

Leadership Development in India: Relooking at the 70:20:10 model

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Abstract:

Leadership Development is a strategic priority for organizations. Widely used approaches to build leadership have relied on the 70:20:10 model as advocated by McCall and Lombardo. However, 70:20:10 doesn't match either the reality of how leaders learn or how they prefer to learn. Paradigms around the 70:20:10 model and its effectiveness are thus being questioned. Based on empirical research, this study explores the experiences of leadership development intervention in the context of 70:20:10 model across Indian organizations. The findings highlight the dichotomy between design and outcome and the dysfunctional consequences of the 70:20:10 model. The study contributes much needed discussion towards rethinking the utilitarian approach of widely used leadership development approaches in the context of emerging markets like India.

Keywords: Leadership Development, 70:20:10, Effectiveness, India

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership (Bennis, 2003; Yukl, 1994; Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978) as a source of competitive advantage for organizations (Petrick, Scherer, Brodzinski, Quinn, & Ainina, 1999; Vicere & Fulmer, Maxwell, McCall, 1998) is being increasingly recognized. Research indicates its impact on growth, market share, customer satisfaction and sustainability (Patterson, 2007; Collins & Holton, 2004; Gregersen, 1998). Hence, the demand for leadership development is increasing exponentially (Mintzberg, 2004). Companies that invest in leadership development grow their revenues and profits, 2.2 times and 1.5 times faster respectively than companies that don't (BCG, 2014). Thus, an effective leadership development (McCauley, Moxley & Velsor, 1998) is critical for any organization to sustain its competitive advantage (BCG, 2015; Forbes, 2014; Schuler, Jackson, & Tarique, 2011).

In spite of its significance, there is increasing evidence that leadership development (McCauley, Moxley & Velsor, 1998; Fiedler, 1967) falls short of its promise towards developing leaders (Kets De Vries, 2010; Day, 2000; Gill, 2006). Many of the programs seem to be in a honeymoon phase (Kets De Vries, 2010), without showing any conclusive outcome (Avolio, Avey, & Queenberry, 2010). Clarity on developing leadership at the individual level, leader development vis a vis the organizational interplay of leadership forces and influence also continues to evade many (Congos, 1992). Leadership Development essentially relates to the process of creating a robust pipeline of leaders (Avolio, 2004, 2005; Conger & Benjamin, 1999; Day, 2001; McCall, 1998; McCauley, Moxley & Velsor, 1998). It is any activity that enhances the quality of leadership (Northouse, 2014; Yukl, 2002; Jacobs & Jaques, 1990; Bennis, 1989; Hollander, 1978) of an individual or organization.

Over the recent years, there has been much debate in Western literature regarding the most appropriate way (Bolden & Gosling, 2013; Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2001; Cacioppo,

1998) of leadership development. There is abundant literature on diverse approaches, common among them being prescriptive in nature, around managing self, others, managers, functions as well as inclusive of 360 feedback, action learning, classroom modules, coaching etc. Other approaches also include emphasis on life changing (Maxell, 1998) or transformative events called crucibles, from which extraordinary leaders learn (Bennis, 2010). However most programs fail to achieve the anticipated leadership pipeline as desired. This gap seems to emerge from the traditional approaches (Boyce, Zaccaro, & Wisecarver, 2010), which have over focused on the widely popularized 70:20:10 model of leadership development comprising classroom training (10%), developmental relationships (20%) (Gray, 2007; Smith, 2001) and developmental experiences (70%). Indeed, experience is important, but a more balanced model to include learning from others, personal coaching and action learning is required. Though learning experiences are strong contributors to leadership development, personal experiences and cultural crossings are identified as additional experiences for leadership development (Wilson, Velsor, 2011). The model continues to be widely used, yet there seems to be a rising disinterest in the relevance of the 70:20:10 model and its overemphasis on the role of experience in development is being questioned by practitioner's.

Today in the context of globalisation, the search for more universally acceptable forms of leadership and leadership development will intensify. In contrast, evidence has indicated that leadership practices and effectiveness vary according to the culture (House, 2004; Hofstede, 1980, 2001). As a consequence, context (Hofstede, 2010) is important for businesses as they develop their strategies to fit specific cultures, legal frameworks, geographies & industry structures. Most leadership development studies have largely been conducted in the context of developed economies

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(Cappelli, 2008, 2009). Meyer (2006) proposes Asian researchers to focus on locally grounded research. Very little research has been done to contextualize the 70:20:10 model in diverse cultures (Irving, 2010). Owing to the unique socio-cultural milieu of India, this study is focused in that direction and attempts to address the following research question: **RQ: Does the 70:20:10 model enable effective leadership development in Indian context?**

Leadership Development in India

Although leadership development emerged in the western countries during the year 1900 to 2000, recent research shows that Europe is now second to organizations in Asia Pacific, with India making the fastest progress in the area of Leadership Development. Organizations like ICICI, GE, Adobe, Infosys, Wipro and many more are making huge investments into creating a robust leadership pipeline. Sectors like manufacturing, pharma as well as public sector units have shown increasing levels of organizational investments leadership development programs. With India set to take the centrestage of growth the situation demands a new kind of leader at all levels (Wilson, CCL, 2011). Mark E Mendenhall (2011) raises interesting questions for global leadership development in India in reference to the following (1) "Why develop global leaders in India?" (2) "What are the competencies that Indian leaders need to thrive in this context?" and (3) "How do we develop these competencies in Indian leaders?"

Wilson (2011) states that the basic tenets of leadership competencies in the Indian context stand more universal than we suppose. The key essentials for Indian business leaders are similar to other global business leaders including self-awareness, learning agility, and the capacity to communicate with and influence others (Wilson, 2011). On comparison of leadership development frameworks used in Indian companies, the prevalence of the leadership pipeline model (Ramcharan, Drotter & Noel, 2007) to develop leadership competencies was found. In recent times, leadership development has evolved to more integrated processes encompassing structured interventions, coaching, mentoring, 360 degree, action learning to name a few. Yet, a well thought out strategy of leadership development as evolving from the Indian literature is sparse (McKinsey, 2014, Wilson, 2010). Indeed, Indian organizations face unique challenges with leader development (Booz & Allen, 2012). The evidence surrounding Indian organization's ability to pursue successful leadership development programs to produce leaders is patchy (Budhwar, 2000 et al). Specifically in India, organizational learning capability has been empirically researched (Ramnarayan, 1998; Ramnarayan & Nair, 1993), referred to theoretically (Rastogi, 1998, 1999; Shukla, 1997; Ramnarayan & Bhatnagar, 1993;) and as mechanisms (Pareek, 1988). However the existing literature is inadequate in respect of lessons of learnings in the Indian context (Wilson, 2010). Wilson (2003) analyzed leadership development in several Indian organizations and states that in the absence of creative approaches to synergizing 70:20:10, companies fall back on the 10% element (of coursework and training) as the mainstay of their developmental initiatives. This is no longer efficacious or acceptable. In this regard, scholars have raised questions around the need for relevant

leadership development interventions which can enable Indian companies to attain leadership capability enhancement (Reddy & Srinivasan, 2015).

70:20:10 model of Leadership Development

The 70:20:10 model (McCall, Lombardo & Morrison, 1998) developed by Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) is widely used for thinking about developmental experiences and maximizing the effectiveness of leadership development programs (Day, 2001; Van Velsor, 1998). It holds that individuals acquire 70% percent of their learning from job challenging developmental experiences, 20% by interaction with others, social learning, networking, coaching, mentoring, group situated learning and collaboration opportunities and 10% through formal educational learning and courseware. In total, there are six formal and informal experiences that include 360-degree feedback, feedback programs, skills-based training and informal ones including job assignments, developmental relationships and hardships, respectively that contribute to development. It is broadly acknowledged that hands-on experience (70 %) is the most helpful since it enables enhancement of jobs skills, decision and problem-solving ability as well as ability to address challenges and interface with managers and leadership. These provide reflective insights and feedback on performance.

Developmental experiences are deemed essential to leadership development, however, paradigms around the 70:20:10 approach and its adequacy and effectiveness toward's leadership development are being questioned (Thalhaimer, Kajewski & Masden, 2012). Thalheimer (2006) expressed his criticism of data indicating the supposed percentage retained from various types of instruction, 10 percent from reading, 20 percent from seeing, 30 percent from hearing) and questioned the outcome of research resulting in percentages that are exact multiples of 10? Educational psychologist Alan Tough, through empirical research was able to conclude only the paradigm that "about 70 percent" of adult learning takes place outside institutional frameworks. Sinar, Wellins & Ray (2014) found that the 70:20:10 ratio doesn't match either the reality of how leaders learn or how they prefer to learn. Likewise, learning practitioners contend that the aged model does not reflect the growing emphasis on informal learning. Key discoveries from Lessons of experience that ought to be cited, indicate that the right preparing at the perfect time can have a critical effect, but it's impact of 2 percent or 22 percent is difficult to say. McCall (2010) questions the folklore of the 70:20:10 rule. There is also a lack of certainty about the origin of the model (Kajewski & Masden, 2012).

Undoubtedly, numerous myths hold on, in spite of an absence of evidence of their veracity. In any case, the model keeps on serving as a significant rule on the best way to utilize different formative encounters. While the model's particular proportions don't reflect current learning opportunities, it remains by and large reliable with the developmental experiences of numerous people. Research by ASTD (2014) indicates that three experiences, in particular, stand out: understanding one's career path, occasions to interface and give feedback to senior leaders on strategy and culture. Research indicates that one of the key factors that drive

individual development is an individual's role aspirations, identity and power recognition, which impacts as a precursor to learning outcomes, reactions to learning, programme success, and performance improvement (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000; Holton, Bates, & Ruona, 2000). This is inadequately covered through the model. While, the model may serve to inspire some; the 70:20:10 is neither a scientific fact nor a recipe for how best to develop people (Jefferson, Andrew; Roy, Pollock, 2016).

II. METHODS

Informed by a critical approach to leadership development in organizational context, this study examines the 70:20:10 model and its contribution to leadership development in India. Participants and key stakeholders involved in ongoing leadership development programs in India reported on the experience of their leadership development journey. One of the authors was personally involved as a HR facilitator and project sponsor for two groups in two different companies. Participants were involved in different program durations lasting from 3, 6, 9 and 12 months with majorly involved in 9 month programs. In total data was collected from 126 respondents (111 males; 16 females), (85 manufacturing; 30 service; 12 others), (46: BTech/BE; 60: MBA/CA/LLB; 19: Graduate/Post Graduate; 2: Phd). Their employment varies with company turnover (28:1000 crore; 63: >1000 crore <10000 crore; 36: >10000 crore). The 51 item questionnaire based majorly on the 70:20:10 model (CCL, 2010) including additional items based on literature review was administered. However, the analysis focused only on the 35 items of enablers and experience of leadership development. The participants rated the extent to which they found the effectiveness of each of the 35 items on a Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree/Very ineffective", 2 = "Somewhat disagree/Somewhat ineffective", 3 = "Neutral", 4 = "Somewhat agree/Somewhat effective", 5 = "Strongly agree/very effective". 6 items which were based on ordinal scale with binary scales were not used for the analysis.

The questionnaire was piloted with a sample size of 20 participants. The questionnaire was modified to adequately cover responses to the 70:20:10 model. In addition three other items "Business Alignment", "Participant Aspiration" and "Process Experience" based on literature review were also included. The questionnaire was administered online through googledocs to 160 participants, HR managers, HR facilitators and line managers towards the end of their program duration. Convenience sampling for participants and random sampling for others was used. 135 completed responses were received indicating a response rate of 84.3 %. The questionnaire was checked for validity and reliability and a Cronbach alpha of .83 was obtained. A standard protocol for the administering was used. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify a factor structure that exhibits better model fit for leadership development effectiveness. EFA procedures were followed to include the use of multiple methods to determine the number of factors to retain and extraction of second-order factors when factors are correlated.

III. RESULTS

The data was screened for incomplete data. Responses were

cleaned and only 127 responses were found to be fit for analysis. The minimum amount of data for factor analysis was satisfied, with a final sample size of 127 satisfying the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test. Initially, the factorability of the 35 items was examined. Well recognised criteria for the factorability of a correlation were used. Firstly, 34 of the 35 items correlated at least .3 with at least one other item, suggesting reasonable factorability. Secondly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .80, above the recommended value of .6. The diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all over .5, supporting the inclusion of each item in the factor analysis. Finally, the communalities were all above .4 (see Table 1), further confirming that each item shared some common variance with other items. Given these overall indicators, factor analysis was conducted with all 35 items.

Principle components analysis was used because the primary purpose was to identify and compute composite scores for the factors underlying leadership development. The initial eigen values (Table 1) showed that the first factor explained 24.66% of the variance, the second factor 14.19%, the third and fourth 7.79% and 6.21% of the variance respectively. The fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth had eigen values of just over one, each factor explaining between 4.93% to 2.94%. The six factor solutions were examined, using varimax rotations of the factor loading matrix. The six factor solution, which explained 64.50% of the variance and individually each factor contributed to moderate variance, was preferred because of its theoretical support, the 'leveling off' of eigen values on the scree plot after six factors, insufficient number of primary loadings and difficulty of interpretation of subsequent factors.

Table 1: Initial Eigenvalues based on principle component analysis of 35 items

Factor	Initial eigen values	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	8.629872	24.66%	24.66%
2	4.96513	14.19%	38.84%
3	2.728196	7.79%	46.64%
4	2.174308	6.21%	52.85%
5	1.725147	4.93%	57.78%
6	1.197326	3.42%	61.20%
7	1.153861	3.30%	64.50%
8	1.064564	3.04%	67.54%
9	1.029217	2.94%	70.48%

During several steps, a total of three items were eliminated, because they did not contribute to a simple factor structure or correlate to other items more than 0.4. or cross load of 0.4 or above. The item "Selection Process effectiveness" did not correlate more than 0.4 to other items. The item "Leadership Pipeline Development" though having a primary factor loading of -0.83 on Factor 7, was the only item on Factor 7 to

which no other item correlated for the varimax solution. Similarly “Classroom delivery effectiveness” had a factor loading of -.69 and was the only item on Factor 8 to which no other item correlated.

A principle-components factor analysis of the remaining 32 items, using varimax rotations was conducted, with six factors explaining 64.81% of the variance. The full factor load matrix is presented in Annexure I. All items had primary loadings over .5 and three items had a cross-loading above .4 (Exposure in other areas, Leadership Learning with ALP and Business skills learning with ALP), with primary loading of .48; .62 and -.60 respectively. The scree plot also indicated leveling off of eigen values after six factors. The factor labels were decided based on commonality with 70:20:10 labels and item clustering under factors. The factor loading matrix for this final solution is presented in Table 2

Table 2: Factor loadings and communalities based on a principle components analysis with varimax rotation for 32 items from the leadership development survey (N = 127)

	Process Experience	Aspiration Alignment Process	Developmental Experiences	Organisational Environment	Learning Tools	Business Alignment	Commonality
Alignment to Business Needs						-0.70	0.74
Succession Planning		0.72					0.61
Competency Framework		0.72					0.56
Supportive Culture				0.42			0.51
Leaders Support				0.72			0.54
HR Manager Involvement				0.72			0.64
Performance Management Process		0.53					0.36
Exposure in other areas		0.48	-0.47				0.57
Lateral Roles Opportunity		0.76					0.64
Action Learning Project				0.70			0.56
Leadership Learning with ALP		-0.59			0.62		0.79
Business skills learning with ALP		-0.60			0.57		0.77
Business relevant action learning project					0.55		0.70
360 degree feedback				0.56			0.51
Individual Development Plan (IDP)				0.73			0.63
Coaching				0.62			0.51
Coaching usefulness in development					0.70		0.64
Coach Quality					0.81		0.69
Coach responsiveness					0.77		0.67
Line Manager Involvement				0.72			0.61
Training Content Quality						-0.76	0.77
Relevance to Individual Role						-0.59	0.78
Career Planning		0.76					0.66
Higher Growth Opportunity		0.82					0.80
Personal Reflections			-0.78				0.66
Networking Opportunities			-0.67				0.63
Job Rotation			-0.82				0.71
Leadership Capability	0.84						0.78
Personal Development	0.79						0.73
Understanding of Leadership	0.75						0.61
Overall Experience	0.84						0.77
Overall Satisfaction	0.69						0.58

Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha. The overall Cronbach alpha score was moderate at .65 with -.64 for Aspiration Alignment (6 items), .63 for Organisational Environment (8 items), .72 for Learning Tools (6 items), .56 for Process experience, .53 for Developmental Experiences (4 items) and 0.52 for Business Alignment (3 items). No substantial increases in alpha for any of the scales could have been achieved by eliminating more items. Composite scores were created for each of the six factors, based on the mean of the items which had their primary loadings on each factor to gauge the adequacy and effectiveness of these factors based on participant responses. Factor Scores from regression also was referred to (Table 4). Higher scores indicated greater effectiveness of the contributing factor to leadership development. Process experience (4.07) was the factor that participants reported as the most effective, with a negatively skewed distribution, followed by Business Alignment (3.96) and Organizational Environment (3.81). Low scores on Aspiration Alignment (2.93) and Developmental Experiences (2.94) were indicative of the inadequacy and the low effectiveness of the factors as contributors to leadership development.

Table 4: Factor Score Matrix: Regression

	Process Experience	Aspiration Alignment	Developmental Experiences	Organisational Environment	Learning Tools	Business Alignment
Alignment to Business Needs	-0.033	-0.015	0.018	-0.057	0.001	-0.392
Succession Planning	-0.046	0.171	-0.002	-0.041	0.069	-0.099
Competency Framework	-0.051	0.201	0.081	-0.036	0.106	0.018
Supportive Culture	-0.036	-0.067	-0.036	0.038	-0.121	-0.264
Leaders Support	-0.038	-0.002	0.055	0.245	0.001	0.113
HR Manager Involvement	0.004	-0.009	0.089	0.217	-0.002	0.062
Performance Management Process	-0.032	0.127	-0.06	-0.056	0.057	-0.094
Exposure in other areas	0.006	0.079	-0.181	-0.063	-0.036	-0.103
Lateral Roles Opportunity	0.032	0.174	0.039	0.018	0.039	0.091
Action Learning Project	-0.042	0.041	0.065	0.245	0.018	0.148
Leadership Learning with ALP	-0.039	-0.083	-0.074	-0.009	0.162	-0.062
Business skills learning with ALP	-0.039	-0.093	-0.104	-0.012	0.138	-0.061
Business relevant action learning projects	0.092	-0.069	-0.093	-0.033	0.139	0.103
360 degree feedback	0.022	-0.076	-0.092	0.195	-0.018	0.163
Individual Development Plan (IDP)	-0.016	-0.016	0.003	0.221	0.015	0.085
Coaching Effectiveness	-0.077	0.01	0.019	0.159	0.052	-0.045
Coaching usefulness in development	0.052	0.106	0.133	0.084	0.296	0.258
Coach Quality	-0.068	0.109	0.025	-0.065	0.329	-0.077
Coach responsiveness	-0.064	0.041	0.007	-0.018	0.283	-0.044
Line Manager Involvement	-0.029	-0.075	-0.02	0.236	-0.126	0.048
Training Content Quality	-0.047	-0.004	0.025	-0.097	0.006	-0.452
Relevance to Individual Role	-0.008	-0.003	0.028	0.018	0.023	-0.26
Career Planning	0.004	0.183	-0.047	0.02	0.065	0.112
Higher Growth Opportunity	0.024	0.188	-0.092	-0.02	0.047	0.078
Personal Reflections	-0.014	-0.036	-0.303	-0.012	-0.019	-0.034
Networking Opportunities	-0.095	0.1	-0.259	-0.041	0.052	-0.049
Job Rotation	0.047	-0.009	-0.326	-0.032	-0.03	0.093
Leadership Capability	0.273	0.005	0.064	-0.041	-0.004	0.082
Personal Development	0.247	-0.005	0.079	-0.017	0.022	0.079
Understanding of Leadership	0.258	-0.021	-0.037	-0.034	-0.038	0.11
Overall Experience	0.274	-0.045	-0.021	-0.02	-0.059	0.083
Overall Satisfaction	0.213	-0.016	-0.053	-0.051	-0.063	0.008

Overall, these analyses indicated that six distinct factors were underlying participant responses to leadership development effectiveness and that these factors were moderately internally consistent. Three of the 35 items were eliminated, however one of the components (Developmental Experiences) of the original 70:20:10 model structure proposed by Centre for Creative Leadership (2010) was retained.

IV. DISCUSSION

A six factor structure for 32 out of the 35 items was evident, based on a principal components confirmatory factor analysis with a varimax rotation. The three factor structure of 70:20:10 model, involving Developmental Experiences (70%), Developmental Relationships (20%) and Classroom Training (10%) as proposed by CCL (2010) did not fit well into the six factor structure derived from exploratory factor analysis. One of the retained factor of the model into the new factor structure was "Developmental Experiences". The proposed six factor structure for enabling effective leadership development, comprise Aspiration Alignment (6 items; 4.8), Organisational Environment (8 items; 4.11), Process Experience (5 items, 3.89), Learning Tools (6 items, 3.06), Business Alignment (3 items, 2.19) and Developmental Experiences (4 items, 2.65). The effectiveness of these factors could probably be strengthened by laying focus on the integration and adequacy of these factors into design of leadership development frameworks. Additionally the factors could also be strengthened through rewriting items with lower primary loadings and possibly adding new items with a larger sample base.

V. CONCLUSION

The study presented here proposes that experiences and reflection alone cannot contribute to leadership development efficacy but is a function of the differential effects of key issues of individual aspiration, learning tools, business and role relevance and organizational environment in the overall development framework. The study also recognizes that individual aspirations and social context as well as shared ownership of development are important features of leadership development and calls for integrating individual's growth aspects and organisational environment support as an alternative paradigm to the 70:20:10 rule. We conclude by presenting an agenda for future research which suggests a shift from an overly emphasized approach of 70:20:10 model of leadership development to more socially integrated (Day, 2000) inclusive leadership development based on six factor model.

VI. REFERENCES

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