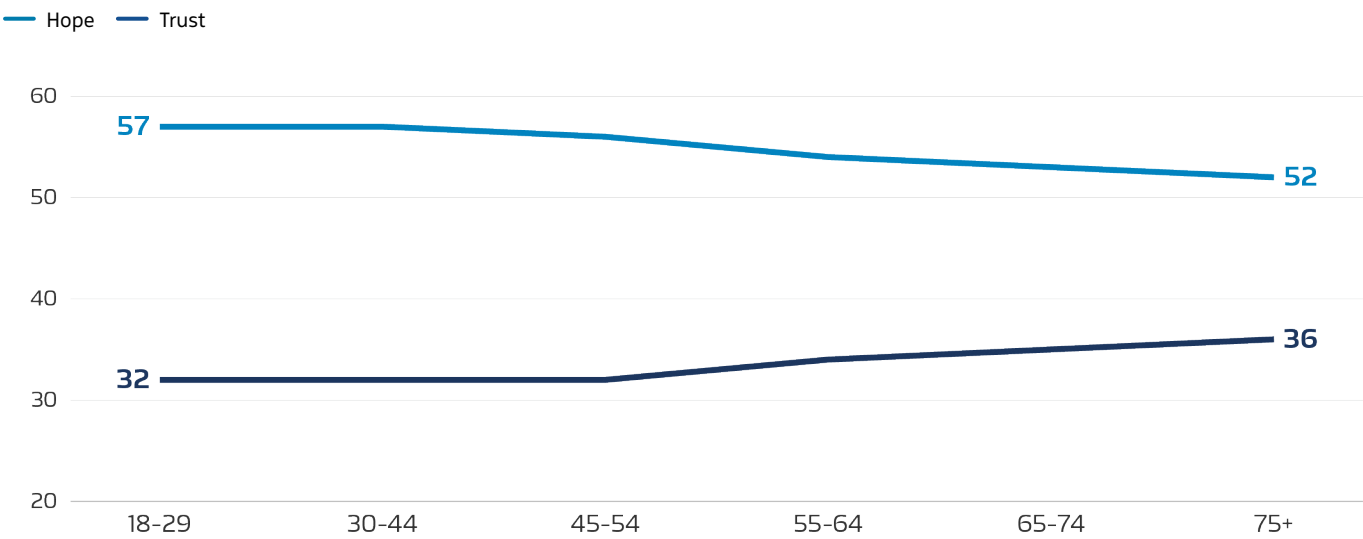
There is a linear relationship between age and the needs of followers. Regardless of age, people are most likely to seek hope from their leader, but young people are more likely than their older counterparts to mention hope.

Among those aged 18 to 29 years, 57% of attributes mentioned were related to hope — almost twice as many as trust (32%). All age groups favor hope over trust, but the gap shrinks as age increases. Among those aged 75 years and older, 52% cite an attribute related to hope, compared with 36% for trust.

CHART 6
Relative Importance of Hope and Trust by Age Group

Question: Now, please list three words that best describe what this person contributes to your life. (open-ended)

% Of mentions



N.B. Respondents aged 15-17 in countries and territories where data were collected on the Gallup World Poll are excluded from this chart but included in the overall statistic.

It is possible that because younger people have more of their lives ahead of them than older individuals do, they seek more inspiration for the future, while older people have more life experience and seek leaders they can entrust with decision-making. These patterns by age are consistent with other Gallup research.

Gallup⁹ finds that, on a global level, people aged 15 to 29 years tend to rate their lives in five years more highly and express greater optimism about their future living standards than those aged 30 to 49 years or those aged 50 years and older. Gallup research conducted internationally in partnership with UNICEF also finds that young people are 50% more likely than older people to believe the world is becoming a better place with each generation.¹⁰

9 The Gallup World Poll is the most comprehensive and farthest-reaching survey of the world. The survey connects with more than 98% of the world’s adult population through annual, nationally representative surveys with comparable metrics across countries. See more here: <https://www.gallup.com/analytics/318875/global-research.aspx>

10 Wylie, H. (2021). Landmark intergenerational poll shows young people are 50% more likely than older generations to believe the world is becoming a better place — yet impatient for action on mounting crises [Press release]. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/landmark-intergenerational-poll-shows-young-people-are-50-more-likely-older>

The Link Between Wellbeing and the Needs of Followers

Gallup measures life satisfaction by asking people to imagine a ladder, with the lowest rung representing the worst possible life and the highest rung representing the best possible life. Those rungs are numbered 0 to 10, based on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale.¹¹ People rate where they stand today and where they expect to stand in five years. Gallup classifies those who rate their current life a “7” or higher and their anticipated life in five years an “8” or higher as thriving. Those who rate their current life and anticipated life in five years a “4” or lower are classified as suffering. Those who are neither suffering nor thriving are considered to be struggling.

This study shows an apparent link between one’s life evaluation and the presence of positive leaders in one’s life.

Among people who do not associate hope with the leader they mention, 33% are classed as thriving and 9% as suffering.

Once the need for hope is met, thriving rises to 38% and suffering dips to 6%. The high prevalence of the need for hope suggests a link with a reduction in suffering.

Trust is the second most prevalent need (33%) but seems to have an additive role. Followers who have a leader who inspires both trust and hope are just as likely to be thriving or suffering as those with a leader who evokes only hope. However, when hope is combined with trust and either stability or compassion, rates of thriving increase again (43% and 39%, respectively), and suffering falls (4% and 4%, respectively).

Suffering is higher with low hope, and even though suffering is relatively rare, it is reduced as more follower needs are met. This is particularly relevant in low-income countries where suffering is higher and residents need hope to see a better future to reduce suffering. Although the base rate of suffering is low, the decline in suffering is significant, as even small differences in suffering mean a lot to the people who experience it.

¹¹ Cantril, H. (1965). *The pattern of human concerns*. Rutgers University Press.

CHART 7

Relationship Between Leadership Traits Mentioned and Life Evaluation

■ % Thriving ■ % Struggling ■ % Suffering

Hope + Trust + Stability



Hope + Trust + Compassion



Hope + Trust



Hope



No hope



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100%


How old a person is, where they live in the world and how they evaluate their lives all have links to what they need from their leaders and what they think makes them good.

However, the most important quality followers seek in their leaders — hope — is universal across this rapidly changing and increasingly volatile world.

Section 3:

A Playbook for Good Leadership



A solid blue diagonal shape that starts from the top-left corner and extends towards the bottom-right, creating a dynamic background element.

The fast pace of change in the world has major implications for those who lead today and those destined to lead tomorrow.

In the workplace, rising stress levels among workers, rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, digital transformation and changing dynamics related to hybrid work are placing new demands on leaders and followers alike. In broader society, rapid changes in the climate and increasing geopolitical uncertainty are forcing leaders to make hard choices.

To face the evolving challenges of our time, leaders must ultimately know three things to succeed.

1. Know the Needs of Followers


A person without followers is not a leader. Everything leaders do affects the people they lead, and the best leaders act with their followers' needs in mind. However, to do that, they need to know what those needs are and do everything they can to meet them. If they don't, they risk losing their followers.

Gallup research proves that what followers need from their leaders remains broadly consistent over time and across countries. **Followers need a sense of hope and something to look forward to.** Leaders can take an active role in developing hope, choosing to initiate change rather than merely respond to it. More than anything, hope is the belief that the future will be better than the present and that people feel empowered to make it so. If a leader does not create a sense of hope and help people see the way forward, chances are, no one else will either.

Followers need to trust that their leaders can keep their word and be relied on to act with integrity. **Trust is the foundation of human relationships;** people are able to collaborate toward shared goals more effectively when trust is present. Followers also need to feel a sense of compassion from their leaders and feel that they are cared for. Finally, they need a sense of stability from their leaders — someone to count on in times of need who holds strong core values.

While the hierarchy of the four needs of followers is consistent, the emphasis on different needs varies depending on the type of leader and the nature of the follower, such as their age or the country in which they live. The overwhelming demands for hope and trust, in particular, point to foundational needs in the human condition.

When leaders can meet these needs, they are more likely to be considered positive influences in people's lives, strengthening the follower-leader relationship. The more of these needs a leader can meet — for example, by demonstrating hope, trust and compassion rather than just one of these attributes — the more likely they are to have a positive effect on their followers. Yet, not all leaders naturally exhibit these four key leadership needs. Understanding the needs of followers is just one part — albeit an important one — of being a good leader.



A leader sees greatness in other people. He nor she can be much of a leader if all she sees is herself.

— **MAYA ANGELOU**

American memoirist, poet and activist

2. Know Themselves

Leaders cannot meet the needs of their followers if they do not first truly know themselves. Good leaders develop and invest in their own innate strengths to succeed in their roles. Understanding one's natural talents and honing them into strengths through knowledge and skill can unlock unique ways of leading and making the most of the things they excel at.¹²

No leader is perfect. Everyone has strengths, weaknesses and ways of leading based on innate talents and limitations.¹³ However, problems arise when leaders believe that they need to precisely emulate other leaders they admire.

Many fall prey to spending most of their time developing their innate weaknesses rather than maximizing their strengths to compensate for them. The best leaders do things the other way around, straying from the usual way of doing things and instead focusing on what they are naturally good at.

To be effective, leaders should base their decisions and actions on their innate strengths and consider which of them to lean into at different times to get the best out of a situation. Leading with their strengths helps create sustainable, high-performance practices that bring out the best version of leaders and those who follow them.

As the late Don Clifton, former Gallup CEO and father of strengths-based psychology, once said:

“A leader needs to know his strengths as a carpenter knows his tools, or as a physician knows the instruments at her disposal. What great leaders have in common is that each truly knows his or her strengths – and can call on the right strength at the right time.”

¹² Clifton, D. O., & Harter, J. K. (2003). Investing in strengths. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline*. Berrett-Koehler.

¹³ Gallup, Inc. (2008). *Strengths based leadership: Great leaders, teams, and why people follow*. Simon and Schuster.

3. Know the Demands of the Role

Successful leaders have a deep understanding of the demands of their specific leadership role and the expectations attached to it.

After leaders gain an awareness of what their followers need and of themselves through their innate strengths, they need to learn how best to apply these strengths to the expectations of their role.

The needs of followers are part of these expectations, but there are expectations beyond them, such as providing shareholder value in business, nurturing within a family or international diplomacy within governments.

Another Gallup study of more than 550 job roles and 360 unique job competencies shows that leaders drive the purpose and performance of their organizations. They bring multiple teams together and make great decisions.

The best leaders achieve success — despite varied roles, organizations and industries — by focusing on the behaviors within **seven expectations**:

People

- 1 **Build relationships** and establish connections with others; share ideas, achieve goals and build trust.
- 2 **Develop people** and help them become more effective by setting clear expectations, encouraging and coaching.

Purpose

- 3 **Inspire others** through positivity, vision, confidence and recognition.
- 4 **Communicate clearly** by sharing information concisely with purpose and being open to listening.

Decisions

- 5 **Lead change** and efforts to adapt work that align with the new vision.
- 6 **Think critically** about information, and seek to solve problems.

Performance

- 7 **Create accountability** by holding self and others responsible for performance.

Many of these behaviors of successful organizational leaders overlap closely with what followers expect of the most positive, influential leaders in their daily lives. Inspiring others and leading change both speak to the need for hope. Building relationships and communicating clearly are the foundations of the need for trust between leaders and followers. Developing and encouraging people can be an act of deep compassion. Thinking critically and creating accountability are closely tied to a sense of stability through transparency.

These seven leadership behaviors will look different depending on the specific leadership role in question.

Viewed together, Gallup's studies of the needs of followers and the seven expectations of successful organizational leaders have many overlaps.

They look at the question of leadership from opposite perspectives — from the bottom-up (from those who follow) and a top-down view of good leaders themselves. The overlap between the two demonstrates how important it is for leaders to truly understand what their followers need from them. This is particularly true during times of uncertainty or change. By starting with knowing themselves, leaders will be able to effectively apply their strengths to meet the needs of followers through these seven expectations.

The more leaders can provide their followers with hope, trust, compassion and stability by leaning into their unique strengths and applying them to the specifics of their role, the more successful they will be.

Conclusion



Leaders today face several challenges and opportunities.

The most influential leaders in people's lives — regardless of where in the world they live or who they are — can meet challenges and opportunities head-on by demonstrating four fundamental traits: hope, trust, compassion and stability. Of these, hope and trust are most foundational to what people look for in their leaders.

While the four traits apply worldwide, there are nevertheless variations. Younger people express a greater need for hope relative to trust. The same is true for organizational leaders, over and above other types of positive leaders in people's lives.



Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.

— **STEVE JOBS**

American businessman, inventor and investor

Gallup's research into the needs of followers offers a blueprint for current and future leaders. As we navigate an era marked by rapid technological advancements and global interconnectedness, the ability to pivot and respond to new challenges is more important than ever. Leaders who keep the four needs of followers at the forefront when making decisions will likely be most destined to make a positive impact on the world.

Methodology



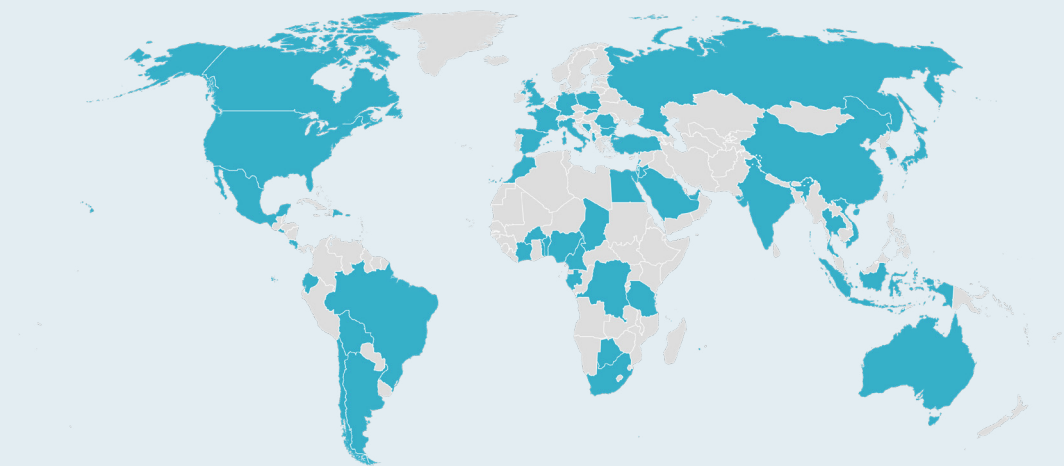
A: Country Coverage

This study combines data from two sources: 25 countries were surveyed via opt-in web samples, and 70 countries used in-person interviewing methodology as part of the Gallup World Poll. At the time of reporting for this report, final data were available for 27 of these 70 countries. Combining these 27 with the 25 from opt-in web surveys resulted in 52 countries with final data. Across these 52 countries, a total of 30 different languages were used to administer the survey.

TABLE 2
List of countries

Albania	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Nigeria*
Argentina*	Dominican Republic	Poland*
Australia*	Ecuador	Romania
Benin	Egypt*	Russian Federation*
Bolivia	El Salvador	Saudi Arabia*
Bosnia and Herzegovina	France*	Slovakia
Botswana	Gabon	South Africa*
Brazil*	Germany*	South Korea*
Bulgaria	India*	Spain*
Burkina Faso	Indonesia*	State of Palestine
Cameroon	Israel	Tanzania
Canada*	Italy*	Thailand*
Chad	Japan*	Togo
Chile	Jordan	Türkiye*
China*	Lebanon	United Arab Emirates*
Costa Rica	Mexico*	United Kingdom*
Côte d'Ivoire	Morocco	United States*
		Vietnam

N.B. * Indicates countries where data were collected via opt-in web samples.



B. Sample Coverage

Those interviewed on the web were adults 18 years and older who are members of commercial panels, while those interviewed in person were 15 years and older. The in-person samples are all nationally representative by design, while the opt-in samples are configured to represent the national population in terms of key demographics such as age, gender, education and region through the use of quotas.

Each country had a sample size of $n=1,000$. The margin of error for 25 web countries is ± 4 percentage points and ranged from ± 3 to ± 5 percentage points for in-person countries. The margin of error reflects the influence of data weighting. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error.

C. Identifying the Four Needs of Followers

All responses to the question *“Now, please list three words that best describe what this person contributes to your life”* were translated into English and reviewed for completeness and comprehensibility. Data was cleaned to remove responses such as “no one,” “no leader,” “self,” “I don’t have a leader I look up to,” and so on. Next, meaningless, nonsensical, irrelevant or empty responses to either the leader or at least one attribute were deleted as there was no information to process. This resulted in a loss of roughly 10–30% of responses across countries.

The leader data was then analyzed by frequency counts and grouped into 12 broad categories. The attribute data was similarly analyzed for unique themes, starting very narrow and then grouping similar themes in multiple stages to result in the four overarching themes. This was achieved using a mix of topic modeling tools and guided artificial intelligence inquiries. The analysis was primarily qualitative in nature and examined the open-ended descriptions of attributes in the context of how the respondent described the leader who had the greatest positive influence on their life. Thus, different respondents could use similar terms in describing attributes but have different interpretations based on the descriptions and surrounding context they provided. The topic modeling approaches and guided artificial intelligence inquiries were conducted separately and derived similar groupings of themes.

Examples of attributes associated with each need include:

- 1 Hope:** love, happiness, confidence, help, joy, good, faith, smart, work, wisdom, education, hope, strength, harmony, company, counselor, life, counsel, motivation, security, brave, worth, protection, strong, advice, courage, leader, positive, health, attention, gratitude, diligent
- 2 Trust:** caring, cheerful, concern, family, friendship, gentle, honesty, integrity, kindness, loving, positivity, reliable, respect, responsible, safety, sincerity, support, tenderness, trust, understanding, values, welfare
- 3 Compassion:** peace, patience, balance, calmness, charity, compassion, generosity, grace, guide, loyalty, mercy, prayer, sacrifice, tolerance, tranquility
- 4 Stability:** responsibility, stability, calm, reliability, discipline, intelligence, home, clever, guaranteed, obedience, order, persistence, serious, self-discipline, seriousness, guardian, authority

About Gallup

Gallup delivers analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems. Combining more than 85 years of experience with its global reach, Gallup knows more about the attitudes and behaviors of employees, customers, students and citizens than any other organization in the world.





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