



A STUDY ON LEADERSHIP SKILL AMONG SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS WITH REFERENCE TO BHARATHIAR UNIVERSITY

KEYWORDS

Leadership, Skills, Social Work, Students, Challenging goals.

Janani. S. B

Ph.D Scholar, Department of Social Work, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.

Dr. A. Sethuramasubbiah

Former Professor and Head, Department of Social Work, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.

ABSTRACT

Leaders emerge from some very unlikely situations and they often need help to develop their skills and encouragement to identify service opportunities. Effective leaders are able to set and achieve challenging goals, to take swift and decisive action even in difficult situation, to outperform their competition, to take calculated risks and to persist in the face of failure. Strong communication skills, self confidence, the ability to manage others and a willingness to embrace change also characterize good leaders. The foremost quality what any school, university, or management firm looks for in a student or any graduate before recruiting is leadership skills. Social work students need to develop their leadership skills in college, so that they can help their communities. Young, Angela M (2012), "Assessing Leadership Skill Development: Implementing V Leader © Simulation Software to Capture Advances in Leadership Skills among under graduates Student" the findings indicate that the first attempt using the software results in approximately similar score but improvement of scores with repeated play was generally higher for students with prior instruction on leadership concepts. Leadership roles are all around us. They can be applied to any situation where you are required to take the lead, professionally and socially in the society. Many people have researched and studied the qualities that leaders possess, and they have observed many commonalities. The need of the study is to develop the leadership skills among students to perform their task in effective way. The researcher has made an attempt to identify the level of leadership skills among Social Work students with reference to Bharathiar University. The researcher used descriptive research design for the study. The researcher adopted census method.

Introduction

Leadership is one of the most salient aspects of organizational context. However, defining leadership has been challenging. Leadership has been described as the "process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task". Students of leadership have produced theories involving traits, situational interaction, function, behaviour, power, vision and values, and intelligence among others.

A leader must be a developer not only of a team, and of his or her people, but also, a leader today must be a developer of vision. What does it mean to develop a vision? It means that leaders must show the people they lead the meaning of their effort, the effect (impact) their work and its quality has on the lives and work of others.

People need to believe in the work they do; they need to believe that what they do matters. Bosses, principals, supervisors, teachers must provide this meaning to their people. They will never get people to do their best unless they see that what they are doing is important.

Definition

- According to Alan Keith of Genentech who said, "Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen".
- According to Harkens, 2002 "A good leader will ensure that the vision is kept in view, and does not become lost amongst a forest of targets, deadlines, and problems".

Characteristics of A Leader

- **Self confidence:** "A leader who is self-assured without being bombastic or overbearing in-stills self-confidence in team members". Self-confidence and calm demeanour can help others feel more certain that they, too, can overcome hurdles or reach a challenging goal.

- **Humility.** When you're willing to share credit with others, and you're willing to admit that you're not perfect, others see that and appreciate it.
- **Core self-evaluations.** Research shows that four related self-perceptions relate to effective leadership: "self-esteem, locus of control [that is, taking responsibility for what happens in your life], self-efficacy [akin to self-confidence], and emotional stability".
- **Trustworthiness.** People trust you when your attitudes, words, and motives align with what you actually choose to do. This includes being honest about mistakes, refusing to gossip and shift blame, and doing things the ethical way (even if it's more expedient to do otherwise).
- **Authenticity.** Be yourself, and act in line with your core values and personality. People will notice if you're trying to be someone other than who you really are.
- **Extraversion.** Most leaders maintain an outgoing demeanour, show an interest in people, and gladly participate in group or team activities. (Feel that you're not naturally extraverted? You can work on your skills by making a conscious effort to demonstrate genuine curiosity about and friendliness toward others.)
- **Assertiveness.** Be up front about your needs, concerns, and opinions. However, don't forget to be tactful!
- **Enthusiasm, optimism, and warmth.** Staying positive, being approachable, and expressing positive thoughts and feelings through both verbal and nonverbal communication help you build rapport with those around you.
- **Sense of humor.** Your ability to make people laugh can help others feel comfortable and relieve tense situations.

In addition to these general personality traits, DuBrin also lists several task-related personality traits common to leaders:

- **Passion.** Leaders show an extremely strong commitment to and enthusiasm about their work.
- **Emotional intelligence.** A solid leader exhibits empathy towards others, has a good understanding of emotions – both others' and their own – and recognizes that their own mood can have an effect on the entire organization's performance. (The primary research in this area was conducted by Daniel Goldman.)
- **Flexibility and adaptability.** A leader can bring about change... so it follows that he or she must also be ready and willing to adjust to different settings and situations.
- **Internal locus of control.** Strong leaders take responsibility for events and believe that they can have an effect on outcomes and conditions.
- **Courage.** Willingness to take risks on new ideas may put you "out there" for criticism and blame... but it also carries the reward of bringing new ideas to fruition.

Role of Leader

Leaders provide the vision. They motivate others. Leaders need to have a clear internal model of their role. This is likely to be strongly influenced by other roles that they fill in life, by their values, and by the sources of inspiration that they call upon. For example, some people might describe a leader by using one or more of the following metaphors. A leader is:

- An architect, designing and constructing a project;
- A sales – manager, selling a vision;
- A social worker, intervening to improve the lot of others;
- A general, commanding an army;
- An actor, playing to an audience;
- A diplomat, poring oil on troubled waters;
- An artist, with a particular vision.

Review of Literature

Kenneth Leithwood, Christopher Day, et.al (2006), "Successful School Leadership What Is It and How it influences pupil Learning" This study examines the four broad categories of leadership practices and fourteen more specific categories capture our review of the evidence about what effective leaders do. It is the enactment that must be sensitive to context, not the core practices them. The core practices provide a powerful source of guidance for practicing leaders, as well as a framework for the initial and continuing development of leaders.

Daniel G. Breen (1970), "Survey of Selected Programs for Student Leadership Training at Colleges and University" This report describes student leadership training programs at selected colleges and universities in a 5 state area. This paper lists resources that one can utilize; however, the best solution for improvement and promotion of quality leadership programs lies in the establishment of clusters of neighbouring colleges, with leadership and human relations interest.

Methods & Materials

Aim: The main aim is to study the leadership skill among Social Work students with reference to Bharathiar University.

Objective

- To identify the level of leadership skill among Social Work Students.

- To identify key measures for practice, policy and develop the leadership skill.
- To find out the difference between the age of the respondents and level of leadership skill
- To find out the difference between the field of specialization and current semester percentage of the respondents

The researcher has adopted descriptive research design for the study. To conduct this study the researcher adopted census method consisting of two sections, including "basic data" and "leadership questionnaire". The leadership questionnaire was developed by Lizbeth Stevens in 2008. The questionnaires were distributed to the Social Work students at Bharathiar University.

Findings

- Majority of the respondents (89%) belong to the age group of 23 years.
- More than half of the respondents (71.1%) belong to the female category.
- Nearly half of the respondents (43.2%) have their current semester percentage of 61 – 70 %
- More than half (52%) of the respondents' field of specialization was Human Resource Management.
- This study shows that students who belong to the final year have more leadership skills when compared to the first year students.
- There is no significant difference between the age of the respondents and leadership skill
- It is found that there is no significant difference between the field of specialization and overall percentage of the respondents.
- It was found that the overall leadership of Social Work students were moderate.

Suggestions

Whether aware or not on some level we are continually leading our self and others. Therefore it makes sense that we strive to improve our leadership skills.

- Students need to have a clear vision of self, others, and the world. So they need to determine their purpose in life and how they want to contribute to the world.
- Using this vision an action plan is to be developed and take first step in making their vision a reality.
- Determining the strengths and weaknesses the students will come to know how and in what are they should improve their self.
- There should be individual morals and personal values system. Making choices and taking actions that are aligned with the set morals and values helps to succeed almost effortlessly.
- Students need to take part in leadership programmes to improve their overall skills to work more effectively with their group and become a successful leader.

- A good leader knows how to communicate with others. He allows everyone to share their opinions and concerns. When information is given, he gets opinions from them. He also gives honest and unbiased feedback regularly, and gives clear directions as well. Therefore communication skills need to be improved.
- Finally we need to continue to educate and improve one self. The person who thinks he is an expert, has a lot more to learn. Never stop learning.

Conclusion

These days, students need to move towards leadership programs because they need to recognize the importance of leadership in ways that older generations did not. Today's students are graduating into a world that is much riskier than the one we knew. They will have multiple jobs and even multiple careers during their lifetimes. Many will work for small firms, and a growing percentage will be consultants and freelancers for most of their working lives. They will need to be equipped to make their own opportunities. They need the skills, knowledge, and qualities like self reliance, social and cultural capital, appreciation for lifelong learning, creativity, conflict-resolution and teambuilding skills, ethics, understanding of economics, and more. Leadership is a skill so we need to teach it to our students. Only then can we produce leaders who will have a potential to bring about a change in our community, country and globally. Leadership is never a finished product, but rather, it is an ongoing process that needs continuous nurturing and refinement. It is a part of our profession and our responsibility to people and nation.

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