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## ARTICLE

# LEADERSHIP EDUCATION: WHO ENROLLS AND HOW IT HELPS

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### INTRODUCTION

Despite the endurance of the lock-step model of associate advancement, some law firms are integrating behavioral skills, or competencies, into their evaluation and even promotion systems.<sup>1</sup> Behavioral competencies refer to observable behaviors that tend to generalize across job families, and typically include interpersonal skills such as leadership, teamwork, and communication.<sup>2</sup> Corresponding with the increased integration of competency models, interpersonal competency training programs within law firms are also on the rise.<sup>3</sup> Yet despite the increased emphasis on behavioral com-

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1. See HEATHER BOCK & ROBERT RUYAK, CONSTRUCTING CORE COMPETENCIES: USING COMPETENCY MODELS TO MANAGE FIRM TALENT 1–4 (2009); see also The NALP Foundation for Law Career Research and Education, Research Findings: Survey of Law Firm Use of Core Competencies and Benchmarking in Associate Compensation and Advancement Structures (July 2009), <http://www.nalpfoundation.org/uploads/PDCCompetenciesandBenchmarksSurveyResultsFINAL.pdf> [hereinafter *NALP Research Findings*] (detailing law firm's use and implementation of core competencies in the workplace).

2. See Emil Rodolfa et al., *A Cube Model for Competency Development: Implications for Psychology Educators and Regulators*, 36 PROF. PSYCHOL.: RES. & PRAC. 347, 348–49 (2005).

3. See Mike Jay Garcia, *Key Trends in the Legal Profession*, 71 FLA. B.J. 16, 16–17 (1997).

petencies and behavioral competency training within law firms, little is known about the effectiveness of competency training. We sought to investigate two issues central to behavioral competency training and development in a large law firm. First, we assessed the extent to which a training program on leadership skills actually enhanced behavioral competency development. Second, we assessed the extent to which two personality traits—locus of control and self-efficacy—influenced self-selection into elective leadership training in this law firm.

In the following sections, we first review the rise of behavioral competencies and behavioral skills training in law firms. We then review how personality traits are expected to influence attendance in elective training. Following our review of the literature on training and self-selection into training contexts, we provide a summary of our research methodology. Finally, we discuss our results and the implications of our findings.

## I. THE RISE OF BEHAVIORAL SKILLS TRAINING

Legal education has traditionally relied upon lectures and the Socratic Method to instill aspiring attorneys with the knowledge and skills necessary for a legal career. However, a growing number of academics and practitioners assert that while knowing the law is important, attorneys also need to have mastery over other non-legal skills to effectively practice law.<sup>4</sup> To bridge this gap, law students and young attorneys should receive behavioral skills training in order to make them client-ready<sup>5</sup> as they embark upon their careers.

Because of this trend, there is an increased emphasis on developing law students' and attorneys' behavioral skills and competencies<sup>6</sup> such as management,<sup>7</sup> leadership,<sup>8</sup> teamwork, and client relationship skills.<sup>9</sup> For example, law schools are now encouraged to better develop students' behav-

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4. See Paula A. Patton, *Large Law Firms and Their Role in the Educational Continuum of Lawyers*, 33 *FORDHAM URB. L.J.* 233, 235–36, 238 (2005); see also Rodney J. Uphoff et al., *Preparing the New Law Graduate to Practice Law: A View From the Trenches*, 65 *U. CIN. L. REV.* 381, 385–88 (1997).

5. See Neil J. Dilloff, *The Changing Cultures and the Economics of Large Law Firm Practice and Their Impact on Legal Education*, 70 *MD. L. REV.* 341, 354–55 (2011); see also Ann Massie Nelson, *Setting a Course for the Future*, 74 *WIS. LAW.*, March 2001, at 49–50.

6. See Dilloff, *supra* note 5, at 354–355.

7. See John O. Sonsteng et al., *A Legal Education Renaissance: A Practical Approach for the Twenty-First Century*, 34 *WM. MITCHELL L. REV.* 303, 382–85 (2007).

8. See Deborah L. Rhode, *Lawyers as Leaders*, 2010 *MICH. ST. L. REV.* 413 (2010); Daniel W. Toohey & I. Barry Goldberg, *Leadership Coaching in Law Firms*, 53 *FED. LAW.* 46 (2006); see also Donald J. Polden, *Leadership Matters: Lawyers' Leadership Skills and Competencies*, 52 *SANTA CLARA L. REV.* 899 (2012); Robert J. Rhee, *On Legal Education and Reform: One View Formed from Diverse Perspectives*, 70 *MD. L. REV.* 310 (2011); Janet Weinstein, *Coming of Age: Recognizing the Importance of Interdisciplinary Education in Law Practice*, 74 *WASH. L. REV.* 319 (1999).

9. See Steven C. Bennett, *When Will Law School Change?*, 89 *NEB. L. REV.* 87, 91–97 (2010).

ioral competencies<sup>10</sup> through simulations,<sup>11</sup> through practicum courses,<sup>12</sup> and by offering classes that develop problem-solving skills.<sup>13</sup> Law schools are also considering integrating interdisciplinary<sup>14</sup> education into their curricula under the premise that such courses help law students and graduates better relate to clients,<sup>15</sup> peers,<sup>16</sup> expert witnesses,<sup>17</sup> and help with delegating and communicating.<sup>18</sup>

While law schools are increasingly supplementing traditional course offerings with skills courses, attorneys typically develop their behavioral competencies after law school,<sup>19</sup> principally through working in large law firms.<sup>20</sup> Law firms continue to hire law school graduates at a higher rate than most other sectors of employment,<sup>21</sup> and many sectors, including corporate legal departments, rely on hiring talent out of law firms rather than hiring straight out of law school.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the onus often rests on large law firms to close gaps in the competencies of new hires.

Consistent with this perspective, several law firms have moved away from the lock-step model of talent development and have implemented competency models outlining both traditional legal skills, such as legal research and writing, as well as behavioral skills, such as leadership, team, and client relationships skills.<sup>23</sup> By 2009, 65% of firms responding to the Professional Development Consortium and the National Association for

10. *See id.* at 94–97.

11. *See* Eric J. Gouvin, *Teaching Business Lawyering in Law Schools: A Candid Assessment of the Challenges and Some Suggestions for Moving Ahead*, 78 UMKC L. REV. 429, 443–44 (2009).

12. *See, e.g.*, John Sonsteng et al., *Learning by Doing: Preparing Law Students for the Practice of Law*, 21 WM. MITCHELL L. REV. 111 (1995) (describing how one law school incorporated a legal practicum course into its curriculum to give students the opportunity to “learn by doing,” the philosophy of a practicum course).

13. *See* Rachel J. Littman, *Training Lawyers for the Real World: Part Two*, 82 N.Y. ST. B. J. 31, 31–32 (2010).

14. Interdisciplinary education broadly refers to the incorporation of courses from other disciplines such as economics, sociology, and psychology; it subsumes behavioral skills training.

15. *See* Kim Diana Connolly, *Elucidating the Elephant: Interdisciplinary Law School Classes*, 11 WASH. U. J.L. & POL’Y 11, 23 (2003).

16. *See id.* at 13–15, 28–29.

17. *See* Anita Weinberg & Carol Harding, *Interdisciplinary Teaching and Collaboration in Higher Education: A Concept Whose Time Has Come*, 14 WASH. U. J.L. & POL’Y 15, 22–26 (2004).

18. *See* David Sorin & Anne Weisbord, ‘Soft Skills’, 29 PA. LAW. 17, 19–20 (2007).

19. *See* James R. P. Ogloff et al., *More Than “Learning to Think Like a Lawyer”: The Empirical Research on Legal Education*, 34 CREIGHTON L. REV. 73, 218–27 (2000).

20. *See* Patton, *supra* note 4, at 235–36; *see also* Scott Westfahl, *Response: Time to Collaborate on Lawyer Development*, 59 J. LEGAL EDUC. 645, 648 (2010).

21. In 2008, law firms with over one-hundred lawyers employed twenty-two percent of all law school graduates. *Trends in Graduate Employment (1985-2008)*, NALP, <http://www.nalp.org/july09trendsgradempl> (last visited Oct. 30, 2012).

22. *See* Kevin A. Kordana, *Law Firms and Associate Careers: Tournament Theory Versus the Production-Imperative Model*, 104 YALE L. J. 1907, 1931 (1995).

23. *See* BOCK & RUYAK, *supra* note 1, at 23–24; *see also* PETER B. SLOAN, FROM CLASSES TO COMPETENCIES, LOCKSTEP TO LEVELS, at xv, 1–9 (2007 ed.); SCOTT A. WESTFAHL, YOU GET

Law Placement Foundation's survey on competencies and benchmarks indicated that they had developed or were in the process of developing core competencies.<sup>24</sup> Further, 94% of these firms intended to use their core competencies for professional development.<sup>25</sup> To develop their attorneys, law firms are turning to internal and external training programs focused on the core competencies they emphasize. For example, some firms are sending partners to leadership training programs<sup>26</sup> and training associates on leadership skills in-house.<sup>27</sup> Despite this recent push for behavioral competency training in law schools and in law firms, there is little empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of training in developing competencies. Our research addresses this gap in the literature. In particular, we assessed the extent to which attending leadership training helps associates in a large law firm develop behavioral competencies.

## II. WHO BENEFITS FROM LEADERSHIP TRAINING?

If leadership training enhances behavioral skill development, it is important to consider what individual differences might lead attorneys or law students to take advantage of leadership training opportunities. Addressing this question may help us understand why some attorneys excel and why others fail to improve their behavioral competencies. The traditional perspective on training assumes that attending training helps lower-performing individuals develop to an acceptable standard.<sup>28</sup> This perspective on training suggests that leadership training is useful for closing gaps in leadership ability by improving the skills of lower performers. However, another perspective on training suggests that training is particularly useful for moving individuals from a good to a great skill level.<sup>29</sup> To the extent that the same characteristics that enable attorneys to succeed also lead them to seek out elective training, this latter perspective on training suggests that elective leadership training may create further disparities in ability.

As such, it is important to understand the characteristics that drive self-selection into leadership training programs. In the current study, we investigate two characteristics that are expected to influence decisions to attend

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WHAT YOU MEASURE: LAWYER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS AND EFFECTIVE EVALUATIONS 13, 34–35 (2008).

24. *NALP Research Findings*, *supra* note 1, at 4.

25. *Id.*

26. Several business and law schools, including the Harvard Business School, Georgetown Law, and the University of Pennsylvania offer executive education courses on leadership for partners. Partners from many firms, including DLA Piper, Reed Smith, and WilmerHale, attend these courses.

27. WilmerHale, Hogan Lovells, and Goodwin Procter, amongst other firms, offer in-house leadership training for associates.

28. See, e.g., Carol T. Kulik et al., *The Rich Get Richer: Predicting Participation in Voluntary Diversity Training*, 28 J. ORG. BEHAV. 753, 754 (2007).

29. See JOHN H. ZENGER & JOSEPH FOLKMAN, *THE EXTRAORDINARY LEADER: TURNING GOOD MANAGERS INTO GREAT LEADERS* 30–31 (2002).

leadership training: locus of control and self-efficacy. First, an individual's *locus of control*, which is the extent to which individuals feel they have personal control over their environment and the outcomes of important events,<sup>30</sup> may affect decisions to attend elective training. An individual with a high *internal locus of control* feels that they have a great deal of control over their environment.<sup>31</sup> Conversely, an individual with a high *external locus of control* feels that they do not have much control over their environment and that forces external to them drive what happens to them.<sup>32</sup> Attorneys with a high internal locus of control may seek out training more readily because they see it as an opportunity to develop skills that allow them to exert control over their environment. On the other hand, attorneys with a high external locus of control may not seek out training. These attorneys may feel that skill development would not enhance their performance due to the perceived impact of external forces.

Second, *self-efficacy*, which is an individual's belief in their ability to perform highly across contexts,<sup>33</sup> might also influence decisions to participate in training. Individuals with high self-efficacy feel confident in their ability to succeed at whatever comes across their path.<sup>34</sup> For example, when assigned a challenging task, attorneys with high self-efficacy feel confident in their ability to complete that task. Consequently, they will invest the necessary time and energy to do so. However, attorneys with low self-efficacy confronted with the same task doubt their ability to complete the task and might not invest the necessary effort to complete it.

Limited research currently exists on the influences of locus of control and self-efficacy on self-selection into training in any context. One study found that undergraduate female students with a high internal locus of control are more inclined to participate in skills training,<sup>35</sup> and that individuals with a high internal locus of control tend to be more motivated to learn in training contexts.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, self-efficacy influences motivation to learn in a training context.<sup>37</sup> However, while some prior research, as discussed, has

30. See HERBERT M. LEFCOURT, *LOCUS OF CONTROL: CURRENT TRENDS IN THEORY AND RESEARCH* 1-3 (1976).

31. See *id.* at 15-26.

32. See *id.*

33. See Timothy A. Judge & Joyce E. Bono, *Relationship of Core Self-Evaluations Traits—Self-Esteem, Generalized Self-Efficacy, Locus of Control, and Emotional Stability—With Job Satisfaction and Job Performance: A Meta-Analysis*, 86 J. APP. PSYCHOL. 80, 80 (2001).

34. See Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy*, in 4 ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR 71, 71 (Vilayanur S. Ramachandran ed., 1994).

35. Musaddiq Jahan, *Influence of Locus of Control on Choice of Skill Training Programme Among Women Students*, 5 J. PERS. & CLINICAL STUD. 207, 208 (1989).

36. See Jason A. Colquitt et al., *Toward an Integrative Theory of Training Motivation: A Meta-Analytic Path Analysis of 20 Years of Research*, 85 J. APPLIED PSYCHOL. 678, 680 (2000) (noting that surveys consistently yield results showing a positive correlation between self-efficacy and motivation).

37. Aichia Chuang et al., *An Investigation of Individual and Contextual Factors Influencing Training Variables*, 33 SOC. BEH. & PERS. 159, 162, 166, 168 (2005). See also Colquitt et al.,

found a relationship between both high internal locus of control and high self-efficacy and training-relevant motivations, no research exists on the relationship between locus of control or self-efficacy and the decision to pursue leadership training in a law firm. In this study, we assess the extent to which these characteristics influence the choice to enroll in an optional leadership training program. Through self-selection, elective training in a law firm environment may be delivered primarily to attorneys with a high internal locus of control, low external locus of control, and high self-efficacy. This concentration could very well increase the gap between lower- and higher-performing associates.

### III. METHOD

We conducted this research in an AmLaw 100 firm.<sup>38</sup> All mid-level (fourth year) associates at the firm were eligible to take a training course on leadership skills. For associates who attended this course, we collected competency data for the year immediately before and the year immediately after taking the course. For associates who did not attend this course, we collected competency data for the year immediately before and the year immediately after the time when they were eligible to take the course. Additionally, we administered surveys on locus of control and self-efficacy to a subset of these associates.

#### A. Competencies

We collected four behavioral competency ratings for each associate in the sample ( $n = 169$ )<sup>39</sup> prior to and subsequent to their attendance (or non-attendance) of the leadership training program. Competency ratings were based on annual performance evaluations completed by partners who worked with each associate.<sup>40</sup> Associates were evaluated using a scale that ranged from 1 to 5 on four behavioral competencies: (i) drive for excellence, (ii) teamwork & leadership, (iii) case management & leadership, and (iv) client service & communication. We define each of these competencies in more detail below.

#### Behavioral Competencies:

- I. *Drive for Excellence*— The associate's attitudes toward and participation in training opportunities; reaction and ap-

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*supra* note 36 (discussing the positive correlation between self-efficacy and motivation to learn in training contexts).

38. The American Lawyer provides a ranking of law firms by financial metrics each year. The "AmLaw 100" refers to the top 100 ranked firms in this publication.

39. " $n = x$ " indicates the number of associates who were assessed on a given variable. The variable  $n$  represents sample size, and  $x$  represents the number of associates evaluated. For example, " $n = 169$ " in this sentence means that behavioral competency data was available for 169 associates.

40. Partners were not given information on whether associates attended or did not attend the leadership training program.

proach to feedback; and contribution to meeting and responsibility for setting the firm's high standards of excellence. A score of "1" in this competency would represent "developing accountability," whereas a score of "5" in this competency would represent "maintains high standards of excellence."

- II. *Teamwork & Leadership*— The associate's contributions to: a cooperative and collegial work environment; a fair allocation of the workload; the achievement of common goals; and an inclusive, effective decision-making process. A score of "1" in this competency would represent "cooperates as a team member," whereas a score of "5" in this competency would represent "principal team leader."
- III. *Case Management & Leadership*— The associate's management and communication skills; the timeliness and efficiency with which an associate accomplishes necessary tasks; and the associate's ability to understand, formulate and deliver clear assignments. A score of "1" in this competency would represent a "developing contributor," whereas a score of "5" in this competency would represent a "case manager."
- IV. *Client Service & Communication*— The associate's commitment to: internal and external clients; exercising good judgment in advising and representing the client; effectiveness in advising the business or organization; and ability to promote the firm's strengths and capabilities to new or existing clients and the legal community. A score of "1" in this competency would represent "communicates appropriately with clients," whereas a score of "5" in this competency would represent "trusted advisor."

### B. *Personality Traits*

In addition to collecting competency data, we collected data on associate personalities. Associates completed self-reported measures of internal and external locus of control ( $n = 26$ )<sup>41</sup> and self-efficacy ( $n = 26$ ).<sup>42</sup> Participants responded to the internal and external locus of control items on a scale of 1 to 5, with "1" being "rarely – less than 10% of the time" and "5" being "usually – more than 90% of the time." Sample items from the internal locus of control sub-scale include: "If I want something I work hard to get it," "Whenever something good happens to me I feel it is because I've earned it," and "I like jobs where I can make decisions and be responsible

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41. See Patricia C. Duttweiler, *The Internal Control Index: A Newly Developed Measure of Locus of Control*, 44 EDUC. & PSYCHOL. MEASURE 209 (1984).

42. See Ralf Schwarzer & Matthias Jerusalem, *Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale*, in MEASURES IN HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY, A USER'S PORTFOLIO: CAUSAL AND CONTROL BELIEFS 35 (John Weinman et al. eds., 1995).



for my own work.” Sample items from the external locus of control subscale include: “When part of a group, I prefer to let other people make all the decisions,” “I prefer situations where I can depend on someone else’s ability rather than just my own,” and “I need frequent encouragement from others for me to keep working at a difficult task.” Participants responded to the self-efficacy items on a scale of 1 to 4, with “1” being “not at all true” and “4” being “exactly true.” Sample items from the self-efficacy scale include: “It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals,” “If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution,” and “I can usually handle whatever comes my way.” Reliability estimates for all scales were acceptable.<sup>43</sup>

### C. Academy Design and Attendance

The leadership academy lasted two days and covered several topics—including leadership, teamwork, and project management techniques—through a variety of teaching methods. In addition to lectures and team exercises, associates watched live theater scenarios of challenging team and leadership situations and coached the actors based on the leadership frameworks learned in the academy. Associates also participated in an assessment tool that gave them upward feedback about their leadership styles, and had one-on-one coaching sessions to discuss their leadership styles and challenges that arise when working with teams.

Associates became eligible to take the academy during their fourth year at the firm. Of the 169 associates in the sample, 45 associates took the academy and 124 did not. We created a variable to indicate the year before and the year immediately after each associate’s attendance or non-attendance at this academy. If the associate ever attended this academy—regardless of when they attended—we denoted the year before they took this academy using “-1” and the year after using “1.” If the associate never took this academy, we denoted the year before they typically would attend (i.e., beginning of their 4th year) using “-1” and the year after (i.e., 5th year) using “1.” This way, we were able to assess change over time during the most relevant time frame for the impact of the leadership academy.

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43. Scale reliabilities were calculated on a larger sample, including associates not eligible for the leadership academy,  $n = 133$ . We employed Cronbach’s alpha as a measure of inter-item consistency. The self-efficacy measure had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.79, the internal locus of control measure had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.94, and the external locus of control measure had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.77. Guidelines for interpreting Cronbach’s alpha assert that an alpha above 0.8 indicates good reliability, whereas an alpha above 0.9 indicates excellent reliability. So, the internal locus of control measure had excellent reliability, whereas the other two measures have slightly below desirable levels of reliability. However, both of these reliabilities were above 0.7, which is often considered an acceptable, albeit less than ideal, level of reliability. See JUM C. NUNNALLY & IRA H. BERNSTEIN, *PSYCHOMETRIC THEORY* 264–65 (3d ed. 1994).

#### D. Class Year

Because associates with more seniority tend to achieve higher competency scores, we controlled for experience using class year as a proxy. As such, we included class year to statistically control for the natural improvement in competencies that tends to occur over time.

### IV. ANALYSIS

We addressed two research questions: (1) Does leadership training enhance behavioral competencies? and (2) who attends optional leadership training? To address the first question, we had to answer three separate sub-questions: (a) do attorneys, on average, improve in competency ratings over time? (b) do the competency ratings of attorneys who attend the leadership academy differ from those who do not? and (c) do attorneys who attend the leadership academy show a greater improvement in competency ratings over time than those who do not? While our research question only addressed this third sub-question, modeling the other two sub-questions was required in order to investigate an interaction.<sup>44</sup> Assessing interactions allows for the estimation of non-additive effects<sup>45</sup> across combinations of two or more variables. In this study, for example, we tested not only the hypothesis that associates generally improve in competency ratings over time, but also that those who took the leadership academy improved *more* over time than those who did not.<sup>46</sup>

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44. An estimate of an interaction (non-additive effect) in regression analyses can only be accomplished by modeling both additive (“main” effects) and the non-additive effect of interest. So, even though we did not test hypotheses for either of the main effects, we nonetheless included them in our model.

45. Two types of effects are frequently included in regression analyses: additive and interactive effects. An additive model (“main” effects) is one in which the outcome is driven by the sum of the independent effects of two or more variables. In this case, for example, an additive model would indicate that the combined influence of (1) time and (2) academy attendance is the sum of their individual effects; the whole equals the sum of the parts. In other words, an additive model would test the hypothesis that everyone improves equally over time, regardless of their attendance at the academy. In contrast, we tested an interactive model, which evaluates the hypothesis that combinations of the independent variables produce different outcomes. In this case, for example, an interactive model would specify that the influence of time on competencies depends on whether an associate attended the academy; the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. *See* JACOB COHEN ET AL., *APPLIED MULTIPLE REGRESSION/CORRELATION ANALYSIS FOR THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES* 256–58 (3d ed. 2003) (giving an overview of the differences between interactive and additive effects).

46. We assessed four equations (one for each competency) to evaluate this hypothesis. The equations we tested to answer this question took the following form:

$$y = a + b_1\text{classyear} + b_2\text{time} + b_3\text{attendance} + b_4\text{time*attendance} + e, \text{ with:}$$

y: the predicted behavioral competency

a: the intercept parameter, which represents the average competency across time and associates simultaneously

b parameters: estimates of the relationship between each predictor variable and the competencies, controlling for all other effects in the model

e: the residual/error variance.

Traditional regression techniques<sup>47</sup> operate under the assumption that observations are independent or unrelated to each other.<sup>48</sup> Because we collected multiple observations for each associate (i.e., competencies measured before and after attending or not attending the leadership academy), the observations were not independent. Instead, they were related to each other through each associate. As such, we could not use traditional regression techniques. Consequently, we employed a technique known as mixed modeling<sup>49</sup> to account for this interdependence in order to provide a robust estimate of the impact attending the leadership academy has on behavior competencies.<sup>50</sup>

To answer the second question, we conducted logistic regression to assess the independent impact of each personality trait (internal locus of control, external locus of control, and self-efficacy) on leadership academy

The variable "time" represents the two time points (-1 is "before attending/eligible" and 1 is "after attending/eligible"). The variable "attendance" represents whether or not the participant attended the academy (-1 is "did not attend" and 1 is "attended"). Finally, the variable "time\*attendance" represents the four possible combinations of the above two variables (i.e., (1) attended, before attending; (2) attended, after attending; (3) did not attend, before eligible; and (4) did not attend, after eligible).

47. Regression is a common inferential statistical analysis under the General Linear Model that assesses the predictive linear relationship between one or more independent (predictor) variables and one dependent (outcome/criterion) variable. See ROGER E. KIRK, *EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN: PROCEDURES FOR THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES* 210 (3d ed., 1995) (describing a typical regression situation); see also COHEN ET AL., *supra* note 45, at 1 (giving an introduction to multiple regression/correlation).

48. See KIRK, *supra* note 47, at 220; COHEN ET AL., *supra* note 45, at 120.

49. Mixed models have additional advantages over traditional techniques. Traditional regression techniques measuring change would typically rely on difference scores. Such techniques only model the influence of the difference between two scores, but do not allow for the simultaneous estimation of the influence of the before or average score. Since positive growth is more difficult at the higher end of a scale (i.e., an associate who scores a "5" on a competency before the academy cannot improve, whereas an associate who scores a "1" on a competency before the academy cannot do worse), an accurate estimation of change needs to also take into account the associate's "before" score. Additionally, difference scores are unreliable when the before and after scores are highly correlated over participants, which is likely the case when evaluating competencies. See NUNNALLY & BERNSTEIN, *supra* note 43.

50. In each analysis, support for a given relationship was derived from evaluating the "significance" of that relationship. Each relationship was quantified using a "b" value, which represents the strength and direction of the relationship between a predictor variable and the outcome, with all other variables in the model held constant. When b is standardized, it is theoretically bounded by -1 and 1. For standardized b's, -1 represents a perfect negative relationship (high values on one variable correspond to low values on another variable), 1 represents a perfect positive relationship (high values on one variable correspond to high values on another variable), and 0 represents no relationship (information about an individual on one variable gives no information about their relative placement on another variable).

In null hypothesis testing, each "b" is then evaluated against an alpha level to determine its statistical significance. The alpha value is set by the researchers to control for the possibility of declaring a "null" result significant. That is, the alpha value represents the probability that an apparently strong relationship actually comes from the null distribution, or the distribution where no effect exists. Typically, the alpha is set at 0.05. Consistent with this standard, we set the alpha at 0.05 and evaluated results as "significant" if they were associated with a probability of occurrence under the null model of 5% or less.

attendance.<sup>51</sup> Logistic regression is suitable for analyses of the predictive relationship between continuous or pseudo-continuous variables (i.e., personality traits) and a dichotomous outcome variable (i.e., attending versus not attending leadership training).<sup>52</sup>

## V. RESULTS

First, we assessed the impact that leadership academy attendance had on behavioral competency ratings. As discussed, we compared the overall difference in each of the four competencies across associates who attended versus associates who did not attend the academy, the average change over time on competencies for all associates, and the differences in change over time for those who attended versus did not attend the academy.<sup>53</sup>

We found that associates who attended the leadership academy improved significantly in their behavioral competency ratings of Teamwork & Leadership and Drive for Excellence over time relative to associates who did not attend the academy. As a result, there is support for the positive influence of participating in the leadership academy on two out of the four competencies. Table 1 summarizes the b values<sup>54</sup> of the interaction term and their significance, obtained from the previously discussed inferential analyses.

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51. We assessed three regression equations to evaluate this hypothesis. The regression equations took the following forms:

$$y = a + b_1\text{classyear} + b_2\text{classyear} + b_3\text{self-efficacy} + e$$

$$y = a + b_1\text{classyear} + b_2\text{classyear} + b_3\text{internalLOC} + e$$

$$y = a + b_1\text{classyear} + b_2\text{classyear} + b_3\text{externalLOC} + e, \text{ with:}$$

y: attendance at the leadership training academy

a: the intercept parameter, which represents the average likelihood of attending academy, not accounting for personality differences

b parameters: estimates of the relationship between each predictor variable and academy attendance, controlling for all other effects in the model

e: the residual/error variance.

The variable "self-efficacy" is each associate's self-efficacy score, the variable "internal-LOC" is each associate's internal locus of control score, and the variable "externalLOC" is each associate's external locus of control score.

52. See COHEN ET AL., *supra* note 45, at 479–535.

53. Note that these three effects mirror the questions: (a) do attorneys, on average, improve in competency ratings over time? (b) do the competency ratings of attorneys that attend the leadership academy differ from those who do not? and (c) do attorneys who attend the leadership academy show a greater improvement in competency ratings over time than those who do not?

Although we were interested in the difference in competency development over time between those who did attend and those who did not attend the academy, the impact of academy attendance in general and the average difference over time is also included in this analysis. These latter two effects are also included because testing an interaction (differences in change over time for those who attended and did not attend) requires that both main effects (attendance and average difference over time) are simultaneously estimated.

54. See *supra* note 50.

TABLE 1: PREDICTING CHANGE IN BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCY SCORES BY ACADEMY ATTENDANCE

	Drive for Excellence	Teamwork & Leadership	Case Management & Leadership	Client Service & Communication
Do attorneys who enroll in the leadership academy improve more in behavioral competency ratings over time than those who do not?	0.09*	0.09*	-0.01	0.05

Note: The table above provides b values for each relationship, and \* indicates a significant relationship where  $p < 0.05$ .<sup>55</sup>

Table 2 provides estimates of associates’ average change in each competency the year after they either took the academy or were eligible to take the academy (for those who did not take the academy), derived from the mixed models review above.<sup>56</sup> In Table 2, a positive number represents estimated average increase in scores on the competency (on a scale of 1–5) across associates, whereas a negative number represents estimated average decline in scores on the competency (on a scale of 1–5) across associates. As depicted in the results in Table 1, Table 2 reveals that attorneys who attended the academy improved, on average, more in the behavioral competencies of Teamwork & Leadership and Drive for Excellence after attending the academy than those who did not attend the academy, possibly due to the skills they developed during this training. Notably, associates who attended the academy improved by 0.54 of a point on a scale that ranges from 1–5 (13% growth) in Drive for Excellence, whereas associates who did not attend the academy only improved by 0.04 of a point (1% growth). Similarly, associates who attended the academy improved by 0.63 of a point on a 1–5 point scale (16% growth) in Teamwork & Leadership, whereas associates who did not attend the academy improved by 0.18 of a point (5% growth) in Teamwork & Leadership. While it appears that associates also improved substantively in Client Service & Communication if they attended the academy, note that this comparison is non-significant, and thus does not reflect a stable assessment of the differential associate improvement for those who attended versus did not attend the academy.

55. See *supra* note 50.

56. The numbers in Table 2 depict estimated growth in competencies after attending or being eligible to attend the academy, not actual growth in competencies after attending or being eligible to attend. We chose to depict estimated growth in competencies as opposed to actual growth, as estimated growth controls for the influence of class year both on academy attendance and on competency scores, whereas actual growth does not. In other words, estimated growth best aligns with the mixed models analyses conducted to test our hypothesis.

TABLE 2: AVERAGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEFORE AND AFTER COMPETENCY SCORES BY ACADEMY ATTENDANCE/ELIGIBILITY

	Average Change in Competency Ratings	
	Attended	Did Not Attend
Drive for Excellence*	0.54	0.04
Teamwork & Leadership*	0.63	0.18
Case Management & Leadership	-0.05	-0.04
Client Service & Communication	0.21	-0.03

*Note: The numbers in the table above denote average change in competency ratings on a 1–5 point scale. For example, associates who attended the academy changed 0.54 of a point in Drive for Excellence, whereas associates who did not attend changed 0.04 of a point in Drive for Excellence. This means that, if associates on average scored a “3” before attending/being eligible to attend the academy, they would score, on average 3.54 after the academy if they attended, and only 3.04 after eligibility if they did not. \* indicates a significant difference in change in competency ratings,  $p < 0.05$ .*

Second, using simple logistic regression, we tested the extent to which locus of control and self-efficacy influence enrollment in leadership training. Consistent with expectations, internal locus of control and self-efficacy<sup>57</sup> positively predicted enrollment in the training.<sup>58</sup> However, external locus of control did not significantly predict enrollment in leadership training.<sup>59</sup> In other words, individuals who scored higher on internal locus of control and self-efficacy were more likely to attend the academy, whereas external locus of control did not impact academy attendance. The average scores on locus of control and self-efficacy for those who did versus those who did not attend the academy are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3: AVERAGE SELF-EFFICACY, INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL, AND EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL SCORES BY ACADEMY ATTENDANCE

	Average Score	
	Attended	Did Not Attend
Self-Efficacy	3.39	2.97
Internal Locus of Control	4.05	3.54
External Locus of Control	2.29	2.22

## VI. DISCUSSION

Legal education—both in law schools and in law firms—has increasingly emphasized behavioral skills training. However, limited research on the impact of behavioral skills training exists, and currently little is known about who elects to participate in behavioral skills training. In the current paper, we sought to address these two issues in a large law firm. First, we assessed the extent to which leadership training improves behavioral competencies. Our findings reveal that leadership training significantly im-

57. Self-efficacy predicting attendance:  $b = 4.47$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

58. Internal locus of control predicting attendance:  $b = 4.47$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

59. External locus of control predicting attendance:  $b = 0.32$ ,  $p > 0.05$ .

proved two out of four behavioral competencies assessed for associates, accounting for the influence of class year. However, we also found that training did not significantly impact the Case Management & Leadership competency. At first blush, it appears that the academy failed to improve a skill it was designed to target. However, a closer examination of the leadership academy, the behavioral competencies we assessed, and the rating scales used to measure associate mastery of those competencies tell a different story.

While the academy included one lecture focused on case management and delegating, the majority of the academy (and more interactive components) focused on the softer, more interpersonal aspects of leadership. In looking deeper into the Teamwork & Leadership competency, we found that it addresses interpersonal aspects of leadership and teamwork skills. This focus on behavioral skills is apparent in the rating scale for this competency. Higher levels of the Teamwork & Leadership competency involve motivating others<sup>60</sup> and being a team leader,<sup>61</sup> whereas higher levels of Case Management & Leadership competency are focused on project<sup>62</sup> and case management.<sup>63</sup>

In other words, the Teamwork & Leadership and the Case Management & Leadership behavioral competencies assess different aspects of leadership. While the Case Management & Leadership competency assesses delegating and case strategy—more management than leadership—the Teamwork & Leadership competency assesses the softer side of leadership, such as motivating others. So, it appears that the leadership academy improved skills associated with strong leadership and, in particular, the behavioral skills that were the target of the training program, but not the case management aspects of leadership.

It is also interesting to note that associates who attended the training academy showed greater improvement in the Drive for Excellence competency than associates who did not attend. This finding may suggest that the academy empowered participants to excel by providing them with tools critical for setting and meeting high standards. Another interpretation is that individuals who are drawn to training programs such as this leadership academy avidly pursue learning opportunities in general and excel, at least in part, due to their personalities. Since higher levels of this competency include behaviors such as actively developing oneself, seeking feedback, providing feedback to others, and cultivating an environment of continuous

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60. In particular, recognizing their contributions, coaching them, soliciting and valuing others' ideas, and being a calm influence during stressful circumstances.

61. Including providing a vision for others, resolving conflict, and establishing a respectful team decision-making process.

62. In particular, setting deadlines, case staffing, and managing meetings.

63. Such as implementing case strategy, budget management, and coordinating timely completion of projects.

improvement, either or both of these interpretations might explain the apparent relationship between attending the academy and development in Drive for Excellence.

The leadership academy also did not explicitly target the skills assessed in the Client Service & Communication competency. High levels of competence in Client Service & Communication indicate the ability to attract new clients to the firm and be recognized as a trusted advisor by clients. While it is possible that the teamwork and leadership skills cultivated in the academy may eventually also influence case management and client service skills, the associates who enrolled in this academy were typically in their fourth or fifth year at time of enrollment. Consequently, they were not yet at the point in their careers where they would be able to develop into the highest levels of case management and client service, limiting the impact that the academy could have on the immediate development of these competencies. Consistent with this perspective, while academy attendance may slightly influence development of the Client Service & Communication competency, the difference in competencies before and after academy attendance/eligibility does not *significantly* differ between those who did and did not attend the academy.

Finally, we sought to better understand the characteristics of those who willingly pursue leadership training. Here, it is apparent that associates who have a high internal locus of control and associates who have high self-efficacy are more likely to self-select into leadership training opportunities. Therefore, to the extent that elective training is effective, it may only be reaching individuals motivated to pursue it. By disproportionately reaching some attorneys more than others, training may increase gaps in performance. Moreover, training may be effective not only because of the tools provided in training programs, but also because of the nature of the individuals who pursue training. In other words, personality or training alone does not drive growth. Rather, development is fostered by the rich interactions of people within their learning environments.

Due to the apparent importance of personality in the pursuit of elective training, educators should consider the outcomes of their programs relative to their aims. For example, training that only reaches high performers may not be a problem if the goal of training is to target and improve high performers. However, if the goal is to provide equal training to all, optional training that reaches only one portion of the population may not be satisfactory. To avoid this issue, educators may consider making certain early training programs mandatory, and building individuals' internal locus of control and self-efficacy in these programs. By developing attorneys' self-efficacy and internal locus of control, educators can increase the chances that optional training, such as leadership training, will be attended by all rather than by one subset of the attorney population. While personality tends to be relatively stable, research has also shown that, with certain interventions,



self-efficacy and locus of control can shift over time. For example, prior research reveals that students' self-efficacy can be strengthened with multimedia-based training.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, error management training<sup>65</sup> can strengthen self-efficacy for students high in ability or openness to experience.<sup>66</sup> Internal locus of control has also been shown to increase, albeit only slightly, after major life events such as acquisition of a college degree<sup>67</sup> or transitioning into a working role.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, some research has shown that memory, reasoning, and speed of processing training can improve the internal locus of control of adults over sixty-five.<sup>69</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Our research highlights the need to track and assess the efficacy and reach of training programs for attorneys. Three issues relevant to training merit further assessment. First, the impact of training programs on relevant skills should be evaluated. Second, the impact of the enrollment procedure for the program should be explored in more depth. That is, mandatory programs may impact learning differently than elective programs, and they may reach a broader audience. Finally, the role of the training attendee should be investigated more fully. Our research suggests that individual personality traits affect attendance at these training programs—it is not inconceivable that personality traits also influence the efficacy of these programs. More research on all three of these issues will better enable us, as a profession, to develop the skills of attorneys at all levels.

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64. See Richard T. Christoph et al., *Overcoming Barriers to Training Utilizing Technology: The Influence of Self-Efficacy Factors on Multimedia-Based Training Receptiveness*, 9 HUMAN RESOURCE DEV. Q. 25, 29–33 (1998).

65. Error management training places participants in situations where they can make mistakes. The goal of error management training is to encourage participants to learn how to manage, learn, and adapt after making mistakes.

66. See Stanley M. Gully et al., *The Impact of Error Training and Individual Differences on Training Outcomes: An Attribute-Treatment Interaction Perspective*, 87 J. APPLIED PSYCHOL. 143, 153–54 (2002).

67. See Lee M. Wolfle & Jill H. List, *Temporal Stability in the Effects of College Attendance on Locus of Control, 1972–1992*, 11 STRUC. EQUATION MODELING 244 (2004).

68. See Mandy E. G. van der Velde et al., *Stability and Change of Person Characteristics Among Young Adults: The Effect of the Transition from School to Work*, 18 PERS. & INDIV. DIFF. 89, 95–97 (1995).

69. See Frederic D. Wolinsky et al., *Does Cognitive Training Improve Internal Locus of Control Among Older Adults?*, 65B J. GERONTOLOGY: SOC. SCI. 591 (2010).