

# Leadership barometer

A Survey on Finnish Perspectives on Leadership  
2024

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# Forewords

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# Background and Implementation of the Study



The aim of the Leadership Barometer research project was to explore the attitudes of Finns towards leadership and management, both in the present and future.



The 2024 Leadership Barometer has been built, where applicable, on the foundation of previous Leadership Barometers. The study has been adapted to meet today's needs, making this edition of the Leadership Barometer the first of its kind.

The survey was conducted using an external panel in August 2024. The target group consisted of Finns aged 18–74, representing the population in terms of age, gender, and region. The sample size was N=1,000. The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 2–3 percentage points in either direction.



Partners as the implementation partner.

This report is divided into three main themes, with the results presented separately at the overall respondent level and for selected demographic groups. Each section begins with a summary highlighting the key findings of that section. Additionally, the report includes a summary of the entire study.

# In addition to the representative population sample, the results are also analyzed against these respondent groups.

Group-specific analyses have been formed based on respondents' backgrounds and survey answers. For example, the "Future Leaders" group includes respondents who find working in a leadership position now or in the future somewhat or very attractive. The same respondent may belong to multiple groups.



## Under 30

18–29 years old  
N=182



## 30+

30–74 years old  
N=818



## Future leaders

Those Who Find  
Leadership Attractive  
N=331



## Leaders

Those Working in  
Leadership  
Positions  
N=95



## Employees

Those Not Working in  
Leadership Positions  
N=481

# Towards Better Leadership in Working Life



## Current State

### The Current State of Leadership is Under Significant Pressure

The importance of good leadership for organizations and employee well-being is critical, but expectations for leaders differ between employees and those in leadership positions. There is a need for more openness and transparency in leadership.

## Barriers Along the Way

### Experience of Influence Creates a Gap Between Leaders and Employees

The majority of employees feel their opportunities to influence leadership are insufficient, and over a third feel they cannot impact the leadership of their work community through their actions. Currently, the success of leadership is monitored quite narrowly. Participation and open discussion are seen as opportunities to bridge the gap.

### A Long List of Factors Preventing Pursuit of Leadership Positions

Pursuing a leadership position is more often seen as unattractive than attractive. Reasons include excessive responsibility, expectations of leadership, and unsuitability of one's character. However, qualities considered important for a good leader can be learned. How do we update the image of leadership?

## Future

### Future Leadership and Management as a Service Profession

Future leadership in working life is expected to ensure employee well-being. Leaders and leadership will also require more interactive skills and increasing emotional intelligence and emotional skills. A good leader is an enabler of team success.

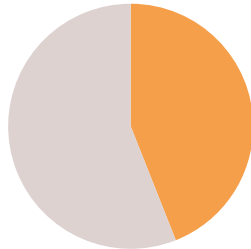
Part 1

# Attitudes Towards Working Life

Finnish Attitudes Towards Working Life

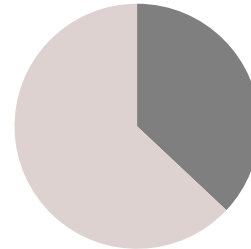
Motivating and Worrying Factors in Working Life

# Attitude Towards Working Life is Positive, and Motivating Factors Outweigh Worrying Factors



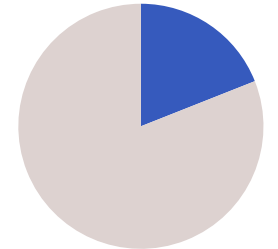
**44%**

Finns with a positive attitude towards working life feel they are in the right place and enjoy their work. They feel their skills are valued, and their workplace invests in their professional development. Some have had a long successful career and are nearing retirement, some are just entering the workforce full of new enthusiasm, and some are retraining.



**37%**

Well over a third of Finns have a neutral attitude towards working life. Feelings are described as expectant or stagnant. Things are neither particularly good nor bad. For some, work is just work or not particularly thought about, while others see few opportunities for advancement or are nearing retirement, so they no longer worry about work.



**19%**

About a fifth of Finns have a negative attitude towards working life. The most significant reasons for negative attitudes include age discrimination





# The Majority Have a Neutral or Positive Attitude Towards Working Life



**5%**   
Erittäin  
negatiivinen

**14%**   
Melko  
negatiivinen

**37%**   
Neutraali  
KOROSTUU:  
Työntekijät  
30+ vuotiaat

**31%**   
Melko  
positiivinen  
KOROSTUU:  
Tulevaisuuden johtajat

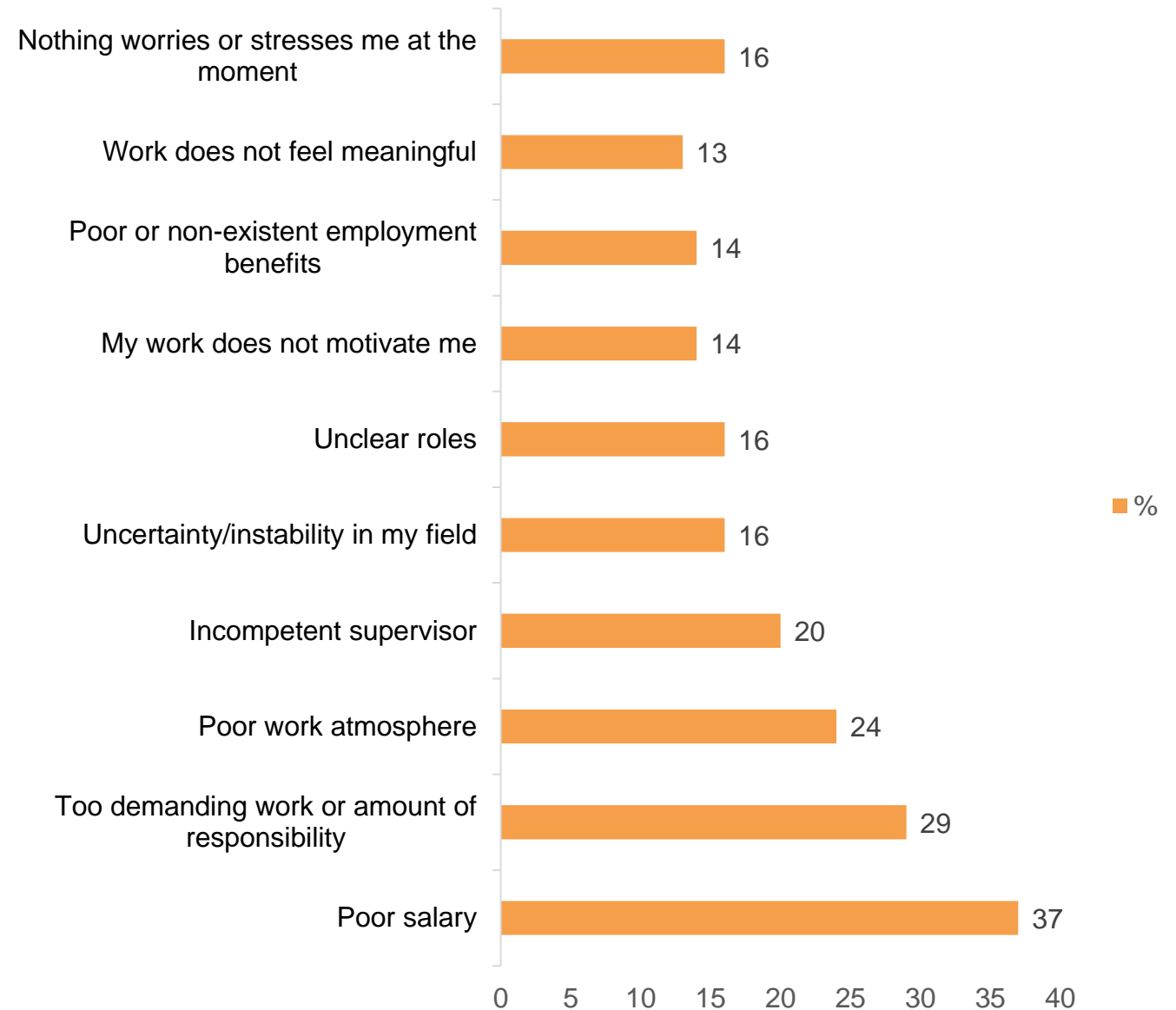
**13%**   
Erittäin  
positiivinen  
KOROSTUU:  
Johtajat  
Alle 30-vuotiaat  
Tulevaisuuden johtajat

# The most motivating factor in working life is having nice colleagues and a good work atmosphere



Select from the list below the 1-5 factors that currently motivate you the most in working life. | N=1,000

**The most worrying or stressful factor is livelihood, but also the demands of working life, poor work atmosphere, and an incompetent supervisor have an impact.**



## Attitude Towards Working Life / Under 30-Year-Olds



**53%**

Under 30-year-olds have a fairly positive or very positive attitude towards working life.

(Finns: 44%)

# Attitude Towards Working Life / Leaders



73%

Leaders have a fairly positive or very positive attitude towards working life

(Finns: 58%)

# Especially Among Future Leaders, Several Motivating Factors in Working Life Stand Out



## Worrying Factors in Working Life / Under 30-Year-Olds



**47%**

Under 30-Year-Olds Find Poor Salary  
a Worrying Factor in Working Life  
(Finns: 37%)

**40%**

Under 30-Year-Olds Find Too  
Demanding Work or Amount of  
Responsibility a Worrying Factor in  
Working Life (Finns: 29%)

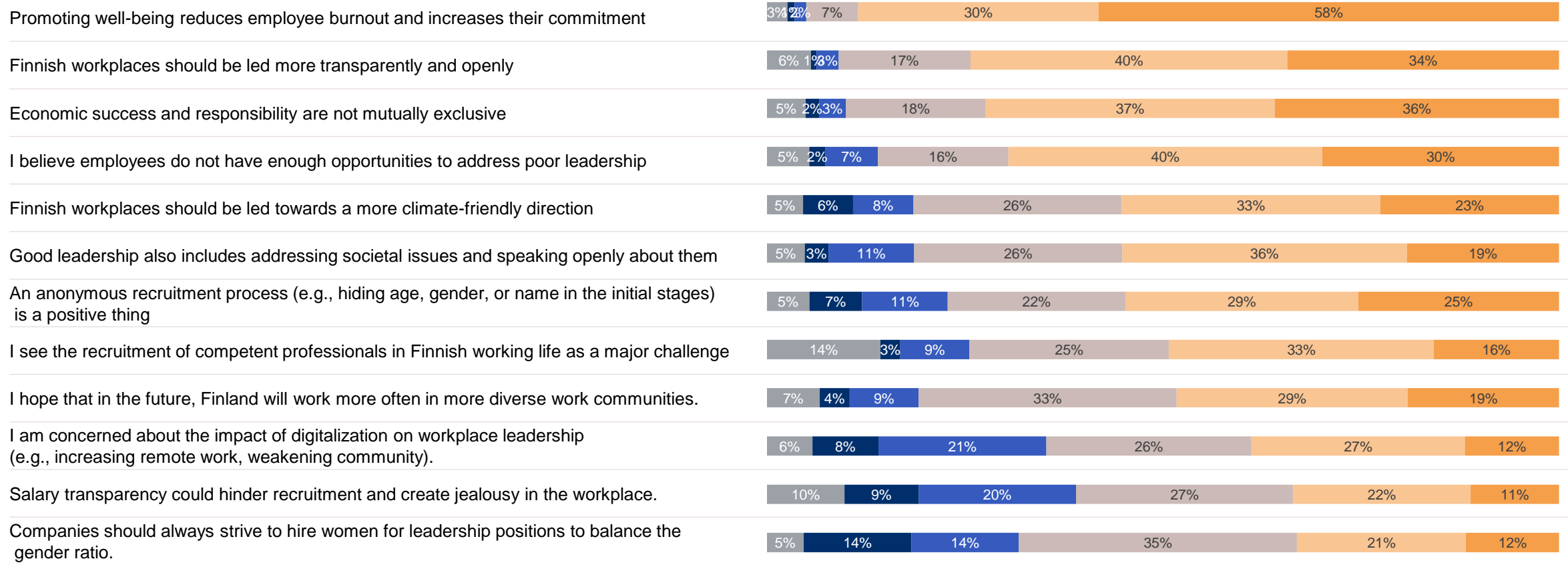
Part 2

# The Current State of Management and Leadership

Leadership in Finnish Working Life Today  
Defining Good and Bad Leadership



# There is broad agreement on promoting well-being and transparent leadership. The most divergent views are on hiring women for leadership positions, salary transparency, and digitalization



■ I don't know      ■ 1=Completely disagree      ■ 2=Somewhat disagree  
 ■ 3=Neither agree nor disagree      ■ 4=Somewhat agree      ■ 5=Completely agree

# A good leader is primarily described as fair and considerate of others

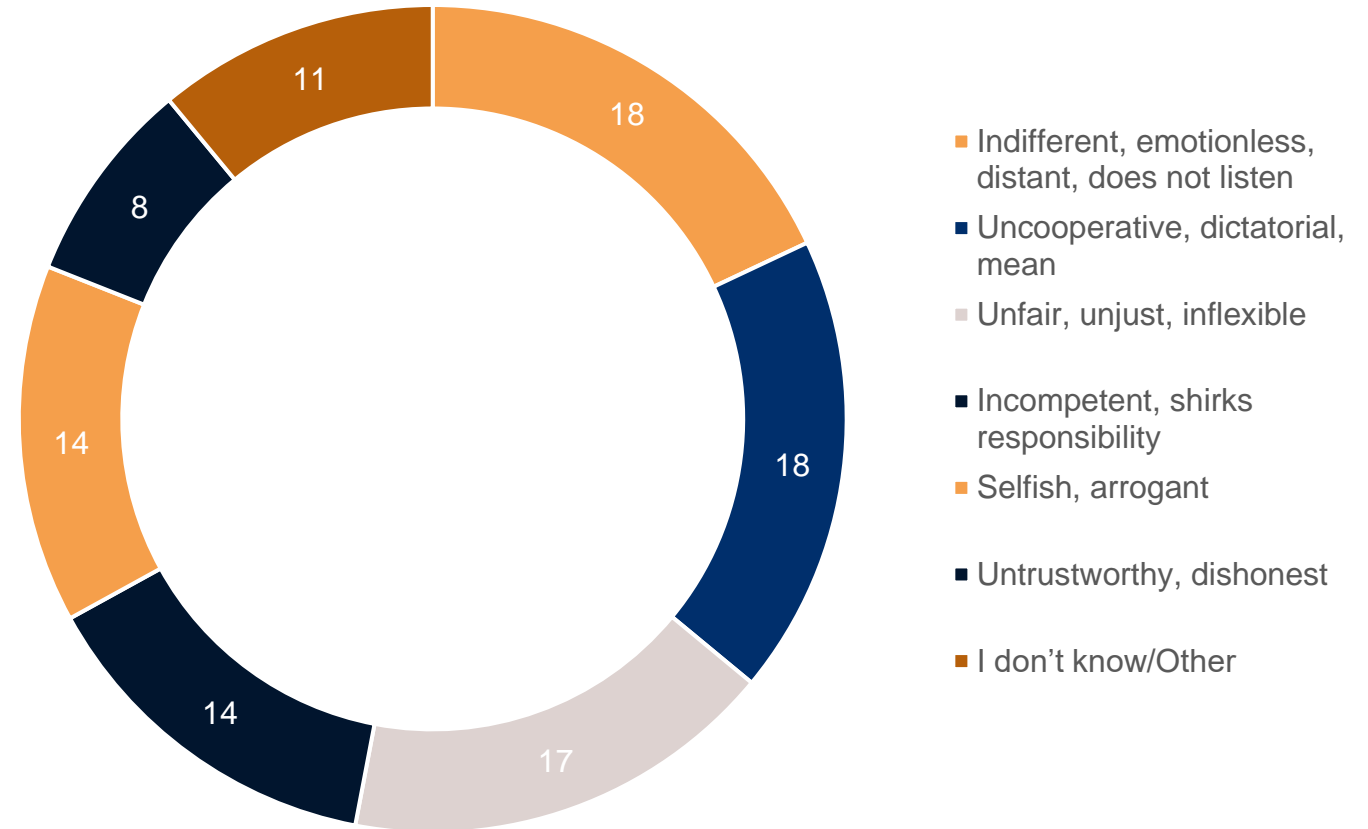
A good leader is most often associated with human-centric qualities. Above all, fairness and justice, approachability, and trustworthiness are highlighted as important qualities of a good leader.

Only towards the end of the list do we find perhaps more “traditional” leadership qualities, such as ambition, result-orientation, and courage.

However, there are differences in responses between leaders and employees; for example, employees emphasize approachability, fairness, and justice, as well as recognizing individual needs – these same qualities are underemphasized among leaders.



**A bad leader is described in very verbose terms, particularly unfairness and behavior that avoids employees characterize a bad leader**



## **Team spirit, incompetent leaders, and poor communication skills are seen as the biggest challenges in workplace leadership**

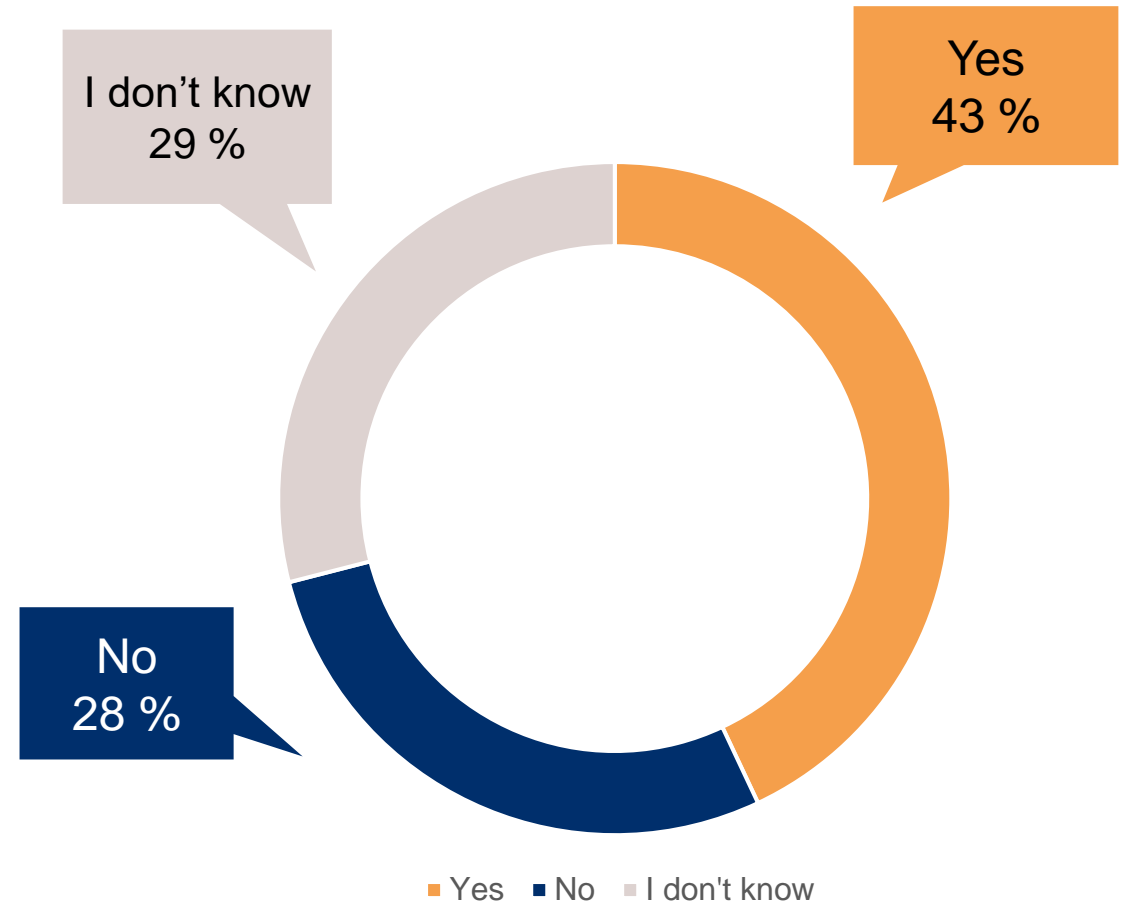
Up to 70% of part-time workers and 68% of those actively seeking work consider poor work atmosphere or team spirit as the biggest challenges in workplace leadership. Among leaders, this is less common (41%).

61% of those who are not actively seeking work but might consider it see incompetent leadership as the biggest challenge in workplace leadership.

Leaders believe that low employee motivation (40%) and the requirement for self-direction (19%) are the biggest challenges in workplace leadership.

# Less than half of those in the workforce are aware that the quality and success of leadership are monitored. The most common way to monitor leadership quality is through satisfaction surveys and development discussions

- 73 % Employee satisfaction surveys
- 58 % Development discussions
- 31 % Supervisor feedback
- 31 % Performance metrics and goal achievement
- 30 % Monitoring of sick leave and well-being
- 30 % Open feedback channels
- 24 % Colleague feedback
- 21 % Self-assessment of those in leadership positions
- 20 % Customer and stakeholder feedback
- 15 % Monitoring of employee turnover
- 1 % Other
- 2 % I don't know



## Evaluation of Leadership Quality

63%



Leaders report that the quality and success of leadership are evaluated in their current workplace. The most important measure for them is monitoring employee turnover  
(Employed: 43%)

39%



Employees report that the quality and success of leadership are evaluated in their current workplace  
(Employed: 43%)

33%



Employees report that they do not know whether the quality and success of leadership are evaluated in their current workplace  
(Employed: 29%)

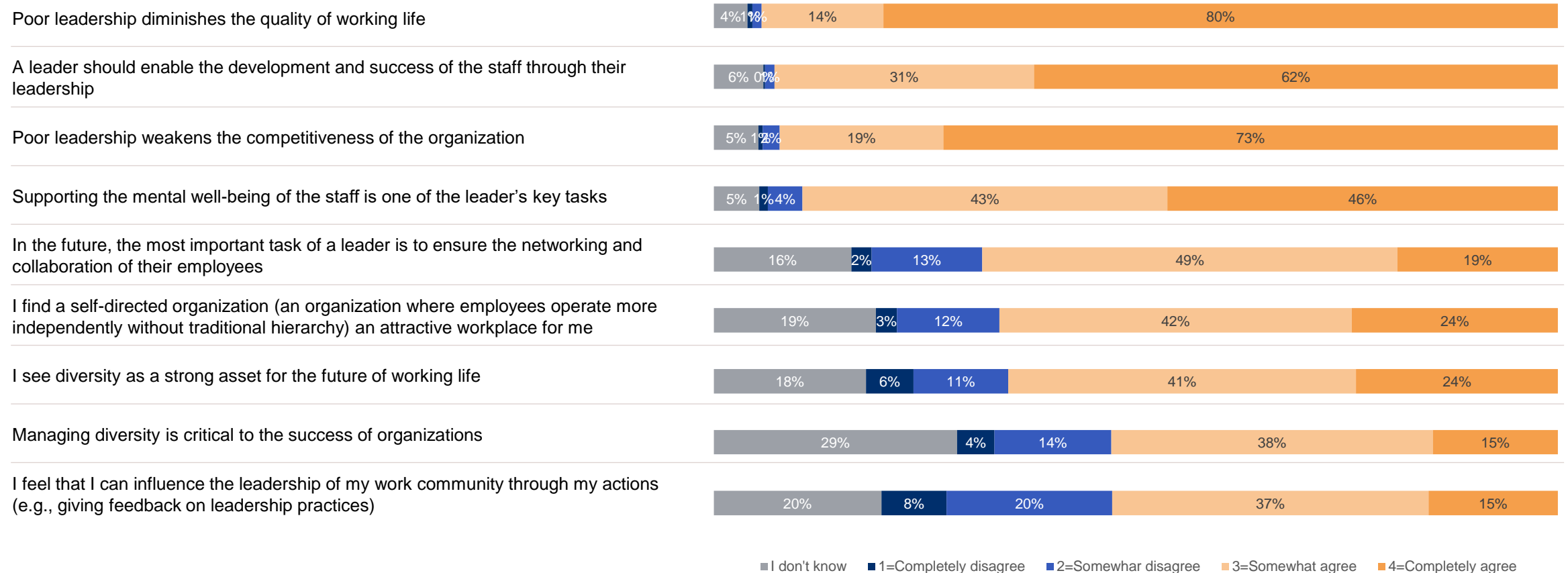
## About Working Life and Leadership / Employees



# 36%

Employees do not feel they can influence the leadership of their work community through their actions  
(Finns: 33%)

# Finns have strong opinions on the negative aspects of poor leadership for working life and organizations





## About Working Life and Leadership / Future Leaders



# 63%

Future leaders believe that good leadership also includes addressing societal issues and speaking openly about them

(Finns: 55%)

# 54%

Future leaders hope that in the future, Finland will work more often in more diverse work communities

(Finns: 48%)

## About Working Life and Leadership / Leaders



# 48%

Leaders believe that salary transparency could hinder recruitment and create jealousy in the workplace (Finns: 35%)

Leaders and those over 30 are concerned about the impact of digitalization on workplace leadership.

Future leaders and those under 30 are less likely to share this concern



I am concerned about the impact of digitalization on workplace leadership.

49%



Leaders

(Finns: 39 %)

40%



30+

(Finns: 39 %)

40%



Future leaders

(Finns: 39 %)

32%



Under 30

(Finns: 39 %)

# There are interesting differences in the experience of current leadership and working life among respondents



## Under 30 years old

For those under 30, a good leader is open, empathetic, and a team player.

Up to 33% of them find working in a leadership position somewhat attractive in the future. The main reasons for this are career advancement and the appreciation of a leadership position within their family.

Inexperience and young age strongly reflect why working in a leadership position is not appealing.



## 30+

For those aged 30 and over, a good leader emphasizes fairness, cooperation, and delegation of responsibility.

The most significant challenges in managing working life are incompetent leaders and poor communication skills.

Up to 27% find working in a leadership position very unattractive.

Future leaders



## Future leaders

Future leaders define a good leader as one who delegates responsibility and leads by example.

Among them, many factors are emphasized in defining a good leader compared to others.

They see challenges in remote leadership and the growth of digitalization.



## Leaders

Among leaders, goal orientation is emphasized in defining a good leader. They believe that low employee motivation and the demand for self-direction are more significant challenges in managing working life.

The appreciation received from others and the desire to create a better future make working in a leadership position attractive.



## Employees

The most important qualities in a good leader are fairness, approachability, and the ability to recognize individual needs.

The most significant challenges in working life are incompetent leaders and a poor work atmosphere.

Up to 57% do not find working in a leadership position attractive. The main reasons for those interested are improving salary levels and career advancement.

Part 3

# The Future of Leadership

Attractiveness of Leadership Positions

The Future of Leadership in Finnish Working Life

# Future leadership in working life will be increasingly service-oriented

Working in a leadership position is considered unattractive



In the future, nearly half of Finns will find working in a leadership position unattractive. The main reasons for this are the responsibility, demands, and performance pressures associated with leadership positions. About one-third find leadership positions attractive, particularly due to the potential for higher salaries, creating a better working life, and utilizing their skills.

Well-being-related themes are the biggest challenge in managing working life



Over half of Finns see mental health and well-being challenges as the most transformative factors in managing working life over the next five years. New technologies and societal uncertainties will also change the management of working life – it is advisable to respond to these now. Only 4% believe that the management of working life will remain unchanged in the future.

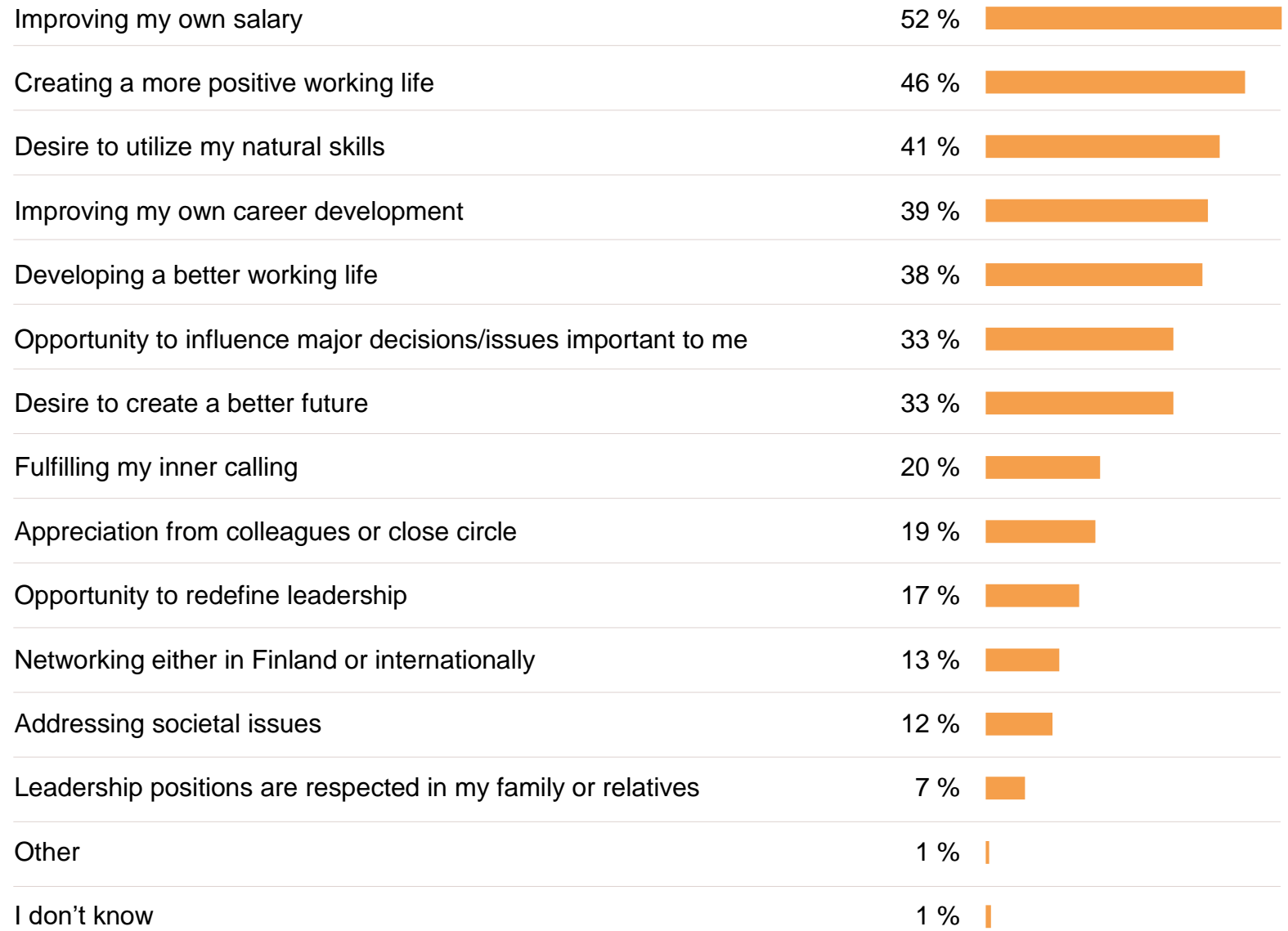
Emotional and experiential aspects are more broadly on the leader's and leadership's agenda



Two-thirds of Finns consider the most important task of a leader to be ensuring the networking and collaboration of employees. Nearly one-third see the consideration of diversity and the emphasis on soft skills as significantly transformative factors in managing working life over the next five years. It is clear that leadership will increasingly touch on the emotional and experiential world of employees – people – in the future.

# Interest in Leadership Due to Personal and Career Development

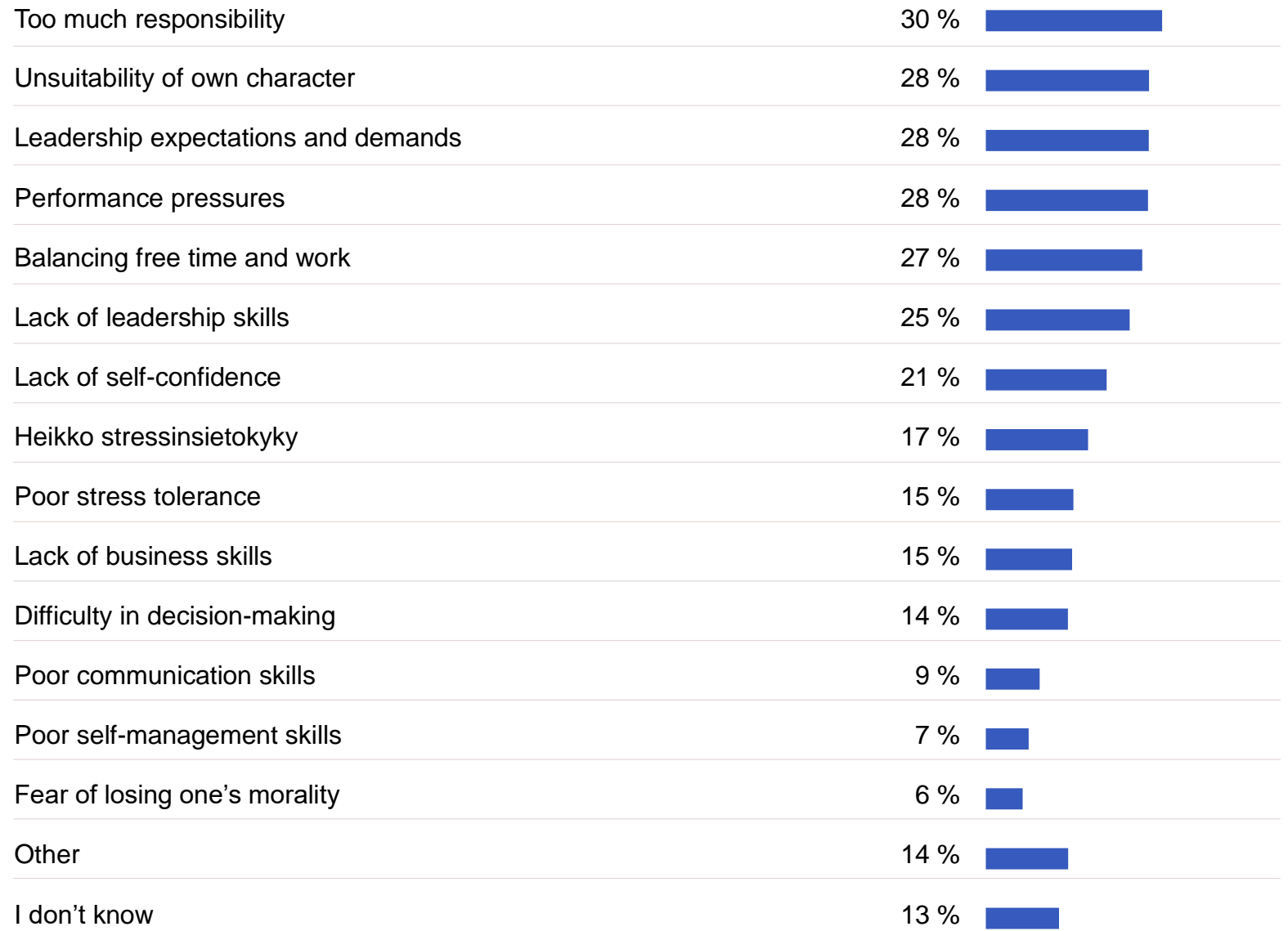
Currently, among employees who find leadership interesting now or in the future, the emphasis is on improving their own salary and career development.



# Lack of Interest in Leadership Due to Responsibility, Skills, and Position Demands

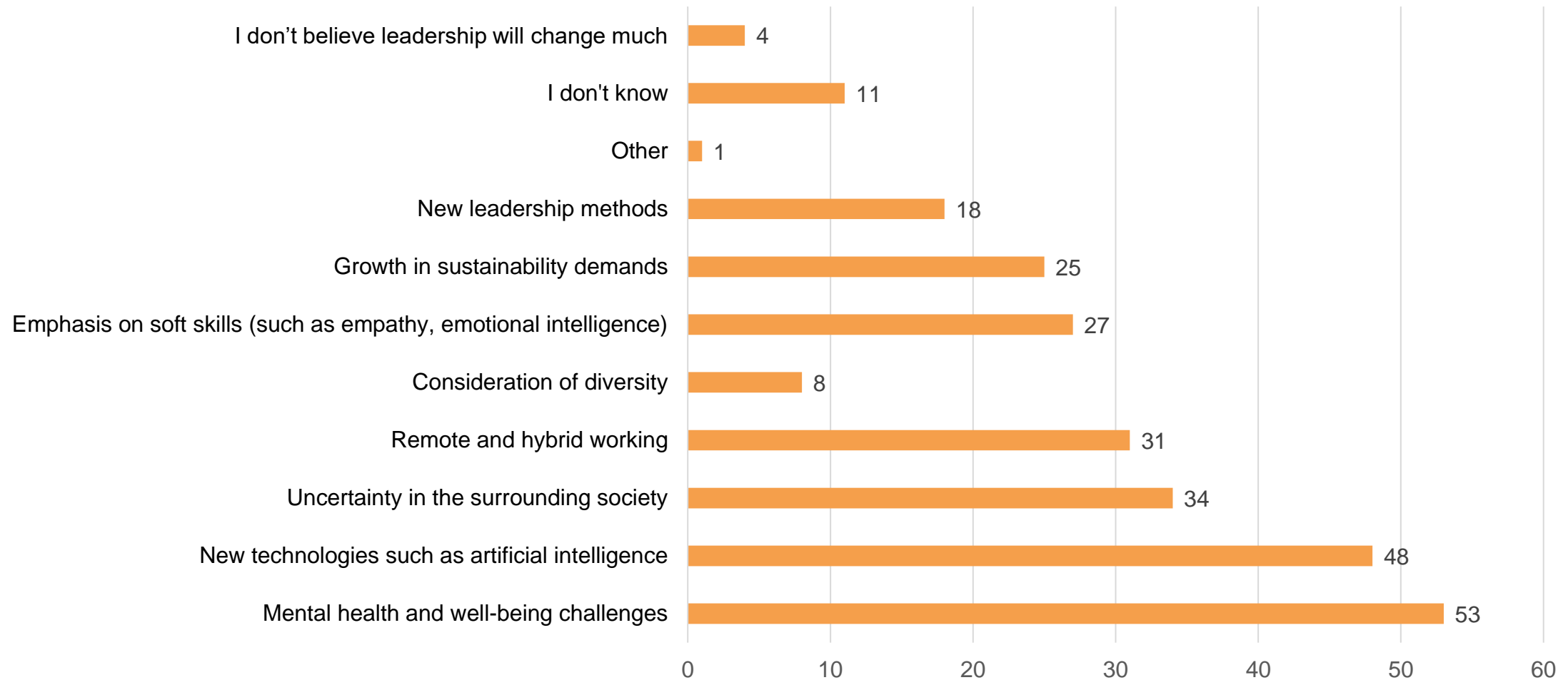
When examining through demographic groups, it is seen that those under 30 experience significantly more factors than other groups as to why working in leadership positions does not interest them now or in the future.

The emphasis is particularly on the lack of their own skills and abilities, rather than, for example, the unsuitability of their own character.





# Mental health challenges and new technologies are seen as the most transformative factors in Finnish working life leadership



# Among those under 30, the demands of leadership positions and lack of skills are emphasized as reasons for not being interested in working in leadership positions



Too much responsibility

Lack of leadership skills

Lack of self-confidence

Poor stress tolerance

Lack of business skills

Guiding others

Difficulty in decision-making

Poor communication skills

Poor self-management skills

## About Working Life and Leadership / Under 30s



# 76%

Under 30 believe that the most important task of a leader in the future is to ensure the networking and collaboration of their employees.  
(Finns: 68 %)

# Leadership Barometer conducted in collaboration

