

Evaluation of a Leadership Development Programme in a London Local Authority

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About the author

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Abstract

This is an evaluation of a Leadership Development Programme (LDP) consisting of a number of development approaches such as leadership coaching and action learning; carried out for leaders in a London Local Authority. Using semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion the Taxonomy of Training and Development Outcomes (TOTADO) framework is applied to evaluate the influence of the LDP on individual, team and organizational level outcomes. Characteristics of coaching and action learning were examined; along with factors that may influence learning and transfer of learning to the workplace. Findings suggest that the LDP led to increased confidence and awareness of leadership behaviours and improved teamwork amongst leaders. Coaching content, the coach's experience and experience sharing in action learning were found to promote leadership development. Manager and peer support, opportunity and work demands were found to influence transfer of learning to the workplace.

Introduction

The role of leadership in organizations is known to be of utmost importance, as leaders hold the responsibility of making decisions that influence their followers and drive general organizational performance. In light of rapid global changes in business, technology, environmental, political and social factors, understanding how to facilitate the development of effective leadership in organizations is important (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014). Solansky (2010) notes the benefits of leadership development programmes may include enhanced leadership skills, increased

confidence, broadened perspectives, and increased communication skills for the individual. These desirable benefits confirm the importance of adequately planned and executed leadership development programmes in organizations. However, there is an indication that regardless of the increased focus on leadership development, systematic evaluation and reporting of outcomes of leadership development interventions are rare in the literature (Avolio, Avey, & Quisenberry, 2010).

This research aims to answer the following questions: a) using the TOTADO framework, to what extent does the LDP lead to individual, team and organizational level outcomes? b) What factors of coaching enhance or hinder leadership development? c) What factors of action learning enhance or hinder leadership development? d) What factors promote or hinder learning effectiveness and transfer from the LDP to the workplace?

Research context

Research was carried out in a London Local Authority (LLA). London has a two-tier system of local and regional government. The first tier includes 32 Boroughs (including the LLA) and the City of London, responsible for delivering day-to-day services to local residents. The second tier, the Greater London Authority, sets out an overall vision on a range of issues including air quality, policing, development, transport and waste.

The LLA is currently undergoing various organizational changes resulting from financial and economic factors (e.g., budget cuts of £80 million over the next four years); while continuing to work towards providing quality services to the residents. The LLA decided to give an identity to its leaders by bringing together senior managers and directors from across the organization to form what is now referred to as the Leadership Family. The LDP stemmed from the organization's desire to have competent leaders working towards achieving goals including: development of new solutions to reduce inequality, creating conditions for economic growth and driving value for money services. The organization holds the belief that if their Leadership Family is well equipped with six leadership behaviours namely the: Ability to Influence, Inspire, Drive Quality and Value, Collaborate, Develop People and Are Politically Astute; the organization can achieve these goals.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the LDP carried out in the LLA between November and December 2013 using the TOTADO framework (Birdi, 2010). The LDP consisted of Multi-Source Feedback (MSF) and an on-line Development Centre (an approach consisting of Situational Judgement Tests, personality assessment and motivation assessment), created by a leading Psychology Consultancy to assess leaders' behavioural strengths and areas for development. One hundred and twenty Leadership Family members participated in the LDP; and were provided with feedback reports from the MSF and on-line exercises. A two-hour, one-to one-coaching session, facilitated by a consultant from the Psychology Consultancy allowed participants' to discuss their leadership behaviour strengths and areas of development from the feedback reports and to set future development goals. The leaders were then put into action learning sets of seven to nine participants; with the aim of supporting each other towards achieving their development goals.

Evaluation of Training and Development

Evaluation is defined as "The systematic collection of descriptive and judgemental information necessary to make effective decisions related to the selection, adoption, value and modification of various instructional activities" (Goldstein, 1993, p.181). Effectiveness of training and development should be assessed through evaluation to ascertain whether aims have been achieved (Boaden, 2006). However, some organizations fail to carry out thorough evaluation, focusing instead on "post-delivery feedback or happy sheets" which only provide initial reactions to the programme (McGregor, Carter, Straw & Birdi, 2009, p. 30). Some known evaluation techniques include: Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Framework (Kirkpatrick, 1959), Context-Input-Reaction-Output- Process (CIROP) Evaluation model (Warr, Bird & Rackham, 1970), and TOTADO (Birdi, 2010).

Kirkpatrick's evaluation framework (Kirkpatrick, 1959) proposes evaluation should be carried out at four levels: participant reaction to the programme, learning acquired, behaviour transferred to the workplace, and organizational business results. The Kirkpatrick framework has been criticised for being vague, simple and lacking evidence to support relationships between the four levels (Alliger & Janak, 1989). The CIROP model of evaluation sought to address these shortcomings of by considering the context and process of the evaluation. According to Warr and

colleagues (1970), evaluation should be carried out in five stages: context, input, reaction, output and process. While this model covers a wider range of variables with specific evaluation outcomes, it does not consider the possibility of training and development having multidimensional level effects; such as effects on teams, the wider organization and the external environment.

Consideration of these wider outcomes led to the development of the TOTADO framework (Birdi, 2010) emphasising the importance of going beyond individual level outcomes to evaluate training and development. Meta-analysis by Taylor, Russ-Eft and Taylor (2009) on the impact of evaluation data sources on the effect sizes of outcomes of management training indicated that the data source used for evaluation affects the outcome, and as such data from a single source, may be subjective. In some cases, evaluation data obtained from participants' of training or development programmes may be biased as a result of impression management (Taylor et al., 2009). The TOTADO framework provides a good deal of multi-source (and therefore useful) data to scientists and practitioners exploring the impact of training and development, which the other evaluation techniques do not provide.

The TOTADO framework consists of individual, group, organizational and societal levels of evaluation; each level consisting of outcome dimensions on which learning is expected to have some effect (see Figure 1 below).

While the TOTADO model gives an in-depth approach to evaluation, some levels and dimensions will apply to certain activities more than others (e.g., physical outcomes). As a result of time constraints and organizational restrictions the researcher focused on the following. Individual level: affective, cognitive and behavioural; Team level: affective, cognitive and behavioural; and Organizational level: output and processes.

Figure 1: The TOTADO Framework; Levels and Outcomes

Level	Sub-Level	Outcome
Individual	Affective	Feelings resulting from participating in a training and development activities (confidence, self-efficacy)
	Cognitive	Learning gained from the training and development activities
	Behavioural	Changes in work behaviour/performance as a result of training and development activities
	Physical	Changes in physical health and fitness as a result of training and development activities
	Instrumental	Events that have occurred as a result of taking part in training and development activities e.g. Pay rise
Team	Affective	How the team feels about and individual taking part in training and development activities
	Cognitive	Group learning resulting from training and development activities
	Behavioural	Changes in team work behaviour/performance as a result of training and development activities
	Instrumental	Events within the team that have occurred as a result of taking part in training and development activities
Organizational	Processes	Changes in the organization's way of working as a result of training and development activities
	Outputs	Changes in the organization's output as a result of training and development activities
	Financial	Changes in the organization's financial performance as a result of training and development activities
	Resources	Changes in the organization's human and material resources as a result of training and development activities
Societal	Economic	Influence of training and development activity on the local economy
	Health	Influence of training and development activity on health
	Educational	Influence of training and development activity education in the society
	Law and Order	Influence of training and development activity on law and order
	Environmental	Influence of training and development activities on the environment

Learning effectiveness and transfer

The effectiveness of learning gained from training and development activities is determined by learners' ability to successfully transfer and generalise such learning to the actual work environment; in such a way that can be sustainably maintained (Blume, Ford, Baldwin & Huang, 2010). Research evidence suggests factors that facilitate or hinder learners' ability to transfer learning to the workplace can be

broadly classified into three categories: characteristics of the learner, transfer environment, and learning programme (Lim & Johnson, 2002). Learner characteristics reported to have the most influence on transfer of learning include, but are not limited to, perception of the usefulness of learning (Burke & Hutchins, 2007), self-efficacy (Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons & Kavanagh, 2007) and personality (Blume et al., 2010; Colquitt, LePine & Noe, 2000). Furthermore, organizational characteristics that influence transfer of learning include: peer and supervisor support (Ford, Quinones, Segó & Sora, 1992) and organizational transfer climate (Rouillier & Goldstein, 1993). Furthermore, Belling, James and Ladkin (2004) reported that pressurised work environments requiring employees to meet work demands under strict deadlines, can hinder transfer. Characteristics of the learning programme include the training system (Arthur, Bennett, Edens, & Bell, 2003) and the relevance of the programme content (Axtell, Maitlis & Yearta, 1997). Meta-analysis of 89 empirical studies exploring the influence of trainee characteristics, work environment and training interventions on the transfer of training to different contexts, carried out by Blume and colleagues (Blume et al, 2010), confirmed significant relationships existing between transfer and predictor variables such as work support and personal motivation, especially when the training was related to leadership development. Considering the existing literature on learning transfer, it is expected that some factors will influence learning effectiveness and transfer to the workplace in the organizational context of the LLA.

Method

A qualitative approach was taken in this research, with interpretivism and constructivism as the underlying orientation as individuals are expected to have different perceptions of the influence of the LDP (Willig, 2008). This evaluation combines the use of interviews and a focus group discussion (FGD) to obtain a depth of information from a range of participants over a short period of time (Morgan, 1996).

Semi-structured telephone interviews were used with ten members of the Leadership Family. Each interview lasted between 30 to 45 minutes depending on the interviewees' responses. The interview questions were based on the TOTADO framework (Birdi, 2010) and the research questions (see above). For example, "How

has taking part the LDP influenced your behaviour as a leader?” Probing questions were asked to further understand the participants’ responses. Responses were fed back to participants to enhance clarity and accuracy. These responses were then noted down by the researcher. Some dimensions of the TOTADO Framework such as financial changes were not explored at the request of the organization.

The FGD was carried out with four members of the Leadership Project Team and Human Resource Business Partners of the LLA involved in the planning and implementation of the LDP. The FGD aimed to uncover the benefits, or absence thereof, of the LDP from the viewpoint of the Leadership Project Team. The FGD took place in a private office at the LLA and lasted one hour and ten minutes.

Questions asked in the FGD explored the outcomes of the LDP from the perspective of the Leadership Project Team. For example, *“To what extent have you achieved the expectations for the LDP?”*

No recordings were taken for confidentiality and anonymity purposes. At the end of all interviews and the FGD, notes were written up into transcripts, with references made to reflexive notes taken by the researcher. Reflexive notes were taken to account for the researcher’s preconceptions about the research and how the researcher may influence every step of the research process. The participants’ responses were analysed using template analysis (King, 2004).

Template Analysis

Template Analysis was used to collect and categorise data from the interviews and FGD, allowing the researcher’s *‘a priori’* thoughts to be explored. These thoughts are used to categorise expected outcomes into templates before gathering responses from participants. King (2004) defines Template Analysis as “a varied but related group of techniques for thematically organizing and analysing textual data” (p.256). Unlike Grounded Theory technique (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) that specifies procedures for data gathering and analysis; Template Analysis provides a flexible approach allowing the researcher to tailor the template to research requirements (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Following suggestions presented by King (2004) *‘a priori’* themes for this research are defined as: a) Influence of LDP on leaders; b) Influence of LDP on teams; c) Influence of LDP on the organization; d) Coaching factors influencing leadership development; e) Action learning factors influencing leadership

development; and f) Factors affecting learning effectiveness and transfer. These themes, defined by the leadership development literature and the research questions, served as a guide that will be broken down into sub-themes, allowing for the flexibility of adding and deleting themes based on relevance and importance to the research (King, 2004).

Findings

Ten participants were interviewed (seven males and three females) with varying lengths of service (ranging from two to 35 years), responsibilities and number of staff managed (ranging from two to 200). Findings are summarised in Figure 2 below, with key findings discussed further.

Figure 2- Summary table of interview themes and sub-themes

S/n	'a priori' themes	Sub themes and lower level themes
1	Influence of LDP on the leaders	1) Feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Feeling about self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Awareness of behaviour strengths and development 5/10* ii) Increased confidence 2/10 iii) Long-term career development 1/10 b) Feeling about organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Organization's interest in leadership development 4/10 ii) Increased integration of leaders 4/10 iii) Clarity of organizational goals 3/10 iv) Empowering environment 1/10 2) Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New knowledge 6/10 3) Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Focus on future career 2/10 b) Increase awareness of personal leadership style 5/10 c) Conscious display of leadership behaviour 3/10
2	Influence of LDP on Team level outcomes	1) Teamwork among followers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increased consultation with team 1/10 b) Communicating vision 1/10 2) Teamwork among leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Awareness of work going on in other directorates 2/10 b) Increased leader interaction 3/10 c) Knowledge of common goal 1/10
3	Influence of LDP on Organizational level outcomes	1) Achievement of LLA Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Awareness of working together towards achieving goals 7/10 2) Process improvement 4/10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reduced use of Checks in LLA b) Cross-directorate team working
4	Factors of Coaching influencing Leadership development	1) Enhancing factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Content of coaching session 4/10 b) Coach's experience 1/10 2) Hindering factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Short duration of coaching 1/10 b) Poor rapport with coach 1/10
5	Factors of Action learning influencing Leadership development	1) Enhancing factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Experience sharing 4/10 2) Hindering factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Time constraints 1/10 b) Poor attendance 2/10 c) Learning style 1/10
6	Factors affecting the effectiveness of learning	1) LDP Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Enhancing factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Multi-Source Feedback 5/10 ii) Coaching 2/10 b) Hindering factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Conflicting feedback reports 1/10 ii) Non context-specific content of online tools 1/10 2) Organizational Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Enhancing factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Manager's support 3/10 ii) Peer support 2/10

		iii) Opportunity to apply learning 2/10 iv) Personal factors 2/10 b) Hindering factors i) Time and Work demands 5/10
7	Suggested improvement	a) Increase one to one coaching sessions b) Facilitation of action learning sets c) Simple log-in process for online tools d) Provide Context- specific content for online tools e) Clarity of rating scales for multi-source feedback / Reduce ambiguity f) Consider time and work demands of leaders g) Include a means to measure leaders' progress after the programme

* The number of participants who reported the themes.

Influence of LDP on leaders

Influence was considered on: leaders' feelings, learning and behaviour. Sub themes are further explained in the following sections.

Influence on leaders' feelings (towards' self)

Eight of the ten participants reported a change in their feelings about carrying out their leadership duties since the LDP, citing increased awareness of leadership behaviour strengths and areas for development, increased confidence and long-term leadership development. For example:

"I've become more aware of my style and I'm reflecting on how I do things. It's made me work on the weaknesses that came out of the programme..." Participant 7.

"It's made me more effective, better equipped and more confident to talk with others on projects." Participant 10.

"It's helped me to focus more on long-term career development rather than the day to day work activities." Participant 4.

However, two of the ten participants stated feelings towards their leadership abilities had not changed since the programme.

"I don't feel any different. To be honest, I still don't know what LLA means when they say leadership. It's easy to write words down but difficult to translate these to reality" Participant 1

"I feel pretty much the same in how I do what I do" Participant 6

Leaders' feeling towards organization

Four participants reported an increase in the organization's interest in developing leaders. Others reported increased integration of leaders, clarity of organizational goals and empowering environment. For example:

“It does demonstrate the interest of the organization in developing leaders to focus on their strengths and weaknesses. It’s a concerted effort to develop leaders.” Participant 6.

“It’s helped to address the kind of ‘silo-ed’ nature of leadership, giving an opportunity to come together with others in a systematic way and to talk openly about the leadership and change issues in the organization” Participant 10.

Comments show that since the LDP, a majority of the interviewed participants feel positive about the organization’s interest in developing its leaders, increased integration of various leaders, clarity of organizational goals and note the experience of an empowering leadership environment. However, these views were not shared by all participants.

Influence of LDP on Leaders’ learning

Six of the ten participants reported gaining new knowledge of their leadership behaviour from the LDP while the remaining four reported no new learning.

“I learnt more about my strengths and weaknesses through the self- assessment evaluation. It was a great opportunity to take a step back, to know where my strengths and weaknesses lie. The 360 feedback was also useful, powerful and eye-opening. Some of the negative comments got me defensive at first but they also got me thinking about how I really behave.” Participant 10.

Participants who reported no new knowledge attributed this to discrepancies in the feedback reports they were given. For example:

“To be honest, I didn’t relate well with the results. There were contradictory reports from the personality tests, 360 feedback and SJT. The results were much different from how I saw myself. The reports felt negative while the 360 was more positive. I came out without a clear understanding of where my strengths and weaknesses lie....” Participant 9.

It was interesting to note that leaders who reported no new learning, also reported getting a negative feedback report

Influence of LDP on Leaders’ behaviour

Six of ten participants reported change in behaviours as a result of the LDP through focus on future career development and increased awareness of personal leadership behaviours. However, four participants reported no change.

“It’s made me think more about my career and my future as a leader. I was aware but I guess it brings it to the front of one’s mind. I don’t think my personal leadership behaviour has changed.” Participant 4.

“It has made me more aware of the kind of behaviour I want to display. You know, things I find uncomfortable and how to address them. I understand better now and am more aware of my leadership style” Participant 2.

Some reporting no changes in their leadership behaviours since the LDP besides being more aware of them. However, three participants reported changes in leadership behaviour:

“Working on the project with XXX directorate has definitely helped in my collaboration.” Participant 2.

“Well, I’ve made conscious effort to increase my Political Awareness by being in front of politicians as much as possible” Participant 4.

Summary

Participants expressed an overall understanding of the influence of the LDP on individual outcomes based on the TOTADO framework. Knowledge gained from the LDP informed some changes in behaviour identified by some participants; making them more focused on their future development and increasing awareness of personal leadership behaviour.

Influence of LDP on Team level outcomes

While eight of ten participants reported no changes in teamwork amongst followers, two participants indicated some changes in teamwork within their work group:

“It’s definitely made me consult more with them... There have been situations regarding how best to carry out the job. In the past, I wouldn’t consult with the whole team but now I do and it’s led to more efficient ways of delivering on the project.” Participant 8.

Seven of ten participants reported changes in teamwork with other leaders, citing increased awareness of work in other departments, increased leaders’ interaction and knowledge of the common goal.

“...the action learning was very useful meeting people from different directorates and to help understand what other people do in the business.” Participant 7.

“It’s helped increase my understanding of the importance of collaboration. It has helped working with the other directorates on projects to provide better services to customers” Participant 10.

Findings suggest while there was little change in teamwork amongst followers; a majority of participants’ report a change in teamwork among peers; citing increased awareness of work going on in other departments and increased integration amongst leaders.

Influence of LDP on Organizational level outcomes

Two sub themes emerged: achievement of organizational goals (the LLA Plan) and process improvement. Seven participants described increased awareness of working together to achieve the LLA plan. For example:

“It has given a degree of clarity in terms of what is expected. There is an awareness of what is expected for me as a manager and others as well. Other heads of services know what they have to do and that they have to work together to achieve the goals” Participant 2.

Six out of ten participants indicated they had made no decisions leading to process improvements since taking part in the LDP. However, four participants who reported process improvement stated that they were not necessarily as a result of taking part in the LDP.

“I have encouraged my staff to work with other teams to improve the process and ways we do things to avoid duplication and bring more clarity to the roles and responsibilities.” Participant 2.

“Well, one is our approach to try to get rid of checks from the business.” Participant 5.

Summary

Findings indicate an awareness of working together to achieve organizational goals but not necessarily achieving these goals.

Coaching factors influencing Leadership development

Enhancing factors

Content of the coaching session was reported by four participants as important for leadership development.

“The ability to talk it through and to know that while the feedback report wasn’t what I expected, there were other areas where I could focus on to improve myself.”

Participant 5.

One participant however, stated the importance of the coach’s experience for leadership development.

“It gave me a window to the outside world, talking about how things are in the private sector in comparison to the public sector. It provided some useful insight. Also, being challenged by the coach who has obviously worked with several senior managers was good. I also got the opportunity to draw up a plan moving forward, with regards to my development.” Participant 10.

Hindering factors

Short duration of coaching and poor rapport with the coach was identified by two participants as hindering factors.

“...there was just one session and so no avenue for follow- up. Two or three more coaching sessions could have been useful” Participant 4.

“Because I didn’t connect with my coach and the report wasn’t meaningful and I had no clear understanding of my strengths and weaknesses” Participant 9.

Summary

Findings suggest some characteristics of coaching are important for leadership development such as relevance of coaching content and coach’s experience. On the other hand, the coaching duration and absence of rapport were hindering factors.

Action learning Factors influencing Leadership development

Four of ten participants reported finding Action Learning useful for leadership development through experience sharing.

“I thought it was a really good, open forum for people to have discussions about leadership challenges...” Participant 3.

However, six out of ten participants reported not finding the Action Learning useful citing: time constraints, poor attendance and learning style.

“We haven’t met in my group. I found this least useful because of the lack of time to meet up. I guess the group dynamic has not been effective.” Participant 9.

“It doesn’t suit my personal working or learning style. I prefer to learn on my own”

Participant 1.

Summary

Experience sharing amongst leaders in an open environment was reported to be useful in leadership development. However, Action Learning was hindered by: lack of time to meet with other leaders; poor attendance of Action Learning sets; and perceived unsuitability of Action Learning to some leaders’ learning styles.

Factors affecting learning effectiveness and transfer to the workplace

Reports from six participants showed that MSF and coaching were the most useful features of the LDP; while on-line tools and contradictory feedback reports were least useful. For example:

“It was a 2 hour one to one session spent going through my strengths and weaknesses as a leader in detail. It was very useful having the results interpreted to me in an understandable way. I guess it kind of set the ball rolling on what next steps to take were, with regards to my leadership skills and focussing on how to improve.”

Participant 2.

Organizational Characteristics

This sub theme includes enhancing and inhibiting factors. Eight participants identified a range of factors helping them to apply learning including: manager’s support, peer support, opportunity to apply learning and personal factors.

“My manager has taken keen interest in my development and has encouraged me to take on board my personal development. ... She also encouraged me to take on the XXX project on a full time basis and it made me feel more comfortable doing this with her support.” Participant 2.

“Getting feedback from colleagues was useful in applying what I’ve learnt.” Participant 3.

Five of the ten participants reported time and work demands as hindering factors of learning transfer from the LDP.

“Time to apply the learning... Time to reflect on some of the things learnt as well. The thing is leadership can be pushed down the list of priorities when other things come up, especially at this busy time in the organization.” Participant 2.

Summary

Generally, interview findings gave insight into participants' perception of the LDP on individual, team and organizational level outcomes of the TOTADO framework. Key factors affecting learning effectiveness and transfer were identified as manager's support and work demands.

FGD findings

Responses from each question were grouped together to form the themes presented below (See Figure 3 below).

Figure 3- Summary table of FGD themes and sub-themes

FGD Summary Template		
S/N	Themes	Lower level themes
1	Strategic aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To reduce number of leaders b) Create identity for leaders c) Identify potential strategic leaders d) Identify Strengths and areas for development of those leaders e) Develop leaders with skills to achieve organizational goals.
2	Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Leaders strengths and areas for development b) Have collective information on leadership family strengths and weaknesses c) Give leaders the opportunity to take charge of their own development
3	Balanced view of programme achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a)Positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Development Centre and Coaching run as expected b)Negative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Action learning not run as expected
4	Balanced view of programme Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a)Positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Individual Leaders strengths and areas for development identified ii) Leaders taking charge of their own development b)Negative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) No collective outlook on general leadership family performance
5	Inadequate information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Information too spread out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Provided paradoxes
6	Development activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) One to one coaching b) Action learning sets c) Leadership family events d) Cross-directorate projects
7	Future consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Cost implication b) Better understanding of outcomes
8	Suggested improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Create a simpler log-in process

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Pre-training on how to access the online tools to maximise user experience c) Tailor contents of programme to better suit organizational context d) Reduce ambiguity of some content e) Factor in time for planning and execution of entire project f) Gain better understanding of how data and outcomes can be used and applied
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FGD findings suggest that the LDP had achieved most of the aims that were set out. Participants reported the development centre and coaching yielded the expected outcomes of producing a feedback report and a one-to-one coaching session with each leader. While some Action Learning sets were up and running, others were not due to time constraints for leaders and poor attendance in some groups (validating interview responses stating the same). Findings also indicate that individual Leaders' strengths and areas for development have been identified in individual feedback reports with some Leaders taking charge of their own development. However, there was no summary report of collective performance of the Leadership Family.

Summary

Although the LDP had identified leaders' strengths and areas for development, it had not provided a collective output on performance as expected by the Leadership Project Team.

Overall, these research findings suggest that for the majority of participants, the LDP resulted in changes in feelings and learning with some change in leadership behaviour. However there were mixed findings for team level outcomes and no evidence of changes in the organizational level outcomes. Coaching and Action Learning were found to be beneficial by most participants and links were found between the interview and FGD data, serving as validation of these findings.

Discussion

The TOTADO Framework was useful in assessing the different levels of influence of the LDP. Research findings suggest the LDP resulted in some positive outcomes for individuals and mixed findings for team and organizational level outcomes. Coaching content and coach's experience were found to be important for leadership development, while experience sharing was relevant for Action Learning. Social

support; time and work demands were key factors affecting transfer of learning to the workplace.

Individual level outcomes of leadership development

Findings indicate mostly positive individual level outcomes as a majority of leaders felt increased confidence and awareness of their strengths and areas for development. This is supported by the literature stating that leadership development should begin with self-awareness; to help leaders work on their own development (Atwater & Waldman, 1998). These findings are validated by the FGD findings as members of the Project Team affirmed that leaders had become more aware of their strengths and areas for development, indicating the achievement of one of the programme strategic aims.

A majority of leaders reported change in feeling towards the organization; stating increased clarity of organizational goals and noting the organization's interest in their leadership development. This seems to suggest a change in organizational climate for some; such as "shared perceptions of work environment characteristics" (Burke et al., 2008, p.139). Participants considered the LLA was paying more attention to leadership suggesting a more supportive climate helping leaders in their development, especially in the transfer of learning from a development activity to the workplace (Rouillier & Goldstein, 1993).

This evaluation demonstrated that the LDP led to the acquisition of new knowledge, as majority of the leaders reported learning about their leadership behaviour strengths and development. However, some leaders reported acquiring no new knowledge suggesting the tone of feedback (positive vs. negative) critically influences learning; as those leaders reporting gaining new knowledge had received positive feedback. This confirms meta-analytic findings on the effects of feedback intervention on performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996); describing discouraging feedback decreasing intervention effectiveness. Negative feedback may not always result in positive behavioural changes and this poses a challenge for the LLA and practitioners as they have to consider the best ways to provide feedback that would achieve its intended aim. Alternatively, absence of learning may result from low managerial self-efficacy i.e., "perceived capacity to be effective and influential in the organization" (Fast, Burriss & Bartel, 2014, p. 1017). Fast and colleagues (2014) in

their study of managerial self-efficacy, ego defensiveness and employee voice, demonstrated that managerial self-efficacy affected the extent to which managers responded to improvement-oriented voice. Since feedback reports projected how leaders were seen by direct reports, peers and line managers and it could be argued that leaders with low self-efficacy would find it more difficult to accept reports that didn't describe their own view point.

According to the findings, some leaders reported no changes in learning but some changes in behaviour. This dissonance between learning and behaviour suggests that behaviour is not always a result of learning. Perhaps changes in organizational climate requiring leaders to exhibit certain desired behaviours motivates the exhibition of such behaviour even without learning taking place, for example the need for the LLA to save money leading to collaboration among leaders.

A majority of leaders reported little change in their leadership behaviours; expressed as Inspire, Influence, Develop People, Collaborate, Are politically Astute and Drive Quality and Value. This finding may suggest that these behaviours have not been fully internalised at an individual level in relation to job roles; therefore leaders were not able to demonstrate these behaviours. Further work expressing these behaviours may be required making them more applicable to each leader's role. This may then lead to more opportunities for leaders to apply these behaviours effectively in the workplace. Furthermore, the extent to which leadership behaviours had improved after the LDP cannot truly be ascertained. This is because there were no standard measurements for leadership behaviours besides self-reports; and no pre-LDP measures to compare behavioural changes against.

Team level outcomes of leadership development

Some participants reported changes in their work groups such as increased consultation with direct reports and improved communication of the LLA vision to the work group. The LDP also encouraged changes in teamwork among leaders, through increased awareness of work taking place in other departments and increased interaction among leaders and knowledge of common goals. The increased interaction appears to be a significant shift from how things were previously done, confirming some team level changes as a result of the LDP. This is

a positive outcome which could be attributed to the changing climate within the LLA promoting integration.

Organizational level outcomes of leadership development

Leaders indicated becoming more aware of the roles they had to play individually and collectively towards achieving the LLA plans; with some reporting decisions leading to process improvement, although they could not attribute the origins of these decisions to the LDP. The absence of perceived organizational change could be as a result of the short time span (seven months) between the LDP and its evaluation or the fact that the researcher was unable to explore other organizational outcomes where changes could have occurred, such as savings and profits resulting from the LDP.

Coaching and leadership development

Content of the coaching session and coach's experience were found to promote leadership development while the short duration and poor coach-coachee rapport were found to hinder development. Leaders reported the relevance of coaching content helped them to understand strengths and areas for development enhancing leadership development. This outcome could be a result of basing the coaching on feedback reports and focusing on leaders' current needs in order to set adequate development goals (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). This is similar to leadership development action research by Thach (2002), where MSF was carried out initially to inform coaching, which took place over a few months, and ending with a follow-up MSF that showed some increased effectiveness as a result of this procedure. The coach's experience was reported to enhance leadership development. While there is no major research promoting the importance of coach's experience, some research has indicated that coaches must have a general understanding of leadership, business, management and organizational politics (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). This implies that a coach who is more experienced is more likely to gain the confidence of the leader, which could be relevant in building rapport to aid leadership development.

The short duration of coaching and poor coach-coachee rapport was found to hinder coaching for leadership development. The LDP coaching was a two-hour session which may be argued to be inadequate, especially as leadership development is

considered an on-going process. In support of this notion, past research on leadership development has reported coaching sessions lasting from a few weeks to over a year (Thach, 2002). As Carey, Philippon and Cummings (2011) suggest coaching stages should include: relationship building, problem definition, reflection, goal-setting; ending finally with evaluation and follow-up to monitor the leaders' developmental progress. In line with research, coach-coachee relationship is listed as important for successful coaching outcomes in leadership development (Boyce, Jackson & Neal, 2010).

Action Learning and leadership development

Experience sharing was found to promote leadership development while time constraints and poor attendance hindered leadership development. The opportunity to share work experiences with colleagues proved useful for leaders' development. This finding confirms the proposition of Marquardt (2000) that Action Learning should create an avenue for experience sharing on work-related issues, where managers help and are helped by others in similar positions, leading to development of problem-solving and personal development skills.

Time constraints and lack of attendance were highlighted as factors hindering Action Learning, but, there may be practical issues resulting from inadequate scheduling within the LLA, especially considering the demanding work climate. It would therefore be useful for the LLA to consider more practical ways of bringing leaders together for Action Learning activities.

However, an interesting theme identified by a participant was their different preference in learning style. According to one participant, Action Learning was not beneficial to leadership development because it did not suit their learning style. This finding differed from the action learning literature which suggests that group action would lead to learning (Cho & Egan, 2009). This highlights the role of individual differences in learning as proposed by Honey and Mumford (1982), which identified four learning preferences including Activists who learn by doing, involving themselves in group discussions and role play; and Reflectors who learn by observing and thinking of what has happened. This implies the need for the LLA to consider such differences when planning developmental activities, by making various

options for development available to leaders, as opposed to making certain activities mandatory.

Factors influencing learning effectiveness and transfer

MSF and coaching were both found to influence learning effectiveness. Participants reported MSF increased awareness of their leadership behaviour, while coaching allowed a deeper understanding of leadership to be developed. This finding emphasises the importance of including MSF and coaching in leadership development (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

The lack of context-specific content in some of the online exercises was found to hinder learning. Although this point was highlighted by only one interviewee, it was validated by the FGD findings. Research examining factors affecting learning transfer by Axtell and colleagues (Axtell et al., 1997), showed a high correlation between the content validity of training content and transfer. This suggests that for effective learning, the participants of training and development activities must see the relevance of the training or development programme content to their job. Therefore it is important that practitioners designing leadership development interventions tailor content to suit the organizational context.

Leaders reported support from managers and peers helped to ensure transfer of learning acquired from the LDP. This confirms past literature that social support within the organization enhances the transfer of learning. In Lim and Johnson's (2002) study of factors influencing training transfer, the forms of support most recognised as positively influencing transfer of learning were discussions with supervisors on applying new learning, supervisor's involvement in training process and positive feedback from supervisors.

Leaders reported lack of time to reflect on learning and prioritised work demands hindered learning transfer, confirming Belling and colleagues (2004) finding that a pressurised work environment hinders the application of learning to the workplace. Training and development activities are regarded as effective if the acquired learning is generalised to the workplace and sustained overtime (Blume et al., 2010). Therefore, it is important organizations, like the LLA, should ensure that factors promoting learning transfer are available to leaders, while the factors hindering transfer are managed effectively.

Reflexive consideration

The researcher tried to maintain a neutral role in carrying out this evaluation and so tried to remain independent of both the LLA and the Psychology Consultancy. The researcher approached each interview and the FGD quite openly, regardless of the knowledge of leadership development approaches and expected outcomes from past literature. This allowed for better understanding of the varying perspectives of participants; which was also useful during the analysis. While reporting and discussing the findings, the researcher not only considered the most recurring themes from the interviews and FGD, but also singular themes that appeared to be important to individuals. Most interviewees seemed to respond quite openly to the study, while some found it difficult to give specific examples of changes that occurred as a result of the LDP. The researcher attributes this to perhaps a lack of preparation. The FGD participants also seemed to have unified answers, which the researcher attributed to their working on the LDP project together for a long time. The responses from the interviewees and FGD were positive most of the time, leading to the reporting of findings in a somewhat positivist nature whilst acknowledging participants who reported their experiences from a different perspective.

Implications of research

One prominent finding is that duration of coaching and coach-coachee rapport is essential to promote leadership development. It is therefore important for the LLA (and other organizations) to consider longer-term coaching, with adequate follow-ups for leadership development. In order to manage costs, it would be worth considering the training of in-house staff to undertake the coaching.

This research highlighted the possible influence of negative feedback on learning; it is therefore important for the LLA to consider the best ways of providing feedback in a developmental manner to staff (such relating feedback to their work roles and also providing suggestions and opportunities for improvement) in order to ensure learning takes place. Time constraints and poor attendance hinder Action Learning for leadership development and so it would be useful for the LLA to consider more

suitable ways of running the Action Learning sets (with proper scheduling to accommodate leaders' own schedules) and encouraging leaders to create time for their own development and providing Action Learning set facilitators to help leaders fully utilise the time set aside for Action Learning.

Individual differences in learning style also need to be taken into consideration in the design of development processes in order to provide leadership initiatives that will be beneficial to all leaders, such as providing one-to-one coaching for leaders who do not learn effectively in Action Learning sets. This research noted the positive influence of social support and an enabling environment on learning transfer indicating the importance of encouraging a supportive work environment in the LLA (e.g., managers' having closer involvement in leaders' development, to allow leaders to display leadership efficiently, further improving their leadership development).

There is also need for the Psychology Consultancy to further tailor the contents of the LDP to better suit the organizational context, to improve the learning experience and promote learning transfer. This could be achieved by researching into the leadership needs of the organization and choosing training and development interventions that are best suited for the organization, thereby ensuring participants' ability to relate the intervention to the organizational context and their individual roles.

Recommendations for future research

Findings show that there is need for even more evaluation research to assess the influence of LDPs. While the TOTADO framework allowed for evaluation of different training and development outcomes resulting from the LDP, future research could apply the framework in its entirety by including the societal level and extending multiple data collection sources to include direct reports, supervisors and customers. This will allow for more in-depth evaluation of training and development outcomes. Future research should examine leadership development in a longitudinal way to account for the on-going nature because of leadership development. The use of comparison groups who have not participated in development would be beneficial to explore true behavioural changes that may occur as a result of the LDP. Longitudinal studies on larger samples, that incorporate a mixed method approach will allow for better understanding of development and evaluation of learning transfer. Finally,

research on the role of individual preferences and learning, in the context of leadership development, could also be explored to provide better understanding for adequate leadership development.

Conclusion

Leadership development remains an evergreen area of research as organizations continue to seek effective leadership for the achievement of organizational goals in today's competitive, global business environment. These research findings show the importance of adequate planning and implementation of leadership development initiatives, in line with organizational requirements to ensure achievement of desired outcomes. In this study, carefully planned and facilitated coaching and Action Learning were beneficial for leadership development. Future evaluations should use the TOTADO framework to considerate several outcome levels of evaluation to determine the effectiveness and impact of leadership development programmes.

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