Leader Development: Transforming Self-Concept

Antwan D. Brown

Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Dr. Curtis McClane

* 1. Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited sources) during the week of the residency. Be prepared to discuss and engage with other students during the live sessions. Post this document in DIAL.

Leadership development is a critical focus area within organizations concentrated on behavioral studies and practical strategies for management. The essence of leadership development lies in enhancing the skills, capabilities, and confidence of leaders and emerging leaders within organizations (Day, 2000). According to Northouse (2018), leadership development encompasses a broad range of practices, including formal education, mentorship, and hands-on experience, to foster leadership qualities such as strategic thinking, effective communication, and ethical decision-making.

A pivotal aspect of leadership development is its emphasis on experiential learning and reflective practice. Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) argue that transformative experiences, when adequately reflected upon, significantly contribute to the development of effective leadership. These experiences help individuals to understand their inherent leadership styles, strengths, and weaknesses (or areas for improvement). Peer-reviewed research suggests that leadership development programs incorporating demonstrable learning components, such as simulations, role-playing, and project-based assignments, are more effective in enhancing leadership capabilities (McCauley et al., 1994).

Mentorship is another cornerstone of leadership development. According to Higgins and Kram (2001), mentorship provides emerging leaders with the guidance, feedback, and support necessary to navigate complex organizational landscapes and leadership challenges. Effective mentorship relationships contribute to a deeper understanding of organizational dynamics, enhanced leadership skills, and increased career satisfaction for mentees.

Furthermore, technology integration in leadership development programs has become an emerging trend, especially post-COVID-19. Some years before COVID-19, however, Bingham and Conner (2015) highlighted the role of digital platforms and social media in facilitating continuous learning and peer collaboration. These technologies offer leaders flexible opportunities to engage with content, connect with mentors and peers, and apply learning in real-time contexts.

In conclusion, leadership development is a multifaceted process that requires a combination of formal education, hands-on learning, mentorship, and the strategic use of technology. By focusing on these areas, organizations can cultivate leaders adept at navigating current challenges and prepared to lead effectively in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.

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