Sinem Konuk, M.S.
Yıldız Technical University

Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D.
Santa Clara University

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM IN TURKEY

Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of a student leadership program at Yildiz Technical University (Turkey) based on the Kouzes and Posner (2018) leadership model. A quantitative quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group demonstrated the effectiveness of the program. The analysis indicated a positive change for all five leadership practices, with three reaching statistical significance levels. Semi-structured interviews with students explored the two non-significant findings. The qualitative results suggested that leadership development programs need learning activities that apply to real-life situations and focusing on enhancing students' self-confidence as leaders.

Introduction

Society has a responsibility to guide, shape, and influence the next generation of leaders, with a most important obligation to help discover and release their untapped potential. The young are vital because they represent the future of every country, needing to be, among many desirable attributes, hopeful, entrepreneurial, and productive. To be best prepared to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, they must develop leadership skills.

Most scholars advocate that leadership is not an innate talent; it is a set of behaviors and abilities that can be learned and developed (e.g., Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 1964; Greenleaf, 1977; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Van Fleet & Yukl, 1986). Developing the leadership skills of young people will assist them to overcome the individual and social difficulties in solidarity and ultimately lead them to contribute to the development of society.

Young people need opportunities where they can take leadership roles to improve their leadership skills. For this reason, leadership development programs, unlike theoretical knowledge, should provide actual leadership experience, a practice-based infrastructure (Allio, 2005; Fish 2011), and hands-on learning activities (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster & Burkardt, 2001). A university setting should provide ample opportunity and fertile ground for learning leadership (Wurr & Hamilton, 2012). Undergraduate students' college experience should be a time for independence and learning about their own personal leadership skills (Forbes, 2014).

Several studies have found a direct relationship between the effectiveness of the leadership training programs that are supported by theoretical knowledge and the learning levels achieved by students (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009; Komives, Dugan, Owen, Slack, Wagner & Associates, 2011; Weber, 2019). There are many ways to conceptualize leadership theories. For the purpose of this paper, we draw from Northouse

(2018), conceptualizing three themes, focusing on (1) the leader as an individual, (2) the environment and/or the situation, and (3) the relationship or exchange between the leader and the followers. Several studies have found a direct relationship between the effectiveness of the leadership training programs that are supported by theoretical knowledge and the learning levels achieved by students (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009; Komives, Dugan, Owen, Slack, Wagner & Associates, 2011; Weber, 2019).

Historically, leadership was thought to consist of traits that an individual was born with, often referred to as the "Great-Man Theory" (Bass, 1981; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). This approach presumed that these traits could not be developed (Bass, 1981; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Northouse, 2018; Russell, 2012); and completely overlooked female leadership (Bass, 1981). These notions are out-of-date, and researchers now believe that "any human skill can be taught" (Fish, 2011, p. 82).

The skills approach is another leader-centered theory similar to the trait approach. The difference is that the skills approach focuses on skills and abilities that can be learned, instead of the belief of fixed traits (Katz, 1955; Northouse, 2018). Research conducted by Katz (1955) identified three basic skills; technical, human, and conceptual. Katz went on to state that different levels of leadership one needs a varying amount of each skill. The style approach is another important theory that focuses on the individual, but more specifically, on the individual's behavior (Northouse, 2018). This theory focuses on two leadership behaviors, task behaviors, and relationship behaviors (Bass, 1981).

Another widely recognized theory of leadership that has stood the test of time is the situational approach (Northouse, 2018), and postulates that different situations require different degrees of directive and supportive actions. That is, leaders must judge the situation and adapt their style accordingly. In general, the situational approach allows for four different leadership styles, each with a coordinating approach: Directing, Coaching, Supporting, and Delegating.

Once a leader identifies the situation, he/she is to adjust his/her leadership style to address that specific situation. Leadership contingency theory (Fiedler, 1972) suggests that leaders should be matched with situations where they best fit and hence have the greatest chance for success. The contingency theory categorizes situations based on three factors; leader-member relations, task structure, and position power (Fiedler, 1972).

The path-goal leadership theory explains how leaders can motivate followers to perform responsibilities and achieve satisfaction from these actions (Bass, 1981; House, 1971). The focus of this approach is to use follower motivation to enhance performance and satisfaction (Northouse, 2018). The leaders provide clear directions on the tasks that need to be done and provides clear instructions on how to achieve them. Followers' motivation is developed by the leader providing valued extrinsic rewards that hinge on the follower's performance (Bass, 1981; House, 1971). Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory focuses on leadership as a process that occurs between the leader and his/her followers. In contrast, previous viewpoints saw leadership as more of an action that leaders did to followers, instead of viewing it as an interaction between leaders and followers (Northouse, 2018). LMX theory also highlights the importance of relationships and the key role they play in getting things done as a leader

Transformational leadership is one of the most current and popular leadership theories (Northouse, 2018) and centers on the actual behaviors of the leader. It has been cited as being the "most effective leadership style in contemporary organizations" (Lopez-Zafra, Garcia-Retamero, & Martos, 2012, p. 99). The Bass transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985) consists of four different characteristics: inspirational motivation (creating and selling a group vision), idealized influence (acting as a role model), intellectual stimulation (incorporating follower's opinions and challenging followers), and individual consideration (treating everyone as a unique individual) (Bass, 1985; Bass & Steidlemeier, 1999;

Vallée & Bloom, 2005). The goal is to change and transform people with an emphasis on intrinsic motivation and lead them to accomplish more than they believed possible (Bass, 1985).

Part of what sets transformational leadership apart from other theories involves the focus on the full person. There are other variations of transformational leadership. For example, servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970) centers around the appeal of leaders serving others. According to Laub (1999), servant leadership places an emphasis on actions that favor the good of individuals who are being led over the egotism of the leader. Servant leadership supports the appreciation and advancement of people, the fostering of community, the practice of truthfulness, the supplying of leadership for the good of individuals led and the allocation of power and position for the general good of each person, the entire institution and those aided by the organization (Greenleaf, 1977).

The Kouzes and Posner (2017, 2018) framework is another transformational leadership model. Their research, conducted over nearly four decades, suggests that leadership is not about personality, situation, or position, but a collection of behaviors and actions. These practices serve as guidance for leaders on "how to make extraordinary things happen in organizations" (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Their framework has been validated across a wide variety of settings, functions, industries, demographics, and nationalities (Abu-Tineh, Khasawneh, & Al-Omari, 2008; Posner, 2013; Pugh et al., 2011; Quin et al., 2015; Vito & Higgins, 2010; Zagorsek, Jaklic & Stough, 2004). Mostly important to the current study, their framework has been extensively studied with student populations (e.g., Cook, 2017; Diaz, 2018; Harmon, 2017; Johns, 2006; Posner, 2004, 2009; Posner & Brodsky, 1992, 1993, 1994; Posner, Crawford, Denniston-Stewart, 2015; Posner & Rosenberger, 1997; Stadler, 2018; Vogt, 2007; Wallace, 2017; Weber, 2019).

The latter is critical because serious concerns have been raised about whether many leadership theories are appropriate for college students and collegiate environments, which are different from settings in which managers and corporations operate (Martin, 2019). Students have limited leadership experiences and opportunities, and their organizational environment is equalitarian rather than hierarchical (Freeman, Knott, & Swartz, 1994; Komives & Associates, 2009). Within student organizations there are few extrinsic reinforcements (either positive or punitive), and the tenure of members, as well as their leaders, is generally quite limited, both in terms of time and scale. The following section describes the Kouzes and Posner (2018) transformational leadership framework.

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership model is a well-established transformational leadership framework that has been used for many decades to help individuals develop their leadership abilities (Northouse, 2018). Kouzes and Posner (2017, 2018) have collected thousands of case studies about peoples' personal-best leadership experiences. It turns out that every individual can demonstrate leadership behaviors although their industrial sectors, age, gender, ethnic origins, religious and cultural backgrounds, educational levels, job positions, etc. may be different from each other (Posner, 2013, 2014). Their research reveals that when at their personal best as leaders, people Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

Model the Way. Student leaders must recognize the personal values that guide them in order to set an example for the behaviors they expect from others (Kouzes & Posner, 2018). Leaders must find their own voice and then make a clear behavioral statement of their values (Wong & Page, 2003). This kind of behavior is consistent with a key dimension of transformational leadership, which involves the pursuit of higher-order values that motivate leaders and followers to perform above-expected levels (Burns, 1978). They realize, as well, that it is the consistency between their espoused values and

their actions that grants them genuine respect and credibility, and take great care to ensure that they are fully cognizant of aligning their words and actions (George, 2007; Rao, 2013). In sharing their values with others, leaders also ensure that people adhere to the shared values of the group (Kouzes & Posner, 2018). This creates an environment in which leaders are more concerned with directing their followers by focusing on what they have in common rather than highlighting their differences (Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2014).

Inspire a Shared Vision.   Leaders cannot emerge without having followers, and being "forward-looking" is key to distinguishing an individual contributor from a leader (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). Exemplary student leaders create an environment with open communication in order to unify the group's hopes, dreams, and desires, creating a roadmap or guide about how long-term interests can be realized by working together (Bass, 1990). They give life to the teams' aspirations by employing motivational language (Pondy, 1989) and they stimulate the team with a contagious enthusiasm and excitement to reach their dreams (Kouzes & Posner, 2018). The passion for making a difference leads the team to imagine the unique opportunities when they arrive at the destination (McCutcheon & Lindsey, 2006).

Challenge the Process.   Exemplary student leaders are eager to learn new things and challenge obstacles in the way of opening new horizons and allowing them to achieve excellence (Harris, 2009). They seek novel ways to improve their work and take the initiative in this process (Kouzes & Posner, 2018). Not satisfied with the current situation, they spread their wings and take risks (Bass & Riggo, 2006). They see inevitable mistakes as a valuable learning opportunity, creating a safe environment for their followers to experiment and learn from experience (Day, 2000).   They give attention to listening to others rather than telling and talking (Senge, 1990), and go out of their comfort zones in search for new ideas (Peters & Smith, 1998). Leaders sustain the momentum through breaking projects into small wins and providing people with a sense of purposeful progress (Kouzes & Posner, 2018).

Enable Others to Act.   Exemplary student leaders know that they will not succeed alone (George, 2007) because leadership is not a solo performance. Helping other people to realize that they are talented and strong, and building mutual trust, are keys to motivating them to participate energetically in a journey towards a common aspiration (McCutcheon & Lindsey, 2006; Balyer, 2016). Exemplary leaders acquire the mutual trust required for improvement when they let others exercise decision-making on their own, building in this way team spirit, harmony, and community consciousness (Day, 2012). Leaders share their knowledge with team members (Stoll & Temperley, 2009) and facilitate the development of individuals' skills through shared goals and roles (Greenleaf, 1977). Behaving like coaches and teachers, leaders provide team members with opportunities to enhance their abilities and build greater self-confidence (Hamel, Doz, & Prahalad, 1989).

Encourage the Heart.   People may feel physically and psychologically exhausted as they try to be the best they can be, and they will surely struggle during periods of great change. They may become disappointed or lose their faith and come to the threshold of giving up. Exemplary student leaders instill hope and appreciate the contributions that people make both individually and collectively (Kouzes & Posner, 2018). They raise and maintain high expectations and find the most meaningful and personal way to celebrate the achievements of team members (Isaac, Zerbe, & Pitt, 2001). Appreciation can take many forms, from a small thank-you note to a lavish public celebration event, and leaders make it a point to be creative and personally involved (Kouzes & Posner, 2018). In order to sustain esprit de corps, they make it a point to congratulate the triumphs achieved as the result of collective efforts (Goleman, 2000; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Mahoney, 2001).

Although every individual personal-best leadership story is different, Kouzes and Posner (2018) found that the behaviors and actions in these case studies revealed similar patterns.   Normative analyses of whether student leaders engaging in these leadership behaviors mattered has been clearly affirmative (Posner, 2012). Research shows, from

the perspective of their observers, that the more frequently student leaders were perceived as engaging in the five leadership practices, the more motivated, committed, and productive they were and the more favorably they assessed their leaders' effectiveness (Posner, 2014; Posner & Brodsky, 1992, 1993; Posner & Rosenberger, 1997). When examining the effectiveness of collegiate student leadership programs, studies have shown that the leadership skills of the students participating improved (e.g., Allen, 2009; Bailey, 2012; Blyden, 2009; Bommarito, 2009; Egger, 2009; Erwin, 2005; Ford, Greene, & Richardson, 2013; Hopkins, 2013; Matsos, 1997; Posner, 2009; Pugh, 2000; Rosch & Caza, 2012; Stadler, 2018; Torres, 2008; Vogt, 2007; Weber, 2019).

Similar results have been shown in studies with students in Turkey, carried out with pre-school students (Gündüz & Duran, 2016), sixth-grade students (Tüysüz, 2007), rural teenage girls (Babacan, 2008), tenth-grade students (Alkan, 2009), and, gifted and non-gifted students (Ogurlu, 2012; Kavak, 2013). However, the studies in Turkey have been conducted at primary and secondary school levels, with one exception (Külekçi, 2015), and in addition, they did not involve a curriculum based on any particular leadership paradigm. Building upon previous studies, both in Turkey and around the globe, this study aimed at improving the leadership skills of Turkish university students through a leadership program based upon Kouzes and Posner (2018) transformational leadership framework. The research hypothesis was that the leadership behaviors of students completing the student leadership program (treatment group) would increase when measured against a comparable group of students who had not completed the program (control group).

Methodology

The approach of The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2019) determined the extent to which the Student Leadership Program affected students' leadership skills. The CAS Standards and Guidelines for "Student Leadership Program" (2019) identified five steps for assessing programs:

Setting goals, gathering data from multiple sources, interpreting qualitative and quantitative data, reporting results, and implementing improvements. Collecting both qualitative and quantitative data is important in understanding the extent to which program objectives are achieved (CAS, 2019). Accordingly, this study methodology utilized a sequential-descriptive pattern from mixed model research types.

Research Model.   Mixed research models involve the process of using both quantitative and qualitative methods, and generally provides a clearer understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2008). The order of gathering quantitative and qualitative data is important for the mixed research model, and in this study, it was deemed appropriate to first collect quantitative, and then qualitative, data.

The sequential-descriptive pattern allows explaining and elaborating quantitative data collected in the first phase, and is the most commonly used model in educational research (Creswell, 2008). In the quantitative section, which is the first step of the mixed-model sequential-descriptive design, a semi-experimental design with the pre-test-post-test control group was used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Student Leadership Program. Of the two pre-established study groups, one was randomly selected as the control group, and the other one was selected as the experiment group.

The Student Leadership Practice Inventory, a paper-pencil self-report measure, was used as a pre-and post-test. The pre-test inventory had additional demographic questions which were not included in the post-test version. After administering the pre-test to both groups, there is no intervention in the control group while the intervention is carried out in the experimental group. Both groups were then subjected to a post-test at the conclusion of the intervention, seven weeks later (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The experimental and control group are statistically equalized according to the results from their pre-test. Prior to the experimental study, a pilot implementation of the Student Leadership Program was carried out, and necessary

precautions were taken to avoid the problems that may occur in the experimental study.

A qualitative research methodology was used to elaborate on the results obtained from the quantitative part of the study. Qualitative research enables an in-depth description of a scientific program or practice (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). With the help of phenomenological patterns, the researcher examines the experience of students participating in the student leadership program and tries to find out which part or parts of the program are more or less effective than others. Generated are suggestions about how to improve the program and ensure that it is more effective. The interview technique obtained the views of the students who participated in the program (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

Student Leadership Development Program. In this study, the Student Leadership Development Program, which was prepared by Weekes (2010), based on The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2018) model, was taught and its effectiveness on students' leadership behaviors investigated. In addition to the conceptual rationale already explained, the decision to use this framework was based on some practical considerations. The framework is easily explained to students, has a commonsense appeal, provides five relatively uncomplicated dimensions, and each of these dimensions creates patterns of actionable behavior outside of the classroom. Materials were also readily available, offering a rich set of activities and lesson plans that focus on developing leadership behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2013, 2014; Kouzes, Posner, & Biech, 2017; Weekes, 2010). Unlike the theoretical education content traditional to the Turkish educational system, this framework also enables students to apply the knowledge they already know theoretically to their own life, which enhances their perception that they can.

The Student Leadership Program was conducted for the experimental study. The program consisted of a weekly one-hour session, over seven weeks. It was conducted as a stand-alone program at Yildiz Technical University in Istanbul, Turkey. The goal of the program was to demonstrate how students can be a leader by using the five leadership practices. Since students participating in this program would graduate from the faculty of education within a year and aspired to become teachers, they were intrinsically motivated to acquire leadership skills. The learning outcomes associated with the program, consistent with the needs of future teachers, were: discovering and owning their values, being a role model, creating and sharing their vision with others, searching for new opportunities and taking risks, encouraging cooperation, empowering others, appreciating people's contributions, and celebrating victories. The program content was as follows (Weekes, 2010):

- Session 1: Introduction to Student Leadership Challenge Model/ Poster activity, personal best writing

- Session 2: Defining Leadership/ Brainstorming and discussions to define leadership, exit cards

- Session 3: Model the Way/ Value list, group and classroom discussions, leadership analogies.

- Session 4: Inspire a Shared Vision/ Metaphor collage, discussion about the song 'Dream Big' (c).

- Session 5: Challenge the Process/ Journal entries, interactions to the scenarios, exit slips

- Session 6: Enable Others to Act/ Quote walk, team challenge: create a sculpture, interview homework

- Session 7: Encourage the Heart/ Preparing an achievement award, award ceremony, reflection

All classroom materials were translated into Turkish from the original English. The suitability of the materials for the age group of university students was confirmed. According to Weekes, it would be completely appropriate to use these materials with university students. She uses the curriculum design and materials with college students in her classes.

Experimental and Control Groups. A study group

was established to carry out the experimental research, which constituted the first part of the research. The study group consisted of students in their third year in the School of Education at Yildiz Technical University. Convenience sampling from non-selective sampling methods was used, with the control group consisting of 22 students (4 males and 18 females) studying to be Turkish language teachers and 22 students (5 males and 17 females) as the experimental group studying to be primary school teachers. The demographics of both groups were relatively equivalent in terms of age, gender, and work experiences.

Homogeneous sampling of non-selective sampling was the method used in the qualitative portion of the study. The purpose of the homogeneous sampling is to provide an in-depth depiction of the study group (Patton, 1990). Semi-structured interviews were conducted in an effort to find out more in-depth reasoning for the results found in the quantitative analysis.

Data Collection. In order to measure the effectiveness of the Student Leadership Program, participants completed the Student Leadership Practice Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2005) as both a pre-test and post-test of any changes in leadership behaviors from the beginning to the end of the program. A semi-structured interview form collected data. The Student Leadership Practices Inventory (S-LPI) is based upon The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership framework (Kouzes & Posner, 2018). It consists of 30 behavioral statements, asking about how frequently the individual typically engages in each leadership behavior, using a five-point Likert scale, with (1) representing "rarely or seldom do what is described," (2) "once in a while," (3) "sometimes," (4) "often," and (5) representing "very frequently or almost always do what is described." A neutral point is not indicated because the measurement is focused on how often a participant engages in a behavior.

There are six behavioral statements for each of the five leadership scales (practices). For example: "Sets a personal example of what I expect from other people"

(Model the Way); "I talk with others about how their long-term interests can be met by working towards a common goal" (Inspire a Shared Vision); "I look around for ways to develop and challenge my skills and abilities" (Challenge the Process); "I support the decisions that other people in our organization make on their own" (Enable Others to Act); and, "I praise people for a job well done" (Encourage the Heart). Scores for each of the leadership practices can range from six to thirty. It is important to appreciate that these statements rely upon self-reported perceptions of one's behaviors and may or may not be the same as their actual behaviors.

Meta-analysis of the psychometric analysis of the S-LPI revealed strong reliability among student populations (Posner, 2010). Diaz (2017) translated the S-LPI into Spanish and the Cronbach alpha values for the five leadership practices averaged .78. Research involving Chinese and Taiwanese nursing education students reported strong reliability and validity of the instrument (Chen & Baron, 2007). Translated into Turkish for this study, and administered as part of the pilot study to 383 university students, the resulting Cronbach alpha values for the S-LPI all exceeded .73.

Data Analysis. The S-LPI was administered as a pre-test and post-test measure to assess the effectiveness of the Student Leadership Program. T-tests were used to examine (a) changes in leadership behaviors for the experimental group and control group from Time 1 (pre) to Time 2 (post) and (b) between the experimental and control groups at Time 2 (completion of the program). Semi-structured interviews provided an elaboration on the quantitative data. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. Themes were determined based on the interview questions below:

1. Why were the modules on "Model the Way" and "Enable Others to Act" not very effective?

2. What can be done to make the activities more effective?

3. Where do you see yourself in enabling others to act?

4. Where do you see yourself in modeling the way?

Then predefined themes were used to classify, summarize and interpret the data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

Quantitative Results

The results of the pre-and-post-test administrations of the S-LPI for the control and experimental study groups are shown in Table 1. For the experimental group, the average scores for each of the five leadership practices increased significantly, and the overall average score increase (from 115 to 129) was also statistically significant (p < .003). For the control group, any change in average scores between the pre-and-post administrations of the S-LPI were rather modest or non-existent, and the overall average score increase was only two points (from 118 to 120). None of the changes from the pre-test to post-test were statistically significant for the control group (p > .226). As shown in Table 2, there were statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups for the leadership practices of Inspire (p < .02), Challenge (p <.03), and Encourage (p <.01). Differences for Model approached significance levels (p <. 06) and the differences in Enable were not statistically significant (p < .13).

Table 1

Descriptive Values for the Experimental and Control Groups on the S-LPI Pre-Test and S-LPI Post-Test

	Leadership Practice		N	Min	Max	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
Experimental Group	Model the Way	Pre-Test	22	13	29	23.77	3.75
		Post-Test	22	21	30	26.50	2.56
	Inspire a Shared Vision	Pre-Test	22	11	29	22.54	3.83
		Post-Test	22	15	30	25.09	4.03
	Challenge the Process	Pre-Test	22	12	29	21.04	4.37
		Post-Test	22	16	30	24.40	4.10
	Enables Others to Act	Pre-Test	22	12	30	23.55	4.57
		Post-Test	22	21	29	25.77	2.41
	Encourage the Heart	Pre-Test	22	13	29	24.31	3.68
		Post-Test	22	17	30	27.14	2.88
	Total	Pre-Test	22	61	140	115.23	17.6(
		Post-Test	22	94	147	128.90	13.6!
Control Group	Model the Way	Pre-Test	22	19	30	24.64	2.44
		Post-Test	22	21	29	25.68	2.27
	Inspire a Shared Vision	Pre-Test	22	16	28	23.68	2.92
		Post-Test	22	18	28	23.38	2.45
	Challenge the Process	Pre-Test	22	13	28	21.86	3.65
		Post-Test	22	14	30	22.54	3.55
	Enables Others to Act	Pre-Test	22	15	30	23.68	3.96
		Post-Test	22	13	29	24.10	3.72
	Encourage the Heart	Pre-Test	22	18	30	24.18	2.84
		Post-Test	22	19	29	24.33	2.98
	Total	Pre-Test	22	95	142	118.04	12.6₄
		Post-Test	22	98	139	120.04	10.9!

Table 2
The Results of Two-Way ANOVA For Complex Measurements of Each Sub-Dimension of S-LPI

Sub-dimension	Group	Pre-Test			Post-Test			Sd	F	P
		N	$\overline{x}$	ss	N	$\overline{x}$	S			
Model the Way	Experiment	22	23.77	3.75	22	26.50	2.56	1	3.74	0.06
	Control	22	24.64	2.44	22	25.68	2.27			
Inspired a Shared Vision	Experiment	22	22.54	3.83	22	25.09	4.03	1	6.14	0.02
	Control	22	23.68	2.92	22	23.38	2.45			
Challenge the Process	Experiment	22	21.04	4.37	22	24.41	4.10	1	5.11	0.03
	Control	22	21.86	3.65	22	22.54	3.55			
Enables Others to Act	Experiment	22	23.55	4.57	22	25.77	2.41	1	2.37	0.13
	Control	22	23.68	3.96	22	24.10	3.72			
Encourage the Heart	Experiment	22	24.31	3.68	22	27.14	2.88	1	7.31	0.01
	Control	22	24.18	2.84	22	24.33	2.98			

Qualitative Results

For the qualitative portion of the study, the pre-test and the post-test S-LPI scores were examined for those students in the experimental study group. Those with little to no empirical difference in their pre-to-post-test Model and Enable scores (N=8) were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview; however, they were not informed as to the criteria for their selection. All voluntarily agreed and half were randomly selected to answer questions about the course design and lesson plans for the section on Model the Way, while the other half were asked about the section on Enable Others to Act. Each interview took place about four months after the Student Leadership Program was completed, conducted over Skype, recorded, and took about 30 minutes.

The descriptive analysis of the interview data revealed four themes regarding curriculum and pedagogical design flaws or inadequacies that may have contributed to the lack of significant behavioral change in the leadership practices of Model the Way, along with a number of suggestions for improvement. Illustrated in Figure 1, they centered on (1) the classroom learning activity, (2) students' feelings, (3) the practical application, and (4) unrealistic case study.

One of the major reasons that the Model the Way lesson plan was not overly effective according to the students interviewed was an inadequate classroom activity. The activities in the Model the Way lesson (Weekes, 2010) aimed to help students discover their important values and how to put them into action. According to the students' interviews, the values list activity did not sufficiently direct them to deeply reflect and reveal the values that were important to them, nor did the other classroom activity provide enough specificity to compel them to do more to put their values into action. Student 1 summarizes the challenge he experienced with the values sort activity:

> When I think about life as a whole, values may vary from person to person and from place to place and I did not know what to think about or reference while doing the activity. For example, the values that I pay attention to in my private life and the values that I pay attention to my school life are different. For this reason, the activity instruction should be more detailed about to help provide a context within which the students choose their values.
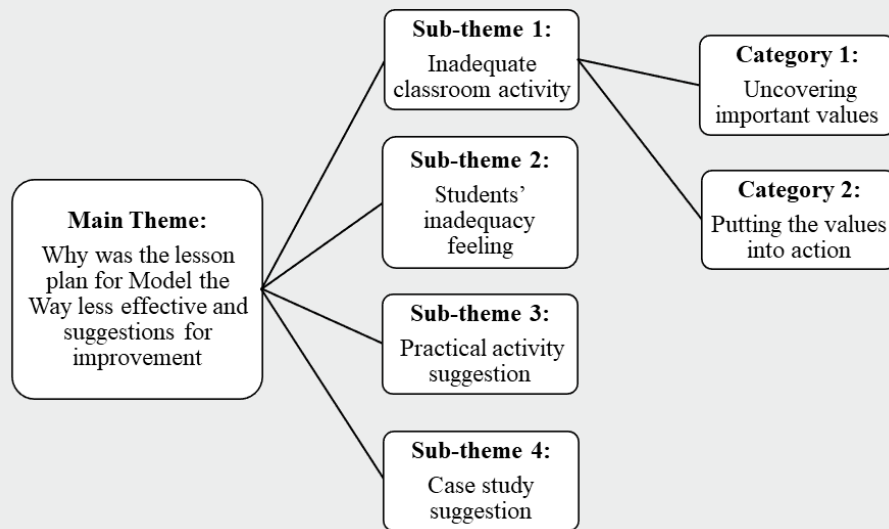
Figure 1. The Reasons That 'Model the Way' Was Less Effective and Suggestions

The purpose of the activity was to make students aware of their values, to practice them in real life, and to be a model for their values. The fact that students are aware of their values is an important step taken to become a model for others, but it is not enough. In order to Model the Way, their values must be reflected in their behavior, which requires practice. According to Student 2, the activities did not give people enough opportunity to model their values, as indicated in her reflections:

> The values list was a great activity. I'm interested in myself there. "Who am I? What are my values? What is my priority?" Because in our everyday life, we do not think "Who am I?" When you gave us such an opportunity, we seized this opportunity. However, this activity was insufficient to direct us to be a model for our values. It helped us be aware of our values, but did not give us sufficient opportunity to put them into action.

A second reason why the lesson plans for Model the Way did not make a substantive difference, as suggested by another student is that his, and he speculated this was also true for others, self-esteem about modeling personal values is low. Low self-

esteem may result from peoples' inability to recognize and fully appreciate their values, skills and abilities, such that they feel inadequate (even an "imposter) to be a model for other people. Student 3 believed that students could not be role models because they have not achieved anything very special, as he maintained:

> When it is said to be a model, it comes to my mind to be perfect. I do not think I'm such a person. I have a vision, but I need serious self-confidence before I can consider being a model and I need to be perfect. For this reason, I do not think I can be a model for others.

The remedy for these concerns, from the students' perspective was that the experiential activity should be more practical, thus making Model the Way a more concrete action. They also suggested that a group project might be a better context within which to illustrate and apply the essentials of clarifying one's values and setting an example for others. In the words of Student 4:

> Practice oriented activities can be applied if there is more time. Group work may be more useful than paper pencil activity. We could spend two weeks on this subject or a

group project could be carried out throughout the whole program. I may be thinking that I am a good model on paper, but maybe there is nothing I can put into practice in real life. It seems like a group work would be useful to realize this.

Closely aligned with this viewpoint, was another student who suggested that the lesson could be better grounded through analyzing a case study, recounting the story of people who are cognizant of their values and make a conscious effort to align them with their behaviors and actions. Such an example might better guide the students so that they can similarly behave in this manner. As he explained:

It can be studied on a case study about the values of the leaders who have made the difference. They cannot make a difference alone. There are some people with them and they are sharing the values and vision. For instance, referring to a case study about Atatürk and his friends, İsmet İnönü and Kazim Karabekir, it can be say that they had common values. You can give this example and ask the question of what your group's values are, and how you model these values. Using such a case

study can facilitate a better understanding of the topic.

In the interviews with students about the curricular design and learning activities associated with Enable Others to Act, the descriptive analysis revealed three possible reasons why students did not make noticeable changes in their behavior. As displayed in Figure 2, these were (1) not teaming up, (2) character, and (3) practical activity suggestion.

The theme of "not teaming up" had two components: friend relationships and common goals. The learning activities for the Enable Others to Act lesson (Weekes, 2010) aimed at the idea that students can work together as a team, motivating and strengthening one another in the process of reaching their goal together.

According to the interviews with students, it turned out that while working on the team project they had difficulties in motivating each other, involving everyone, and being collaborative with team members. Student 5 shared his viewpoint that friendships and pre-existing relationships with people can positively affect the process of the team working together, even though his team did not
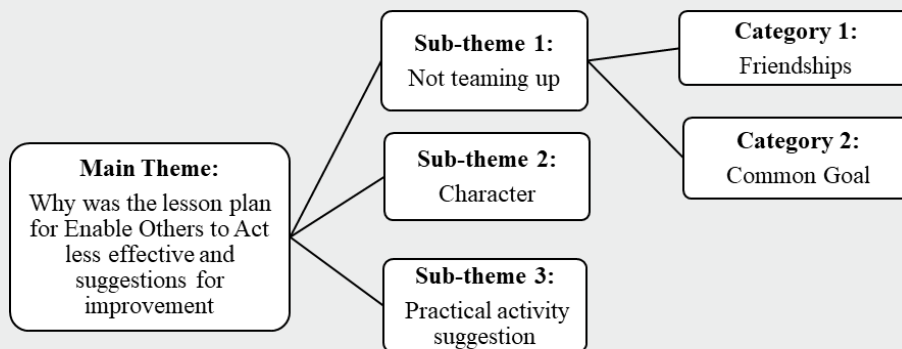

Figure 2.The Reasons That 'Enable Others to Act' Was Less Effective and Suggestions

have any such pre-existing relationships:

> In our team process, we didn't know each other well, we couldn't observe each other exactly, we didn't know each other's abilities and we were unable to coordinate. That's why my team friends and I had some difficulty in involving the team process.

Even if students know their teammates very well, sometimes they may have difficulty working together. This may be caused by reflecting personal problems on the team process, as noted by Student 6. She observed one of her teammates feeling discouraged, and commented how his mood negatively affected the rest of the team:

> Student X is a dominant character and also is my best friend. His abstentious behavior during the team period negatively affected me. Time and again, we warned him and even offered some advice about joining in the team process, and tried to encourage him to do so. But morally he dropped us, and we were at a loss about what to do.

Another factor adversely affecting the teaming process was that group members did not strongly share a common goal. The fact that team members could not agree on a common goal and that team members may change their minds at the last moment affects the team's productivity. Student 6 summarized the dilemma that resulted:

> I was the leader of the team in that activity. I brought up an idea and my team members supported this. We were all very excited, because there was an idea in our minds that we shared. However, one of our team members, Student Y was not very active. Despite the fact that the rest of the team worked well and enthusiastically, Y was having no part of this. He offered another idea when we were almost finished with the project; but that was not acceptable.

The second reason offered about the relative ineffectiveness of the Enable Others to Act lesson was that students lacked the self-confidence necessary to motivate others. They were not convinced that they had what it took to motivate and empower others, especially their peers. Student 7 expressed a rather personal view of this challenge:

> I'm a Pisces. That means I am a follower rather than a leader. I am more comfortable and active in the process of adapting an idea more than managing an idea. So, I do not think I have progressed in leadership

Some leaders may choose to do certain tasks themselves, rather than forcing their teammates to do things they do not want to do. Student 8's viewpoint about why some students find it challenging to "enable" others laid in the nature of their personality. She explained that she has an emotional character:

> In general, I can lead people, but leading them in a certain way is a very sensitive point. I take care not to be arrogant and commanding. I do not want people to think badly about me because I'm an emotional person. I do not have difficulty of leading people I do not know, but I am nervous when I lead my close friends. If necessary, I can do their work myself. Because I don't want to break their heart. It has always been like that for me.

The comments from the student interviews emphasized how they had some difficulties about leading others because of their own characteristics and teaming up. Their feedback about how to make the lesson about leading through Enabling Others to Act was to focus more on real-life situations rather than experiential classroom activities. Said one student:

> Scissors-paper activities look easy to do at first sight. Leadership was more evident during our community service project, as there were certain tasks that everyone needed to make sure were completed, and we knew that.

According to the recommendations, activities in the

'Enable Others to Act' lesson should be adapted more to real-life situations.

Discussion

An important objective of this study was to improve the leadership behaviors of students studying at the Faculty of Education, Yildiz Technical University. To do so, the leadership behaviors of students completing the Student Leadership Program (Weekes, 2010) were compared with those not enrolled. The Student Leadership Practices Inventory was administered to both groups as a pre-test before the program started and a post-test after the program ended. This data provided an opportunity to investigate the impact of the program on students' leadership behaviors.

The statistical analysis showed that the leadership behaviors of the experimental study group significantly improved compared with the control group students. Within the experimental group, students reported to be using all five leadership practices much more often than they were prior to taking the course, and little to no change was found for the control group. The leadership practices of Inspire, Challenge, and Encourage in the experimental group were all statistically higher than the control group, with Model almost reaching statistical significance levels, and Enable in a positive direction but not statistically significant. Overall, these results support the contention that the Student Leadership Program had a positive impact on the leadership capabilities of the students involved.

This result is in line with other studies about the impact of leadership development programs. For example: Increasing the frequency that students report demonstrating leadership behaviors (e.g., Alkan, 2009; Babacan, 2008; Bommarito, 2012; Kavak, 2013; Külekçi, 2015; Matsos, 1997; Ogurlu, 2012; Posner, 2009; Torres, 2008; Tüysüz, 2007); developing students' balance, motivation, and confidence skills (Jensen, 1998); increasing students' self-directed leadership and empathy perceptions (Allen, 2009; Hopkins, 2013; Yee, 2004); increasing students' satisfaction towards their leadership practices (Bailey,

2012); enabling students involvement in leadership situations (Ford, Greene, & Richardson, 2013); and reinforcing students' thoughts about "the importance of integrity on leadership" (Pugh, 2000). Both short-term (Rosch & Caza, 2012) and long-term (Cook, 2017; Posner, 2009; Stadler, 2018; Weber, 2019) leadership programs have demonstrated an ability to increase the leadership behaviors of students.

This is one of the few studies to actually ask respondents, in this case students, for the why behind their survey responses. Statistically significant changes in the leadership practices of Enable and Model were not found (although the latter approached statistical significance). While the average change was in a positive direction, the failure may well be an empirical one due to limited sample size. Still, as Conger (1992) argues, leadership development programs should address each of the behaviors that guide the leadership process, rather than focusing on just one behavior. Interviews with students about the classroom activities associated with these two leadership practices indicated a need for more practical applications of the materials, as well as greater attention to building students' image of themselves as leaders (for Model) and while working with others (for Enable). Stadler (2018) examined the effectiveness of various assignments in teaching undergraduate students leadership, and as with the current study, she found that frequency scores on the S-LPI significantly increased from pre-course to post-course, and her students reported more successful learning of leadership from assignments that were more involved and practical. The more theoretical and less kinesthetic the assignments were, the less the students reported learning leadership. Other studies support the utility of practical experiences for students to achieve true learning of leadership (Fish, 2011; Hurd et al., 2014; Olsen & Burk, 2014).

Part of the challenge in developing leadership skills is that often there are a limited number of hours devoted to such efforts. For example, in this study, the total classroom time was only seven hours, and this may simply have not been enough time to have a lasting effect on every leadership behavior. According

to Hopkins (2013), the greater the number of hours of training, the higher the frequency with which students exhibit all the leadership behaviors. In evaluating a leadership program for undergraduate nursing students Weber (2019, p. 60) found that "progression through the baccalaureate nursing program does have an impact upon the development of transformational leadership behaviors." Blyden (2009) found that graduate students who have participated in a leadership development program in college, and are currently working, have higher perceptions of The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership than those participating in the student leadership program who are still students.

Although short-term programs have a positive impact on students' leadership skills, these programs may not be able to fully develop each leadership behavior. For this reason, students who complete any such program need additional time to put into practice what they learned, which is the conclusion reached by Rosch and Caza (2012). However, as shown by the results of this study, students introduced to leadership issues and given even some opportunity to practice them, significantly increased their leadership in comparison to those students who did not have the same opportunity or experience.

It is important to recognize and appreciate that not every student learns in the same way, or the same exact content, in any leadership development course. Most obviously because students do not all come into the experience with identical skills and experiences, or motivations. While instructors may teach in a particular fashion for pedagogical reasons, the truth is that leadership-in-practice might be best conceptualized as a set of skills and the development of any one, however idiosyncratic to the individual, should necessarily result in strengthening others. Finally, the qualitative data revealed that the lesson plans for helping students to become more proficient in the leadership practices of Model and Enable may require activities of a more practical nature, including analysis of case studies, than left to classroom experiential activities.

This study adds to a growing body of research supporting the efforts of faculty and their institutions to develop and strengthen the leadership capabilities of their students. However, some students may initially be hesitant to partake in any student leadership program. One method for encouraging more participation is by providing certificates for completing the program; these may have significance in their subsequent employment and career searches. Another possibility is providing academic credit for such courses, and linking any single course with others to provide a more in-depth perspective and multiple opportunities to practice and hone leadership skills.

To provide students the opportunity to practice and internalize their leadership skills, student leadership programs that are longer in duration are possibly more effective than shorter ones. An academic year program could be more effective than a quarter (seven-to-ten weeks) or even semester (fifteen-week) term. In addition, after a maximum of six-to-eight months from the end of the leadership program, follow-up efforts with the students are warranted to measure what they learned in the program, to what extent they are applying their leadership skills, and what additional programs or activities can be offered to further enhance their leadership competence and confidence.

Finally, these research results are subject to several limitations. For example, the relatively small sample sizes involved and homogeneity of the participants. The voluntary participation in the Student Leadership Program and their relationship as students of the principal investigator may have skewed the findings. Other factors affected the robustness of the intervention could be the limited nature of the class (one-hour seminar over seven weeks), as well as the experience level of the seminar instructor in teaching leadership development. Use of an instrument which only provided self-reflections could restrict both the range of responses but also be separate or distinct from how these students actually behaved, as noticed by others with whom they interacted. Furthermore, the use of only one research instrument to assess transformational leadership restricts the study's

validity. Future scholars can both replicate the results using the S-LPI, as well as use other measurement tools to determine similar or different patterns.

Conclusion

The Student Leadership Program (Weekes, 2010) based on The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership framework (Kouzes & Posner, 2018) was implemented for one-hour sessions held over seven weeks to improve the leadership skills of the students studying in Yildiz Technical University Faculty of Education (Turkey). According to the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study, with the aspiration of developing students' leadership skills, the program overall generally achieved its objectives. Students can develop and enhance both their ability and use of various leadership behaviors, as indicated by the significant changes shown in this study.

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