



TVET as a Leadership Incubator: Preparing an Adaptive Generation for the Future Economy

Avela Ngqunguza*, Thami Issac Makhoba

Walter Sisulu University, South Africa

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*Correspondence Address:

avelaproper00@gmail.com

Abstract :

This study examines the urgency of Vocational Education and Training (TVET) universities in equipping students with essential leadership skills to face the dynamics of the changing global job market. Although the role of TVET is crucial, there are gaps in the literature regarding how these institutions specifically foster leadership and align it with economic demands. Through a qualitative approach with a case study design, this study examines the educational strategies employed in TVET institutions in South Africa, drawing on the perspectives of both students and lecturers. The findings indicate that leadership training programs are generally received positively, particularly in enhancing communication skills, decision-making, and teamwork through experiential learning methods, such as collaborative projects and internships. Nonetheless, interpersonal challenges and variations in student readiness levels are still a concern. Lecturers confirmed the high value of hands-on experience and recommended integrating leadership modules early in the curriculum, as well as utilizing simulation technology to enhance learning outcomes. This research provides profound implications on effective practices, fills empirical gaps, and contributes to the understanding of TVET's role in shaping adaptive leaders who are ready to face the economic complexities of the future.

INTRODUCTION

Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a specialized form of education carefully designed to equip individuals with practical skills, knowledge, and competencies relevant to a particular industry, occupation, or vocation (Gilead & Dishon, 2022; McDiarmid & Zhao, 2023; Whalley et al., 2021). TVET programs are structurally designed to prepare students for the workforce, characterized by a pedagogical approach that emphasizes hands-on and practical application (Caves et al., 2021; Okolie et al., 2023; Sepúlveda, 2025). In the dynamic modern economic landscape, TVET colleges are uniquely positioned to equip students with the practical skills, leadership prowess, and flexibility needed to succeed. Leadership is not limited to managerial roles but also encompasses the development of problem-solving, communication, and decision-making skills that contribute to overall economic resilience (Anning-Dorson, 2021; Nadeem, 2024; Schiuma et al., 2024). Therefore, TVET plays a crucial role in preparing individuals to face the challenges and opportunities of an ever-evolving job market.

Various studies have underlined the importance of leadership development in education. Several studies have found that TVET students who engage in industry-oriented internships and leadership workshops show superior adaptability and decision-making skills (Kholifah et al., 2024; Li et al., 2024; Sappar et al., 2024). Next, Okolie et al. (2021) found that TVET institutions should prioritize leadership development by integrating project-based learning and real-world problem-solving into their curriculum. Several other studies have also developed a specific leadership model for TVET institutions, verifying key elements of the model through thematic analysis (Cabreros, 2023; M. Mohd Siraj et al., 2023; Muthumuni & Mokoena, 2024). Nonetheless, there is still a need to understand the specific approach that TVET institutions use to align leadership education with the demands of the labour market.

Despite the increase in research on leadership development in higher education, a significant lack of focus remains on how Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions contribute to fostering leadership skills. Existing studies often place more emphasis on traditional universities, ignoring the specific challenges and opportunities presented by TVET institutions. In addition, the alignment between TVET leadership programs and the demands of the job market remains lacking (Aina & Ogegbo, 2022; Majola et al., 2024; Raby et al., 2023), as explored, raising concerns about whether current educational strategies are effectively preparing students for an ever-evolving economic landscape. The problem addressed in this research is rooted in the need to bridge the knowledge gap by providing a comprehensive examination of the strategies employed by TVET universities to cultivate leadership skills, as well as evaluating the alignment of these strategies with the demands of the changing global economy.

This research offers significant novelty by providing a comprehensive qualitative examination of specific educational strategies implemented in TVET colleges in the South African context. This area is underrepresented in the leadership literature. In contrast to previous studies that tended to focus on public universities or theoretical aspects of leadership, this study uniquely delved into the first-hand experiences of TVET students and lecturers. This novelty lies in identifying excellent practices and successful case studies in leadership development within vocational settings, as well as conducting an in-depth evaluation of how these strategies align with the demands of the ever-changing job market. Thus, this research not only fills empirical gaps but also provides granular insights that can serve as the foundation for the development of more effective curricula and policies in the future.

This research was conducted to investigate in depth how TVET universities utilize educational strategies to cultivate leadership skills and equip students to face the rapidly evolving economic landscape. The main objective is to review the educational strategies used, evaluate the alignment of these strategies with the demands of the changing global economy, identify best practices and case studies that have been successful in leadership development in TVET institutions, as well as provide concrete recommendations to improve leadership education in TVET universities to better prepare students to face future challenges. Through this exploration, this research aims to make a significant contribution to the discourse on education reform, highlighting the vital role of TVET institutions in shaping competent and adaptable future leaders.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative case study design to investigate the educational strategies used by TVET colleges in developing leadership skills. This design was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon in the real-world context, i.e. TVET institutions in urban and rural South Africa. This approach is relevant to understanding how specific strategies are applied and perceived in a unique vocational education environment, providing rich insights into leadership development practices. As a type of qualitative research, this case study facilitates the exploration of meanings, concepts, and characteristics related to leadership development, while also emphasizing the analysis of non-numerical data to understand views and attitudes (Alam, 2021; Cole, 2024; Gretschel et al., 2023). A qualitative approach fundamentally supports the holistic exploration of this phenomenon, providing a more profound understanding than simply measuring variables.

The primary data collection methods in this study were semi-structured interviews with administrators and instructors, as well as targeted group discussions with students. This method was chosen to capture diverse perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders, which is essential for understanding institutional strategy, curriculum design, industry partnerships, and student experiences in leadership development programs (Changpueng & Pattanapichet, 2023; Huybrechts et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2022). The role of the researcher is that of a facilitator who delves into the information in depth, ensuring that all conversations are recorded and transcribed for analysis. The research subjects comprised eight students (CS1-CS8) and four lecturers (CL1-CL4) from TVET institutions in South Africa, totalling 12 participants. Data collection was conducted over three months, both in-person and online, with a focus on prioritizing informed consent and confidentiality to protect the rights of participants. To ensure the credibility of the research results, the data triangulation technique is employed through the use of multiple informant sources (students and lecturers) and various data collection methods (interviews and group discussions).

The collected data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model (Briand et al., 2023; Karmina et al., 2021; Xiao et al., 2025), which involves three main activity streams: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. Data reduction is achieved by selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data from interview transcripts and group discussions, thereby identifying patterns and themes relevant to the research question. Furthermore, the presentation of data is facilitated through the creation of matrices, graphs, and charts, which organize the reduced information, allowing researchers to see relationships and patterns more clearly. Finally, conclusions are drawn and verified iteratively throughout the analysis process, comparing the findings with the original data to ensure the consistency and reliability of interpretation. This approach was chosen for its systematic nature and its ability to unravel the deep meaning of the participants' narratives, in line with the goal of qualitative research to comprehensively understand the phenomenon. These analysis measures significantly contribute to increased credibility in the data interpretation process. By identifying themes that consistently emerge from various data sources, the study ensures that the results obtained are not only in-depth and detailed but also representative of the participants' experiences and views, thereby reinforcing the reliability of the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section presents the results of qualitative findings obtained from interviews with students and lecturers, as well as field-based findings, regarding the educational strategies implemented by TVET universities to foster leadership skills and prepare students to face the ever-evolving economic landscape. The thematic analysis identifies several key sub-themes that warrant in-depth discussion.

Student Experience in Leadership Skills Development

Students' experience in leadership development refers to their perception and interaction with the leadership training programs provided by TVET institutions. These themes include satisfaction levels, challenges faced, and the program's impact on improving their personal leadership skills. This evaluation of experience is crucial for understanding the effectiveness of educational strategies and identifying areas for improvement. Focusing on the student experience enables institutions to align their curriculum and pedagogical approach with the actual needs of students, thereby producing leaders who are more adaptable and ready to meet the demands of the workforce. This quality of experience directly impacts students' motivation to be actively involved in self-development and their readiness to assume leadership roles in the future.

Positive Perception of Leadership Training

Leadership training at TVET institutions typically provides valuable experience that helps students understand how to handle situations in leadership roles and prepare them to work effectively in teams. This indicates that existing programs have successfully established a foundational understanding of leadership roles and collaboration. The following informant's statement evidences this: "The training was a good training that gave us the experience of knowing how to deal with situations while in a leadership position" (CS1). In addition, the program's adaptation to the needs of students and the job market is also highlighted, with an emphasis on the quality of trainers and opportunities to gain various leadership perspectives from external speakers. This shows the institution's commitment to providing relevant and up-to-date training. "I appreciate that our university continues to improve its programs and adapt to the needs of students and the ever-evolving job market. The coaches are knowledgeable and often bring in guest speakers from a variety of fields, allowing us to gain diverse perspectives on leadership" (CS2).

Overall, these findings confirm that the majority of students have had a positive experience with the leadership training. This positive acceptance is primarily based on the development of fundamental skills such as teamwork and adaptability. The institution's ability to invite guest speakers and conduct regular program updates is a determining factor in fostering such positive perceptions. Furthermore, the emphasis on practical experience, which encompasses the application of technology and hands-on interaction with industry experts, significantly enhances students' understanding of the dynamics of teamwork and the importance of adaptation in a professional setting.

Improved Communication and Teamwork Skills

Participation in group discussions, presentations, and workshops has significantly improved students' verbal and written communication skills, allowing them to convey ideas clearly and provide constructive feedback. This is crucial for effective collaboration in the work environment. The following informant's statement evidences this: "Participating in group discussions, presentations, and workshops has improved my verbal and written communication skills. I have learned how to articulate my ideas clearly, actively listen to others, and provide constructive feedback, which is essential for effective collaboration" (CS7). Additionally, training helps students work together as a team and make informed decisions. This reflects the program's focus on developing essential interpersonal skills. "This has helped me in knowing how to work together as a team" (CS1). "To be good at decision-making" (CS5).

An in-depth analysis of the presented excerpts confirms the success of the leadership training program in instilling and optimizing communication and teamwork skills among students. This is evident in the increased readiness of students to actively participate in collaborative projects and their ability to make informed decisions. These indicators collectively reflect the program's effectiveness in preparing students to assume leadership roles in the future. It is essential to emphasize that the development of this capability is not solely theoretical, but also highly oriented towards practical application, as demonstrated by the students' ability to clearly express their ideas and facilitate the mediation process.

Experiential Learning Implementation and Real-World Preparation

The implementation of experiential learning and real-world preparation is an educational approach that emphasizes hands-on experience and practical application of knowledge and skills. This theme focuses on how TVET institutions integrate internships, projects, and group activities to equip students with leadership skills relevant to the demands of the dynamic job market. This approach allows students to test theories in authentic contexts, develop decision-making, problem-solving, and adaptability skills in a professional environment. The importance of experiential learning lies not only in the transfer of knowledge but also in the formation of character and confidence that are essential for future leaders. Institutions that successfully implement this strategy will produce graduates who are better prepared and competent to face the ever-changing economic challenges.

Experiential learning in TVET has proven to be very beneficial in leadership development. Real group activities and projects significantly improve conflict mediation skills and team collaboration. Students learn to manage differences of opinion and reach consensus, which is crucial for leadership roles. Group activities help bring together different ideas and perspectives, encouraging critical thinking and innovative solutions. The following informant's statement evidences this: "Yes. It is a helpful group activity because they bring together different ideas" (CS4).

Additionally, working with diverse individuals on projects teaches students how to mediate disputes and find common ground, thereby fostering a more collaborative and effective team environment. "Working with diverse individuals can lead to differences of opinion and conflict. I learned how to mediate disputes, listen to different perspectives, and find common ground, which encourages a more collaborative environment" (CS6).

Nonetheless, there is a polarisation in students' readiness for real-world leadership roles. Some feel prepared and confident after gaining valuable skills and experience, while others feel less prepared, indicating a gap between training and the expectations of the workforce. This disparity may be due to differences in practical experience or an individual's capacity to internalize learning. "I feel at least ready now for real-world leadership roles. I have gained valuable skills and experience that have built my confidence, and I am excited to take on the challenges that come with leading a team. I am eager to put my knowledge into practice and continue to grow as a leader" (CS3). "Not very prepared" (CS1).

Instructors actively create authentic learning opportunities through internships, collaborative projects, and mentorship programs. Integration with industry and guidance from professionals is highly effective in providing authentic leadership experiences, reinforcing the relevance of TVET education to the job market's needs. "We proactively connect students with local businesses for internship opportunities. These placements provide valuable hands-on experience, enabling students to undertake small projects, such as organizing events or managing product inventory. In addition, we facilitate mentorship programs where experienced professionals offer guidance through challenges and provide career advice" (CL1). In engineering, emphasis is placed on joint projects during workshops, where students take leadership positions in creating and developing prototypes. Guidance from industry experts is also integrated through seminars and guest lectures. "Our emphasis is on joint projects during workshops, where students take on leadership positions in creating and developing prototypes. Guidance from industry experts is combined through seminars and guest lectures" (CL2).

However, the assessment of leadership skills faces significant challenges due to its subjective nature. Although instructors use practical assignments, peer assessment, and reflective essays to evaluate growth, the diverse nature of leadership styles makes it challenging to standardize assessments. "We use practical assignments, peer assessments, and reflective essays to evaluate growth. We focus on essential skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork" (CL1). "One of the main challenges is that leadership can be very subjective. Leadership styles are different, and some students may shine in a calm, supportive role rather than being overly assertive. It is difficult to recognize and evaluate the different ways of demonstrating this leadership" (CL1). From the various sources of information provided by the study's informants, a common thread can be drawn, as shown in Table 1.

Based on the exposure of the findings revealed, it is clear that TVET universities have a strong commitment to implementing experiential learning. This is realized through a series of activities that include group discussions, collaborative projects, and structured internship programs. The initiative makes a significant contribution to the development of essential leadership skills among students, preparing them for the challenges of the professional world. Upon listening to the description, although the majority of students express a sense of readiness to assume leadership roles in the real world, the data indicate that there are variations in individual readiness levels that require further consideration. From a methodological perspective, challenges in leadership assessment are also a central issue, given their subjective and complex nature. Therefore, to ensure that every student maximizes the benefits of the practical experience, there is a need to continually refine the strategies and assessment frameworks used. This development must be oriented towards increasing objectivity and comprehensiveness, so that the implementation of education management in the aspect of leadership development can be measured more accurately and comprehensively.

Table 1 . Experiential Learning Implementation and Real-World Preparation

| No | Theme/Category | Supporting Evidence |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Benefits of Experiential Learning | "Yes. It was a group activity..." (CS4); "Working with diverse individuals... fostering a more collaborative environment" (CS6). |
| 2. | Workplace Readiness Gap | "I feel at least ready now for a real-world leadership role..." (CS3); "Not very prepared" (CS1). |
| 3. | Authentic Learning Strategies | "We proactively connect students with local businesses for internship opportunities... facilitate mentorship programs" (CL1). |
| 4. | Authentic Learning Specialization (Engineering) | "Our emphasis is on joint projects during the workshop... Guidance from industry experts is combined through seminars and guest lectures" (CL2). |
| 5. | Leadership Assessment Challenges | "One of the main challenges is that leadership can be very subjective... It is difficult to recognize and evaluate the different ways of demonstrating this leadership" (CL1). |
| 6. | Variants of Student Readiness | "Although the majority of students ... feeling prepared..., data shows that there is variation in the level of readiness of individuals..." (Final paragraph). |
| 7. | Assessment Recommendations Improvement | "... There is an urgency to continue to refine the strategies and assessment frameworks used... oriented towards increasing objectivity and comprehensiveness...". |

Perceived Value and Impact of Leadership Training

The perceived value and impact of leadership training refer to how students assess the relevance and direct benefits of leadership training programs about their career goals and future readiness. This theme examines whether the training provided aligns with their professional aspirations and how effectively the program equips them with the skills considered essential for their chosen career. This understanding of perceived value is crucial for measuring program success and ensuring that investments in leadership development yield optimal outcomes for individuals and industries. It also helps institutions to align the curriculum with the changing needs of the job market, so that graduates become more competitive and relevant.

The relevance of training to a student's career goals varies. Some students find the training very relevant to their career goals, especially for those who aspire to work in a field that involves interaction with many people and ministry. However, some students feel that the training is not fully aligned with their career goals, especially if it is too general and lacks specificity for a particular administrative or project management role. This gap highlights the need to personalize the curriculum, ensuring each student derives the maximum benefit from training that is relevant to their professional aspirations. The following informant's statement evidences this: "Yes. The career I want to pursue is very broad, which means working closely with people and ministry" (CS2). "Yes. It helps to interact with people very well" (CS7). "I felt that the leadership training I received was not aligned with my career goals in administration. The training was more focused on general leadership theories and concepts, but didn't really address the specific skills and knowledge I needed for my role" (CS5).

Practical experiences, such as hands-on projects, are the most transformative aspect of leadership training, allowing students to apply theory in real-world situations and develop essential skills in a meaningful way. The ability to communicate effectively and have a solid strategy is also considered very beneficial. "The practical experience on offer has been a game-changer. Being involved in hands-on projects allows me to apply the theories I learn in real-world situations, helping me develop important skills in a meaningful way" (CS2). "To be able to communicate more effectively and have a strategy. Nothing needs to be fixed" (CS3).

Students have clear aspirations to apply their leadership skills after graduation, including taking on mentorship roles and sharing experiences. They also plan to be good listeners in the workplace, as well as consider the ability to think critically under pressure and problem-solving methodologies as essential leadership skills for future careers, particularly in conflict management. "After receiving mentorship throughout my education, I plan to take on a mentorship role, sharing my experience and knowledge with new or less experienced individuals in my field. It can help build a supportive community and empower others to grow and succeed" (CS5). "By being prepared to lead and be a good listener in the workplace, because leaders are also great listeners" (CS6). "The ability to think critically under pressure and problem-solving methodologies. So, when faced with conflict management, it will be easy to deal with those aspects" (CS3).

Based on the overall findings, students consistently feel significant value from the leadership training programs they have attended. This experience is highly valued, particularly for gaining practical experience and refining fundamental communication skills. This observation indicates the early success of the program in equipping students with the essential capabilities needed in various leadership contexts. Nevertheless, there is an essential need to make more targeted curriculum adjustments. This adjustment aims to make the training material resonate more strongly with the specific career goals of each student. Thus, the relevance of the program can be increased, ensuring that the provisions students receive are genuinely aligned with their aspirational professional paths. Students themselves demonstrate a strong aspiration to gradually implement their leadership skills, highlighting the importance of mentorship, active listening skills, and critical problem-solving as key areas of application. This confirms that the program must continue to evolve to meet the expectations and practical needs of future leaders.

Lecturer Feedback on Program Effectiveness

Lecturer feedback on the effectiveness of the program refers to the views and assessments of the lecturers regarding the success of the leadership training program in achieving its goals. This theme examines lecturers' perceptions of aspects of the program that are working, areas that require improvement, and their recommendations for enhancing leadership development initiatives. The perspective of lecturers is valuable because they have first-hand experience in delivering material and observing student development. This feedback is crucial for the continuous improvement of the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and overall TVET education strategy in cultivating competent leaders.

Lecturers point out that hands-on projects are the most valuable aspect of leadership training. This finding is consistent with those from the student side and emphasizes the importance of experiential learning. The following informant statement evidences this: "Students often state that hands-on projects are the most valuable aspect of their training" (CL2). Additionally, lecturers recommend the use of leadership simulations with decision-making software and building stronger relationships with industry to create a better hands-on learning experience. "I suggest using leadership simulations with decision-making software and building stronger relationships with the industry. This will create a better hands-on learning experience" (CL1).

Lecturers also believe that leadership training should be introduced early in the curriculum, by recommending the integration of leadership modules from the first year. This will help build students' basic skills and confidence from the outset. This is evidenced by the following informant statement: "However, they believe that leadership training should be introduced earlier in the curriculum" (CL2). "Integrating leadership modules from the first year and utilizing augmented reality tools to simulate leadership scenarios can significantly improve learning outcomes" (CL2). Based on the results obtained from several research informants, it is evident that lecturers' feedback on the effectiveness of the program is illustrated in Figure 1.

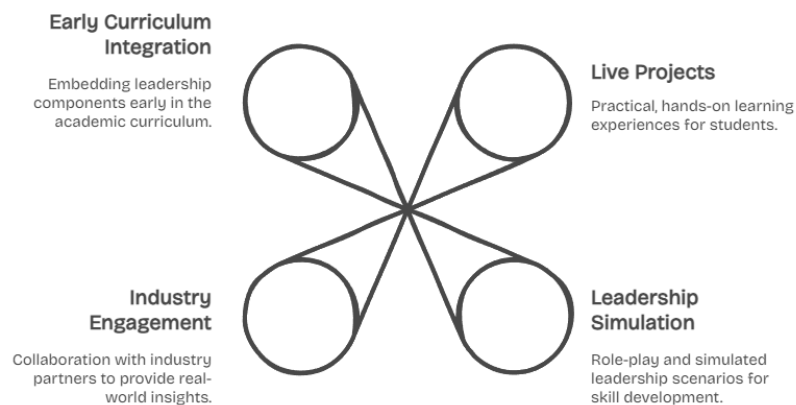


Figure 1. Lecturer Feedback on Program Effectiveness

Comprehensively, the views of lecturers indicate a strong consensus that hands-on experience and practical projects are at the heart of effective leadership training. These elements are rated as the most valuable components, significantly contributing to the development of student leadership capacity. Departing from this observation, there is a collective aspiration to integrate leadership modules early in the curriculum structure, even from the first year. This idea aims to build a foundation of students' skills and confidence from the early stages of education. Upon hearing the description, there is also a high level of enthusiasm to utilize simulation technologies, such as decision-making software and augmented reality, to enhance the quality and depth of the learning experience. This innovation is expected to create more realistic and interactive leadership scenarios. Thus, the constructive feedback from these lecturers becomes a crucial foundation for continuous improvement efforts of leadership development programs in TVET universities, ensuring their relevance and positive impact on the formation of future leaders.

Discussion

This discussion section presents the interpretation of qualitative research findings on educational strategies in TVET universities that foster leadership skills and student readiness to navigate a dynamic economic landscape. This discussion will relate the findings to the existing literature, apply theoretical frameworks, and identify practical implications and recommendations for future research and policy. This systematic approach aims to make a substantive contribution to academic discourse on leadership development in the context of vocational education.

This research reveals that TVET colleges have successfully cultivated leadership skills through a combination of educational strategies. Students generally have a positive perception of leadership training, particularly in enhancing their communication skills, decision-making abilities, and teamwork. However, interpersonal challenges and the need for more intensive training sessions are still areas of concern. The implementation of experiential learning through group projects and internships has proven to be highly effective, although there are variations in students' readiness levels for real-world leadership roles. Lecturers also confirmed the high value of hands-on experience and recommended integrating leadership modules early in the curriculum, as well as utilizing simulation technology to enhance learning outcomes. Findings in the field further reinforce the importance of practical experiences outside the classroom.

The findings of this study significantly support the existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of experiential leadership development. The findings align with research conducted by the real group and project activities aimed at improving conflict mediation and collaboration skills (Hussein, 2021; Kim, 2024; Zhang & Ma, 2023). Students' positive perception of training relevant to the job market also strengthens their views, as noted by M. Mohd Siraj et al. (2023), about the need for real-world leadership experience in education. This research fills a gap in the literature that previously lacked focus on how TVET institutions specifically contribute to leadership development (Cabreros, 2023; Muthumuni & Mokoena, 2024; Raby et al., 2023), by providing empirical evidence of effective strategies. Nonetheless, the variation in student readiness suggests that there is still room for refinement of a more personalized approach. This area may have been less thoroughly explored in previous studies.

The findings of this study align closely with Transformational Leadership Theory (Kok et al., 2023; Oswald et al., 2022; Schiuma et al., 2024), which emphasizes the role of leaders in inspiring and driving innovation. TVET programs that encourage hands-on experience and adaptation to economic change reflect efforts to form transformational leaders capable of navigating a volatile environment. Student-developed communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills are at the core of transformational leadership. In addition, Constructivist Learning Theory is also relevant, as the findings demonstrate that learning experiences and collaboration are crucial in developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Almulla, 2023; Dong et al., 2025; Vijayakumar Bharathi & Pande, 2025). This research enriches the theory by demonstrating how this framework is practically implemented and influences leadership development in the context of vocational education, particularly in shaping understanding and confidence through real-life experiences.

This discussion emphasized the importance of a comprehensive educational strategy in TVET universities in forming leaders who are adaptive and ready to face economic dynamics. The findings suggest that a combination of experiential learning, instructor support, and curriculum relevance to career goals is key to success. This research contributes to the literature by providing specific empirical evidence from the context of TVET, a topic that has been previously underdiscussed. Theoretically, this study enriches the understanding of how Transformational Leadership Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory operate in a vocational education environment, suggesting that hands-on experience is a key catalyst for holistic leadership development. The study's findings are specifically to expand the understanding of the effectiveness of integrating practical experience and technology in the TVET curriculum in producing leaders who not only possess technical skills but also the adaptability, communication, and problem-solving skills that are crucial in the ever-changing economic era.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to address the urgent need to understand how Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions equip students with leadership skills relevant to a dynamic economic landscape. Key findings suggest that TVET education strategies effectively foster leadership competencies, particularly through experiential learning approaches, such as collaborative projects and internships, which enhance communication and teamwork skills. Although student perceptions are generally positive, interpersonal challenges and variations in readiness still exist. Lecturers emphasize the value of direct experience and recommend integrating leadership modules from an early age, as well as utilizing simulation technology. The implication is that the curriculum must be adjusted and industry partnerships strengthened. Longitudinal studies and explicit policy standards, supported by funding, are crucial to ensure TVET graduates are prepared for the complexities of the world of work.

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