

Impact of training duration on leadership skills development among prefects and learner representative council members

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Abstract

This quantitative study examined whether the length of leadership training for prefects and learners' representative council (LRC) members in Namibian schools was associated with perceived development of key leadership competencies. Guided by transformational leadership and experiential learning perspectives, training duration was treated as a design feature that shapes opportunities for practice, feedback, and reflection. An online survey was completed by 450 prefects and LRC members who had attended external leadership camps of varying duration (1 day, 2 to 3 days, or 4 to 7 days) or had received only school-based orientation. Perceived gains were measured using five Likert scales covering collaboration and role modelling, role clarity, public speaking confidence, time management and planning, and decision-making voice. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA. Findings showed that mean ratings across all competencies were above the scale midpoint, indicating that learner leaders believed training strengthened collaboration, clarified roles, improved public speaking, improved time management, and enhanced influence in school decision-making. Findings also showed that training duration did not significantly predict perceived collaboration, role clarity, public speaking confidence, or decision-making voice, suggesting that longer camps did not yield stronger perceived gains in these domains. The statistically significant effect of duration was observed for time management: the longest camps (4 to 7 days) had the highest mean scores. However, pairwise comparisons were not significant because few learners attended such extended camps. Overall, these findings suggest that training quality and structure, supported by school-based mentoring, are more critical than duration. Therefore, training providers that prepare prefects and LRC members for leadership roles should adopt a context-responsive approach and design training based on participants' specific needs, situations, and challenges.

Keywords: *prefects, learners' representative councils, leadership training, leadership development, Namibia*

Introduction

Background and context

Namibia has a dual system of Prefects and Learners' Representative Councils (LRCs), both recognised in the Basic Education Act 3 of 2020 and the Basic Education Regulations of 2023 as key structures for learner participation in school governance (Republic of Namibia, 2020, 2023). Prefects traditionally focus on maintaining order, discipline and practical support to school management, while LRCs are mandated to represent learners' interests and institutionalise democratic participation in decision-making (Kudumo & Raju, 2025). Prefects and LRC members are democratically elected and often serve on School Boards or related forums, where they help manage learner conduct, support assemblies, and advocate for welfare and inclusive learning conditions (Basic Education Act, 2020; Basic Education Regulations, 2023; Adhanja et al., 2024; Amadhila, 2022).

Despite this central role, many Prefects and LRC members receive limited preparation before assuming office. Although the Regulations encourage schools to orient and support them with the help of liaison teachers, there is still no standardised national programme specifying content, methods or duration of leadership training (Da Silva, 2018; Shikalepo & Kandjengo, 2021; Kudumo & Raju, 2025). As a result, the depth and quality of leadership development differ widely across schools.

External leadership-training landscape in Namibia

Because some schools lack the time or expertise to run their own leadership programmes, they often contract external providers, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), youth development organisations, and private consultants (Da

Silva, 2018; Kudumo & Raju, 2025). These actors offer short workshops on motivation, teamwork, communication, or discipline, alongside multi-day camps that combine input with experiential activities and reflection (Kudumo & Raju, 2025). However, this landscape is largely unregulated, and there are no national guidelines on minimum duration, core content, or expected competencies.

School budgets, location, and leadership priorities influence training access and length. Rural schools often offer very short training or none, while better-resourced urban schools can afford residential camps (Shikalepo & Kandjengo, 2021; Kudumo & Raju, 2025). Consequently, two Prefects in the same position but different schools may have very different preparatory experiences, ranging from a brief motivational talk to a week-long camp with structured modules (Shikalepo & Kandjengo, 2021; Amadhila, 2022). This variability leads to unequal leadership readiness and leaves schools with little empirical guidance on which training approaches and durations most effectively build collaboration, role clarity, communication, and decision-making skills (Tsikati & Magagula, 2019; Kuranchie & Affum, 2021). Evaluation of training outcomes is also weak, since few providers conduct follow-up assessments and schools rarely measure returns in terms of discipline, teamwork, or participation (Kuranchie & Affum, 2021; Kudumo & Raju, 2025).

These realities motivated the present study, which investigated whether varying training durations for prefects and LRC members were associated with different levels of perceived leadership skill development. The study aims to generate evidence to guide the Ministry of Education, regional offices, principals, liaison teachers, and external providers in designing more coherent capacity-building strategies for Prefects and LRC members.

Problem statement

In Namibian schools, leadership training for prefects and LRC members is common but highly uneven in duration and structure, ranging from brief motivational sessions to multi-day camps, because there are no national guidelines on minimum hours, core outcomes, or evaluation standards (Shikalepo & Kandjengo, 2021; Kuranchie & Affum, 2021; Kudumo & Raju, 2025). As a result,

learners in similar positions receive very different levels of preparation, and school leaders invest in camps of varying length without clear evidence that additional days translate into stronger leadership development. Empirical studies in Namibia and the region have not yet tested how training duration relates to specific competencies such as collaboration, role clarity, public speaking confidence, time management, and decision-making voice (Tsikati & Magagula, 2019; Shikalepo & Kandjengo, 2021; Kuranchie & Affum, 2021). This study addressed that gap by analysing how different training durations were associated with Prefects' and LRC members' perceived development of leadership skills in Namibian government schools.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the duration of leadership training influenced Prefects' and LRC members' perceived development of core leadership skills in Namibian government schools. Specifically, the study examined whether moving from single-day workshops to multi-day programmes was associated with differences in perceived collaboration, role clarity, public speaking confidence, time management, and decision-making voice. The findings aimed to provide evidence that might guide school leaders, liaison teachers, and training providers in selecting and designing leadership programmes that offer meaningful developmental value (Shikalepo & Kandjengo, 2021; Kuranchie & Affum, 2021; Kudumo & Raju, 2025).

Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Does training duration affect Prefects' and LRC members' perceived team collaboration?
2. Does training duration influence Prefects' and LRC members' perceived role clarity?
3. Does training duration affect Prefects' and LRC members' confidence in public speaking?
4. Does training duration improve Prefects' and LRC members' time-management skills?

5. Does training duration affect Prefects' and LRC members' decision-making ability and voice?

Significance of the study

This study is significant at the theoretical, practical, and policy levels. Theoretically, it seeks to contribute to the literature on leadership training effectiveness in Namibian schools by examining how training duration relates to perceived gains in collaboration, role clarity, public speaking confidence, time management, and decision making among Prefects and LRC members, and by linking transformational leadership and experiential learning to concrete outcomes for adolescent leaders.

Practically, it may provide school principals, liaison teachers, and external training providers with evidence to judge whether shorter workshops or multi-day camps are associated with stronger perceived gains and may highlight the importance of combining off-site training with structured school-based mentoring so that skills are reinforced throughout the year (Kuranchie & Affum, 2021; Kudumo & Raju, 2025). At policy level, the findings may support the Ministry of Education in formulating evidence informed guidelines on minimum training duration, priority competencies, and monitoring mechanisms for learner leadership training under the Basic Education Act 3 of 2020 and the Basic Education Regulations of 2023, contributing to a more coherent and equitable framework for developing Prefects and LRC members in Namibian schools.

Literature review

Theoretical framework

This study draws on Transformational Leadership Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, and training science on exposure time and transfer of learning (Kolb, 1984, 2015; Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Lacerenza et al., 2017). Transformational Leadership Theory explains how leaders develop followers through modelling, motivation, and individual support, processes that require repeated interaction and feedback, so multi-session training should better strengthen collaboration, public speaking, and decision-making than one-off workshops (Givens, 2008; Amadhila, 2022). Experiential Learning Theory views learning as cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and

experimentation; leadership camps that include group tasks, simulations and debriefs allow Prefects and LRC members to move through these cycles, with longer or spaced programmes offering more chances to refine role clarity and time management (Kolb, 2017; Jambunathan et al., 2019). Training science research further shows that programmes with adequate duration, active learning, feedback and follow-up have more potent effects on behaviour than brief, lecture-based events, and that distributed practice over multiple sessions improves retention and transfer more than the same hours in a single block (Cepeda et al., 2006; Carpenter, 2012; Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Lacerenza et al., 2017). On this basis, the study treated training duration as a key design feature that shaped how often Prefects and LRC members could practise leadership behaviours, receive feedback, and reflect with peers, and therefore expected longer, well-structured programmes to be associated with stronger perceived gains in collaboration, role clarity, public speaking confidence, time management, and decision-making voice than very brief sessions.

Training duration and leadership learning outcomes

Training duration shapes the depth of learning, retention, and transfer because sustained, structured, and repeated practice provides more opportunities to rehearse skills, receive feedback, and consolidate mental models (Ericsson et al., 1993; Cepeda et al., 2006; Carpenter, 2012). Meta-analyses show that leadership programmes with multiple sessions, active learning, and feedback outperform brief lecture-based events, and similar patterns appear in team training and teacher professional development, where repeated simulations and collaborative learning improve performance more than isolated workshops (Lacerenza et al., 2017; Day et al., 2014; Buljac-Samardzic et al., 2020; Darling Hammond et al., 2017; Geerts, 2024).

However, extra contact time only adds value when used for high-quality, role-relevant activities. Most studies vary in duration, content, and follow-up, and the evidence focuses mainly on adults rather than adolescent school leaders (Day et al., 2014; Reyes et al., 2019). For Namibian Prefects and LRC members, guidance on optimal training length is scarce. However, theory and broader

training research suggest that well-structured multi-day or modular programmes are more likely than very short sessions to support perceived gains in collaboration, role clarity, public speaking confidence, time management, and decision-making.

Collaboration (team-building)

Collaboration was understood as a team process through which members coordinated interdependent tasks, assumed shared responsibility for collective outcomes, and developed the trust needed to work effectively together (Bolton et al., 2021; Dirks & de Jong, 2022; McGuier et al., 2024). For Prefects and LRC members, collaboration is essential, as they must work with peers, teachers, and administrators to organise events, uphold discipline, and participate in school governance. Team-building activities in leadership training make this behaviour visible and practicable through joint tasks, structured problem-solving, and guided debriefs (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018).

Meta-analyses show that team training and team building reliably improve affective, cognitive, process, and performance outcomes, with interventions that use repeated sessions and reflection producing more durable teamwork gains than one-off events (Delise et al., 2010; Salas et al., 2008; McEwan, 2017). Recent work in sports contexts further indicates that programmes lasting more than two weeks, particularly with participants aged 15 to 20 years, yield more substantial cohesion effects, which are highly relevant for secondary school learner leaders (Kwon et al., 2024). Leadership education reviews in higher education similarly find that programmes embedding group projects, peer coaching, and joint planning are more likely to report gains in collaborative leadership than lecture-based designs (Ueda & Kezar, 2024).

Taken together, these findings suggest that longer, well-structured leadership programmes for Prefects and LRC members that allocate sufficient time to trust building exercises, interdependent tasks and reflective debriefs are theoretically more likely to strengthen perceived collaboration than brief, single session workshops, although most existing studies focus on adults and do not isolate duration effects in school leadership settings (McEwan, 2017; Shuffler et al., 2018).

Role clarity

Role clarity refers to leaders' understanding of their responsibilities, authority limits, and performance expectations (Rizzo et al., 1970; Tubre & Collins, 2000). For Prefects and LRC members in Namibia, this includes knowing their duties, reporting lines, and how their work aligns with the Basic Education Act 3 of 2020 and the Basic Education Regulations 2023 (Republic of Namibia, 2020, 2023; Shikalepo & Kandjengo, 2021; Kandjengo, 2020). Studies consistently show that clear roles are associated with better coordination, accountability, and performance, whereas role ambiguity is associated with strain and reduced effectiveness (Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Tubre & Collins, 2000; Schmidt et al., 2014). Role clarity typically develops through structured orientation, written job descriptions, opportunities to ask questions, and performance feedback (Rizzo et al., 1970).

Southern African studies report that learner leadership training, which explains responsibilities, uses scenarios to rehearse common dilemmas, and opens dialogue about expectations, helps student leaders feel more confident and clearer about their mandate (Da Silva, 2018; Chifamba et al., 2022; Kandjengo, 2020). However, research in Namibia shows that limited regulations, guidelines, and ongoing support often leave LRC members unsure about what they may do, thereby weakening their participation in decision-making (Shikalepo & Kandjengo, 2021; Kapuire, 2018). It is therefore reasonable to expect that Prefects and LRC members who attend longer, well-structured programmes that revisit written role guides, case discussions, and feedback will report higher perceived role clarity than those who only receive a very brief one-day orientation.

Public speaking confidence

Public speaking confidence refers to learners' belief that they can speak in front of groups, manage anxiety, and convey ideas clearly, and is increasingly seen as central to leadership effectiveness rather than a peripheral skill (Riggio, 2024; Españó, 2025). For Prefects and LRC members who must address assemblies, represent peers, and engage adults in decision-making, repeated speaking opportunities, practice, and feedback are therefore critical. Empirical studies show that structured, graded speaking tasks with

feedback reduce speaking anxiety and increase self-efficacy, whereas limited practice tends to maintain fear and weak delivery (McNatt, 2019; Heideman & Laury, 2022; Ebrahimi et al., 2019).

Meta-analyses of public speaking anxiety interventions indicate that multi-component programmes that combine cognitive restructuring, behavioural rehearsal, modelling, and graduated exposure are more effective than information-only formats (Allen et al., 1989; Ebrahimi et al., 2019). Leadership development reviews similarly find that programmes which allocate sufficient time for practice, coaching, and feedback produce stronger communication-related outcomes than short, lecture-based sessions (Lacerenza et al., 2017; Elkington et al., 2017). On this basis, leadership camps for Prefects and LRC members that run over more than one day and include repeated speaking tasks with feedback are expected to yield higher perceived public speaking confidence than very brief single-day workshops. However, many studies still rely on short-term self-reports rather than long-term behavioural indicators.

Time-management improvement

Time management, understood as planning, prioritising, and monitoring tasks, is a core self-regulated learning strategy linked to motivation, persistence, and achievement across educational settings (Hemmler & Ifenthaler, 2024; Guntur & Purnomo, 2024; Simón-Grábalos et al., 2025; Olid-Luque et al., 2025). Prefects and LRC members must balance academic work with leadership duties, so difficulties with scheduling and organisation can quickly undermine their effectiveness. Meta-analytic evidence shows that interventions that explicitly teach concrete routines, such as timetabling, goal setting, task chunking, and self-monitoring, yield significant gains in time management, academic performance, and self-efficacy compared to information-only sessions (Liu et al., 2024; Guntur & Purnomo, 2024). These programmes tend to be more effective when delivered across multiple sessions that allow repeated planning, implementation, feedback, and adjustment, consistent with broader evidence that spaced practice improves retention and transfer more than single-session training (Liu et al., 2024; Patzak et al., 2025; Cepeda et al., 2006). Although most studies focus on university students and vary in

duration, content, and support, they suggest that multi-day or modular leadership training, which repeatedly rehearses planning and scheduling routines, is more likely to produce meaningful perceived improvements in time management for Prefects and LRC members than very brief, one-off workshops.

Decision-making skills and voice

Decision-making skills and student voice refer to learners' capacity to participate meaningfully in school governance, deliberate on options, and influence decisions. Reviews show that authentic participatory structures are associated with gains in agency, engagement, and school climate, although "voice" is operationalised inconsistently and evidence is often descriptive (Schaefer, 2024; Montrosse-Moorhead et al., 2024). Classroom studies distinguish between structured input and shared decision-making and find that both can strengthen students' perceived influence when adults are willing to share power and when formal forums exist for acting on learners' proposals (Conner et al., 2024). Early intervention trials suggest that adolescents' decision-making processes can be improved through targeted curricula but transfer to institutional decision-making depends on school-level opportunities and adult support.

The causal evidence that longer leadership training improves students' decision-making voice remains limited. Recent reviews of youth decision-making interventions report heterogeneous designs, short follow-ups, and few studies that isolate the effect of duration from content or context (Riádigos-Couso et al., 2025; Birnie-Lefcovitch et al., 2025). Research on student councils also highlights structural barriers, such as insufficient training, competing academic demands, and weak follow-up, which can blunt the impact of any gains in skills on actual influence in school governance. Existing theory and training science, therefore, suggest that multi-day or spaced leadership programmes that combine decision-making practice with real opportunities to present proposals and engage in consultation are more likely than one-off workshops to enhance perceived decision-making voice. However, this expectation remains largely inferential and requires more vigorous experimental testing in school leadership settings.

Gaps identified

Most leadership development evidence comes from adult corporate or health sectors, not adolescent school leaders in sub-Saharan Africa (Lacerenza et al., 2017; Geerts, 2024; Karagianni & Montgomery, 2018). Regional studies on Prefects and LRCs mainly describe roles and challenges without testing how training duration affects specific competencies (Da Silva, 2018; Kapuire, 2018; Shikalepo & Kandjengo, 2020, 2021). Youth leadership programmes are typically assessed with short-term self-report designs and rarely isolate duration while holding content and follow-up constant (Parkhill et al., 2018; Rehm, 2021). Policy frameworks mandate learner participation but provide no standards for training content, length, or evaluation, leading to inconsistent practice across schools and providers (Republic of Namibia, 2020, 2023). By linking different training durations to perceived leadership outcomes, this study responds to these conceptual, empirical, and policy gaps.

Hypotheses

H₁: Multi-day training enhances collaboration (team-building) among Prefects and LRC members by providing more opportunities for group interaction, shared problem-solving, and trust-building.

H₂: Multi-day training improves role clarity by allowing learner-leaders sufficient time to understand their responsibilities, boundaries of authority, and accountability structures through feedback and reflection.

H₃: Multi-day training increases public speaking confidence as repeated exposure, practice, and coaching reduce speaking anxiety and strengthen communication self-efficacy.

H₄: Multi-day training improves time management by providing structured opportunities to plan, prioritise, and balance leadership duties with academic tasks.

H₅: Multi-day training strengthens decision-making voice by fostering participation, confidence, and critical thinking in consultative or governance-related contexts within schools.

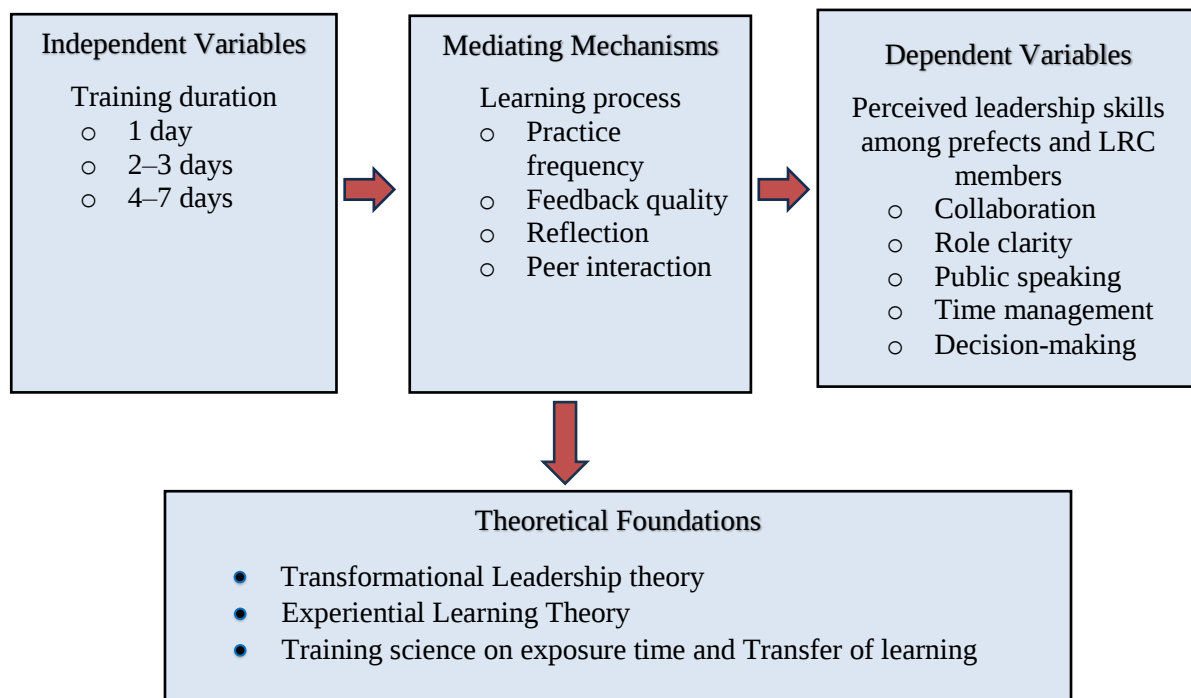


Figure 1: Conceptual framework (Source: Authors)

Training duration is identified as a key input shaping the depth of experiential learning processes, such as practice, feedback, and reflection, for Prefects and LRC members (Ericsson et al., 1993; Kolb, 2017). Multi-session programmes allow more cycles of these processes than single-day workshops, which enhances learning and transfer (Cepeda

et al., 2006; Lacerenza et al., 2017). Consequently, longer camps are expected to yield stronger perceived gains in collaboration, role clarity, public speaking confidence, time management, and decision making (Karagianni & Montgomery, 2018; McNatt, 2019; Liu et al., 2024; Schaefer, 2024). However, research shows that additional time only improves

outcomes when it is used for active, relevant tasks rather than passive lectures (Buljac-Samardzic et al., 2020; Geerts, 2024). Duration is therefore viewed as necessary but not sufficient for improved leadership development.

Methodology

The study followed a post-positivist paradigm, which seeks approximate truth through empirical observation while recognising that knowledge is fallible and context-bound (Kivunja, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A quantitative, deductive approach is used to test theory-driven hypotheses about links between training duration and perceived leadership outcomes among Prefects and LRC members using questionnaire data (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2014). A cross-sectional survey design collects data from many learners at a single point in time and is suitable for describing populations and comparing groups when experiments are not feasible (Levin, 2006; Sedgwick, 2014; Wang & Cheng, 2020). Implemented through a structured questionnaire and standardised analysis, this design supports objectivity, replicability, and policy-relevant generalisation in applied educational research (Robson & McCartan, 2016; Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The target population comprised all Prefects and LRC members in Namibian government schools, recognised as formal learner leadership structures in basic education (Republic of Namibia, 2020, 2023; Shikalepo & Kandjengo, 2021). A non-probability, voluntary-response sample of 450 learner leaders was obtained through an online questionnaire distributed to government schools across seven regions, namely Erongo, Kavango East, Karas, Oshana, Oshikoto, Otjozondjupa, and Zambezi. This approach was practical for reaching geographically dispersed participants where complete sampling frames were difficult to construct (Minnaar & Heystek, 2013; Regmi et al., 2016; Bihu, 2021).

This sample size aligns with recommendations that several hundred cases are generally adequate for multivariate survey analysis when resources allow (Memon et al., 2020). Although voluntary sampling limits statistical generalisability, broad regional and school-phase coverage still permits analytically generalisable insights into learner leadership

training patterns in Namibia (Memon et al., 2020; Gamarra-Moncayo et al., 2025). Data were collected with a structured self-administered questionnaire that measured perceived collaboration, role clarity, public speaking confidence, time management, and decision-making voice among Prefects and LRC members using multiple five-point Likert items per construct (Aldosari et al., 2024; Taber, 2018). Items were drawn from the literature and organised into clear conceptual domains aligned with the theoretical framework (Kalkbrenner, 2021). Content validity was established through expert review and content validity indices (Polit & Beck, 2006; Luque-Vara et al., 2020). Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011; Taber, 2018).

Data were analysed in IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Screening for missing values and outliers, followed by basic distributional checks, and then descriptive statistics for each leadership scale. One-way ANOVA tested whether perceived collaboration, role clarity, public speaking confidence, time management, and decision-making voice differed by training duration (1 day, 2 to 3 days, 4 to 7 days). Assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were examined using residual plots and Levene's tests, with Welch ANOVA applied when variances were unequal. Where omnibus tests were significant, Tukey HSD or Games-Howell post hoc tests were used as appropriate, and effect sizes (η^2 and Cohen's d) were reported with p values.

Findings and discussion

Descriptive statistics and assumption tests

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics for the five perceived leadership competencies are reported in Table 1. Scores were based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Across the full sample of 450 prefects and LRC members, mean scores ranged from 3.70 for perceived decision-making voice ($SD = 0.81$) to 4.06 for public speaking confidence ($SD = 0.77$). Ratings for teamwork and role modelling ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.83$), role clarity ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.78$), and time management ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.82$) were also above the scale's midpoint, which suggests that most

learners felt that the training contributed positively to these competencies.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics across training duration

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teamwork and role modelling improved	450	1	5	3.93	.826
I clearly understand my role	450	1	5	3.95	.782
Improved confidence and public speaking	450	2	5	4.06	.773
Time management and planning improved	450	1	5	3.88	.819
Our views are valued in decisions	450	1	5	3.70	.805
Valid N (listwise)	450				

Descriptive statistics for the five perceived leadership competencies by training duration are presented in Table 1. Across all groups, mean scores were above the midpoint of the five-point scale. Learners who attended 1-day camps reported means between 3.66 and 4.15, and those who attended 2–3-day camps

reported very similar scores. The small group who attended 4–7-day camps ($n = 4$) showed slightly higher mean ratings on most competencies, whereas learners for whom a camp was not applicable scored close to the overall sample averages.

Table 2: Means and SDs by training duration

Training duration		Teamwork and role modelling improved	I clearly understand my role	Improved confidence and public speaking	Time management and planning improved	Our views are valued in decisions
1 day	Mean	3.89	3.91	4.15	3.94	3.66
	N	100	100	100	100	100
	Std. Deviation	.863	.805	.770	.839	.781
2 to 3 days	Mean	3.95	3.96	3.99	3.89	3.69
	N	260	260	260	260	260
	Std. Deviation	.785	.775	.771	.817	.785
4-7 days	Mean	3.25	3.75	4.50	4.75	4.25
	N	4	4	4	4	4
	Std. Deviation	.500	.957	.577	.500	.500
Not applicable	Mean	3.92	3.95	4.13	3.73	3.73
	N	86	86	86	86	86
	Std. Deviation	.910	.781	.779	.789	.900
Total	Mean	3.93	3.95	4.06	3.88	3.70
	N	450	450	450	450	450
	Std. Deviation	.826	.782	.773	.819	.805

Assumption tests

Normality of the outcome variables within each training duration group was examined using histograms, Q plots, and Shapiro–Wilk

tests. Shapiro–Wilk statistics were significant for most groups ($p < 0.05$), suggesting some deviation from normality. However, visual inspection of the distributions suggested that

they were approximately symmetric and free of extreme outliers, and group sizes were large for the main categories ($n = 100$ for one day and $n = 260$ for two to three days). Given the robustness of analysis of variance to moderate non-normality under such conditions, parametric tests were retained and supplemented with Welch corrections where required.

ANOVA results for each competency

One-way ANOVAs compared mean scores across four groups (1 day, 2 to 3 days, 4 to 7 days, and not applicable). For teamwork, role

clarity, public speaking confidence, and decision-making voice, training duration did not have a significant effect. Welch ANOVAs confirmed this pattern (all $p > 0.10$). Only time management differed by duration, $F(3, 446) = 2.66$, $p = .048$; Welch $F(3, 15.04) = 4.78$, $p = .016$. The 4-to-7-day group showed the highest mean time management score ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 0.50$) compared with 3.94, 3.89, and 3.73 in the shorter camp and non-camp groups. Overall, longer camps were not systematically associated with stronger perceived leadership outcomes, except for a small advantage in time management.

Table 3: Means and SDs by training duration

Outcome variable	F(3, 446)	p	Welch F(3, df2)	Welch p
Teamwork and role modelling improved	1.06	.37	2.38	.11
Role clarity	0.19	.90	0.15	.93
Public speaking confidence	1.78	.15	1.94	.17
Time management and planning	2.66	.048	4.78	.016
Decision-making voice	0.76	.52	1.61	.23

Post Hoc Analysis

Post hoc tests for time management showed no significant pairwise differences between training duration groups (all p -values $\geq .07$), despite the 4- to 7-day camps having the highest mean score ($M = 4.75$, $n = 4$). For the other four competencies, omnibus ANOVAs were non-significant, and post hoc tests confirmed minimal differences between groups. Overall, 1-day and 2-to-3-day programmes appeared to yield similar perceived leadership gains, and any added benefit of 4-to-7-day camps for time management remained tentative, given the small subgroup.

Robustness Checks

Robustness checks supported these results. Welch ANOVAs produced the same pattern as standard ANOVAs, with training duration non-significant for four competencies and still significant for time management ($p = .016$). Shapiro–Wilk tests and plots showed only moderate non-normality, and group sizes were large, so ANOVA remained appropriate. Similar means for 1-day and 2-to-3-day camps suggested that minor recoding would not change the findings. In contrast, the tiny 4-to-7-day group suggests caution in interpreting any apparent extra benefit of long camps.

Discussions

The findings showed that leadership training, in its current forms, was generally perceived as beneficial, as learners across all duration categories reported high levels of collaboration, role understanding, public speaking confidence, time management, and decision-making. However, the lack of statistically significant differences between one-day, two-to-three-day camps and school-based orientation indicated that simply increasing camp length did not reliably enhance perceived leadership development. This supports training research that highlights content quality, active practice, feedback, and follow-up as more important than duration alone.

The only tentative exception was time management, where the small 4-7-day group reported higher mean scores, possibly because extended residential camps offer more opportunities to practise scheduling and planning. Given the very small subsample and non-significant post hoc tests, this pattern should be treated as a hypothesis for future studies rather than a firm policy signal. Overall, the results questioned heavy reliance on longer off-site camps and instead pointed to the value of well-designed shorter programmes supported by strong, ongoing school-based mentoring from liaison teachers.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study showed that leadership training was positively valued by Prefects and LRC members, who reported gains in collaboration, role clarity, public speaking confidence, time management, and decision-making voice. However, within the observed practice, camp duration alone was a weak predictor of these perceived gains, since there were no significant differences across duration groups for four competencies and only a small, uncertain effect for time management among the very few learners who attended 4- to 7-day camps.

Given that training duration did not significantly predict most perceived leadership outcomes, the findings suggest that the effectiveness of leadership development training programmes for prefects and LRC members should not be judged primarily by the training's duration. Instead, schools and training providers that prepare prefects and LRC members for leadership roles should adopt a context-responsive approach, designing training based on participants' specific needs, situations, challenges, and conditions. Such an approach will move away from a one-size-fits-all model based on fixed training duration to place greater emphasis on the quality, structure, and relevance of the learning experience, supported by ongoing school-based mentoring. Essentially, this means that shorter programmes can still provide meaningful leadership development when they are well-structured and include active learning strategies, such as role-plays, problem-solving activities, and opportunities for reflection, followed by continued guidance and support at school. Training providers should therefore focus on developing practical leadership competency content relevant to each school's cohort and providing schools with follow-up tools to reinforce learning after the training.

The Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture, school boards, and other stakeholders involved in learner leadership development should consider developing evidence-informed guidelines that set expectations for training content, facilitation quality, and follow-up support while allowing schools and training providers flexibility to adapt programmes to their specific contexts. Future research should further investigate how training duration, programme quality, and follow-up support influence actual leadership behaviour using

larger samples and objective measures rather than self-reported outcomes alone.

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