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**Who Will Follow The Leader? Managers' Perceptions of Management
Development Activities: An International Comparison**

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Editor's Foreword

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Abstract

This article contributes to the on-going debate surrounding management education and development through an examination of the development experiences of managers studying for an MBA by distance learning at Warwick Business School. It analyses the extent to which management development opportunities, both formal and informal, are seen to support managers in their day-to-day roles and deliver those skills necessary for the future. The research also provides the opportunity to compare responses from UK managers with those from managers in other countries. The survey evidence shows that in some respects the experience of UK and Overseas respondents are quite similar; they both receive large amounts of training and development from their employers and show a preference for more 'non-formal' routes of learning. In other ways their experiences are quite different: UK managers take up their first full-time job and their first managerial appointment earlier than the overseas respondents and overseas respondents placed much more emphasis on networking and learning from outside their own organisations than did UK managers. The research also suggests that integrating management development activities with other human resource policies and practices, such as performance evaluation and reward remains problematic and that there is a strong perception amongst managers both in the UK and overseas that their organisations do not view management development in a strategic way. When looking at future development needs respondents from both the UK and overseas highlighted the need for leadership skills as a priority for themselves but focused on more general management and operational skills as the main priority for their colleagues. One possible explanation for this is that the respondents were only too well aware of the fact that that leaders need followers. This is, however, a view at which is at odds with current policy arguments in the UK where leadership skills are seen to be necessary for all managers.

Who Will Follow The Leader? Managers' Perceptions of Management Development Activities: An International Comparison

Introduction

This article contributes to the on-going debate surrounding management education and development through an examination of the development experiences of managers studying for an MBA by distance learning at Warwick Business School. It analyses the extent to which management development opportunities, both formal and informal, are seen to support managers in their day-to-day roles and deliver those skills necessary for the future. The research attempts to elaborate the kinds of development undertaken by the managers, how the managers themselves perceive these initiatives and their relative effectiveness as learning opportunities. The research also provides the opportunity to compare responses from UK managers with those from managers in other countries and thus go some way to answering questions about the extent to which there has been international convergence in management development away from the highly differentiated experiences identified by Handy (1987) and Storey et al. (1997).

Where does Management Development Stand Now?

A number of highly influential reports in the mid to late 1980s (for example Constable and McCormick, 1987 and Handy et al., 1988) expressed acute concern about the state of management development and the quality of British managers. At that time there were approximately three million people in managerial jobs. On average, it was found that these three million received only about the equivalent of one day's formal training each year and the majority received no training at all. Worse still, of the 100,000 persons entering managerial roles each year, the majority had received no formal management education or training. The Handy report put this record in an international context. Although some organisations were doing a lot for the development of their managers and were doing it well, the main competitor countries were doing more and doing it better. More recently Thomson et al. (2001:229-30) have reported a more promising outlook. They argue that considerable change has taken place in management

development since the mid-1980s. Their message, based upon surveys carried out in the 1990s, is considerably more upbeat with “many positive things to report”. They found an increased level of training with very few companies undertake no training at all; few differences by sector; training taking place even where there was no explicit policy statement or budget; that training was no longer reserved for high fliers; in over two thirds of cases some training provision was made for low-potential managers; and that training covered all levels and competency role areas. Yet the overall conclusion was still that there is no room for complacency. Whilst Britain may have moved a rung or two up the ladder of sophistication in training and development it is still a long way from the top (2001:236).

The surveys on which these findings are based were comprised of three main elements: surveys of employers carried out in 1986, a survey of MBA graduates drawn from membership of the Association of MBAs in May 1997 and a survey of 215 managers from 55 companies which had already participated in the 1986 employer surveys. The research thus attempts not only a triangulation perspective (i.e. data collected from Human Resource Development managers, MBA graduates and managers) but the number of respondents is large and there is coverage of aspects of both formal and informal management development processes. Despite these strengths the authors readily acknowledge some weaknesses with the survey and note that “we recognize that only when the results have been confirmed by a number of corroborating findings over a period of time will they be definitive” (2001:10). The current survey of 359 managers registered on Warwick Business School’s Distance Learning MBA not only deals with many of the same issues examined in the Thomson surveys, but also, because of its international dimension, permits comparison of responses between UK and non UK respondents in relation to particular issues.

The Survey

The survey was based on postal questionnaires sent to all students registered on the Warwick MBA by Distance Learning on the 1st November 2002. 1,030 questionnaires were sent out and 359 were returned (218 from UK respondents and 141 from overseas respondents). The overall response rate of 34.85% is higher than in many similar surveys. However, response rates did vary according to nationality. The UK response rate was particularly high at 39% the overseas response rate a more disappointing 31%. These factors need to be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the results. The overseas respondents are drawn from 37 different countries which means that analysis by individual country was not feasible. The ratio of men to women respondents reflects the difference between men and women students on the Warwick MBA, a factor common across Business Schools. A recent survey carried out at Brunel University confirmed that little more than one in four MBA students in the UK is female and that growth in participation rates has stalled since 1997 (Green, 2004). Given other findings from the Brunel survey concerning the different benefits that women and men obtain from MBA courses careful consideration was given to gender differences in response to the questions that were posed. However, apart from a slightly different age profile for overseas female respondents (90% of whom were in the 30-39 age category) there were no significant differences between the responses of men and women in the sample. Interestingly, even where there are differences in response between the UK and overseas respondents these differences are reflected in both male and female results. Being UK or non-UK is a more important influence on the current results than being male or female, even where respondents are answering question about issues such as job roles and future learning needs.

More generally, MBA students cannot be said to be representative of managers as a whole, especially perhaps in terms of their formal educational achievements and their commitment to on-going management development. Yet precisely because of this and the fact that MBA students may also be expected to hold informed views about the topic of management development, it makes them a group of considerable research interest.

The main characteristics of the individuals in this survey are:

<i>Age</i>		<i>Size of current employer by employee</i>	
Under 30	10%	Less than 100	13%
30- 39	71%	100 - 499	15%
40 - 49	17%	500 - 999	7%
50 or over	3%	1,000 - 4,999	27%
		5, 000 +	38%
 <i>Length of service with current employer</i>		 <i>Business Sector of current employer (%)</i>	
10 years or more	16 %	Manufacturing	33
6-10 years	21%	Financial services	17
3-5 years	24%	Business Services	14
Less than 3 years	39%	Transport & communication	7
		Public administration and defence	6
		Retail and distribution	5
<i>Gender</i>		Construction	5
Male	76%	Health	3
Female	21%	Primary	2
Not stated	4%	Education	2
		Utilities	2
		Other	4

The Nature of Management

Since the mid-1980s in the face of increasing competitive pressures and tighter cost controls accompanied by rationalisation, reduction in hierarchies and the potentially de-skilling effects of new technology, academics have predicted substantially differing responses from both organisations and individuals. Some (Scase & Goffee 1989) have predicted a pessimistic future for managers: greater intensification of work, longer hours of work, wider spans of control, greater responsibility and less real authority. Others

(Millman & Hardwick 1987) have predicted a more optimistic outcome with a more entrepreneurial role of managers built around the concepts of change management and innovation. Respondents were therefore asked a number of questions about the key characteristics of their jobs. One of the most important impacts of downsizing and rationalisation at management levels in organisations is thought to be an increase in spans of control and supervisory ratios. However, the results of this survey show that almost half the respondents were directly responsible for managing fewer than 5 people. In this regard there were no differences between the UK and overseas respondents nor between the male and female respondents.

How Many People Do You Manage?	
0-4	49%
5-9	18%
10-24	14%
25-49	8%
50+	11%

Table 1

Respondents were also asked to rank the five most important roles in their current job. In order to produce the table below, the number of responses was multiplied by up to five points according to the ranking given by the respondent.

Rank The Five Most Important Roles In Your Day-To-Day Job			
<i>UK respondents</i>		<i>Overseas respondents</i>	
Planner/strategist	382	Planner/strategist	352
Facilitator	256	Facilitator	221
Conflict Resolver	165	Mentor/Coach	173
Resource Allocator	147	Resource Allocator	143
Mentor/Coach	111	Conflict Resolver	138
Judge of Performance	84	Teach/trainer	105

Table 2

There are some interesting differences here between the UK and overseas responses with regard to the role of mentor/coach (overseas score of 173 compared to the UK score of 111) and that of teacher/trainer (overseas score of 105 compared with the UK score of 46). These two development roles were being seen as much more important by the overseas respondents than by the UK respondents. The same patterns are reflected when the results are analysed for both male and female respondents separately.

Finally, respondents were asked if they had more time, what would they seek to spend it doing? Interestingly, ‘developing self’ and ‘developing others’ both scored very low here with only 6% and 5% respectively. Forty per cent of managers would, however, welcome more time to spend on thinking and reflecting, perhaps not surprising given that currently 47% of UK managers and 40% of overseas managers spend only 5% or less of their time on this activity.

If you had more time, what would you spend it on?			
	%		%
Thinking & reflecting	40	Developing self	6
Strategy & planning	17	Developing others	5
Reading	13	‘Walking & Talking’	5
Research	7		

Table 3

Type of Management Development Activities

Historically managers in the UK were essentially left to develop informally by experience, but it is clear that formal means of development have been gaining ground in the recent past, not least through formal educational qualifications. Whilst the number of managers with a degree in Britain is rising, albeit at a relatively slow rate, according to Thomson et al (2001:37) Britain is still at a disadvantage in respect of the educational qualifications of its stock of managers. Only a minority of all British managers have a degree, although the majority of those moving in to management now do have a qualification.

Perhaps not surprisingly for those registered for a Masters degree the level of educational achievement amongst respondents was very high, with little difference between UK and overseas responses (85% and 87% respectively had a first degree level qualification or above).

What is your highest level of academic achievement?		
	UK respondents (%)	<i>Overseas respondents (%)</i>
First degree	49	61
Masters degree	24	19
Ph.D.	12	7
Higher education below Degree level	-	3

Table 4

Despite high levels of educational achievement the extent to which respondents saw this type of qualification as being important in their development as managers was actually quite limited. Respondents were asked to identify those factors which had been most effective in developing themselves as a manager in their career so far (Table 5). The results largely reflect the findings from the Thomson survey (2001:11) that an MBA is less important to managers than work experience.

What has been most effective in terms of developing you as a manager to date?			
<i>UK respondents</i>		<i>Overseas respondents</i>	
Wide experience of challenging assignments	166	Wide experience of challenging assignments	158
Early exposure to responsibility	137	Early exposure to responsibility	110
Formal education	73	Formal education	95
A mentor/coach	42	A mentor/coach	51
A role model	35	Self Development techniques	33
Private study	29	A role model	27
Self Development techniques	27	Private study	26
Certain training programmes	25	Certain training programmes	21
Consultation & collaboration with work group	25	Consultation & collaboration with work group	24
Consultation and collaboration outside immediate work group	15	Networking	19
Membership of a professional association	13	Consultation and collaboration outside immediate work group	11
Networking	4	Membership of a professional association	10
Nothing specific	9	Nothing specific	12

Table 5

Respondents were asked to rank the three most important sources of new ideas in their day-to-day jobs. A multiplier was then used to reflect the ranking awarded by the respondent and to obtain the scores set out in Table 6.

Where Do You Get Most Of Your New Ideas From?			
<i>UK respondents</i>		<i>Overseas respondents</i>	
Colleagues at the same level	145	Colleagues at the same level	105
Management text books	87	Networking outside the organisation	101
Senior managers	81	Management text books	78
Networking outside the organisation	80	Senior managers	66
Professional journals	48	Business magazines	60
Business magazines	46	Professional journals	59

Table 6

There is an interesting difference here between the UK and overseas respondents. The overseas respondents are much less likely to rely on colleagues at the same level to provide ideas, and give much more emphasis to networking outside of the organisation. In contrast, the UK respondents are much more likely to look for new ideas from inside their own organisation than outside. According to Eraut et al. (2000:12) the majority of human learning at work occurs in non-formal contexts. Eraut et al.'s research revealed two important types of factor in what they call, 'non-formal' learning. One of these is learning from other people. This echoes the work of Etienne Wenger (2000) on 'Communities of Practice'. Often these communities or networks are ignored by the organisation since the way in which work and groups are perceived tends to reflect other organisational objectives, rather than foster communities or networks within which learning is actually likely to take place. In relation to this aspect of learning from others and developing networks and communities of practice outside the employing organisation we see quite distinct differences between the UK and overseas respondents. Whilst the UK respondents primarily learn from others within the same organisation the overseas respondents place much more emphasis on learning from others outside the organisation. What factors encourage or enable the overseas respondents to actively seek to network outside the organisation was outside the scope of this study, but must surely be a priority for further research.

A second factor identified by Eraut et al. (2000) as being an important source of 'non-formal learning' in the workplace is the challenge of the work itself - does the work that managers do provide them with the motive or opportunity to develop their skills? What is the quality of their 'experience'? In relation to this aspect of 'non-formal' learning Thomson et al. (2001) found that the main emphasis in methods of informal management development amongst their respondents appeared to be on the learning curve experienced through performing the job, followed by coaching, although descending in importance as managers took more senior roles. However, less than a third of organisations in the Thomson survey were seen to be providing opportunities such as mentoring, coaching and job rotation for development. In the current survey respondents were asked a number of questions about the type of development opportunities they had received (Table 7) and how valuable they had found them (Table 9).

Type of Development Opportunity Experienced By Individual Managers			
	(%)		(%)
Problem solving	68	Computer-based training	38
In-house training course	64	Visiting other workplaces	30
Off-site training	62	Special job placement	17
On-the-job learning	52	Work shadowing	13
Mentoring	42	Other	2

Table 7

As with the Thomson survey the respondents revealed that their employing organisations did not place a great emphasis on mentoring, coaching or job rotation or placement activity. Nevertheless, looking at the extent to which it is possible to gain experience within organisations through cross functional moves – something common within the Japanese management development system, the survey reveals a surprisingly high degree of cross functional moves within organisations. Although 61% of managers had been with their current organisation for more than 3 years, nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) had been in their current post for less than 3 years and 45% of respondents had held more than three posts already within their current organisation. This suggests quite a high degree of intra-firm mobility, but not necessarily cross functional activity which might lead to general all-round management capabilities. Respondents were therefore asked directly about their cross-functional experience. A large minority of respondents had obtained cross functional experience: 30% of respondents had worked in 3 or more different functional areas and 45% had worked in two or more different functional areas. This inter-function mobility contrasts strongly with the findings for example of Storey et al. (1997) who found that “beyond a certain level cross functional mobility was found to be too difficult in the UK. Requisite specialist knowledge would be too high. In any case most people’s prime orientation seemed to be to progress up their functional chimney” (1997: 75). These results suggest a degree of convergence in patterns of job moves and developmental experience across different countries and a reduction in the differentiation outlined in the Storey study. Cross industry experience was rather more limited: only 12% of respondents had worked in 3 or more different industries, although 40% had worked in at least two different industries.

Managers were also asked about their views on future trends in terms of intra-firm job moves, particularly in relation to horizontal and vertical moves and opportunities for job moves in general. The results are shown in Table 8.

Future Trends in Management Careers	
	(%)
Increase in horizontal moves	54
No change	31
Decrease in horizontal moves	15
Increase in vertical moves	17
No change	48
Decrease in vertical moves	36
Increase in opportunities	19
No change	42
Decrease in opportunities	39

Table 8

The survey results revealed low levels of satisfaction amongst respondents with in-house training programmes, but very high satisfaction with the development opportunities provided by problem solving and learning from experience working on the job. Problem solving was thus both a common and a popular development activity. It is difficult to know the extent to which this is actually a formalized process or something that is simply generated out of the managers day-to-day activities. Nevertheless, it was seen by respondents to be the single most valuable development activity undertaken. These results echo the findings of other researches who have argued that managers learn as much, and potentially more, from their day-to-day work experiences as they do from management training programmes and calls in to question the efficacy of many off-site training programmes where there is little opportunity to integrate the learning off-site with the day-to-day activities. This has been a common complaint of MBA courses and may help to explain why the respondents, whilst keen to complete their own studies would not necessarily recommend this route to their managerial colleagues (see Table 16).

Degree To Which Managers Found The Management Development Activity Valuable

	<i>Very valuable (%)</i>	<i>Fairly valuable (%)</i>	<i>Not valuable (%)</i>
Problem solving	68	28	4
On the job learning	59	33	7
Off-site training	47	46	7
Mentoring	44	41	15
Visiting other work places	39	50	11
In-house training	28	63	9
Shadowing	34	40	26
Computer based training	13	55	32

Table 9

Another way of judging how effective management development activities are is to find out whether on moving to a new job respondents felt prepared for the role in which they found themselves. Seventy six per cent of respondents said that in relation to their most recent job change they did have the necessary skills and abilities for their new role prior to starting. Given that the generic British approach to management development has often been characterised as one of ‘sink or swim’ (Storey et al. 1997) does this signify a more planned and strategic approach to management careers than we have been traditionally accustomed to? When asked ‘where were these new skills acquired?’ the answer most commonly given was through experience on the job, which suggests that the emphasis on problem solving and job experience are successfully equipping managers with the skills they need to progress through a range of different jobs within the organisation. Of course, a less optimistic interpretation might be that the skills required for the new job were not substantially different from the old job and further case-study based research would be needed to explore this in more detail.

Managerial Labour Markets

Labour market differences were one of the key differences noted by Storey et al. (1997) in their comparison of Japanese and British management development where age of entry into the labour market and the age at which managers took up their first

management position were seen to be important indicators of the amount of experience and development gained before being put into a management role. From the current survey we see that not only are the overseas respondents less likely to take up their first job before 18 years old, but they are almost twice as likely as UK managers to take up their first job after 25 years of age.

Age Took Up First Full Time Job		
<i>Age</i>	<i>UK respondents (%)</i>	<i>Overseas respondents (%)</i>
<18 years	9	5
18-20 years	13	12
21-25 years	70	67
25< years	8	15

Table 10

The most significant difference here between the UK and overseas responses is the number of managers who had their first managerial appointment before the age of 25 years. Ten per cent more UK respondents were in a managerial position before the age of 25 than the overseas respondents and more than twice as many overseas respondents as UK respondents only took up their first managerial appointment between the age of 30 and 35 years old.

Age Of First Managerial Appointment		
<i>Age</i>	<i>UK Respondents (%)</i>	<i>Overseas Respondents (%)</i>
<25 years	26	16
26-29 years	56	49
30-35 years	16	34
35 < years	2	1

Table 11

Storey et al. (1997) examining the difference between Japanese and UK patterns of management education and market entry also found that Japanese managers had much higher levels of educational achievement and that “not one of the Japanese managers in the sample had entered the labour market before the age of 18 and only a handful had entered by the age of 20, whereas this had been the experience of 45 per cent of the British” (1997:68). While these results show quite a different picture in terms of entry in to the labour market for the UK respondents, only 9% entering the labour market before 18, the differences between the UK and overseas respondents are nevertheless quite marked.

As well as looking at intra-firm moves the survey asked questions about mobility between organisations or inter-firm mobility. A slightly, but not significantly higher number of overseas respondents had worked for between 3 and 5 organisations than the UK respondents (51% and 48% respectively) whilst a slightly larger percentage of UK than overseas respondents had worked for only 1 or 2 companies (35% compared to 31%).

How Many Organisations Have You Worked For?		
<i>No. of Organisations</i>	<i>UK respondents (%)</i>	<i>Overseas respondents (%)</i>
1-2	35	31
3-5	48	51
5<	17	17

Table 12

The Thompson survey found quite high levels of mobility (managers had worked for an average of 4.2 companies) amongst its sample of MBA graduates and comparing this with data from the US suggested that “this seems to indicate a higher level of mobility amongst MBAs in Britain than the US, not what many people would have surmised” (2001:191). This might suggest either that there is a converging trend across countries towards increased mobility between organisations, or that the US is general, or Harvard MBAs in particular are somewhat out of step with other countries.

Extent of Management Development Activities

Respondents reported how many training or development days they personally experienced. The results show that most of the respondents enjoyed high levels of training in comparison with other groups of employees in general and other management samples in particular. For example, whilst overall a larger percentage of respondents than the Thomson et al. survey reported no training (7% compared to 4% in the Thomson survey) a much larger percentage of respondents reported both '6-10 days' (29% compared to 17% in the Thomson survey) and '10 or more days' training (31% compared to 13% in the Thomson survey).

How Many Training/Development Days A Year Do You Personally Have?	
<i>Days</i>	<i>(%)</i>
0	7
1-5	33
6-10	29
10+	31
Not stated	20

Table 13

Previous research has established a link between amount of training provision and size of organisation and of course, many of the respondents here were working for very large organisations (as we saw above, 65% of respondents worked for employers with 1,000 or more employees) which may account for the apparently high levels. Like the Thomson survey the number of days training experienced by respondents did not vary significantly according to business sector of their employer.

Responsibility for Training and Development

The Thomson survey (2001) noted that where senior management had responsibility for training more days were spent on training than where responsibility resided with the personnel or HR function or with the individual manager him or herself. Responsibility for training and development is therefore an important issue for further consideration. This survey sought to establish where responsibility for training and development currently rested in the organisation and whether managers believed that this was where it should rest?

A survey by the Institute of Personnel & Development (1999) found a heavy emphasis on devolved responsibility for performance to individual managers. Yet at the same time a high proportion of organisations also referred to an emphasis on 'more leadership from the centre'. In fact, about a third of organisations were making changes in both directions. The Thompson survey (2001:105) found that the some organisations in the past had placed prime responsibility on the individual, others on the organisation, but that there was now a shift toward more balanced sharing of responsibility between the organisation and the individual (2001:109).

From our respondents a rather different picture emerged. First, a large proportion of respondents (60% from the UK sample and 66% from the overseas sample) said that there was no involvement of either Senior Management or the Board in decisions about management development. Indeed only 18% of UK respondents and 6% of overseas respondents reported that Senior Management or the Board had any role, either solely or jointly in decisions about management development. In the UK management development was mostly likely to be the sole responsibility of the individual manager (30% of respondents compared with only 15% of overseas respondents) with the HR function taking something of a backseat (HR was solely responsible in only 3% of cases in the UK and 6% of cases overseas and having a shared responsibility in only 10% of cases in the UK and 12% of cases overseas). Furthermore 7% of UK respondents reported that no one in their organisation was responsible for management development which rose to 10% for overseas respondents.

Respondents were asked who they thought *should* have responsibility for management development within their organisation. Sixty five percent of UK respondents said that there should be a change as compared to 59% of the overseas respondents. In terms of the direction of those changes, of the UK respondents 30% (35% of overseas respondents) believed that the organisation should treat management development in a more strategic fashion by involving senior management/board and 13% (10% of overseas respondents) that individuals should be given more responsibility for their own development activities.

These results, particularly the lack of senior management/board responsibility for management development ought to be a cause of concern for those interested in seeing meaningful and sustained management development activities within organisations. As Thompson et al (2001:110) pointed out the consequences of senior managers not taking an active role in management development has serious consequences since both the amount of activity and the degree of impact of management development are enhanced where it is given priority by senior managers and subsequently embedded in formal policies. The survey addressed managers' perceptions of the profile of management development within their organisation and their department and attempted to ascertain how seriously management development was taken by people at different levels in the organisation. Forty six per cent of respondents felt that there was very little incentive for line managers in their organisation to give management development activities a high priority. Only 37% of managers agreed that management development had a high profile in their organisation and only 32% that it had a high profile in their department. Furthermore, 46% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that 'management development is very effective in my organisation'. Forty nine percent of respondents said that in their organisations managers were moderately concerned with developing their subordinates, whilst 33% said that in their organisations managers were only concerned with developing their subordinates to a small extent and 'when under pressure development tended to be neglected'.

Integrating Management Development

Research on adult learning suggests that a number of factors are important if learning is to be effective: timeliness and relevance of training is important as are opportunities for the transfer of learning to the workplace situation. Equally important, however, are mechanisms for review and feedback and reward and recognition for any behaviour/ attitude modification. In other words, how well integrated are training and development systems with the organisation's other HR policies and practices? In order to try to understand the degree to which management development is an integrated part of the overall management approach in the respondent's organisations they were asked questions about related policies, namely performance evaluation and pay.

As Kessler notes (2000:281) "the bad press received by individual performance-related [IPRP] pay does not appear to have dampened the more general enthusiasm or popularity for such schemes". The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has also argued that "contrary to the popular belief that organizations are becoming disillusioned with performance pay, and with IPRP schemes in particular, the results strongly suggest that the use of all forms of performance pay is growing" (1998:4). If this the case, are management development integrated with the organisation's performance evaluation systems? The results were rather surprising. First only 20% of respondents said that their performance was closely formally evaluated, 38% saying that it was only broadly evaluated and 25% that it was only occasionally evaluated. This shows little attempt to reward or recognise improvements in performance brought about through training and development activities. Second only 26% of UK respondents (30% of overseas respondents) said that their performance evaluation depended wholly or partly upon the way in which they developed their staff. Finally, as can be seen in Table 14 only 7% of respondents said that their pay was linked to some kind of formal performance appraisal.

On What Basis Are You Rewarded?	
	(%)
Company discretion	20
Annual award	27
Annual award tied to the profitability of the company	26
Pay linked to performance appraisal	7
Individual negotiation	7
Other	13

Table 14

There is thus little evidence of companies using what might be described as their most important communication system to emphasise the criticality of management development within the organisation.

If the respondents performance as ‘developers’ was not formally evaluated to what extent did managers nevertheless feel that developing others played a large part in their own roles as managers. If we look back to Table 2 we see that amongst overseas respondents it was seen to be 5th in the list of most important roles played in my current day-to-day job with a score of score of 105. In relation to the UK respondents however it was ranked as only 10th out of 14 possible roles with a score of only 46 points.

If companies wish their staff to take management development seriously then its importance needs to be communicated effectively. Rewarding development achievements is obviously one way of doing this. Another way is through the clearly communicated company objectives. Respondents were asked how certain they were of the priority objectives set by their organisation and the results are set out in Table 15. Only 29% of respondents reported that these objectives were clear and in writing. A further 20% said that they were usually clear, but were not written down and 26% of respondents said that there was some uncertainty or tensions about what the priorities were.

How Certain Are You Of The Priority Objectives Set By
--

The Organisation?	
	(%)
Clear, in writing	29
Written, but only a broad guide	25
Not written, but usually clear	20
Not written and some uncertainty	16
Tensions between what the organisation tells me to do and what it expects me to do	10

Table 15

Together all these factors provide evidence of little integration of development activities with other key personnel or human resource policies, which in turn suggests that management development is not seen by many organisations to be a key activity within the organisation, it is not the responsibility of senior management or dealt with at Board level and it is not something that is recognised or rewarded through appraisal and pay systems. It should be noted that these problems are not, however, confined to the UK respondents, they are common across the both the UK and overseas cohorts.

Membership of Professional Institutes

If organisations are still a long way from successful management development to what extent can managers look outside the organisation to professional bodies for direction and help? Thomson et al. (2001) comment on the growing importance of Professional Institutes in promoting continuing professional development. They argue that such institutes can contribute in four main ways: through their own qualifications; through the direct provisions of development; through influencing and sometimes providing vocational qualifications; and through influencing the curriculum of the profession when it is taught elsewhere. They note that the development of the professional strand within management has been significant, with considerable growth in the various institutes which cater for managers. Even so, and allowing for many members of other institutes in engineering, accounting, and other professions having a managerial role, they point out that a relatively small minority of all managers are members of any institute. Nevertheless, institutes are probably at their strongest position

yet in relation to the whole occupation of management and there may be an increase in membership as managers lose their expectation of corporate commitment to their longer term career, and search for an alternative career anchor.

There was little evidence to support arguments about the growing importance of professional institutes to the development of our respondents, even though relatively large numbers were members of a professional association (54%). As we saw in Table 5 both UK and overseas respondents placed professional institutes towards the bottom of their lists of factors that had helped them to become an effective manager and professional institutes were highlighted by a majority of respondents as playing the least important role in terms of their future on-going development.

Future Development Needs

One of the findings from the Thomson survey (2001) was that individual managers were clearly aware that the future will not be like the past and that learning would become more important. How far was this reflected amongst the respondents to this survey?

Respondents were asked about their own future learning needs and what they perceived to be the learning needs of other people at their level in their organisation. What is interesting here is not only the differences between the UK and overseas samples, but within those samples the differences in perception between the learning needs of the respondent and the learning needs of others at the same level. Respondents were asked to make two choices and the number of points in the table reflects a multiplier of 2 points for a first choice and of 1 point for a second choice.

Again the patterns are the same for both male and female respondents within the UK and overseas cohorts. The high scores for all round general management capabilities largely reflect the findings from the Thompson survey that managers wanted to “keep up-to date in a changing environment, main skills sought are general management skills, people skills come next quite a way ahead of financial skills. “(2001:89). Financial skills were not rated at all. The overseas cohort were more varied in their views about the

range of different skills required, although leadership skills came top of the list, it scored only 46 points in comparison with the UK cohort where it scored 49 points even though it was only 3rd choice. Inter-personal skills were rated as important, coming in front of an MBA qualification which was only 4th in the list. However, in relation to the development needs of others, all respondents were much less likely to select leadership skills (UK respondents 38 points and overseas respondents 36 points) which might suggest some recognition that leaders (the MBA graduates) need followers (their colleagues) and that not everyone therefore requires these types of skills, regardless of current fashions. Also interesting is the view of how far other colleagues might require an MBA qualification. Whilst completing their own MBA was high on the agenda for UK managers for other managers it did not rate at all and for the overseas cohort it rated only 15 points.

Indicate Your Own Two Most Important Future Learning Needs And The Two Most Generally Needed By Other Managers At Your Level In The Organisation			
<i>Own Needs – UK</i>		<i>Others - UK</i>	
MBA or equivalent	53	All round general management skills	75
All round general management skills	52	Communication skills	42
Leadership skills	49	Leadership skills	38
Foreign language skills	22	Familiarity with info. technology	34
Communication skills	21	Interpersonal skills	31
Interpersonal skills	16	Marketing skills	12
<i>Own Needs - Overseas</i>		<i>Others - Overseas</i>	
Leadership skills	46	All round general management skills	62
All round general management skills	44	Communication skills	41
Interpersonal skills	39	Interpersonal skills	38
MBA or equivalent	37	Leadership skills	36
Foreign language skills	24	Familiarity with info. technology	29
Familiarity with info. technology	17	MBA or equivalent	15
Table 16			

In terms of future trends respondents were strongly of the view that increasingly managers would need to share knowledge (56%) and that there would have to be an increase in the amount of education and training that managers received (40%) although opinions were more evenly split on whether or not there would be any increase in the

degree to which managers had a more rounded experience (39% increase, 44% no change) and whether or not there would be more specialists in organisations (38% more specialists, 34% no change). There was also less support for the idea that there will be more emphasis on learning in the future than is suggested by the Thomson survey with 45% saying that there would be an increase in learning but 41% predicting no change.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results presented here provide some evidence to support the claim by Thompson et al (2001:158) that “all parties agree on this, that when judged by volume alone, there is now a great deal more management development happening in most organisations”. The results also support their conclusions about the future. Our respondents predicted a growing need for managers to share knowledge and a likely increase in the training and development of managers. Coupled with high levels of educational achievement amongst our respondents the results seem to paint a much improved and very healthy picture of management development, with UK respondents being in no worse position than their overseas counterparts. In terms of quantity at least, management development has improved since the surveys of the mid-1980s. What is less clear is the extent to which this picture holds true for all managers (not just those who are or have studied for an MBA qualification). It is also not clear whether these activities will have a positive impact on organisations. Some caution is called for on several counts. In the first place we have to ask questions about the relevance of the training received and the degree to which what is learnt can be transferred to the working environment. Whilst the respondents clearly valued on the job experience, particularly through problem solving, they were much less satisfied with formal training programmes whether delivered off-site or in-house. In relation to the more informal, or rather ‘non-formal’ methods of development it was not clear whether these were a formally managed and planned process or whether they were the results of accident and chance. Yet it is these non-formal methods that are most highly rated by the respondents and organisations might be well advised to move beyond the idea of formal training programmes.

The second set of questions relate to the way in which development activities are recognised and rewarded by the organisation. How are training and development policies integrated with other HR practices and policies such as performance evaluation and reward, so that messages about the value of development are reinforced in a variety of ways. The shortcomings identified here in relation to the existence of such policies and their successful integration suggest that organisations have not adequately addressed these problems. It raises the commonly articulated but nevertheless difficult issue of how to incorporate the results of training within recognition and reward systems. Not only does it appear that appraisal systems are failing to bring the two issues together successfully, it suggests that appraisal systems are not even being used to evaluate performance for the majority of respondents. This begs the question of what is the organisation's response to training. Training may be both relevant and transferable to the job, but is it getting the recognition and reward that it deserves.

Closely related to this is the apparent failure of senior managers to make development a priority. This becomes clear in two ways. First, in the lack of senior management responsibility for the development and implementation of management development policy and second in the fact that a sense of being responsible for developing others is not successfully cascaded down through the organisation. Senior managers are not leading by example and management development is failing to achieve a high profile or become part of the culture of the organisation. This was also a problem identified in the Thompson survey (2001:154) where only one in three respondents claimed any developmental responsibilities at all and even more surprisingly more than one-quarter of MBAs in senior management positions said that they played no personal role in developing others. Of course, when analysing these figures we must also bear in mind how the changing nature of the management role may be affecting these findings. For example, nearly half of the respondents to this survey were responsible for managing fewer than five employees, many having no people management responsibilities at all. Yet in other ways the nature of management in Britain seems to have changed very little. For example, managing still appears to be a largely reactive activity. Respondents reported little space during the working day for time and reflection. Improving management is not simply about developing managers but about having adequate systems

and processes in place so that managers can go beyond 'fire fighting' in the daily roles. Perhaps we should be heartened by the extent of the desire amongst our respondents to spend more of their working time in thought and reflection.

Two other more general points deserve attention. First is the difference between the findings in this survey and the Thompson survey in relation to the role and influence of Professional Institutes. Whereas in the Thompson survey it was noted that there was a demand for courses from Professional Institutes from 50 per cent of their respondents, in this survey Professional Institutes were seen to be one of the least useful sources of new ideas and ways of meeting future development needs. Second is the information about managers' perceptions of their own and others future learning needs. Two key issues arise here; first the difference between managers own perceived needs and the perceived learning needs of others at the same level in the organisation and second the difference between the UK respondents and the overseas respondents on these points. This is one area in which there were noticeable differences between the two cohorts. It is of course difficult to know to what extent the present desire for leadership skills (at least in the UK) is fuelled by the current 'fashion' in some academic and policy circles or whether it represents a real felt need for a particular set of skills that these MBA students believe their MBA is unlikely to deliver. What is interesting is the extent to which respondents do not feel that their colleagues require these skills. The cynics amongst us might argue that even the most ambitious leader is aware that she or he requires someone to lead. Who is going to follow the leader if all managers become leaders?

On most other measures we might argue that the overwhelming picture is one of growing convergence between the management development practices in the UK and elsewhere. One exception to this pattern of convergence relates to the features of the managerial labour market in the UK where managers are appointed to their first full time position earlier than in other countries and where they take up their first managerial appointment earlier than in other countries, both of which have implications for the quality of educational and work experience that they bring to their jobs. Finally, a key difference emerged between the UK and overseas samples in relation to the importance of networking outside the organisation as a key source of new ideas. Given the growing importance attributed to networking in the knowledge economy this is one finding that

ought to be pursued in further. Which factors encourage or enable the overseas respondents to actively seek to network outside the organisation, in sharp contrast to the UK respondents, was outside the scope of this study, but must surely be a priority for further research.

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