The Apotheosis of Leaders : A Case for Capability Building

Asha Albuquerque-Pai [1]
Lena Ashok [2]
Varalakshmi Chandra Sekaran [3]
Sebastin K. V. [4]

Abstract

Purpose : This study aimed to explore the influence of diverse role models on the development of leadership capabilities in the contemporary context of global disruptions, thereby providing insights for leadership development initiatives.

Methodology : A qualitative exploratory approach was employed, utilizing semi-structured in-depth interviews to gather data. The purpose of the thematic analysis was to find themes and patterns in the data so that the various impacts of role models on leadership development could be better understood.

Findings : The study revealed that leadership development was influenced by four primary domains of life: family, education, society, and workplace. Each domain of role models contributed uniquely to cultivating specific capabilities essential for effective leadership.

Practical Implications : The findings of this research offered a valuable framework for comprehending the multifaceted impacts of role models on leadership development. This framework could be utilized in various practical applications, including leadership selection processes, educational curricula design, and leadership training programs, to enhance the effectiveness of leadership development initiatives.

Originality : This study contributed to the existing literature by providing a holistic framework that delineates the diverse influences of role models on leadership development. This framework provided a fresh viewpoint by highlighting the distinct skills developed in various spheres of life. This could make it a helpful place to start for research in the future and practical leadership development projects.

Keywords : role model, leaders, capability, qualitative, leadership development

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The pandemic has taught us that change can happen quickly, leading to an increased focus on capability building and personalized learning journeys for all employees, especially leaders (Hong et al., 2022; Pillania, 2020). Organizations recognize that employees should approach their careers excitedly about

[1] *Research Scholar,* Social Work Program, Prasanna School of Public Health, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal - 576 104, Karnataka. (Email : asha.albuquerque.pai@gmail.com)
ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6493-0205
[2] *Professor,* Social Work Program, Prasanna School of Public Health, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal - 576 104, Karnataka. (Email : Lena.ashok@manipal.edu) ; ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2441-3224
[3] *Associate Professor (Corresponding Author),* Department of Health Policy, Prasanna School of Public Health, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal - 576 104, Karnataka. (Email : varalakshmi.cs@manipal.edu)
ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3319-3075
[4] *Associate Professor & Dean Academics,* Department of Social Work, School of Social Work Roshni Nilaya, Mangalore - 575 002, Karnataka. (Email : Sebastinkv@sswroshni.in) ; ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9200-4863

developing new skills and knowledge to enhance productivity. Understanding the relationship between capacity building and business value is critical; leaders should consider the capabilities vital to the organization's competitive differentiation (Garcia et al., 2021). Accordingly, it is critical to search for leadership capability in the middle of today's upheaval (Pai et al., 2024; Ram & Shishigu, 2011). The relevance of role models in forming and strengthening leadership competencies is highlighted by the fact that as leaders navigate through global disruptions, they frequently look to role models who exhibit the traits and behaviors necessary for effective leadership for inspiration and advice (Porter & Serra, 2020).

Additionally, studies demonstrate the importance of role models in forming a person's ethics and certain actions (Brown & Treviño, 2014; Scaglioni et al., 2018). A role model is an inspiration and a behavioral model for others to emulate (Sanderse, 2024). They represent what is possible and inspire others to set and achieve their own goals. The motivational theory of role modeling, proposed by Morgenroth et al. (2015), highlighted the pivotal role of role models in leadership development, as they shape individuals' goals and aspirations and motivate them to set and achieve objectives. It is believed that if a role model can attain their goals, the individual can do the same (Gartzia et al., 2021). Behavioral exemplars, also known as role models, are crucial because they provide a paradigm of appropriate behavior. They inspire people to realize their greatest potential and empower them.

In the contemporary landscape of dynamic and turbulent business environments, the efficacy of leadership capabilities emerges as a pivotal factor in navigating organizational challenges and uncertainties (Pai et al., 2023). Aside from becoming role models, capable leaders have inspired others to emulate them. However, it is unclear if competence development can be fueled by the motivation and inspiration that role models provide.

Literature Review

The importance of role models in people's growth has long been acknowledged, especially in the fields of academics and education (Aish et al., 2018; Porter & Serra, 2020). The process of picking up new behaviors, attitudes, and actions by seeing and copying those of a role model is known as role modeling (Ahn et al., 2020). According to the literature, role models are helpful mentors and motivators for people, particularly when it comes to developing their leadership abilities (Ahn et al., 2020; Agarwal et al., 2020). For example, a study found that individuals who had role models with transformational leadership styles reported higher levels of transformational leadership behaviors (Bakker et al., 2023). Furthermore, research has shown that role models with high emotional intelligence are more likely to inspire and influence individuals to develop their emotional intelligence (McClellan et al., 2017).

Studies have indicated a favorable relationship between the existence of role models in the lives of people and high levels of self-worth, self-efficacy, and internal drive to take on leadership positions (Hughes et al., 2012). Role models serve as motivation for others, assisting them in creating objectives and ambitions related to leadership (Gartzia et al., 2021). They guided and mentored people, giving them the skills and knowledge they needed (Bowers et al., 2016; Morgenroth et al., 2015), and they helped people develop professional identities (Sealy & Singh, 2008). Research has demonstrated the substantial influence role models have on people's aspirations and objectives (DiRenzo et al., 2013). A common focus among the era's social-cognitive theorists was on social-cognitive meanings, such as goals, beliefs, and perceptions, rather than fixed personality traits, as the driving force underlying motivated behavior in achievement scenarios (Morgenroth et al., 2015).

Furthermore, research indicates that role models can initiate change in behavior (Ogunfowora et al., 2021). Additionally, research showed that real-world individuals, as well as fictional characters, coworkers, acquaintances, and relatives, can operate as role models (Posner, 2021). This implies that role models can be found in a variety of settings and are not just those in formal positions.

A comprehensive review of the research on role models and their effects on leadership abilities highlights the important role that role models play in influencing the development of leadership skills. However, the precise magnitude of their influence as catalysts for enhancing leadership capabilities necessitates further elucidation.

Further research is necessary to fully understand the complex effects of different role models, which extend beyond professional domains, and how cultural and societal factors interact to influence the process of role modeling and its consequences for leadership competence. Future studies must, therefore, close these gaps and provide a comprehensive understanding of the capacities that are fostered by various kinds of role models. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to investigate mid-level and C-suite leaders' perspectives regarding the influence of role models on developing diverse leadership skills.

Methods

Study Area

The study focused on corporate leaders in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India. Bengaluru is often called the Silicon Valley of India. Bengaluru was chosen as the study's geographic location because it offers a representative and diversified group of corporate leaders.

Participant Recruitment

Participants were found through LinkedIn, by other participants, and by human resource professionals from human resource (HR) associations. Participants were men and women in senior and mid-level positions in Bengaluru, India's corporate sector. A total of 22 leaders were purposively chosen. A mid-level leader has 5 to 12 years of experience managing others; a senior leader has at least 13 years. Additionally, they have to give their informed consent.

Design

The multiple realities of the participants were examined in a qualitative exploratory study that was driven by interpretivist epistemology and social constructivist ontology.

Tools

We used in-depth internet interviews (IDIs) to delve into participant experiences because of the leaders' busy schedules (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It was determined that the IDI was the most suitable technique for obtaining comprehensive data on individual experiences (Guest et al., 2013). Industry leaders were interviewed using the appreciative inquiry (AI) approach between March and December 2021 to collect their success stories. AI was preferred because it emphasized identifying the positive aspects and exploring the participants' strengths (Cantore & Cooperrider, 2013).

Data Collection and Management

Every study participant received participant information papers prior to the interviews, and the researcher recorded verbal consent at the beginning of each session. The interviews, conducted in English, lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and focused on their early childhood experiences, career paths, influential persons and situations in their lives, their learnings, and how they see themselves in successful situations. Humor, speech patterns, and addressing the interviewer by name were all indicators that the researcher had built rapport with the respondents before the interviews, which increased the likelihood of open and honest answers. After two days, all of the interviews were transcribed and assigned alphanumerical codes that began with "Rm," indicated seniority

or gender, and then sequentially increased in number in order to preserve anonymity. For instance, the first senior male leader would be identified as RmSM1, and the first mid-level female leader would be RmMF1. Data were saved in password-protected drives.

Data Analysis and Validation

Reflexive thematic analysis and ATLAS.Ti version 8 was used to code and analyze the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Research subjects need a great deal of analytical and interpretive work on the part of the researcher, and the development of such topics depends on the values, abilities, training, and experience of the researcher. The coding process is subjective and unstructured, with codes potentially evolving to capture the researcher's understanding of the data. A reflexive approach involving six recursive phases is needed, including familiarization; coding; generating initial themes; reviewing and developing themes; refining, defining, and naming themes; and writing up (ibid). The principal investigator created codes for the interviews after consulting the third and fourth authors. The coding cycle was carried out in two stages (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). In order to determine the list of deductive and inductive codes, the transcripts were first read. The motivating idea of role modeling served as the foundation for the deductive codes. The inductive codes were cross-gender influence and negative–positive role models. The second cycle involved developing themes and subthemes pertaining to a certain set of role models by grouping codes with comparable features under code families. Four subjects emerged: the role models in the family, community, school, and workplace.

The data validation by the participants served not only to authenticate the findings but also to generate new data and provide them with empowering experiences (Slettebø, 2021).
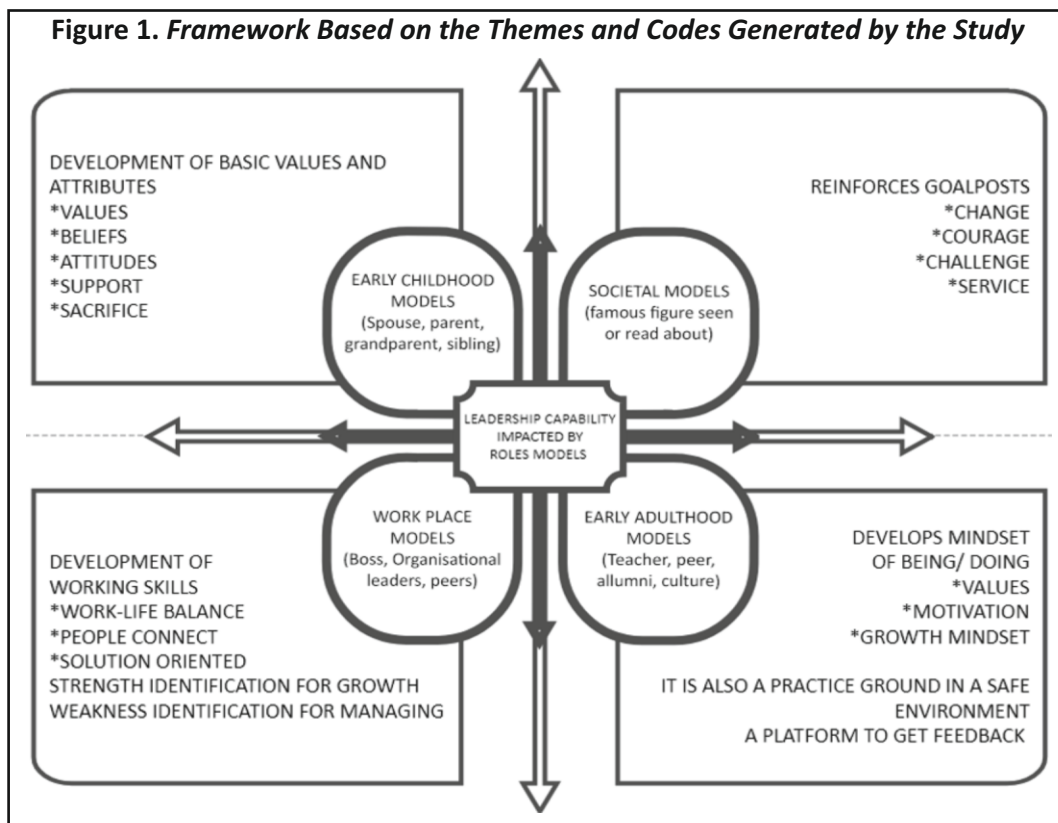
Ethics

This research study was conducted with utmost consideration of ethical principles, including confidentiality, informed consent, and respect for participants' autonomy. The wider study protocol, dated July 2, 2021, with no 804–2020, was accepted by the institutional ethics committee of Kasturba Hospital and Kasturba Medical College. This empirical investigation is a component of a bigger one.

Findings

Our study's conclusions show that participants were influenced by role models who mostly came from the following four different backgrounds: families, workplaces, educational institutions, and society. As an effect on different areas of capability development, each quadrant made a substantial contribution. Figure 1 shows the theme generation that led to the four main backgrounds (quadrants) and the capability developed within each of these quadrants.

The Familial Role Models

The study revealed that family members, including parents, grandparents, spouses, and siblings, played a primary role in shaping individuals' capabilities, particularly in developing attributes rooted in values, beliefs, and attitudes. This involved developing ideas like selflessness and a more comprehensive viewpoint that takes the needs of the team into account in addition to the needs of the individual. Mothers who broke barriers and overcame obstacles inspired leadership by showing the power of determination, perseverance, and resilience. They motivated participants to challenge limitations, embrace diversity, and advocate for positive change.

Figure 1. *Framework Based on the Themes and Codes Generated by the Study*

DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC VALUES AND ATTRIBUTES
*VALUES
*BELIEFS
*ATTITUDES
*SUPPORT
*SACRIFICE

EARLY CHILDHOOD MODELS (Spouse, parent, grandparent, sibling)

SOCIETAL MODELS (famous figure seen or read about)

REINFORCES GOALPOSTS
*CHANGE
*COURAGE
*CHALLENGE
*SERVICE

LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY IMPACTED BY ROLES MODELS

WORK PLACE MODELS (Boss, Organisational leaders, peers)

EARLY ADULTHOOD MODELS (Teacher, peer, allumni, culture)

DEVELOPMENT OF WORKING SKILLS
*WORK-LIFE BALANCE
*PEOPLE CONNECT
*SOLUTION ORIENTED
STRENGTH IDENTIFICATION FOR GROWTH
WEAKNESS IDENTIFICATION FOR MANAGING

DEVELOPS MINDSET OF BEING/ DOING
*VALUES
*MOTIVATION
*GROWTH MINDSET

IT IS ALSO A PRACTICE GROUND IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT
A PLATFORM TO GET FEEDBACK

> I give it all to my mother. I am from a tiny city where it was not important to give higher education to girls, but she made it possible for me to get the best education. I am an engineer with an MBA, and she went against all the classical, patriarchal hierarchies and rules to get me where I am…Moreover, all my value systems, everything comes from her.
>
> (RmMF1)

Here, we also observed role models influencing people of all genders, which is an important idea to acknowledge and talk about. The study discovered that both parents may influence their sons and daughters despite the fact that gender roles are always changing. Parents who encourage their children to pursue their goals instill in them a growth mentality, resilience, and tenacity—all essential qualities for leaders.

As shared by male participants.

> My dad is a huge role model in terms of really pushing me to be able to look at what I can be.
>
> (RmSF3)

> My mother is my biggest influence. There are many characteristics in me that I learned by observing her, e.g. empathy! Respect for individuals and a never-give-up attitude. She was simple, humble, and down to earth but in whatever she could do… and very sacrificing. I am pretty close to her. She has been a big influence for sure.
>
> (RmMM2)

Grandmothers who have broken societal norms and charted their paths inspired them to think creatively, take the initiative, and confidently lead.

My grandmother was very influential. She spent a lot of time with us. She was quite bold and ambitious for her time. To be the first mayor of the city… was trend-setting much before it became a thing. That was the most influential… Yeah, at that time.

(RmMM1)

Husbands who exhibited empathy, support, and partnership demonstrated the importance of emotional intelligence and relationship-building in leadership. They inspired participants to foster strong connections, collaborate effectively, and create a positive team culture.

I was in Europe for over a month and could not have done that without him (my husband). My baby was tiny back then, you know. I think he has been a big influencer in my life.

(RmMF3)

My husband constantly backs me, though I do not listen much to him. However, somewhere, I think I subconsciously take points from him about leadership skills and how I should look at things from different angles… it has worked wonders for me.

(RmMF2)

I think much inspiration has come from my close family members; my wife, too, has been influential.

(RmMM2)

Family members work together to create leadership potential and serve as powerful role models.

The Educational Role Models

After leaving the family context, role models in the school setting (teachers, peers, and alumni) helped students develop their mindsets and other skills. They provided an example for participants to emulate, inspiring them to build their capabilities and strive for excellence. The participants highlighted the mindset of achievement, service, competitiveness, growth, and confidence when influenced by role models in the educational arena.

One person who was truly inspiring and greatly impacted my peers and me was our alumni, Ajith. He mentored many of us throughout college and truly impacted us. He was a filmmaker. He showed us how we can drive social initiatives and make an impact on people.

(RmMM3)

The instillation of a work ethic, commitment, and attention by peers was emphasized by another participant as an important leadership skill.

My peers at school, we took part in every competition. We took it so seriously that we spent our entire holiday coming to school and training ourselves… I think all that has moulded the person who I am today.

(RmMF3)

Teachers' early recognition of students' efforts was another source of inspiration that bolstered self-confidence.

The first opportunity that I received was a leadership role in school…. I was an average student, not a topper. The teacher wanted some bright students in the class to take up a job because she felt

only they would do it. Then, none of those guys volunteered. So, I volunteered. I put my hand up, and she gave me that opportunity…And then, later, she told me I see many people have many skills, but you have leadership skills. You can do well in life; keep at it. I think organizing is your strength.

(RmMM4)

The Societal Role Models

People who are heard and seen on social media, read about in books, or are seen and admired from a distance are some examples of role models outside of the educational setting. These people can help create goals or motivate others to reach particular targets. This in turn motivated the participant to acquire the skills required to meet those objectives.

See, everyone must have an exemplar because that goalpost keeps you motivated. Otherwise, you know you can always become complacent…if you compare yourself to how you were yesterday, how you are today, and how you will be tomorrow, right? You always are doing better than yesterday, and you can get complacent. You do not know when you have to run or what you have to achieve unless you have a goal post.

(RmMF1)

Leaders who take inspiration from their role models also gain a fresh perspective on life, appreciating the journey and the process instead of concentrating only on the final result. The lessons were treasured by the participant in a way that made him more process-oriented.

Ernest Shackleton was the guy who went on an Antarctic expedition... The journey of that guy was beautiful. He did not accomplish his mission. However, the number of expeditions he took to accomplish that goal, the things he went through in his personal life, and how he tackled that while on expeditions were very inspiring. That book inspired me to appreciate the journey more than the end!

(RmSM5)

It was also found to be important to be exposed to multiple fields. Participants explored how reading about successful individuals in a variety of industries affected their leadership styles and competencies. Leaders can be motivated to put others' needs first and provide service with humility and compassion by looking up to role models like Mother Teresa, who exemplifies servant leadership. They encourage empathy and altruism and place a strong emphasis on positively impacting other people's lives.

Mother Teresa, for me, has always been a role model. I had some trouble learning more about her. It was a life-changing experience for me. I look up to her as a serving leader. She did what she could in her capacity. As a TA Head, I do what is in my capacity.

(RmMF3)

I have a role model that I go back to at a time when I want to challenge myself. It is Alexander the Great. At the age of 33, he had conquered half the world… From nobody, he became a leader of people. He purposefully conquered the known civilization then and led his people with hardly any rebellion. So, I look at those traits as what I value the most in myself.

(RmSM2)

Therefore, those who are perceptive, receptive, and persistently pursue information and understanding from various sources can foster a growth mentality and inquisitiveness. Leaders can be inspired to pursue greatness by establishing high standards and making progress toward their objectives.

The Workplace Role Models

Finally, the role models in the workplace include peers, immediate bosses, managers, and organizational leaders who influenced the participants to develop the necessary skills and behavior to perfect the job requirements in that organizational culture. The participants were positively impacted by workplace role models, as demonstrated by the improved acquisition of the necessary abilities and conduct to succeed in their job responsibilities. This realization highlights the importance of role models in cultivating a thriving organizational culture and reinforces the need to provide employees with inspiring exemplars to foster continued growth and development. Strong leaders set an example for others to follow by making wise decisions, communicating clearly, and taking responsibility for their actions. They might encourage others under them to acquire abilities and characteristics.

> With one conversation, she knows who you are as a person... And then she ensures that kind of project is given to me, right? Moreover, there were no conflicts among the team members...my bosses were like that, and that is where I have learned from.

(RmMF2)

Peers who demonstrate rapid growth and development can be role models by showcasing the importance of continuous learning, adaptability, and ambition. They inspire others to seek new challenges, expand their skills, and aim for personal and professional growth.

> Some colleagues of mine have grown very fast in the organization… They have built an excellent reputation. If I hang out with people who are just one or two years above me, they will tell me, OK, this person is doing his job very well, and he has grown very fast and all that, so then you look at them and see how and what they were doing right. Then, you look at them more closely and try to imitate them. Do things the way they are doing it. So that is where I felt in corporate life; they influenced me.

(RmMM1)

Some leaders tried to establish a more personal connection with their role models by inviting them to coffee or walk together for exercise. These interactions provided a more relaxed and informal learning setting and helped build stronger relationships between leaders and their role models.

> So, what I do is I try to walk with her once a week, and I try to spend an hour with her so that this helps me imbibe some of her qualities or if I am getting stuck in something or she tells me about some podcasts that she has listened to, but I have not. So even though that is a walk and a walk with friends, that one hour, I take it as growth. You know, that is like quality mentoring time. I am learning something.

(RmSF5)

It was also interesting to note from the participants that learning can be derived from positive and negative role models. Several participants acknowledged the significance of gaining insights from good and bad examples to foster personal growth. It helped them to understand the consequences of their actions and how to make better decisions in the future. Learning from positive and negative examples also helped them develop empathy, an

integral part of being a successful leader. A participant describes a boss's attitude that he thought was admirable yet had unfavorable effects. He approached it in the same way but with optimism.

> It is very interesting … the characteristic, yes. However, my approach was different. He used to be feared and a terror on the floor. However, when I walked on the floor, I used to be the most approachable HR coming to the floor, you know. You will find a few HR people walking on the floor and interacting with people. I followed him as a role model because I wanted to be like him. So initially, when I went, people ran away from me; I did not know why… because they were all scared of my previous leader, my manager. However, I took his approach but turned it differently. A positive way.

(RmMM2)

There was encouraging evidence of the positive motivational impact that female leaders and their accomplishments can have on male leaders. This notable phenomenon effectively challenges entrenched gender stereotypes and suggests the potential for greater inclusivity and gender parity in leadership roles. Role models can be brave leaders who take calculated risks, make difficult choices, and meet obstacles head-on. They encourage people to leave their comfort zones, face their concerns, and take bold and assertive leadership roles.

Discussion

Role models are crucial in fostering leadership development because they offer a tangible example of what is achievable. This study looks at whether role models helped develop leaders' capabilities. It found that role models could be loosely divided into four groups called quadrants. First, there are role models inside the family who influence the formation of core beliefs and characteristics. This led to capability building, such as ethics, an excellent attitude to work, resilience, and putting the organization and team before oneself. The second type is role models in the educational setup, which impact the development of the mindset of being someone and doing something. This builds the capability of being self-motivated and having a growth mindset. The third type is role models seen in society, reinforcing the person's goalposts of courage, change, challenge, and service. The final category includes workplace role models who influence the growth of working abilities. They support the development of skills related to teamwork, people-centeredness, work-life balance, achievement, and performance orientation.

Other research studies found role models, also known as vicarious role models, as individuals observed and admired from a distance, such as famous industrialists, spiritual leaders, athletes, or public figures. These individuals exemplify what is possible and can inspire individuals to set similar goals and aspirations (Mäkinen et al., 2019; Zhong et al., 2022). Furthermore, support systems within the organization significantly influenced work outcomes, leading to heightened satisfaction among women regarding their jobs and career trajectories (Patwardhan et al., 2018). On the other hand, role models that we interact with, also known as personal role models, are individuals with whom we have direct and personal relationships, such as family members, friends, teachers, mentors, bosses, organizational leaders, or even peers (Kandade et al., 2021). These serve as sources of guidance and mentorship, providing individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve their goals and as important role models in learning to lead (Posner, 2021). Personal role models can also provide feedback, support, and encouragement, which can help individuals develop their leadership capabilities (Brown & Treviño, 2014). Our study highlights that vicarious (societal role models) and personal (from the family) role models could significantly impact an individual's development. Nevertheless, personal role models may directly and immediately affect individuals' leadership capabilities because we have a close and sustained relationship with them. Conversely, research in the last decade has quantitatively proved that social focus values do not foster competency (Meesala et al., 2015), which is now debatable based on our findings.

This research also adds new knowledge to the role model theory. First, negative role models – individuals who exhibit behaviors or actions that are not desirable – can serve as a valuable learning opportunity. While negative role models may leave a bitter feeling and negative consequences, learning from negative role models can be an asset for an individual's personal and professional growth (Verma & Singh, 2020). This study noted a diverse range of role models in the social field, encompassing an array of professions and historical figures. The role models varied from freedom fighters to religious, sports personalities, conquerors, and explorers. The study found that the compatibility or disparity between the leader's aspirations and those of their chosen role models appeared to be the primary impetus for their selection.

Second, this research sheds new light on the differences between gender and background. The study has highlighted the cross-gender impact of role models, a concept of immense significance that warrants recognition and discourse. The dynamic nature of gender roles underscores the crucial realization that either parent can serve as a source of inspiration for both their sons and daughters. A ray of optimism for our society's continued development and its role in the world can be found in observing these growing tendencies. This constitutes a powerful stimulus for the ongoing pursuit of progress. It is important to acknowledge the contributions and achievements of female leaders since this can encourage male leaders to become more capable leaders. The unique leadership perspective that both male and female leaders possess can benefit participants as they can learn from their experiences and incorporate them into their leadership styles.

Furthermore, female role models in leadership positions can create an inclusive environment where individuals feel valued and respected. This leads to increased motivation among male leaders, better performance, and tremendous success. Additionally, participants in the study noted the strong influence of early childhood experiences and family background on their leadership styles. Finally, it was seen that extended exposure to role models (especially in the family, educational setup, and organizational leaders) develops more robust learned behavior and has a long-lasting impact.

A key component of organizational performance is positive leadership (Khatri et al., 2022), and our research shows that role models can be very important in developing leadership skills. According to research on the subject, role models cannot significantly differ in conduct or skill from people who are driven by them in order for them to be effective (Topić, 2023). The "self-leadership model" claims to deliver specific strategies to enable leaders to achieve self-awareness, self-confidence, self-regulation, adaptability, and self-motivation (Tzortzaki, 2023). The role model-driven framework for youth leadership development illustrates how the qualities of relational role models facilitated youths' motivation to lead, their knowledge of opportunities, the relational role models' beliefs in youths' potential, and the fact that they were inspired by positional role models (Bowers et al., 2016). According to Durrani (2002), the behavioral role modeling approach provided by the mentor is well suited to developing leadership skills. It offers a framework whereby the application of prior knowledge obtained through traditional ways to training and development, like that represented within a managerial capabilities framework, takes place during the action prior to the phenomenological experience of leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2022) concluded that excellent leaders set an example, motivate others, challenge the status quo, inspire a common vision, and uplift the soul. Therefore, role models can drive leadership capability by providing inspiration, guidance, and a framework for leadership development.

Implications

Practical Implications

The background and influencers in leaders' lives are crucial to understanding their capabilities. HR can predict leaders' potential by exploring this aspect and using role models to train employees for successful leadership. They can identify successful employees as role models, use storytelling for training, enable observation and learning from role models, and encourage multicultural exposure for development.

Societal Implications

As strongly presented by the participants, the family plays a critical role in building future capability (Kumari, 2022). This is the primary training ground for future leaders. The study also provides insights for educational institutions on their vital role in providing learners with opportunities, exposure, and strong role models, as these are incidental to the growth of future leaders.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we find that "Behind a great leader is a role model who inspires them to reach new heights." Role models play a significant role in building leadership capability. Interacting with role models can help individuals develop their values, attitudes, skills, mindset, and understanding of the world around them. Therefore, organizations should recognize the value of role models and actively work to create a culture where positive role models are cultivated and nurtured. This can help develop employees' leadership capabilities and make them more effective leaders. Individuals need to have access to positive role models who can provide guidance, support, and mentorship as they navigate their professional development. Thus, research has shown that role models in the family, society, educational, and work settings drive individuals to develop specific leadership capabilities.

Authors' Contribution

Dr. Asha Albuquerque-Pai was pivotal in conceiving the research idea and formulating the quantitative design necessary for the empirical study. She also did the data collection, analysis, and validation. Dr. Lena Ashok provided invaluable guidance and supervision throughout the research process. Dr. Varalakshmi Chandra Sekaran and Dr. Sebastin K. V. contributed significantly by triangulating the coding process and thoroughly reviewing the manuscript, enhancing the overall quality and rigor of the study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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About the Authors

Dr. Asha Albuquerque-Pai is a life skills facilitator, researcher, and educator with an MSW, PGDHRM, and Ph.D. in capability-based leadership. Her studies are concentrated on social concerns, youth, empowerment of women, HRM, and leadership.

Dr. Lena Ashok has over 30 years of experience in academia and research, with an emphasis on mental health and wellness. Several prestigious journals have published her work. She has a Ph.D. in social work and psychology and is very involved in the community.

Dr. Varalakshmi Chandra Sekaran, Associate Professor in MPH at MAHE, Manipal, is a medical doctor with a Master's in Public Health and a Ph.D. in parenting and adolescent behaviors. She has 16+ years of academic experience and has received government and institutional grants.

Dr. Sebastin K. V., Associate Professor at the School of Social Work, Mangaluru, India, has over two decades of HRM teaching experience. His research has focused on skill mapping, child labor, CSR, and HRM. He holds a master's and doctorate in social work.