

Leaders' Experiences of Integrated Leadership Development in Higher Education: Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory and the 70:20:10 Model

Edinam Bernice Amenumey and Yaw Agyeman Badu

Abstract

This article examines the perceptions of leaders of a public university in Ghana on how leader and leadership development perspectives are reflected in the institution's leadership development (LD) practices. While there is an extensive body of literature on LD, further research is required on how leader and leadership development perspectives can be integrated. The study examined the applicability of the 70:20:10 model to leaders' LD experiences and blended this model with Kolb's experiential learning theory. A qualitative case study research approach was employed to explore the experiences of the institution's leaders. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews, document review and observation of a training session. The data were analysed using the thematic perspective of narrative analysis. The study found that the concepts in the 70:20:10 model, namely (1) on-the-job task performance (2) relationships in the workplace, and (3) training formed the basis of formal and informal sources of learning that propelled leaders in their development journeys. However, the university did not leverage these to consciously integrate the perspectives of leader and leadership development. It is thus recommended that LD should be consciously planned to ensure holistic learning from the three sources in the university setting.

Key words: leader development, leadership development, experiential learning, higher education

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: EDINAM BERNICE AMENUMEY, University of Cape Coast, Ghana, e-mail: edinam.amenumey@ucc.edu.gh and YAW AGYEMAN BADU, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, email: ybadu222@gmail.com

Sommaire

Cet article examine les perceptions des dirigeants d'une université publique au Ghana sur la manière dont les perspectives de développement du leadership et des dirigeants se reflètent dans les pratiques de développement du leadership (DL) de l'institution. Bien qu'il existe une abondante littérature sur le développement du leadership, il est nécessaire de poursuivre les recherches sur la manière dont les perspectives de développement du leadership et des dirigeants peuvent être intégrées. L'étude a examiné l'applicabilité du modèle 70:20:10 aux expériences de développement du leadership des dirigeants et a combiné ce modèle avec la théorie de l'apprentissage expérientiel de Kolb. Une approche qualitative de recherche par étude de cas a été utilisée pour explorer les expériences des dirigeants de l'institution. Les données ont été recueillies au moyen d'entretiens semi-structurés, de l'examen de documents et de l'observation d'une session de formation. Les données ont été analysées en utilisant la perspective thématique de l'analyse narrative. L'étude a révélé que les concepts du modèle 70:20:10, à savoir (1) l'exécution des tâches sur le lieu de travail (2) les relations sur le lieu de travail et (3) la formation, constituaient la base des sources d'apprentissage formelles et informelles qui ont propulsé les dirigeants dans leur parcours de développement. Toutefois, l'université n'a pas exploité ces sources pour intégrer consciemment les perspectives du leadership et de son développement. Il est donc recommandé de planifier consciemment le développement du leadership afin de garantir un apprentissage holistique à partir des trois sources dans le cadre universitaire.

Mots clés: développement des dirigeants, développement du leadership, apprentissage par l'expérience, enseignement supérieur

Introduction

The challenges confronting higher education institutions make it imperative to develop leaders who are well-equipped to solve problems (Balman and Gallos, 2011; Buller, 2012; Gemlich and Buller, 2015; Gigliothi and Ruben, 2017). In the contemporary world of academia, leadership has to contend with dwindling government support for universities, conflicting opinions on the role of universities, changing trends in

the delivery and acquisition of knowledge as a result of advances in technology, and rapidly shifting and conflicting world economies. These issues have been brought about by globalisation, internationalisation and neoliberalism. Roland Robertson in Steger (2017) defined globalisation as "a concept [that] refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Steger, 2017, p. 15). This suggests that globalisation makes the world a smaller place. Altbach and Reisberg (2013) highlighted globalisation's implications for higher education. They note that globalisation raised issues relating to the flow of technology and the economy, people, values and ideas across borders. Student and staff mobility has also progressed to non-physical virtual mobility (Creelman and Lowe, 2019). Seale (2019) noted that the higher education environment had changed over the past 20 years, with implications for the leadership and governance of higher education institutions. He described the contemporary university as "a postmodern, neo-liberal, competitive, boundary-less knowledge conglomerate, a far cry from its historical, traditional, classical and collegial roots" (Seale, 2019, p. 1). Seale (2019) added that African higher education is in transition and is grappling with major challenges arising from global issues and local imperatives. Neoliberal assumptions have shifted public policy from a social welfare focus to privatisation and profit making. They have also influenced the higher education sector to consider students as clients and to compete for market share and revenue (Mintz, 2021). The result is dwindling government spending on higher education and pressure on universities to raise funds. The need for leaders with the requisite skills to achieve this has therefore become paramount.

According to De Wit (2020), internationalisation traditionally emphasised exchange co-operation and the need to understand different cultures and their languages. However, a gradual shift has occurred towards competitive internationalisation and issues related to world university ranking. For instance, the university under study received a good ranking by a top international ranking body. This had implications for its leadership as more vigorous efforts were made to ensure that leaders throughout the university worked hard to enable it to maintain its position and achieve even greater heights. The global dynamics of university administration, therefore, imply the need to ensure that

leaders have the right skills and expertise to achieve their institutions' vision. Resources thus need to be devoted to leadership development research and practice.

However, Dopson et al. (2019) identify a lack of research on leadership development across changing global university settings. For example, Zulfqar, Valcke, Quraishi, and Devos' (2021) study in Pakistan noted that leadership development is not considered a core component of higher education policies, especially in developing countries. Aye (2014) and Ruben, De Lisi and Gigliotti (2017) stated that academic leaders are appointed to leadership positions without prior or adequate preparation; this is attributed to the lack of policies in this regard. Dopson et al. (2019) also observed that the few studies on leadership development in higher education lack strong theoretical underpinning. In seeking to address this gap, Zulfqar et al. (2021) implemented a leadership development intervention to promote awareness of the adoption of six transformational leadership behaviours among university heads and deans in Pakistan.

Problem Statement

The leadership development literature has tended to favour a collective rather than an individual approach (O'Toole, 2001). Day (2001), who is one of the most well-cited and respected leadership scholars, proposes two perspectives of leadership development. The leader development perspective is centred on the individual, while the leadership development perspective focuses on developing employees across the organisation and involves collaborative use of structures and networks. He described the leader perspective as human capital development and the leadership perspective as social capital development. Day (2001) added that while most scholars consider the leadership perspective more desirable, organisations should combine the two to achieve effective leadership development, which this study refers to as the integrated approach. However, no research has been conducted on how to integrate these perspectives. Ten years after Day's (2001) proposal, Day and Sin's (2011) work points to a dearth of research on a theory of leadership development. There is thus a need for empirical research that is theoretically grounded on this issue, especially in the higher education sector (Wahat et al., 2013) given its volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) nature.

It is against this background that this study adopted Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory (ELT) and McCall et al.'s (1988) 70:20:10 model as a theoretical foundation to explore the integrated approach to leadership development at a selected university. A third theory, the authentic leadership theory (Avolio and Gardner, 2005) informed the choice of its leaders as the study population. Kolb's (1984) theory posits that people learn from their experiences and this impacts their actions. McCall et al.'s (1988) 70:20:10 model suggests that in the work environment, people learn from experiences from three sources – learning resulting from performing their set tasks or roles; learning resulting from the individual's relationships in the work setting (referred to as informal learning); and learning from training (formal learning). Thus, the leaders were asked to share their perceptions of the role that experiences from these three sources played in their development as leaders. Furthermore, based on the responses, the leader and leadership perspectives that featured in their development were identified.

Four empirical works helped to focus the study – Hoba, Mba and Alemneh's (2013) research commissioned by the Association of African Universities (AAU) and studies by Wahat et al. (2013), McDermott, Kidney and Flood (2011) and Dahlvig and Longman (2014). The study sought to fill the gap regarding the dearth of theory in Hoba et al. (2013). It also aimed to address Wahat et al.'s (2013) narrow focus on informal learning by investigating experiential learning from both formal and informal learning perspectives. Furthermore, in response to the fact that Dahlvig and Longman (2014) focused only on women, both males and females were asked to share their views on the sources of learning experiences, whether formal or informal. Lastly, the university selected for the study is one of the oldest public universities in Ghana. Given that it was not part of the AAU's study (Hoba et al., 2013) that covered 33 institutions in Africa, of which four were in Ghana, it allows for comparison of the results.

The main issues addressed were how higher education institutions have approached leader and leadership development, how they integrate the two perspectives and how leaders' experiences impacted their development.

The objectives were to:

- Examine leaders' perceptions of formal and informal learning experiences' contribution to their development as leaders.

- Determine how perspectives of leader and leadership development influenced the development of the leaders in the university under study.

Based on these objectives, the research questions were:

1. What are leaders' perceptions of formal and informal learning experiences' contribution to their development as leaders?
2. How does the university in question approach integration of the perspectives of leader and leadership development?

Theoretical Framework

Experiential Learning Theory

The ELT suggests that people's experiences in an organisation contribute to their development in the entity. It involves two phenomena, experience and action, emanating from four stages known as the learning cycle. The first is the *concrete experience* which is an individual's experience in the work setting. Kolb (1984) posits that as a result of concrete experience, he/she observes what goes on around him/her and reflects on these observations – *reflective observation*. The individual then engages in *abstract conceptualisation* based on observations, which leads to *active experimentation* based on the knowledge gained. In turn, active experimentation results in other concrete experiences and further learning opportunities. Thus, in a higher education setting, individuals' experiences at work, and their resulting action at the time or in the future are informed by their experiences, which help them to 'grow' as leaders. The study, therefore, harnessed the 70:20:10 model to examine whether the participants' experiences impacted their development as leaders.

The 70:20:10 Model

The 70:20:10 model by McCall et al. (1988, cited in McCall, 2004) argues that there are three learning sources in the workplace – *task performance, relationships* and *training*. It thus describes how people learn at work (Scott and Ferguson, 2016). The model suggests that people obtain about 70% of their learning experiences through challenging task performance or on-the-job experiences; 20% through relationships with others at the workplace, networking, working in groups or providing feedback; and only 10% through the training received at short courses,

workshops or formal education on or offsite. While our study did not focus on the ratios, it aimed to determine if these sources of learning were evident in the participants' leadership development journey and could thus be enhanced for leader and leadership development. Although the legitimacy of the model's ratios has been critiqued, Scott and Ferguson (2016) are of the view that it remains relevant to leadership development in organisations. Blackman, Moscardo and Gray (2016) advocated for further research into the three learning sources and suggested that more should be done to integrate them rather than considering them as distinct. The current study combined the ELT and the 70:20:10 model to examine whether higher education leaders' learning development should emanate from their experiences in performing job assignments, their relationships with others in the workplace through networking, mentoring, and feedback (informal learning sources) and the training courses they attend (formal learning sources).

According to Manuti et al. (2015), planned formal learning activities in the workplace help individual employees to gain knowledge, awareness and skills in specific areas to enable them to perform their work. In relation to informal learning, Milligan, Littlejohn and Margaryan (2014, p. 1) stated that "in the workplace, an individual develops trusted networks of current and former colleagues that provide access to the knowledge and expertise necessary to perform their role". Incorporating formal and informal sources will therefore enable the integration of leader and leadership development through the relevant structures (see Figure 1).

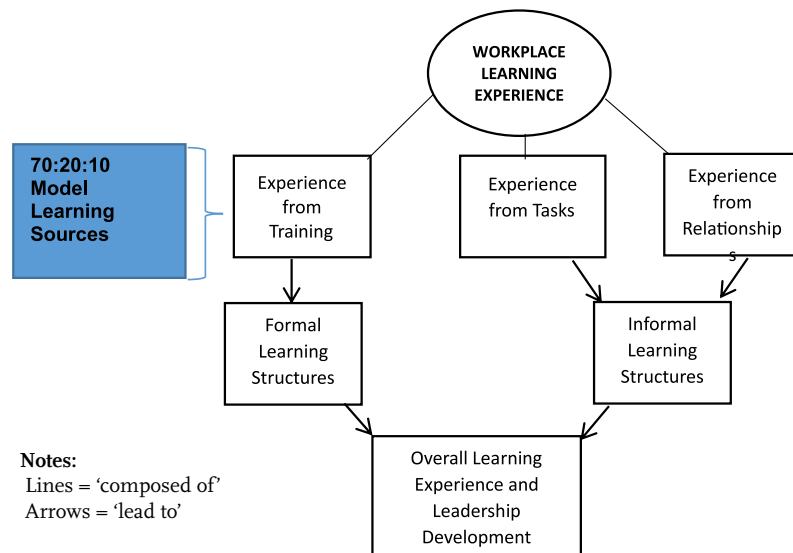


Figure 1: The Relationship between Formal and Informal Learning Experience and Structures in Leadership Development

In Figure 1, workplace learning comprises three sources: experiences of learning from task performance, and learning from relationships with stakeholders in the work setting, which are informal sources of learning, as well as from training, a formal source of learning. The structures put in place to ensure formal and informal learning should combine to provide both leader and leadership development.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership has three perspectives: intrapersonal, interpersonal and developmental (Cairns-Lee, 2015). Intrapersonal refers to the individual's self-awareness of his/her ability and motivation to lead, the interpersonal perspective posits that leadership is about a leader and followers and that leaders do not lead in a vacuum, and the developmental perspective suggests that authentic leadership can be developed. Thus, an individual can learn to become an authentic leader if he/she is so motivated. Eigel and Kuhnert (2005) cited in Cairns-Lee (2015) suggest that people within higher levels of leadership have higher authentic leadership skills or behaviour. Thus, in order to access

the rich experiences of leaders who would provide in-depth information, participants higher up the leadership ladder in the university were selected.

Methodology

The study adopted an interpretive research paradigm based on constructivist philosophy and employed an exploratory research design and a qualitative method. Qualitative research is described as "an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 32). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that it aims to reveal the meaning ascribed to an occurrence by those who are involved in it. Given that the study aimed to gain insight into the study topic through the experiences of the participants themselves, this was an appropriate methodology.

According to Yin (2013), a descriptive case study aims to describe a phenomenon within the context in which it occurred. In this study, the case was a university, which is bounded in its setting or context. This study is a single instrumental case study because it focuses on a single issue, leadership development, in a bounded system, the university in question. Consequently, a single instrumental case study was suitable.

According to Aye (2014), a leader at a higher level of responsibility should have higher leadership experience to train those at a lower level. For this reason, and based on the issues raised in relation to leaders higher up the ladder being more highly-motivated, the study targeted top leaders who had experience in leadership in an academic environment in one or another capacity over a period of ten years. The population was 39 leaders comprising deans, directors, provosts, and principal officers (also referred to as significant others) including the Registrar, Pro-Vice Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor. Twenty-two were selected using stratified purposive sampling, with 50% to 60% in each category to ensure fair representation. The categorisation or stratified nature of the population provided an opportunity to pinpoint differences in the findings across the categories where they occurred. Although saturation was achieved by the 15th participant, 22 were interviewed to avoid criticism raised with regard to using saturation as a means to determine the number of participants in a qualitative study.

Table 1 *Distribution of Target Population and the Sample*

Category of Leader (Participants)	Population (N)	Number of Participants Interviewed
Deans	19	10
Provosts	5	3
Directors	12	7
Significant Others /Principal Officers:		
Registrar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Vice-Chancellor	3	2
Total	39	22

Source: Author's Construct

Semi-structured interview guides based on Kolb's (1984) ELT and the 70:20:10 model (McCall, 1988) were used to facilitate the face-to-face interviews and bring some structure to data collection (Bernard, 2011). The 70:20:10 model formed the basis for the questions seeking to understand the leaders' perceptions of the role played by on-the-job task performance, relationships with others in the work environment and training in their development journey. Kolb's ELT was drawn on to assess whether the participants' experiences taught them lessons that impacted their subsequent actions. Observation of a training section was another source of primary data, while a review of the university's statutes and training and development policy were the sources of secondary data.

The data were analysed using the thematic perspective of narrative analysis. This approach brings to the fore possible underlying causes and effects of events or their impact on people (Allen, 2018). The focus was on the impact of experiences of formal and informal learning, evident in the three sources, on developing individuals as leaders. The document analysis and information gathered during observation provided further insight into the phenomenon (leadership development).

Findings and Discussion

Formal and Informal Learning Experiences' Contribution to Leader and Leadership Development

All 22 participants believed that formal and informal learning experiences contributed to their leadership development journey. This implies that they learned and developed leadership skills through hands-

on task performance, their interaction with stakeholders and training received over the years. It confirms the elements identified in McCall et al.'s (1988) 70:20:10 model as sources of leadership learning in the workplace, which formed part of the study's theoretical framework.

This finding is discussed under the themes: *Informal Learning from Individual Hands-on Experiences, Informal Learning from Group Task Assignments, Informal Learning through Relationship Building and Interactions on the Job, and Formal Learning through Training.*

Informal Learning from Individual Hands-on Experiences

All 22 participants indicated that they learnt from performing leadership tasks (informal learning). It was important to understand their perceptions of how they learned individually (leader development) and as a group (leadership development) through task performance based on McCall et al.'s (1988) model. The participants indicated that their responsibilities required that they obtain hands-on experience (informal learning) in financial management, people management, administration, and, in the case of academic leaders, academic leadership. They learned from these experiences as they had the opportunity to lead from one position to another. They also noted that their experiences of hands-on task performance at lower levels of leadership remained useful when they achieved higher leadership positions. A provost indicated:

Having served in various capacities at the department and faculty levels, I am now in a better position to provide leadership to my deans, heads of departments, coordinators and others serving on various committees in the college [...] it is because I have been there before and I know what goes into their activities. [...] so, I will say having hands-on experience develops you into a good leader.

A director remarked:

It's such a complex environment, so holding administrative positions at the faculty level actually prepares you towards the directorship. This is important as you will have to make independent decisions and adopt innovative strategies and actions to manage your directorate [...].

This implies that learning occurred as the leaders performed various leadership roles along the organisational ladder. However, the findings

suggest that there is a need to build capacity to a certain degree before they are able to perform higher leadership roles (McCauley and McCall, 2014). The system should thus be structured to enable more individuals to gain such experience to prepare them for higher positions (leadership development perspective). This would result in the integration of leader and leadership development that will, in turn, engender staff's holistic development (Chetty and Mearns, 2012) to prepare them for higher leadership roles. However, as discussed under the subtheme *gradual process of learning from hands-on task performance*, this should be an incremental process.

Gradual Process of Learning from Hands-on Task Performance

All 22 participants agreed that during their exposure to leadership at lower levels, they gained experience by performing hands-on tasks. That motivated them to apply for higher-level leadership positions (Day et al., 2014). Experience refers to capacity, skills and knowledge acquired as a result of performing tasks in different positions, rather than just the number of years. The implication is that if leaders were to assume higher leadership positions in the university without prior leadership experience, this could negatively affect their capacity to deliver. Braun et al. (2009, p. 196) stated that “faculty are appointed to senior rank [position] based upon their deep subject knowledge, experience, and scientific accomplishment [not on leadership expertise]”. A director noted that he was appointed only after experiencing a number of responsibilities:

So, I served the Institute as Exam Officer for four years and then I also served as the Coordinator for the Sandwich Programme for six years... When the Institute was working with the [Y Teacher Education Programme], I was the coordinator for that programme and the last role I played had to do with being in charge of our outreach programmes.... It was after these past experiences that I got my appointment as the director.

This implies that the university structure is progressive in nature because it allows leaders to develop practical experience. It is evident in the above statement by an academic director who moved from lower-level leadership to higher-level leadership over a period of time. This finding confirms Day et al.'s (2014) assertion that providing leadership

opportunities at the lower levels is an avenue to build employees' capacity to assume leadership positions in the future. Therefore, experience should be a requirement for appointment to higher leadership positions in the university.

Informal Learning from Group Task Assignments

In line with Day (2001), the study differentiated leader development from leadership development, with leader development focused on the individual whereas leadership development takes a broader view, with networks and group activities and structure coming into play. As such, the study explored the influence of group task assignments on the development of leadership skills. It was found that the committee system was a critical structure in building leadership skills and experience to groom leaders to take up higher positions. The majority of the participants (20) revealed that group activities led to hands-on task experiences in groups and impacted their development. A dean commented:

The university works with a committee system, so as the head of a unit, you chair the board in that unit, and you have to work with the board members to make decisions on issues; and always learn from the discussions that are presented as you take those decisions [....].

The functions and responsibilities of each committee and its legal framework are set out in the university's statutes or policy documents. For example, the Operational Budget guides the Finance Committee's decisions and actions. This means that the frameworks are part of the institution's administrative infrastructure. A review of the statutes and some university policies showed that they facilitate the work of committees because the structure is well documented. It guides and smooths committee work, thereby facilitating group learning across the organisation. The administrative infrastructure thus lays the foundation for leadership development (social capital development perspective). In addition, the participants' responses suggest that when committee members meet, they also interact informally among themselves, and such interactions provide learning opportunities as they discuss issues, network and form collaborations. A provost stated:

I learnt a lot from my colleagues in our interactions at committee

meetings [...] we sometimes discussed issues relating to leadership and management of our various departments [...] I have applied some of the lessons, for instance, learnt from such interactions on countless occasions to address issues in certain situations in my leadership journey...

A dean remarked:

Things come from time to time. Currently, I have been asked to work with the HR Director to look at the new structure for the position of research associate and this is a direct relationship between an academic senior member and a purely administrative senior member. At the end of the day, a lot would be learnt from the performance of this assignment together. As I mentioned earlier, working on committees such as the Graduate Board and the Faculty Board have provided opportunities for learning

These findings confirm the existence of structures and practices that promote leader and leadership development that Day (2001) and Day et al. (2014) discussed through individual and group task assignments. However, no documented indication was found regarding a deliberate strategic objective on the part of the university to use group tasks or activities to provide leadership development at group level, although the Strategic Plan mentions leadership development. This means that the benefits that such situations bring to leadership development (integration) may not be fully acknowledged. Given Hoba et al.'s (2013) conclusion that leadership development in universities in sub-Saharan Africa lacks vision, the university should clearly articulate these strategic goals as modes whereby it integrates leader and leadership development.

Informal Learning through Relationship Building and Interactions on the Job

All 22 participants were of the view that some learning occurred from relationships with followers or stakeholders. They identified three stakeholder relationships that provided learning opportunities, namely, relations with juniors, colleagues and superiors. These terms are used generically to represent followers that are junior to the leaders in rank, those who are colleagues (same rank) and those higher in rank and yet are among the leaders' followers. For instance, it was found

that deans of faculties or schools have followers belonging to different hierarchies. This implies that they juggle a medley of relationships. The interactions that ensue from these relationships generate varying learning experiences that impact their leadership and their development as leaders.

Similarly, administrative leaders (directors) work with three levels of followers (juniors, colleagues and seniors). Therefore, all 22 participants worked and interacted with followers at the three identified levels. These findings provide the foundation for using the 360-degree feedback mechanism as a means of leadership development in the university. DeRue and Myers (2014) asserted that this mechanism is essential for leadership development as it enables the leader to obtain feedback from all categories of followers, impacting his/her actions and, subsequently, development. It was observed that although the interactions with the stakeholders create an avenue to use the 360-degree feedback mechanism to enhance growth and development, its use in the university was not evident. These findings are elaborated on in the subthemes below.

Learning through the Relationships and Interactions with Juniors

Nineteen of the 22 participants indicated that there were learning opportunities in interacting with juniors and that they benefited from a good relationship. It emerged that leaders build working relationships with subordinates by engaging them in the decision-making process. This helped the leaders to become familiar with procedures and processes that they encounter when they assume leadership roles because they depend on the organisational memory that this category of followers brings to the table. Increased involvement of followers in decision-making causes them to take ownership of the outcome. Serrano and Reichard (2011) noted that involving employees in decision-making makes for more engaged staff. A dean shared his experience with juniors:

You learn a lot from your juniors [...] When I came into this office, I came to meet people who have been here for almost 10 to 12 years [...] They know the ins and outs of the office [...] they know what functions well in the office; they know when things need to happen [.....] I think that from the cleaner to the driver, all have something to share, to contribute....

Learning through Relationships and Interactions with Colleagues

The majority (20 of the 22) of the academic and administrative participants submitted that good relationships with their colleagues were critical for their learning in their positions, contributing to their development as leaders. They identified two categories of colleagues from whom leaders learn: those in the same or similar position, and those in a higher position (for instance, the relationship between two deans or directors, and a dean with a provost). In relation to administrative leaders, the study found that consciously sharing leadership experiences among colleagues boosted their leadership capacity and engendered networking and collaboration. The academic participants noted that they were able to learn from one another because their functions were similar. For instance, deans and provosts play similar roles across faculties or colleges. However, with regard to administrative directors, though the mundane administrative activities are similar, the functions differed due to the functional nature of their position, such as Finance, Human Resource Management or Public Relations. Nonetheless, leaders of these functional areas all have the core responsibility of being a leader and demonstrating leadership capacities. Furthermore, the importance of interaction at this level was highlighted when a participant indicated that all administrative directors, irrespective of their functional area, met from time to time to discuss issues and share ideas. This implied that they understood the importance of learning from colleagues. An administrative director stated:

We learn a lot from each other because we do similar things [...] We mostly share our experiences through formal and informal sessions [...]; you know; senior administrative members have weekly meetings [...] We use such occasions to do presentations on new trends in administrative functions [...] Some members use the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarifications from colleagues about how certain administrative functions are and should be handled [...] I have gained a lot from such interactions.

The importance of followers' involvement through good relationship building in line with the leader's vision (Epitropaki et al., 2017) is also evident from the findings regarding relationships with colleagues. However, it seemed that administrative leaders took more advantage of this than their academic counterparts.

Learning through the Relationships and Interactions with Superiors

The findings suggest that maintaining good relations with superiors is crucial. Thirteen academic participants noted that the relationships they forged with seniors in their role as leaders were critical and unique. They had followers who were their seniors as a result of their rank in the university. For instance, a dean reported that one of the people he led was his former lecturer who had served as dean in the past and another, a former pro vice-chancellor. The study found that this was possible because of the rotational nature of the leadership positions in the university. The dean suggested that leading such people was not an easy task and required tact. The literature (Rowley and Sherman, 2003) highlights the need for academic leaders to be conscious of the fact that they lead a team of people who are professionals in their discipline. One of the deans observed:

[.....]. I have had some senior professors, particularly those who showed interest in my development and offered pieces of advice since I took up the mantle. I have realised it is important to maintain good relations with this category as well as colleagues to be able to drive home the agenda you have.

Similarly, most (4 of the 7) administrative participants indicated that they learnt from relationships with their seniors through the formal and informal mentoring. Some also benefited from other seniors who simply wanted them to succeed and were willing to offer advice. For example, an administrative director had this to say:

I have mentors, even my former boss who retired about four years ago, still reads the newspapers and sees things and calls me about them, telling me things to be careful with, things she has read and the implications that have for the job [...].

These findings imply that learning from relationships is multidimensional in the university setting, and that the participants learnt from different categories of stakeholders, including seniors, colleagues and juniors. However, success largely depends on the nature of the relationship that individual leaders build with these stakeholders. Consequently, leadership development practitioners need to be conscious of the peculiarities of the sector in designing programmes for leadership development in higher education. The literature suggests

that leadership programmes should be tailored to suit the particular context (Petrie, 2014), in this case, the university.

Formal Learning through Training

The study found that training takes place in-house or offsite. This concurs with the findings of other studies (Manuti et al., 2015; Marsick and Watkins, 1997, 2001). The third part of McCall et al.'s (1988) 70:20:10 model in which training is one of the sources of learning is captured in the conceptual framework as a source of formal learning in organisations. The objective of this aspect of the study was to identify how formal training featured in the participants' leadership journey. It was found that formal learning such as that received from training workshops and seminars contributed to the university leaders' development. The findings are presented under the sub-themes, *in-house* and *offsite training experiences*.

In-house Training Experiences

The study found that although there is a policy on training and development, the university did not have a documented comprehensive formal programme for leadership training and development. This is in line with Zulfqar et al.'s (2021) view that leadership development is not considered a core policy area in developing countries. The findings showed that leaders are given orientation on the university's operational structures and administrative processes with the aim of ensuring that they comply with the operations and systems for easy monitoring and auditing. This means that the focus of the training programmes using the university's internal structures leaned toward accountability and success in the position (horizontal leadership development). Such training was not targeted at developing creativity and innovativeness to enhance their leadership development (vertical leadership). For instance, a director stated:

The training programme organised by the university was not to develop me as a leader but to build on my capacity to function in the university in the leadership position.

Thirteen of the 22 participants indicated that leadership training is limited to those already in leadership positions. This limits development across the board to promote the leadership development perspective. The

findings further revealed that the university did not employ leadership training professionals to develop training geared towards leadership development which is broad and more holistic. Day (2001) and Day et al. (2014) called for leadership development programmes to be holistic and deliberate, meaning that those who provide such should have the requisite expertise. The in-house training provides learning experiences to succeed in the positions' core activities rather than for broad growth. The triangulation of data gathered through observation of a training session in August 2020 for newly-appointed heads of departments with that from the interviews confirmed the participants' perceptions regarding the in-house training programmes. The observation showed that training was geared towards enabling the leaders to succeed in their new positions. There is a critical need for more vertically oriented content pertaining to higher education institutions. Half a day or a day's training cannot adequately provide the leadership skills required by leaders to position them for leadership in this sectorEH.

Offsite Training Experiences

The findings revealed that sponsorship was provided for university leaders to benefit from offsite leadership training programmes, with an annual budget set aside. All but one of the participants indicated that they had attended one leadership training – the Senior Academic Leadership Training (SALT) programme. According to a former university administrator, now president of a private university in Ghana, Dr Paul Effah, the SALT programme aims to identify skills gaps in leadership performance in West African universities (Effah, 2018). A provost commented:

There were one or two training seminars that were organised by the Association of African Universities (AAU) for deans of public universities. I got sponsorship from the university [...] to participate in those workshops. [...] Also, in 2012/2013, the National Council for Tertiary Education [now Ghana Tertiary Education Commission] organised a training programme on senior administrative leadership training (SALT) which I benefited from as a dean at the time.

The responses showed that the offsite training programmes provided learning opportunities. However, it should be borne in mind that

only those already in leadership positions were eligible. Dopson et al. (2019) made a similar observation. Only one dean indicated having had the opportunity to attend an off-site training programme before being elected as dean. Similarly, Hoba et al. (2013) stated that the Association of African Universities' leadership training programmes targeted individuals in higher leadership roles. This narrow focus does not promote the broader perspective of leadership development. While critical, these external training programmes could be described as reactionary because they only focus on the demands of new or existing roles. There is an urgent need for programmes to be more broad-based to meet the current demands of the sector which is diverse and growing.

Training Received through Personal Effort

Apart from the university facilitating and sponsoring external training programmes, the study revealed that some (12 of the 22) leaders took personal responsibility for their leadership development to participate in leadership training programmes they were interested in, albeit with funding challenges due to the university's financial constraints.

A provost stated:

I have attended some training courses outside the country, mostly through my own initiative [...] I mostly search for leadership training programmes and apply [...] Most of them were fully sponsored by the organising institutions....

This finding showed that the respondents understand the importance of training in their development. Their efforts to access leadership training indicate that they were motivated to develop themselves in readiness for higher leadership responsibilities. Therefore, this finding emphasises the significance of personal effort (brought on by their level of motivation and self-awareness) in the leadership development enterprise. The university should broaden the base of leaders, linking training programmes to career progression. External training programmes should be used as strategic tools for planned leadership development, rather as a knee-jerk reaction to a lack of expertise.

Contribution of the Study

The findings confirm that the three sources of learning in McCall et al.'s (1988) 70:20:10 model propelled the study participants in their development as leaders in the university. It found that the concepts or elements that make up the 70:20:10 model, namely, learning from task performance, relationships and training were evident in leadership development in the higher education institution as formal and informal sources of learning. The study showed that creating the right structures and opportunities for staff across the board to take part in decision-making through representation on boards, on-the-job task performance, relationships, and training enhanced the possibility of conscious, holistic integration of leader and leadership development in the university environment.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated that the participants learned from formal and informal sources in the university setting. Informal learning on the job occurred through differing sources such as task performance (individually and in groups) and lessons from relationships in the work setting with juniors, colleagues and seniors. Formal learning through training also contributed to the participants' development. The findings show that structures are in place that position the university to ensure conscious integration of the perspectives of leader and leadership development in developing leaders. While the literature highlights challenges in developing leadership expertise, this can be achieved by taking advantage of the opportunities provided by learning holistically from the three sources in the university setting. More emphasis should, however, be placed on informal sources of learning given the different nuances and opportunities they present. The university should thus consider creating more structures that provide opportunities for development.

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