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Team Learning, Work Behaviors, and Performance: A Qualitative Case Study of a Technical University in Ghana

Eli Ayawo Atatsi [1,2,*], Jol Stoffers [2,3,4] and **Ad Kil [5,6]**

1   Department of Management Sciences, Ho Technical University, Ho P.O. Box HP 217, Volta Region, Ghana
2   Faculty of Management, Open Universiteit of The Netherlands, 6419 AT Heerlen, The Netherlands; jol.stoffers@zuyd.nl
3   Research Centre for Employability, Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, 6131 MT Sittard, The Netherlands
4   Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA), Maastricht University, 6211 LM Maastricht, The Netherlands
5   Entrepreneurship, Governance and Stewardship Center, Nyenrode Business Universiteit, 3621 BG Breukelen, The Netherlands; a.kil@nyenrode.nl
6   Research Center, Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences, 7331 VZ Apeldoorn, The Netherlands
*   Correspondence: eatatsi@htu.edu.gh

Abstract: Higher education institutions in Ghana have a lot of expectations but appear to be facing contemporary challenges. Using five focus groups, this study explores individual learning, team learning, organizational citizenship behaviors, leader–member exchanges, innovative work behaviors, and performance in a Ghanaian technical university. Interactive exchanges suggest that individual social behaviors and leadership exchanges are important to higher educational institutions (HEIs). Both stakeholders and managers should activate these behaviors and leadership qualities to enhance performance. The inherent benefits help both faculty and HEIs fulfill their core mandates of teaching, research, and community service. With these, they remain globally competitive given challenges, dynamism, and expected performance from both faculty and HEIs as agents of socio-economic development. This study informs on underlying mechanisms that affect engagement in some of these behaviors, including the effect of culture as an inhibitor of women's innovative behaviors. Next to that, it provides both theoretical and practical evidence for stakeholders, especially HEI managers, regarding how to increase faculty members' efficiencies and performance. Finally, the study offers both recommendations and directions for future research.

Keywords: team learning; work behaviors; leader–member exchanges; qualitative design

1. Introduction

An essential aspect of higher education (HE) is its viability in promoting economic growth [1], but contemporary challenges and expectations place the abilities of higher education institutions (HEIs) under duress and further constrain their potential to achieve stakeholder demands [2,3]. Such demands call for effective human resource management through awareness and the harnessing of interpersonal and individual behaviors that promote performance. This is critical given institutional missions and the dynamism that is occurring in HEIs [4]. Research suggests a lack of consensus on factors that encourage employee performance [5], and thus human resource management literature proposes multiple variables when comprehending interpersonal behaviors and performance [6]. Exploration of human capital, behaviors, and employee attitudes might lead to valuable and development of human resources that represent sources of competitive advantage [7,8].

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) [9,10], leader–member exchanges (LMX) [11,12], both individual and team learning [13–15], and innovative work behaviors (IWBs) [16–18] promote performance. The literature suggests that social aspects of innovation [19], the social context created by team learning that improves learning [13,20,21], and OCBs that

allow cognitive and social structures of organizations to run smoothly [22,23] foster positive work interactions that promote work outcomes. High-quality exchanges similarly encourage reciprocal responses in the form of OCBs and improved performance [24,25]. However, little is known about the individual, social, and relational factors that enhance performance in HE [13,26–29].

A systematic review suggests that individual learning, team learning, OCBs, IWBs, LMX, and performance are underexplored in developing countries [30], especially in education. Some studies assess OCBs and LMX in Ghana, but concentration has been on other organizations in the banking, telecommunications, and energy industries [11,12,31,32], with limited studies of HE [26,33]. Individual and team learning, and IWBs, remain unexamined in Ghana, and studies of these variables from a qualitative perspective are limited [34,35], again especially in Ghana. Qualitative research offers in-depth, elucidative information on a problem by exploring, understanding, and explaining such problems through social relations [36]. Focus groups allow exploration of subjective meanings associated among social actors, who operate instinctively in the structure of discourse guidelines and enable content development of knowledge [37]; thus, spontaneously generating information at individual, interactive, and group levels [38]. Given the cognitive, social, and relational potentials of work-related behaviors in ensuring effectiveness and competitive advantages under globalization [13,23,28,39], there is a call for the use of qualitative approaches to assess these variables in HEIs.

This study uses a qualitative approach to assess individual concepts and their interdependence examined in extant studies to corroborate their results and uses subjectivity to get in-depth knowledge on the applicability of these concepts and discover underlying issues that affect these concepts in a Ghanaian technical university. This study thus represents the first extensive qualitative examination of individual learning, team learning, OCBs, LMX, IWBs, and performance in a HEI from an African perspective, the purpose of which is threefold. First, using focus group discussions, we assess the perceptions and viability of these concepts in an understudied context. Second, we contribute to literature on these variables from a Ghanaian technical university perspective. Third, to add to knowledge in this domain, we examine a model that includes leader–member exchange (LMX) and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB). Findings will help maximize the inherent potentials of faculty, which have implications for HEIs as stakeholders during socioeconomic development [1].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Individual Learning, Team Learning, and Innovative Work Behaviors

Individual learning is the way in which "individual or groups acquire, interpret or reorganize change or assimilate a related cluster of information, skills, or feelings. It is primary to the way in which people construct meaning in their personal organizational lives" [40] (p. 4). Human knowledge is fundamental at offering organizations strategic competitive advantages, and the ability to create and use human capital is achieved through an interplay of human agency and social structures [41]. This suggests an interest in development gained from both formal and informal modes of learning, through participation in conferences, training, seminars, workshops, and learning that occurs incidentally on the job, which affects both job satisfaction and performance [42]. The reconstruction of information, generation of shared meaning, and expounding of events [43] allow individuals to develop novel knowledge through interpretation that equips them with mental maps of the multiple fields in which they operate [44]. Research suggests that individual learning imparts organizational learning that, in the long term, helps the attainment of organizational goals [45,46]. Knowledge workers contribute to the development of the knowledge economy and thus must engage in constant learning [46,47].

Team learning connects individual learning to organizational learning [48]—the continual process of collective reflection and action characterized by exploring, reflecting, and discussing errors and unexpected results by soliciting feedback, and experiment-

ing/verifying on the team and as a team [49] (p. 353). Team learning enables growth and diversity regarding perspective, experience, and knowledge [13,50]. Teachers' team learning, through exchanges, experimentations, and reflections, relate to innovation [19].

Team learning has been assessed extensively as an antecedent of innovation [51], since social interactions enrich knowledge repertoires deployed during innovative projects, increasing innovation acceptance and acquisition of the resources necessary for innovation implementation. The social nature of IWBs offers interdisciplinary work teams opportunities to engage in IWBs, thus nurturing team members' team learning and innovative behaviors that are essential to managing challenges experienced during organizational practices [19,52]. Widmann and Mulder [19] assess the work teams of vocational educators in Bavaria, finding a positive relationship between team learning behaviors and IWBs.

Innovation in all its forms [53] is perceived as necessary to promote growth and helpful to organizations that seek to realign or rejuvenate their business models to remain competitive [54]. Sustaining a competitive edge thus depends on the promotion of employees' IWBs, through the maximization of employees' innovative ideas, actions, and skills, to augment innovation, which is critical to development [55,56]. Janssen [16] defines "IWB as the intentional creation, introduction, and application of ideas within a work role, group, or organization in order to benefit role performance, the group or the organization" (p. 288). IWBs comprise three behavioral stages—idea generation, promotion, and realization, and in a study of a Dutch financial firm, innovative behaviors related positively to performance [57].

2.2. Innovative Work Behaviors and Gender

Research on gender and innovation is gaining a broader scope, but females remain imperceptible as innovators [54,58]. Women underrate their performance and cognitive skills [59], and they are perceived to demonstrate less proclivity in comparison to men in managerial positions [60], which consequently lowers engagement in innovative behaviors. This might be attributed to cultural gender classification and social roles, and their influences on behaviors [61]. Research suggests that women's under-representation in HE is attributed to gender inequalities in society [62], partially due to socio-culturally prescribed factors and duties that affect their engagement at all levels of education [63]. Gender discrimination and other socio-cultural factors thus limit both the agency of women in HE and translation of their human capital (e.g., knowledge, skills, and expertise) into innovative outcomes. Lack of agency for women in HE generally, and in the African context particularly, shapes the association between individual learning and innovative work behaviors.

2.3. Leader–Member Exchanges and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Socially, leadership influences the interactional relationship between leaders and followers and affects followers' perceptual responses to a leader's reactions, behaviors, and attributes [64]. Leaders cannot achieve goals without relying on followers, and consequently, it is necessary for leaders to develop a relationship with followers [65]. Built on social exchange theory [66], LMX differentiates the types of quality exchanges between a leader and subordinate, reciprocal responses, and associated benefits for both parties [24,67]. Employees in high-quality relationships with their supervisors are able to gain more of a supervisor's support, resources, and attention than are those in low-quality relationships, and high-quality relationships result in work-related outcomes, such as task performance and OCBs [25,68].

Bolino et al. [69] acknowledge the role of OCBs in "the creation of structural, relational, and cognitive aspects of social capital" (p. 517), and its influence on performance [10,26]. An OCB is an "individual behavior that is discretionary not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" [70] (p. 4), consisting of altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Research suggests that high-quality exchanges have positive

effects on OCBs [24,27]. Measuring OCBs in HEIs is difficult because, per the diverse specialized qualifications of faculty, they offer many imperceptible resources and outcomes in the promotion of the ideals of HEIs [4]. Power [27] argues that since academic faculty members possess expertise in distinct subject areas, for which they show passion and professionalism, leaders can foster high-quality relationships by identifying the interests of individual faculty members and then drawing on their passion to foster a sense of OCBs.

Research on LMX and OCBs as individual variables among other constructs is increasing in Ghana [11,26,33], but little research links the two and other mechanisms, such as culture, and the link has received no attention from a Ghanaian perspective. Most research on LMX and OCBs is conducted in western culture, characterized by low power distance and individualism [71], but results might differ in collectivist and power distance cultures [64,72]. The current study assesses academia, examining the effect of culture on the LMX and OCB association because an individual's cultural value orientation affects perceptions [73], and more so in Ghana, with its patriarchy and collectivism [74,75].

2.4. Work/Organizational Tenure and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Tenure has been used as a proxy for organizational tenure, job tenure, occupational tenure, and work experience in the literature, most commonly as a moderator [31,76]. Although employee tenure plays a role in human resources management, inconsistent results are common regarding how it affects performance [77,78]. We assess work tenure and organizational tenure. Tenure affects individuals differently [79]. Ucanok [80] argues that an understanding of tenure helps to explain the dynamics related to OCBs in facilitating an organization's strategy. We define work tenure as the length of time an individual has worked in an occupation or workforce [77,79], and organizational tenure refers to the span of employment in an organization [81–83].

Empirical evidence supports relationships between work tenure and OCBs and between organizational tenure and OCBs, but results are inconsistent [78], which might stem from the theoretical underpinnings of these relationships. Ng and Feldman [82] argue that longer-tenured workers acquire greater human and social capital, enabling them to acquire firm-specific knowledge, tune their sense of attachment and belonging to the organization, and foster social links with coworkers both in and outside of their departments. Extensive knowledge of an organization, coupled with social links created in the long-term, stimulates OCBs. Huang et al. [84] argue that to prove their abilities, skills, and association with an organization, young employees have more enthusiasm and optimism toward work, which encourages citizenship behaviors. Dirican and Erdil [85] assess academics in Turkish universities, finding a positive relationship between work tenure and OCB, especially among older, tenured employees. In a study of nurses in Texas, Kegans et al. [79] found that only civic virtue relates to work experience. Delle and Kumassey [31] assess Ghanaian banks, finding a positive relationship between organizational tenure and OCBs. Sethi [86] assesses telecom workers in Punjab but found that more experienced workers engage in fewer OCBs than less experienced workers do. The current study assesses whether any similar theoretical underpinnings affect the influence of both work and organizational tenure on OCB in a technical university, and its significance to HE.

3. Methods

To gain deeper insights into OCBs, LMX, individual learning, team learning, IWBs, and performance, and to investigate in greater detail their individual, group, and interactive perceptions [38,87], five focus group discussions were conducted using participants from a technical university (see Table 1 for the participant demographics).

Table 1. Participant demographics.

Departments	Number of Participants	Percent	Gender		Age		
			M	F	30–40	41–50	51–60
A	6	20.69	6	–	1	2	3
B	6	20.69	2	4	1	2	3
C	7	24.14	5	2	1	3	3
D	4	13.79	4		–	3	1
E	6	20.69	6		2	2	2
Total	29	100	23 (79.31%)	6 (20.69%)	5	12	12

Aside from gaining information and observing participants' attitudes and expressions during discussions, FGDs are inexpensive and the least time-consuming method of collecting, collating, synthesizing, and synchronizing information from participants as compared to individual interviews or observations. The purpose of using a technical university is to explore responses on these variables within a specific domain to be able to generate hypotheses and to give a precise report on a specific case. Again, qualitative single-case studies serve as means of tapping into the workability of theories, and subjectively valuing cognition to allow for critical analysis of distinct issues. Similarly, though some fragmented quantitative research on some of these variables assesses the Ghanaian context, no study assesses OCBs, IWBs, team learning, individual learning, LMX, and performance qualitatively in a university context to broaden the scope and understanding of these variables. Participants were approached and informed of the need for focus group discussions and their convenience, and we solicited their participation in the discussions. To preserve homogeneity, the focus groups were formed and conducted based on departments. Using participants from the same department fostered homogeneity, group synergy, and group dynamism since participants feel more comfortable articulating their views among colleagues, with whom they share similar characteristics [88]. Grouping participants of different ranks was simple because collegial culture allows lecturers to convey opinions without intimidation, irrespective of gender or cultural inclinations. Given the socio-cultural background of participants, it may be argued that the female faculty's full participatory abilities might be compromised due to the grouping of both genders in groups unlike using single-sex groups to source information from local community groups. It is worthy to note that definite social settings play key roles in influencing discussions. Female faculty in Ghanaian academic institutions, regardless of sociocultural roles are assertive and through resilience and self-efficacy, willfully and steadily work their way to higher echelons in academia where they are highly respected and valued. Thus, they freely air their views among male colleagues, more so, where the concepts under discussion are of importance to both genders. Participants, lecturers with second and doctoral degrees, were drawn from five departments (i.e., hospitality, automobile, agro-enterprise, management sciences, and building technology) in three faculties. Four were male dominated, accounting for the high number of male participants. It was difficult to get people from other departments to participate due to individual schedules. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Discussions were led by a moderator and lasted 45 minutes to 1 hour 45 minutes. Conducted in English, the discussions were audio recorded and transcribed manually by an assistant. A semi-structured interview guide was used during moderation. Saturation was achieved after the fourth and fifth groups because no new perceptions emerged [89,90].

To produce cogent, replicable deductions, content analysis was conducted [91,92], and to ensure an accurate reflection of information during analysis, data were transcribed verbatim, which were compared with notes taken during group sessions. Comparable to other qualitative methods when analyzing data, content analysis is preferable because it ensures the recording of reliable and valid information that can be classified under the identified themes and relationships in the study. In line with recommendations on analyzing content from focus group discussions, several steps were followed [88,93]. To

familiarize ourselves with the data, we listened to the audio recordings to ensure that we understood and could verify, decipher, and write down the information that evolved during the discussions. Transcripts were read several times, and where information was unclear, the audio was replayed. Each group discussion was analyzed systematically, and information was identified and categorized under questions used during collection. Information from all five units was then grouped under various themes, and data were sorted by identifying responses to questions. Similar and different responses were noted and grouped, and those that reflected issues discussed best were used as illustrative quotes to support the themes. Questions were based on several themes, developed using validated scales and an extant systematic literature review [30].

(1). Individual and team learning activities that focus on teaching, research, and community service, including benefits and how team learning enhances IWBs:

i   Do you think individuals are engaging activities that promote individual learning? What are lecturers doing to enhance their individual learning capacities?
ii   How is team learning reflected in teaching, research, and community service?
iii   Do you think lecturers engage in team learning?
iv   Does team learning help us to be innovative?
v   Does team learning help us promote IWBs?
vi   What are the benefits of team learning?

(2). Gender issues related to individual, team learning, and innovative work behaviors, and the influence of culture on gender roles in relation to these variables:

i   Of the two sexes (i.e., men and women), who is more prone to innovativeness?
ii   Do you think our traditional norms have any effect on the innovative behaviors of women?
iii   Has culture any effect on women's role in team learning?

(3). Issues related to LMX, OCBs, and performance in the university, and the effects of culture on LMX:

i   What do you perceive to be the quality of the relationship in terms of trust, respect, and obligation between you and your supervisor/follower?
ii   Is the respect between you and your supervisor/subordinate reciprocal?
iii   Is your leader/follower aware of the challenges associated with your work in terms of teaching and research?
iv   Can you vouch for your leader/follower in his/her absence regarding a decision he/she had taken?
v   What are the implications of the quality of relationships with our leaders/followers?
vi   Does our relationship with our leaders affect our performance of OCBs?
vii   Does our African culture affect our relationship with a leader/follower?

(4). Issues related to OCBs and performance:

i   Do we perceive lecturers as undertaking OCBs in the institution?
ii   Do we see lecturers participating in the socio-political life of the university?
iii   Are OCBs significant to Ghanaian higher education institutions?
iv   What are the benefits of OCBs in the university?
v   Do OCBs affect performance?

(5). Tenure and OCBs:

i   Do you think that as employees' tenure increases, they increase their engagement in OCB?
ii   Do you perceive lecturers who have been engaged by the university over a short period as approaching their duties with more enthusiasm and engaging in more OCBs than those who have been with the university for a longer time?

Topics that emerged included quality leadership, promoting individual and team learning, team teaching, team dynamics, gender issues, the effect of culture on women and leadership relationships, OCBs and motivation, organizational fairness, organizational politics, tenure and performance, OCBs as enhancers of teamwork and institutional visibility, tenure, and engagement in OCBs.

4. Results

4.1. Individual and Team Learning

From the interactions, a consensus was evident regarding participants' individual learning from diverse sources, which improved knowledge and broadened their scope, corroborating findings from Antonacopoulou [94] and Hameed and Waheed [95]. Sources of learning included seminars, workshops, conferences, studying current trends in relation to subject areas, team learning, learning from students who returned from internships (i.e., demonstrating skills that differed from what they had been taught in school or of what the lecturer was unaware), teaching, interactions with students, assignments and brainstorming sessions, the Internet, news, and reading.

Participants intimated that although team learning occurs, it is not practiced as expected. McCarthy and Garavan [21] support this assertion; although learning occurs at the team level, team learning is a neglected area of human resources development. Consensus suggested that team learning occurs through research teams and community service. A female participant from Department B responded:

> Regarding research group, most of us are now coming together to determine which topics relate to two or three members that can come together, in order to find something to write on. Team learning, yes, I may say but we need to actually deepen it.

However, variation in answers was apparent regarding its focus on teaching. One group acknowledged that due to the peculiarity of some subject areas, and differences in the subjects that they handle individually, they neither learn from colleagues nor engage in team teaching to compel them to team learn. Other participants acknowledged that although their courses share interdependencies and similarities, and since lecturers come from disparate tertiary backgrounds but teach the same subjects, they sometimes engage in team learning to update their knowledge. Participants also engage in team learning through training, workshops, seminars, and conferences to improve as lecturers.

Participants' views were unanimous regarding team learning in relation to research, highlighting some of its benefits. They attested that through research teams, innovative ideas emerge, which improves individual skills and capabilities, aids in achieving synergy and networking, and consequently enables people to get publications. By sharing ideas during team learning, lecturers take decisions on practical lessons to students and decide on best practices to make students marketable in the industry. Through interaction, team learning facilitates the cross-fertilization of ideas and IWBs, and the benefits are team dynamism and improved performance. Interaction also creates synergy that enables the development of new teaching methods and strategies, and better learning outcomes, when teaching students. Some participants expressed their views on how they engage in team learning and its association with innovative behaviors. A response in support of this from a participant in Department E is:

> In a training workshop this semester, we were grouped into teams to work. As we went through that process, I came up with a lot of innovation for my teaching. Innovation is about ideas, and you can't get ideas if work solely without brainstorming with others. Whatever your colleague has, he brings it up and you wonder, "O really!". So, the more you have interactions and inclusions, the more you are able to put up together anything innovative.

Participants reported that team learning generates more IWBs than individual learning does. From interactions, it is obvious that team learning creates the social context through which individual ideas, opinions, and insights are shared, gain support, and ultimately are refined to generate innovative outcomes versus individual perspectives [13]. This is unsurprising because, in collectivist cultures, team members value social relationships, peer support, and workplace harmony [96]. Participants' views on team learning hold much significance in HEIs regarding teaching, research, and community service. Benefits associated with team learning, inferred from the interactions, accord with the idea that team

learning promotes individual learning, and circumstantially predisposes learning-oriented individuals' desires/characteristics to engage in learning [97]. However, one challenge regarding team learning and research was the non-recognition of lecturers for promotion concerning co-authored publications, especially when research does not reflect a person's professional area. This inhibits team learning at the institution, despite team learning crossing disciplinary boundaries and helping to integrate knowledge [13].

4.2. Gender Issues Related to Individual, Team Learning, and Innovative Work Behaviors

Participants reported dissenting views regarding gender and both IWBs and team learning. Some reported that men were more proactive at IWBs, due partially to the risks involved; others proposed that for women, and others said it depended on the individual. Still others reported that women sometimes drive innovation but are unable to complete the task due to cultural differences and the roles women are expected to play in society. However, this trend is expected to change since more women are acquiring education. Some participants alluded to the non-engagement of women regarding innovative behaviors, due to basic training from the onset. Views also diverged but were more in favor of men than women, with some participants reporting that women engage in more knowledge-sharing. Most participants, however, agreed that culture and tradition inhibit women from engaging in IWBs and team learning, though they do their best to engage in individual learning. Buttressing this, a participant in Department B had this to say:

> I think we train girls and daughters to be more careful, and to be ladies. They are trained not to do some things beyond certain boundaries defined by the society or culture. For all you know, the underlying issues may be culture, socialization, and upbringing within an African and Ghanaian context, a patriarchal system where the men are on top. Of course, there are changes that occurring within our societal system but we are still holding on to the cultural norms and societal expectations. When it comes to the cultural side of it, it's said the longer a woman stays in school, the later she marries. So today there is pressure on women to get married.

Culture appears to hinder women in Ghanaian society from attaining their full innovative potential, which corroborates Ng et al.'s [98] argument that from a social role theory perspective, stipulated cultural gender roles pressure individuals to follow traditional behaviors, and failure to conform might result in sanctions. These findings also support Nwajiuba [99], who suggests that low numbers of women in education is the result of traditions, expectations, and both social and cultural beliefs.

4.3. Leader–Member Exchanges, Organizational Citizenship Behaviors, and Performance in the University

Participants acknowledged quality exchanges with their immediate supervisors, some of whom recognized their potential and readiness to engage subordinates in duties as expressed by a participant in Department A:

> My boss and I enjoy a very good working relationship in terms of trust, communication, and involvement.

Participants expressed divergent opinions on degrees of exchanges related to trust, respect, and vouching for leaders/followers in terms of decision communication and involvement. A polarized work environment had paved the way for mistrust, which led to the formation of cliques. Some reported that supervisors' or followers' decisions that contravened stipulated guidelines and statutes were difficult to defend, and others reported that they would vouch for supervisors/followers only if they were well informed of a decision. Some participants said that good knowledge of the personality behind a decision enables support for a decision-maker. For example, if a decision is respectable, is work related, and demonstrates the decision-maker's competence and dynamism, vouching for a supervisor/follower is simple. A participant in Department B intimated that:

> We have a lot of mistrust issues and because of that, there are a lot of groupings. No, it's as if they know that you are the only person who can do this job, that

is when they come smiling at you. Immediately that job is done, you are out of their books until another of such jobs comes.

Some participants acknowledged that they or others will do everything to be acknowledged by a supervisor, but once someone contradicts a leader's view, the employee might be observed in a different light. Asked whether Ghanaian culture influences relational leadership, some participants expressed disagreement, attributing it to a display of leadership skills; not supporting or defending your subordinate/leader in his/her absence shows poor leadership skills or incompetence. Participants reported indirectly that they are concerned about leader–member issues, with palpable sentiments of organizational politics, organizational fairness, favoritism, collectivism, and paternalism apparent.

Discussing whether Ghanaian culture plays a role in LMX, one participant in Department C reported:

> In the Ghanaian or African culture, your father is your father. You must always respect your father and this is reflected in work relations. Our culture has an effect on us, if your boss is wrong, you can't tell him, "Big man, you are wrong." You must find a way of talking to him or find an intermediary to talk to your boss. The culture has an influence on the relationship between you and your boss.

Members of Department D agreed that high-quality leader exchanges encourage OCBs and thus performance and that such relationships facilitated the growth of the department, encouraged department members to upgrade academically, and allowed departmental members to keep the department operating when other members were on study leave. Those present had to take on additional duties to fill the void that absent members left, and they engaged in OCBs not because staff members wanted to be viewed favorably by leaders. Despite challenges associated with LMX and OCBs, participants' responses suggest that quality exchanges led to OCBs, which in turn promoted performance [24,25,33]. The discussions also elucidated perceptions of LMX from a societal perspective. In this collectivistic, high power distance culture, although lecturers were responsive to leadership, their susceptibility to such exchanges might have been affected by respect for authority, collective interests, and role-based loyalty, which might have influenced employees' attitudes and behaviors [71]. Another topic that emerged was leadership from a paternalistic viewpoint, which corroborates research that suggests that paternalism is associated with LMX, and that paternalism links with ethics in collectivist societies [100].

4.4. Organizational Citizenship Behaviors and Performance

Participants reported that OCBs occur in the institution and that they are beneficial to HEIs because they enhance performance. Such behaviors help an institution in terms of economic viability because as lecturers undertake tasks, they minimize costs, and OCBs enhance both teamwork and collective growth. A participant in Department B reported:

> There is the need to be fair to all faculty members, even if you are taking decisions that may not be fair to the others. People will then be willing to go beyond what they are required to do officially. To me, there is an element of performance in trying to save cost. Sometimes as I walk around the V-block and department, I am compelled to turn off fans and switch off lights that have been left on. It's not my duty, but when, I perform that act, then the university's utility bill decreases. Performing such behaviors to me will help the institution in terms of performance, and cost reduction since no subversion is coming from government. If people exhibit these behaviors, then it enhances the economic viability of the institution as well as making money available for other things. It also enhances relationships that foster collective growth. We can't grow individually; we can grow as a team. I'm ready to help others and others are also ready to help others.

Engagement in OCBs appears to be affected by contextual organizational factors such as LMX, organizational climate, and fairness, which require attention. One solution is a work environment in which leaders assist with incidents where otherwise positive OCBs

lead to apprehensions at work [68]. Managers should preserve good workplace associations with workers, preferably through greater informal interactions.

4.5. Tenure and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

One participant in Department E reported that engagement in OCBs does not depend on the number of years an individual has worked, but on an individual's innate characteristics and personal experiences:

> It depends as an individual. We have our individual traits, characteristics; someone will be here one year, two years, twenty years and still show the same traits.

This is unsurprising since according to Kegans et al. [79], tenure has diverse effects on individuals, and Sethi [86] argues that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations affect OCBs. Further discussion on organizational tenure and OCBs, however, revealed that longer-tenured workers are predisposed to greater to OCBs than young-tenured ones, due to their investments and attachment to the organization: From Department B a participant reported:

> I strongly feel that the younger ones have not investment much into the institution. I don't see them exhibiting much of those behaviors. They appear to be testing the system to find out if they will stay longer. I have made an investment ten years longer so I'm concerned about the way things would be before I retire but the young ones are not committed. You see, some of our colleagues never exhibited those behaviors. They will not be even participate in anything. It's like they are not really part of the department.

These findings corroborate Ng and Feldman's [101] argument that since organizational tenure is associated with age, the types of performance that long-tenured employees enjoy and excel at might differ from that of younger ones. Longer-tenured employees might also engage in OCBs due to a sense of belonging and attachment to the organization, and because of good relationships created with coworkers [102]. Kegans et al. [79] argue that employees with longer tenures place more value on their work, which encourages OCBs. Another aspect related to tenure and mentoring that emerged was the fact that mentoring younger employees does not depend on how long or short someone has been with the organization as buttressed from a participant in Department E:

> That does not necessarily mean that because you are old you can mentor; a mentor should have certain characteristics. You can be still old and still young and be in need of mentoring. So, it's not age alone. Some people can be young but learn fast, others are old but show young people's behavior.

5. Discussion

5.1. Recommendations

Participants offered recommendations that they believe, when implemented, help technical universities grow. Lecturers should self-develop through learning and team learning should be encouraged as a way of helping one another, and faculty should avail themselves to team learn. One way to do that is the creation of departmental learning teams and platforms. Teams should help individuals achieve both individual and corporate goals, and the system should encourage innovation to forge ahead. Faculty members should respect their leaders, which should also be reciprocated.

Management should ensure that motivation should be inherent in the system, leadership should be friendly and include fairness, and respect should be reciprocated. Orientations are necessary to prepare staff members psychologically for knowing that each person's quota enriches the team. Similarly, a gender desk in technical universities, and more gender-sensitive policies, would encourage women to participate more in team learning. Management needs to ensure that the system works, and the work environment must be more cordial. Policies should suppress bad practices, and promote good practices, transparency, and collegiality. One participant in Department C summarized his recommendations regarding the need for teamwork and the need to pay attention to human resources:

Leaders should also know that the whole is a teamwork. In our efforts to produce students who are competitive, employable by the industry, and other team players, if you don't see the role that somebody is playing as a contributory factor, what exactly are you trying to do? You can't do it alone. The human resource makes one organization more competitive than the other. They can have the same equipment, the same facilities, but zeal, enthusiasm, and all these things, will make one organization competitive than the other.

Understanding these variables in the context of the social and psychological environment [96] in which research is conducted is important as it brings attention to the critical roles these variables play in helping attain the ideals and performance of faculty and Tus as a whole. Team learning as seen from the discourse, though emerging, needs to be promoted since it has several benefits. According to Bui et al. [20], comparatively, team learning is undertaken effectively in individualist versus collectivist nations, calling for research on this topic. Therefore, given the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of team learning, local, national, and international team learning groups can be formed to generate and develop novel, technically oriented education programs. Innovative and novel programs that address these three levels of content influence socio-economic development. Such collaborations, especially with international partners, will help technical universities in Ghana gain broader perspectives and implement initiatives on technical university education regarding teaching and faculty roles in an era in which competency training is being championed. Such team learning collaborations develop innovative solutions to challenges and complexities that might ensue during technical universities' maturation. This accords with McGregor's [103] and Mebane and Galassi's [104] argument that transdisciplinary collaboration entails the interaction of cognitive and social factors, which promote divergent views, build capacity, and yield integrated results.

Leadership is vital in liaising the synergies of employees positively toward performance when they experience quality relationships from their supervisors. Against the backdrop of a high power distance and collectivist society, leaders must be able to direct relationships and enable employees to have opportunities to air concerns and grievances good for the collective interests of all. Such opportunities could foster OCBs. Likewise, leadership roles must be played fairly.

Since women are noted to drive innovations but lack the exigencies to discover full potentials due to roles and cultural inhibitions, women in academia must be given ample opportunities to develop themselves and others, mentor and train younger female faculty to excel.

5.2. Implications

5.2.1. Theoretical Implications

This qualitative study adds to a better understanding of LMX and OCB theories through participants' explanations on what these theories constitute as well as making several contributions to individual learning, team learning, OCB, LMX, IWB, and performance literature. An inference could be made on social exchange theory (SET) in reference to how good relations between leaders and subordinates enhanced performance.

5.2.2. Practical Implications

This study provides practical evidence for stakeholders, especially HEI managers, regarding how to increase faculty members' efficiencies in meeting the pressures and requirements that HEIs experience when fulfilling their mandates, surmounting challenges, and remaining globally competitive. The research contextualizes these variables in an African HEI, helping to understand these concepts in a unique culture and offering insights into relationships among these concepts in a technical university.

Managers and stakeholders can derive knowledge on how best to promote and organize team learning activities to help the development of employees and organizations. Team learning should be encouraged as it develops knowledge, teamwork, and innova-

tiveness. Technical university managers should reconsider interdepartmental research for promotion because team learning is participative and boundaryless.

To facilitate more participation by women during team learning, and to be mindful of cultural backgrounds and implications for women, managers should empower women faculty members to use a community-service approach to learn, brainstorm, and advocate gender issues. Team learning develops policies that leverage education ratios between men and women, especially in rural Africa, which fosters systematic, dramatic achievements in technical education, which is male dominated. Women in Technical Education Development (WITED) in technical Ghanaian universities has begun implementing programs that sensitize girls in first- and second-cycle schools, but there is an impetus to enable women to think beyond the glass ceiling. Gender balance should be considered during team compositions for community service since diverse socialization and career backgrounds foster better knowledge and innovative outcomes.

Leadership is essential to the survival of growing organizations such as technical universities; it coordinates resources and ensures that stakeholders derive maximum benefits from a work environment. Quality LMX is, therefore, primary to not only fostering reciprocal behaviors but identifying innovative qualities in organizational members that enhance performance [105,106]. Leaders must build trust and respect, and effective communication, between themselves and followers. Leaders and followers should make defensible decisions in the collective interests of other organizational members, and organizational fairness regarding the way all categories of employees are treated should be the norm.

OCBs offer benefits to HEIs, but context commonly hampers engagement in them. It is therefore prudent for HEI managers to look critically at, for example, organizational fairness, politics, and climate if the benefits of OCBs are to be maximized. Managers should pay attention to employees' tenure irrespective of years spent in an organization to be able to encourage and utilize their OCBs in promoting organizational goals.

5.3. Future Research

This study suggests that the investigated variables, when used fully, are beneficial to both faculty members and institutions, but are hindered by some organizational factors. Future studies can examine constraints on the performance of OCBs whether OCBs are voluntary, reciprocal, or compulsory. Another area of possible research is the examination of types of OCBs (e.g., compulsory) in HEIs in light of organizational fairness, procedural justice, and organizational climate. The influence of team learning activities on research is worth examining; as well as enhancing IWBs through team learning of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teams on novel and innovative programs in HEIs. Future research should consider collecting data from faculty in other universities and undertake a comparative analysis to know whether all cases have the same or different experiences.

5.4. Conclusions

Focus group discussions were used to investigate the viability of individual learning, team learning, OCBs, LMX, IWBs, and performance in a technical university context, with findings corroborating results from extant studies, but also revealing underlying issues that are of interest to HEIs. Team learning, LMX, OCB, and IWB are of the utmost importance in promoting university lecturers' performance of the core mandate of teaching, research, and community service. Though men engaged more in team learning activities than women, women had the propensity to excel in team learning as well when the opportunities are rife and as such must be encouraged. Paying attention to employees' tenure in human resource functions is key in the activation of OCBs. The viability of these variables in a Ghanaian context in promoting university mandates is essential to the social, economic, and political development of HEIs. This study contextualizes these variables in an African HEI, helping to understand these concepts in a unique culture, and also offers insights into relationships among these concepts in a technical university.

5.5. Limitations

Although arrangements were made with some participants, who were given reminders of their agreement to participate, some did not arrive at the designated time, accounting for the number of groups and low numbers of participants in some groups. However, Guest et al. [90] argue that 80% of findings regarding themes are discoverable with two to three group discussions, and 90% with three to six. After using five homogenous groups during the study, we contend that the discussions uncovered issues related to the themes, and they add to the literature on these variables. Single, exploratory, single-case studies have been criticized for their subjectivity and lack of external validity, but they have the merits of practicalizing theories, helping to make explanatory hypothetical inferences, and enabling sequential deductive analyses of evaluated cases [107].

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