



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

A. Velayudhan*

Department of Psychology, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore

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ABSTRACT

The Purpose of the present paper is to find out the effectiveness of a Leadership Development Intervention in improving Leadership Skills among students. Three hundred and forty three students at P.S.G. College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, India formed the sample for the present investigation. A Single group Pre-test, Post-test and Follow-up quasi-experimental design was used. All the students received the Leadership Development Intervention voluntarily and were assessed at Pre and Post-test and Follow-up periods. The Intervention was delivered in 40 sessions, included Training and Lecture Methods. Effective skill based techniques were used for the students enhancement of Leadership Skills. The Leadership Style Questionnaire developed by Marshall Sashkin and Morris (1987) measuring 6 Dimensions of leadership style such as Management of Attention, Management of Meaning, Management of Trust, Management of Feelings, Management of Risk and Management of Self was used before, after and Follow-up of the intervention. Repeated Measures ANOVA was used to differentiate the difference between the Pre, Post, and Follow-up phases. The Results indicates a significant difference in three times of assessment of Leadership Skill in the Management of Attention, Management of Meaning, Time Management, Management of Risk and Management of Self. Study results indicated the usefulness of a Leadership Development Intervention among students.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an important and necessary skill for achieving individual, group and organizational performance. It is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It is the human factor, which binds a group together and motivates it towards the goal. More clearly, it is a process whereby one person influences others to work towards a goal and help them pursue a vision. A leader inspires his followers with a vision and helps them to cope with changes. Leaders start by articulating a direction or vision of what future might look like, then develop strategies for producing changes needed to move in that direction. Leadership is "the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It is the human factor which binds a group together and motivates it towards goals" (Keith, (1967). The observation that leadership has an effect on individual well-being would come as no surprise to any working adult (Gilbreath, 2004). Leadership has been linked to an array of outcomes within occupational health psychology: positive outcomes such as psychological well-being (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway and McKee, 2007), and organizational safety climate (Zohar, 2002) and negative outcomes, including employee stress (Offerman and Hellman, 1996), cardiovascular disease (Kivimaki, Ferie, Brunner, Head,

Shiple, Vahtera and Marmot, 2005), workplace incidents and injuries (Barling, Loughlin and Kelloway, 2002; Kelloway, Mullen and Francis, 2006; Mullen and Kelloway, 2009) and health related behaviours such as alcohol use (Bamberger and Bacharach, 2006). The study on Leadership Style and Team processes in self-managed teams done by Stephanie (2008) team processes are explored within self-managed teams that develop different leadership styles. In particular, two leadership styles are compared: shared leadership and single leadership. The results of the study suggested that teams with shared leadership had motivational and cognitive advantages over teams that took the traditional approach of relying on a single leader. Sosik and Godshalk (2000) found that transformational leadership behaviour (e.g., social support provided through mentoring – a form of individualized consideration) indirectly predicted reduced job-related stress. Bono *et al.* (2007) examined the effects of transformational leadership on stress and satisfaction at work. Supportive leadership enhanced the success of a —broad band organizational health promotion programme designed to reduce obesity, smoking and alcohol use (Whiteman, Snyder, and Ragland, 2001) as well as programmes focused specifically on single behaviours such as smoking cessation (Eriksen, 2005). Students who dedicate time to leadership development experiences strongly increase their leadership skills, the ability to set goals, to make educated decisions, and utilize conflict resolution skills. They also develop a

*Corresponding author: avelayudham@rediffmail.com

dedication to helping others develop their own leadership skills, get involved with programmes in their communities, and work with racial and ethnic groups to promote understanding and advocacy of leadership (Astin and Leland, 1991). Kouzes and Posner (2002) claim that enabling self-leadership, providing choice, developing competence, confidence and fostering accountability are necessary factors in strengthening others to act. College students and early career workers need to recognize that "leaders accept and act on the paradox of power: we become more powerful when we give our power away". Empowering others to act can be achieved by creating a climate of trust, listening to others, connecting others to sources of power, educating and creating a learning environment. According to Dugan (2006a), leadership is a relationship-building, developing, procedural, educated, and transformational experience. The training of leaders for the future has been noted as one of the focal points of higher education's missions. Mullen and Kelloway (2009) examined data from both the 54 participant leaders and 115 matched respondents in order to assess the effectiveness of the training. They found that participation in training resulted in improvements in leaders' own safety attitudes, intent to promote safety in the workplace and safety-related self-efficacy. Avolio, Reichard, Hanna, Walumba and Chan (2009) provided a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of leadership interventions. Drawing on data from over 200 studies over a period of more than 50 years based on a variety of leadership theories, Avolio *et al.* (2009) reported evidence that leadership interventions do in fact result in enhanced leadership.

Increase in opportunities to participate in leadership development activities would allow students the chance to gain a sense of responsibility and ownership. This may be a way to improve these low levels of academic achievement, high levels of student boredom and disaffection, and disproportional dropout rates in urban areas (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2004). A grounded theory of high-quality leadership programmes: perspectives from student leadership development programmes in higher education by Darin (2008) revealed 16 attributes of high-quality Leadership programmes organized into three clusters: (a) participants engaged in building and sustaining a learning community; (b) student-centered experiential learning experiences; and (c) research-grounded continuous programme development. The training of leaders for the future has been noted as one of the focal points of higher education's missions (Dugan, 2006b). Management of stress and stressors as college students differ markedly in the effectiveness of their adjustments to these stressors (Matheny *et al.*, 2002). It has been established that cognitive-behavioural stress management and health promoting interventions can reduce both perceived and physiologically measured stress irrespective of the method of delivery (Eisen, Allen, Bollash and Pescatello, 2008; Lustria, Cortese, Noar and Glueckauf, 2009). Some stress management experts contended that person achieves more effective social interactions, ones mental stress decreases and happiness increases, irrespective of the coping strategy used (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984; Hirokawa, Yagi and Miyata, 2002). In addition, pioneers in the field of positive psychology found that happiness levels and overall well-being can be enhanced through several useful interventions involving multiple exercises (Fordyce, 1977; 1983).

An exploratory study of Entrepreneurial Leadership Development of University Students done by Bagheri (2009) shows that the university entrepreneurship development programmes facilitate entrepreneurial leadership development of students in many ways including experiential learning, social interaction learning and opportunity recognition. Entrepreneurial leadership development occurs in a process of transforming the knowledge acquired from experience and social interactions to identify the opportunities of personal development creation. The study done by Garger and Jacques (2007) investigated the impact of self leadership on student performance. Students from a mid-sized, regional, comprehensive university returned completed surveys. Results suggest that students' transformational self leadership positively correlates with grade point averages while passive/avoidant self leadership negatively correlates with grade point averages.

Need for the Study

The problem of leadership in different walks of society has been a perennial subject of discussion in human history. Greater attention has been given for the study of this concept during the past few decades. This emphasis is due to the presumed importance of the leadership function at organizational and social level. Many of today's executives are expected to be both able managers and strong leaders. Most experts believe they understand the basic ideas underlying effective management, but leadership is a much more elusive phenomenon. Indeed, the mystique of leadership is one of the most widely debated topics; millions of dollars are spent annually by the companies on leadership training programmes. It is only natural that people should try to draw lessons, through analysis not only as a judgment on the situation or the individual, but as some kind of guidelines for future. Usually one finds that military leaders and political leaders guiding the nations have been invariably discussed and analyzed for obvious reasons. These have given rise to a lot of fascinating literature on leadership that is of great value. In the modern complex society, thousands of individuals are appointed or elected to shoulder roles and responsibilities of leadership at junior, middle and senior levels in factories and firms, schools and colleges, business and financial institutions, dispensaries and hospitals, in civil and military organs of the state's scientific and research institutions and so on. On their quality and effectiveness depend on strength, prosperity and happiness of the society. Thus, the democratization of society, growing complexities of economic life, advances in scientific and technological fields, expansion of industry and business, development of behavioural sciences, increasing role of government in society, growing intensity of international impact from different angles, rising expectations of the people in developing countries and similar other factors have practically underscored the social significance of leadership in a wider context. Adequacy of leadership is very important for the different sectors and groups in society, business, industry, administration, management or public affairs. The present study focused on studying the Effectiveness of Leadership Intervention Programme among college students in terms of Management of Attention, Meaning, Trust, Risk and Self. The study also supports the effectiveness of leadership interventions and emphasizes the importance of Leadership Skill based training in academic context. There are several

kinds of student organizations in school and universities and it is only necessary that educational institutions should give attention to leadership skills development for students. Through this kind of programme, students can learn how to become and how to be good and effective leaders. There can be many kinds of student leaders and the kind of leadership that they must have will depend on the situation they are in. And through leadership skills development programme, students will be able to better understand different Leadership Styles that best work for certain situations.

Objective: The Objective of the present study is to find out the effectiveness of a Leadership Development Intervention in improving Leadership skills among students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design: A Single group Pre-test, Post-test and Follow-up quasi-experimental design guided the study. The leadership style questionnaire was administered to all the subjects before the beginning of the Intervention (Pre/before). After 40 sessions of Intervention the leadership style questionnaire was once again administered to all subjects (Post/after). After a period of one month the leadership style questionnaire was once again administered to all the students (Follow-up).

Sample: Three hundred and forty three students at P.S.G. College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, India formed the sample for the present investigation.

Interventions Used: The Intervention was delivered in 40 sessions, included Lecture and Training Methods. Lecture Method involves Self-esteem, Assertiveness, Leadership, Goal-Setting, Stress Management, Creativity, Memory, Motivation, and Transactional Analysis. In Training Method Ice Breaking Exercise, Profile About Themselves, Memory and Attention Game, Tower Building Game, Group Discussion, One Minute Presentation, Yoga and Relaxation. The duration of the Leadership Development Programme was 40 sessions.

Tool Used: The Leadership Style Questionnaire developed by Marshall and Morris (1987) measuring 6 Dimensions of leadership style such as *Management of Attention*- Leaders pay close attention to people with whom they are communicating. They help others to see the key points clearly. They have clear understanding or priorities of different issues under discussion; *Management of Meaning*- It focuses on the leader's communication skills, specifically the ability to get the meaning of a message across, even if this means devising some innovative approaches; *Management of Trust*- The key factor is the perceived trustworthiness to follow through on the promises, avoidance of "flip-flop" shifts in position, and willingness to take clear position; *Management of Self*- Is concerned with the general attitudes towards self, others and their feelings, as well as for "taking care of" feelings about oneself in a positive sense; *Management of Risk* - Effective leaders are deeply involved in what they do and do not spend excessive amounts of time or energy on plans to protect themselves against future. These leaders are willing to take risks, not on a 'hit or miss' basis but after a careful estimation of the odds of success or failure; and *Management of Feelings*- Leaders seem to generate consistently a set of positive feelings

in others. Others feel that their work becomes more meaningful and that they are the "master" of their own behaviour i.e. they feel competent. They feel a sense of oneness with their colleagues and co-workers. The questionnaire had a reliability coefficient of 0.71, 0.81, 0.76, 0.72, 0.86 and 0.91 respectively. The content validity was also established.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the Mean, S.D's, of all dimensions of the Leadership Skills of the students in the Pre, Post and Follow-up phases. Table 2 shows the F value for the Leadership Skill Questionnaire for the students across the Pre, Post and Follow-up. The Repeated Measures ANOVA results show a significant difference at 0.01 level for all the variables except the variable Management of Feelings which was found to be significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that the Intervention Programme had certainly had an impact on the students. The Leadership Skill which is very much essential for management of attending to others, conveying what is required to be conveyed, gaining trust of others, understanding what is going on within oneself and others, taking calculated measures towards success, and creating confidence in others. The results of the Sidak Post hoc Comparisons is to differentiate the difference between the Pre and Post, Post and Follow-up of the students in the Leadership Skills are presented in the above Table 3. It indicates a significant difference in three times of assessment of Leadership Skill in the Management of Attention, Management of Meaning, Management of Trust, Management of Self, Management of Risk and Management of Feelings.

With regard to Management of Attention of leadership skill implies how far the individual pays close attention to people with whom one is communicating. There is a significant difference among the students in the Pre and Post and Post and Follow-up phases. This may be due to the interaction between the students during the programme. They were given opportunity to focus on the key issues under discussion and help others to have clear ideas about the relative importance or priorities of different issues under discussion. Role plays could have helped to make one to direct others and influence them. In this dimension, there was a significant difference in the Follow-up phase. When compared to the Post phase, the students improved their attention level in the follow-up phase because they followed the instructions given during the Leadership Development Programme. With awareness and interest, they understood that attention skill is very important for every human being. Evidence suggests that measures of individual aspects of self-regulation, such as attention, also relate to measures of academic achievement, independent of prior levels of cognitive ability. A study by Yen, Konold and McDermott (2004) explored the longitudinal relationships between individual learning-related behaviours – such as attitudes towards learning, attention and task persistence and flexibility – and subsequent academic achievement in literacy and numeracy. Many authors emphasise that skills such as attention, persistence, flexibility, motivation and confidence are more easily amenable to change through teaching and intervention (Diamond, Barnett, Thomas and Munroe, 2007). Follow-up studies of children identified as having attention-

related problems also found that as adults they have lower levels of educational attainment, occupational rank, job performance and self-esteem (Mannuzza and Klein, 1999). Research also indicates that, when considered separately, attention and related skills are more predictive of later achievement than more general problem behaviours (Barriga *et al.*, 2002; Hinshaw, 1992; Konold and Pianta, 2005; Ladd, Birch and Buhs, 1999, Normandeau, 1998; Trzesniewski *et al.*, 2006).

language ability and they were given chance to express and share their feelings. They developed a sense of group cohesiveness and understood the social norms. When compared to the post phase, students improved their management of Meaning in the follow-up phase. The students understood that attention is important and they realized that the message should be passed meaningfully; only then the output could be effective. Pincus and DeBonis (2004) contended that leadership is at its heart a communication

Table 1. Means and S.D.'s of Pre, Post, and Follow-up in the Leadership Skill of the Students

Variables	PRE		POST		FOLLOW-UP	
	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.	MEAN	S.D.
Management of Attention	7.34	3.11	13.41	2.76	15.24	2.71
Management of Meaning	6.56	3.02	7.97	4.24	15.73	2.59
Management of Trust	8.03	3.60	13.78	4.55	8.27	3.18
Management of Self	7.07	3.56	13.41	2.76	9.36	5.61
Management of Risk	9.33	4.17	12.33	3.27	4.88	4.53
Management of Feeling	8.01	3.63	9.01	5.45	8.40	4.13

Table 2. Approximate 'F' (Greenhouse-Geisser) for the Pre, Post, Follow-Up in the Leadership Skill of the Students

Variable	Dimensions	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Leadership	Mgt. of Attention	11737.636	1.869	6281.685	655.331*
	Mgt. of Meaning	16739.629	1.917	8731.599	740.452*
	Mgt. of Trust	7276.169	1.861	3910.739	226.007*
	Mgt. of Self	7061.280	2	3530.640	198.288*
	Mgt. of Risk	9634.171	1.908	5049.957	285.161*
	Mgt. of Feelings	173.458	1.846	93.989	4.484**
Error	Mgt. of Attention	6125.567	639.044	9.586	
	Mgt. of Meaning	7731.705	655.659	11.792	
	Mgt. of Time	11010.498	636.312	17.304	
	Mgt. of Self	12179.068	591.926	20.575	
	Mgt. of Risk	11554.496	652.458	17.709	
	Mgt. of Feelings	13228.542	631.163	20.959	

** Significant at 0.05 level * Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3. Sidak Post hoc comparison among Pre, Post, and Follow-Up phases of the Students in the Leadership Skill

LEADERSHIP SKILLS	MEAN	S.D.	GROUP	FOLLOW-UP	POST	PRE
Management of Attention	15.24	3.1	FOLLOW-UP		**	**
	13.4	2.75	POST	**		**
	7.33	2.7	PRE	**	**	
Management of Meaning	15.73	2.59	FOLLOW-UP		**	**
	7.97	4.23	POST	**		**
	6.55	3.02	PRE	**	**	
Management of Trust	8.26	3.18	FOLLOW-UP		**	N.S
	13.78	4.55	POST	**		**
	8.02	3.6	PRE	N.S	**	
Management of Self	9.36	5.6	FOLLOW-UP		**	**
	13.40	2.75	POST	**		**
	7.07	3.56	PRE	**	**	
Management of Risk	4.88	4.16	FOLLOW-UP		**	**
	12.33	3.27	POST	**		**
	9.32	4.16	PRE	**	**	
Management of Feelings	8.39	4.12	FOLLOW-UP		N.S	N.S
	9.01	5.44	POST	N.S		**
	8.01	3.63	PRE	N.S	**	

** Significant at .05 level N.S – Not Significant

There is a significant difference among the students in the pre, post and follow-up phases with regard to Management of Meaning. This dimension throws light on the students' communication skills and also their ability to get the meaning of a message across. This can be due to the group discussions conducted during the programme. The students were divided into different groups and they were instructed to discuss any topic. Later on, they were asked to present their view points in front of the group one after the other. During this session, they improved their communication skills,

process because it seeks to strengthen human relationships by increasing trust and understanding. A student who lacks interpersonal communication skills will not only experience problems communicating but also during the learning process as discussion forms the very basis of today's teaching and learning process (Yahaya and Nordin, 2006). This inadequacy will indirectly erode a student's confidence and self-concept thus affecting his academic performance.

There was a significant difference among the students in the pre, post and follow-up phases with regard to Management of Trust. This could be possible due to the Tower Building Game played during the programme. In the Tower Building Game, the students were divided into different groups. They were instructed to build a tower using wooden blocks. One individual among the group should be blind – folded and the other group members should help to construct a tower. The blind folded person trusts his group members, following the instructions given by them and builds a tower. Without having trust on others, one can't survive in this world. Because man is a social animal and always depended on others, willingness to take positions is an important factor to develop one's personality. The students should have trust in themselves which will lead to having trust in others. There is a change in the follow-up phase when compared to the post phase. This could be because of the student's lack of opportunity in trusting others. Team structure was significantly associated with team performance, whereas trust and conflict management contributed to teamwork satisfaction. (Liu., Magjuka and Lee, 2007). Lapidot, Kark, and Shamir (2007) found that leader benevolence was most important to building trust and that ability and integrity were more important in situations where trust was lost. Research evidence is mounting that trust is important to organizational and individual performance (Dirks and Skarlicki, 2009; Mayer and Gavin, 2005; Davis *et al.*, 2000). Trust was essential for relationship development; trust taught them more about themselves, and by learning to trust these individuals felt more self-confident (Mietzner and Lin, 2005). The results on Management of self depict the difference among the students in the Pre, Post and Follow-up phases in the Leadership style. This dimension explains the students' attitudes towards their self and their feelings. The students were directed to introspect themselves asking some questions as given below and write responses in a piece of paper.

What are highest and least accomplishments?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

What is your real aim in life?

Who am I? etc., The received responses were shuffled and randomly interchanged among the students and they were asked to present in front of the other students. They were asked to practice this, while presenting the others' achievements, ambition, strengths and weaknesses. The students were able to know about others' abilities and it would be helpful for them to improve and learn more skills and make it less frightening and encourage the belief that, "I can do it" i.e. facing the audience, speaking in front of the audience etc. In this dimension, there is a significant change in the Pre, Post and Follow-up phases. In the follow-up phase, the students did not concentrate on their self because they were busy with their curriculum. Their main aim was to get good marks in their semester examination. In future they might get a chance to identify their own self for the vocational purposes. Self Management approach offers a number of potential benefits for secondary students (Cole, 1992). Self-Management procedures have been effective in promoting a wide range of social and academic behaviours among students with mild disabilities in school settings (Nelson, Smith, Young and Dodd, 1991). A student's ability to plan is but one skill among several for student self-management, the training of which is studied by Gerhardt (2007). Self management procedures have been considered to have many benefits

including the likelihood of increased maintenance and generalization of obtained behaviour change; they help students accept additional levels of responsibility for their own behavior, and are effective with a variety of students, (Kern, Dunlap, Childs, and Clarke, 1994). "Consistency is the essence of leadership" (Badaracco and Ellsworth 1989).

From the table 3 it can be observed that there is a significant difference among the students in the Pre, Post and Follow-up phases with regard to Risk Management of Leadership Style. The Risk Takers are those who have the willingness to take risks, but after careful estimation of success or failure. The evolution of Enterprise Risk Management has emerged both as a concept and a management function (Dickinson, 2001). The students showed very high interest in taking risks in the post phase. They were very much involved in what they did because the students were also learners, so they were in a better position to take more ventures. In the follow-up phase, they scored low when compared to the post phase. The students tried to be on the safer side and they were not ready to accept responsibilities and they planned to protect themselves from danger. The students were not ready to spend excessive amounts of time and energy. The result of research by Reynaldo (2002) showed students were weakest in opportunity seeking; risk taking, and self-confidence and practicing entrepreneurs were weakest in Risk Taking. A significant difference was noted among the students in the Pre, Post and Follow-up phases regarding the Management of Feeling. Leaders seem to consistently generate a set of positive feelings in others. They feel a sense of unity with their teammates as they are trained to understand the feelings of others when they are in a group. Staying in groups and interacting with one another is the primary necessity of human species. Group life, not only gives satisfaction but also becomes instrumental in fulfilling certain desires and wishes. Sharing one's feelings or ideas with different people gives a great pleasure because one's own worries are expressed and shared. Group living overcomes the sense of loneliness. Some people felt very diffident to share with others but by observing the teammates, they started to share and expressed their feelings. They developed a sense of proximity. There is a change found in the follow-up phase of Leadership Development Programme when compared to the post phase. This may be because the investigator did not give any intervention before the follow-up assessment and the students found no time to express and share their feelings, because of their routine activities. A number of studies found different factors that contribute to increasing the rate of attrition among doctoral students. Some of these factors are directly related to the students themselves while others are related to the design and structure of the doctoral programmes as well as the demographic specifics of their student population (Bourner, Bowden and Laing, 2001; Hockey, 1994; Lewis, Ginsberg, Davies and Smith, 2004; Mehmet and Ekrem, 2000). Among the emotional issues that are often neglected in doctoral programs is the feeling of isolation that is experienced by the students during their journey to obtain their doctoral degree (Lewis *et al.*, 2004). Studies of college dropouts associated dropping out with the aversive side of the "fight or flight" formula; that is, students feeling a mismatch between themselves and their college; wish to distance themselves from the source of stress and the college environment (Falk, 1975).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that Leadership skill can be fine tuned by using leadership training programmes for students. "The Leadership Development Programme" was found to be effective in improving Leadership Skills among the students on various aspects such as Management of Attention, Meaning, Trust, Self, Risk and Feeling. In order to have a sustainable impact on the students the leadership development programmes must be conducted as an ongoing programme at college levels. This will enable the future generation to have constant self directed effort towards improving ones' leadership skill and thus in turn leading to be a way of life.

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