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Research Article

**ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM [ALDP]
AT THE COLLEGE OF NURSING, JEDDAH; KING SAUD BIN
ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY FOR HEALTH SCIENCES****Amer Mohammedkhayri Fayraq, medical intern^{1,2}, Dr. Saad Abdulrahman Alghamdi,
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Abstract:

Leadership development can be defined as the “longitudinal process of expanding the capacities of individuals, groups, and organizations to increase their effectiveness in leadership roles and processes”. Leadership is the cornerstone for success in most collaborative institutions. Therefore, the effort spent on leadership development will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the successful delivery of work by such institutions, in multiple different areas. Our understanding of leadership and its development has changed drastically in recent years. This has resulted in the rapid emergence of leadership development programs that focus on both the personal and social qualities and behaviors of already assigned leaders, as well as on the whole chain of prospective leaders or leadership groups, to develop their personal, cognitive and collaborative capabilities.

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INTRODUCTION:

Leadership development can be defined as the “longitudinal process of expanding the capacities of individuals, groups, and organizations to increase their effectiveness in leadership roles and processes” [1]. Leadership is the cornerstone for success in most collaborative institutions. Therefore, the effort spent on leadership development will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the successful delivery of work by such institutions, in multiple different areas.

Our understanding of leadership and its development has changed drastically in recent years. This has resulted in the rapid emergence of leadership development programs that focus on both the personal and social qualities and behaviors of already assigned leaders, as well as on the whole chain of prospective leaders or leadership groups, to develop their personal, cognitive and collaborative capabilities.

In the USA, the potential value of leadership programs was not fully recognized until the 1990s. National studies during the early 1990s revealed that the level of participation of leaders in leadership programs was as low as 3 % [2]. However, this then began to change and, by the start of the new millennium, a variety of institutional sectors had implemented leadership programs as standard. For example, in 1995, the University of Washington established ‘The Teaching Scholars Program’ to promote academic excellence through leadership development. Participants have cited the program as being directly associated with the implementation and success of curricular innovations at both local and national levels[3].

Worldwide interest in the subject of leadership development has been growing exponentially. For example, the UK government established the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education in 2005, in order to emphasize the effectiveness and quality of higher UK educational institutions[5], and in 2007, the federal government of Australia founded the LH Martin Institute for higher education leadership and management, aiming to enrich governance, leadership and management capacity in tertiary sector institutions[6]. The importance of developing such programs has also been recognized by the ministry of education in Saudi Arabia. The Academic Leadership Center [ALC] was established in 2009 in order to generate a greater focus on leadership, and to enhance the quality of higher education[4]. Moreover, there has been a growing interest locally at the College of Medicine in Jeddah [COM-J] and at the King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health

Sciences [KSAU-HS] following Dr. Saad Alghamdi’s 2014 study to develop an academic leadership development program and to construct an effective program which has subsequently been implemented by the assigned authorities at COM-J [7].

Against this background, we set out to design and construct an effective Academic Leadership Development Program [ALDP] for the College of Nursing in Jeddah [CON-J] at the King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences [KSAU-HS]. We adopted an objective approach: the competency based approach first proposed by Geoff Scott[8], Hamish Coates and Michelle Anderson[9], which is effectively a cyclical process in which individuals identify “gaps” using the evaluation criteria, then seek to address these gaps using a mixture of self-managed learning, practice based learning and associated formal leadership development. As the process continues, the results are evaluated based on effectiveness in improving leadership qualities, the good practices are retained and the remaining gaps in leadership behavior are readdressed using the same criteria as before, and so the cycle continues. Whilst a simple approach, the cyclical nature of the process results in an accumulation of skills and behaviors that move individuals towards more effective leadership development within the institution.

METHODOLOGY:

A range of literature sources including validated websites and the published articles referenced below were reviewed in order to develop the research background and identify the domains of leadership development in question. The selected survey methodology was adapted from a large-scale study of higher education leaders led by Geoff Scott[8], Hamish Coates and Michelle Anderson [9] as it was one of the monumental studies in leadership devolvement.

Study setting

The study was conducted at the College of Nursing in King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health sciences, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in December 2017. The University is located within King Abdulaziz Medical City, which is part of the Ministry of National Guard-Health Affairs. At the time of the study, there were 40 faculty staff members in the college.

Study population

All academic staff at CON-J were invited to take part in the study. Thirty responses were received. These comprised 1 dean, 2 chairmen, 13 block coordinators, 13 lecturers and 1 college Council member.

Study design

A cross-sectional study design was employed and used to conduct an online survey of the 30 respondent staff members, incorporating questions based around the following characteristics and functional domains:

- Part 1: Respondents' relevant demographic data
- Part 2: Respondents' perception of the importance of leadership capabilities including:
 - Personal capabilities
 - Inter-personal capabilities
 - Cognitive capabilities
 - Leadership competencies
- Part 3: Respondents' perception of the effectiveness of different approaches in the development of these capabilities
- Part 4: Respondents' perception of the importance of certain indicators as criteria in evaluating their role effectiveness

Participants were invited to complete the survey via an email which contained an explanation of the significance and objectives of the study, and included a link to the online survey. Research assistants were used to prompt participants to reply and to follow-up non-responders where necessary. Respondents were asked to rank each objective item of the survey using the five-point Likert scale [where 1 is low and 5 is high]. All responses were kept confidential. Data collection was completed in December 2017.

Data management and analysis

Data were analyzed by calculating the mean score for each item followed by ordinal ranking of the means in each domain.

Validation and reliability

- The survey methodology had already been tested and validated in a large-scale study, as mentioned above [8]. In order to maximize the reliability of the responses which may otherwise be reduced in a long survey, items ranking among the lowest 20% of those included in the comparable study by Dr. Saad were excluded from our survey[7]. Face and content validity of the final version of the survey content was conducted by experts in the field, such as, Dr. Saad who

conducted the same study in a similar setting, and Dr. Taqwa who is the dean of CON-J. The reliability of the survey methodology was calculated using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, and found to be 0.98, suggesting a very high level of internal consistency.

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues were accounted for in the following ways:

- Scientific approval of the study was received from King Abdullah International Medical Research Center [KAIMRC], Ministry of National Guard-Health Affairs.
- Approval to undertake the study was received from the authority of CON-J.
- Participants were enrolled by informed consent, as part of the online survey.
- Confidentiality of study data was maintained throughout.

RESULTS:

The main results of the study were based on the respondents' perspective, then separated and considered under three major categories. These comprised the leader's capability model, approaches for academic leadership development at CON-J, and criteria for judging effective performance.

● Category 1 : Leader's Capability Model

This category focused on the leader's capability model, which is composed of five different domains. Each one of these domains was defined by a group of items that each contributed to the significance of the domain. A total of 56 items were included in the leader's capability model.

A) First Domain: Personal Capabilities

In this domain, study participants were asked to rank 11 items according to their perceived importance, from the highest to lowest. The results are presented in Table 1. The following items were ranked highest by study participants:

1. Wanting to achieve the best possible outcome
2. Being true to one's personal values and ethics
3. Understanding my personal strengths and limitations

B) Second domain: Interpersonal Capabilities

The results of participants' ranking of items in this domain are presented in Table 2. All items of interpersonal capabilities were rated highly by study participants. Working constructively and honestly in dealing with others was identified as the most important interpersonal capability according to the academic staff that participated in the study.

C) Third Domain: Cognitive Capabilities

Making sense of and learning from experience and having a clear, justified and achievable direction in areas of responsibility were ranked highest among the items evaluated in the cognitive capabilities domain [see Table 3.]. Seeing

and acting on an opportunity for new direction was ranked lowest.

D) Fourth and Fifth Domains: Leadership Competencies

In these domains, study participants were asked to rate items [competencies] relating to skills and knowledge according to their perceived importance in contributing to a respondent's effective performance in their current role. A total of 13 competencies were ranked, as shown in Table 4. According to study participants, being able to make effective presentations to a range of different groups, was considered the most important competency for effective leadership.

Table 1: Ranked mean perceived personal capabilities of study participants [academic Leaders at CON-J].

| Rank | Item | Mean |
|------|---|------|
| 1. | Wanting to achieve the best outcome possible | 4.80 |
| 2. | Being true to one's personal values and ethics | 4.77 |
| 3. | Understanding my personal strengths and limitations | 4.73 |
| 4. | Admitting to and learning from my errors | 4.60 |
| 5. | Having energy, passion and enthusiasm for learning and teaching | 4.57 |
| 6. | Taking responsibility for program activities and outcomes | 4.57 |
| 7. | Being willing to take a hard decision | 4.43 |
| 8. | Maintaining a good work/ life balance and keeping things in perspective | 4.37 |
| 9. | Remaining calm under pressure or when things take an unexpected turn | 4.30 |
| 10. | Being confident to take calculated risks | 4.23 |
| 11. | Deferring judgment and not jumping in too quickly to resolve a problem | 4.10 |

Table 2: Ranked mean perceived interpersonal capabilities of all study participants [academic leaders at CON-J].

| Rank | Item | Mean |
|------|--|------|
| 1. | Working constructively and honestly in dealing with others | 4.83 |
| 2. | Listening to different point of view before coming to a decision | 4.70 |
| 3. | Motivating others to achieve positive outcomes | 4.67 |
| 4. | Emphasizing and working productively with students from a wide range of backgrounds | 4.63 |
| 5. | Giving and receiving constructive feedback to/from work colleagues and others | 4.57 |
| 6. | Emphasizing and working productively with staff and other players from a wide range of backgrounds | 4.50 |
| 7. | Developing and using networks of colleagues to solve key workplace problems | 4.37 |
| 8. | Developing and contributing positively to learning-based programs | 4.27 |

Table 3: Ranked mean perceived cognitive capabilities of study participants [academic leaders at CON-J].

| Rank | Item | Mean |
|------|---|------|
| 1. | Making sense of and learning from experience | 4.60 |
| 2. | Having a clear, justified and achievable direction in my area of responsibility | 4.53 |
| 3. | Thinking creatively and laterally | 4.50 |
| 4. | Diagnosing the underlying causes of a problem and taking appropriate action to address it | 4.37 |
| 5. | Setting and justifying priorities for my daily work | 4.37 |
| 6. | Using previous experience to figure out what's going on when a current situation takes an unexpected turn | 4.33 |
| 7. | Adjusting a plan of action in response to problems that are identified during its implementation | 4.33 |
| 8. | Identifying from a mass of information the core issue or opportunity in any situation | 4.30 |
| 9. | Recognizing patterns in a complex situation | 4.20 |
| 10 | Seeing and then acting on an opportunity for a new direction | 4.17 |

Table 4: Ranked mean perceived competencies of study participants [academic leaders at CON-J].

| Rank | Item | Mean |
|------|---|------|
| 1. | Being able to make effective presentations to a range of different groups | 4.43 |
| 2. | Being able to organize my work and manage my time effectively | 4.43 |
| 3. | Being able to manage my own ongoing professional learning and development | 4.37 |
| 4. | Identifying from a mass of information the core issue or opportunity in any situation | 4.30 |
| 5. | Knowing how to identify and disseminate good learning and management practice across the unit or university | 4.30 |
| 6. | Having a high level of up-to-date knowledge of what engages university students in productive learning | 4.20 |
| 7. | Understanding how to implement successfully a new higher education program | 4.20 |
| 8. | An ability to chair meetings effectively | 4.20 |
| 9. | Being on top of current developments in learning and teaching | 4.17 |
| 10 | Being able to use IT effectively to communicate and perform key work functions | 4.17 |
| 11 | Being able to help my staff learn how to deliver necessary changes effectively | 4.13 |
| 12 | Understanding how to develop an effective higher education learning program | 4.03 |
| 13 | Having sound administrative and resource management skills | 3.97 |

Table 5: Ranked means of approaches for academic leadership development

| Rank | Item | Mean |
|------|---|------|
| 1. | Attending learning and teaching conferences | 4.33 |
| 2. | Learning 'on-the-job' | 4.17 |
| 3. | Study of 'real-life' workplace problems | 4.07 |
| 4. | Being involved in formal mentoring/coaching programs | 4.03 |
| 5. | Participating in higher education leadership seminars | 3.90 |
| 6. | Accessing leadership information on the Internet | 3.87 |
| 7. | Participating in peer networks within the university | 3.83 |
| 8. | Participating in annual performance reviews | 3.80 |
| 9. | Completing formal leadership programs provided by your university | 3.73 |
| 10 | Ad hoc conversation about work with people in similar roles | 3.73 |
| 11 | Being involved in informal mentoring/coaching | 3.73 |
| 12 | Participating in leadership development programs which are custom- tailored to your needs | 3.73 |
| 13 | Completing formal leadership programs given by external providers | 3.57 |
| 14 | Participating in 360-degree feedback reviews based in known leadership capabilities | 3.40 |
| 15 | Undertaking site visits to other institutions or agencies | 3.13 |

- **Category 2: Approaches for Academic Leadership Development**

In this category, study participants were presented with a group of 15 different learning approaches and were asked to rate the effectiveness of each approach in assisting their leadership development. As shown in Table 5, respondents considered that attending learning and teaching conferences was the most effective approach in their development as academic leaders.

- **Category 3: Criteria for Judging Effective Performance**

Study participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of each criterion as a tool to judge the effectiveness of their performance as an academic leader [Table 6]. The results show that participants in general considered that producing significant improvements in their learning and teaching quality, achieving goals set for their own professional development and receiving positive user feedback for their area of responsibility were the most important criteria in contributing to their effective leadership, more so than achieving positive outcomes from external reviews of their area of expertise.

Table 6: Mean ranked scores of criteria for judging effective performance

| Rank | Item | Mean |
|------|---|------|
| 1. | Producing significant improvements in learning and teaching quality | 4.47 |
| 2. | Achieving goals set for your own professional development | 4.43 |
| 3. | Receiving positive user feedback for your area of responsibility | 4.43 |
| 4. | Achieving a high profile for your area of responsibility | 4.40 |
| 5. | Improving student satisfaction ratings for learning and teaching | 4.37 |
| 6. | Meeting student load targets | 4.30 |
| 7. | Successful implementation of new initiatives | 4.30 |
| 8. | Delivering successful team projects in learning and teaching | 4.23 |
| 9. | Delivering agreed tasks or project on time and specification | 4.23 |
| 10. | Having high levels of staff support | 4.23 |
| 11. | Establishing a collegial working environment | 4.23 |
| 12. | Producing future learning and teaching leaders | 4.13 |
| 13. | Bringing Innovative policies and practices into action | 4.10 |
| 14. | Producing successful learning systems or infrastructure | 4.03 |
| 15. | Enhanced representation of equity groups | 4.03 |
| 16. | Achieving positive outcomes from external reviews of the area | 4.03 |
| 17. | Winning resources for your area of responsibility | 3.87 |
| 18. | Publishing refereed papers and reports on learning and teaching | 3.77 |

DISCUSSION:

In order to establish a leadership program and ensure its effectiveness, it is prudent to adopt the six-step cycle devised by David Kern, which comprises: problem identification, general needs assessment, targeted needs assessment, goals and objectives, program strategies, implementation and evaluation [11]. The present research fulfilled the general needs assessment step. Based on the results, all items in the personal and interpersonal capabilities domain were ranked high, indicating the perceived high importance of development of an individual's "emotional intelligence", this being the term used to describe personal and interpersonal capabilities. The interpretation of this is that academic leaders must control their emotional interactions and behave professionally in order to be effective academic leaders and to succeed in their field.

Undoubtedly, professional learning in leadership is not a prerequisite since there are many effective leaders who have not undertaken professional learning. Nevertheless, leadership training and development is important in order to enhance the quality of a leader's performance. Table 3 illustrates how certain skills and knowledge were considered by respondents to be essential in order to perform a leadership role effectively. The results revealed a desire among the respondents to receive motivation for developing their leadership skills from their

working environment. Further, respondents considered that gaining feedback from an end-user as a key criterion upon which to judge the effectiveness of their performance rather than achieving external review outcomes.

Clearly, implementing a successful competency-based model requires the use of effective approaches. Therefore, study participants were asked as part of the online survey to rate the effectiveness of different approaches in assisting their academic leadership development. Evidence from the responses received suggests that attending learning and teaching conferences as well as learning on the job and studying "real-life" workplace problems were considered three most effective approaches in the development of academic leaders in CON-J. Comparing the results of the current study with those of other published studies reveals that learning on the job is consistently ranked within the top three approaches. Ad hoc conversations about work with people in similar roles has been ranked in other international studies as the second [8] and third [10] preferred approach. However, in a further comparable study [7], as in the present study, this approach was not ranked in the top five, mostly likely because the local environment does not facilitate this particular approach. Table 7 illustrates the perceived importance of the different approaches across the aforementioned published studies.

Table 7: Perceived importance of different approaches for the development of effective academic leaders, as reported in different published studies.

| Rank | Scott et al. [2008] | Coates et al. [2010] | Dr. Saad et al. [2014] | Current study |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Learning on the job | 1 st | 1 st | 3 rd | 2 nd |
| Ad hoc conversations about work with people in similar roles | 2 nd | 3 rd | 11 th | 10 th |
| Participating in peer networks within the university | 3 rd | 6 th | 18 th | 7 th |

In order to ensure the effectiveness of a leadership program, an evaluation of the outcomes is required. In our online survey, the final domain included a list of indicators and respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of each item as a criterion for judging their effective performance. Table 6 shows the ranking of these indicators by respondents. Going forward, these indicators will be used in the

monitoring and evaluation of the leadership development program.

LIMITATIONS:

The study employed a quantitative approach, in which objective measures were included. However, for this type of project there would be value in incorporating both objective measures and subjective opinions. Therefore, it is recommended that a

qualitative study be conducted in the future. In addition, the study was limited in its focus to academic staff members, although non-academic staff members and students are also likely to make a valuable input to the development program.

CONCLUSION:

This study has validated that the effective performance of academic leaders requires emotional intelligence, which involves personal and interpersonal capabilities, cognitive capabilities and certain leadership skills and knowledge. The findings of the study were consistent with those of other parallel studies [7].

Recommendations

- The academic leadership development program [ALDP] at CON-J should be constructed based on the findings of this study with regard to how the academic staff prefer to learn and be evaluated.
- It is recommended that further qualitative studies are conducted involving individual or group interviews to gain a more comprehensive perception of leadership development needs at CON-J.
- The results of this study could be utilized by other human resource practices. For example, in the hiring of new staff and promotion of staff.

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