

The Multi Institutional Study of Leadership

University of San Diego
Overall Findings from the Study

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Background of the Study

The purpose of the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) is to examine influences of higher education on college student leadership development. USD was selected as one of the 101 participating institutions of MSL in 2009. Data were collected at USD in Spring 2009.

Theoretical Frame

The social change model of leadership development (Higher Education Research Institute [HERI], 1996) provides the theoretical frame for this study as it was created specifically for college students, is typically cited as one of the most influential leadership models used in practice with college students and is consistent with the emerging leadership paradigm. This perspective, also referred to as the post-industrial paradigm, suggests that leadership is a relational, transformative, process-oriented, learned, and change-directed phenomenon. Similarly, the central principles associated with the social change model involve social responsibility and change for the common good. These are achieved through the development of eight core values targeted at enhancing students' levels of self-awareness and abilities to work with others. The values include: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, common purpose, collaboration, controversy with civility, and citizenship. These values function at the individual (i.e., consciousness of self, congruence commitment), group (i.e., common purpose, collaboration, and controversy with civility), and societal (i.e., citizenship) levels. The dynamic interaction across levels and between values contributes to social change for the common good, the eighth critical value associated with this model.

Social Change Model Value Definitions

- **Consciousness of self:** Awareness of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate one to take action.
- **Congruence:** Thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty towards others; actions are consistent with most deeply-held beliefs and convictions.
- **Commitment:** The psychic energy that motivates the individual to serve and that drives the collective effort; implies passion, intensity, and duration, and is directed toward both the group activity as well as its intended outcomes.
- **Collaboration:** Ability to work with others in a common effort; constitutes the cornerstone value of the group leadership effort because it empowers self and others through trust.
- **Common purpose:** Ability to work with shared aims and values; facilitates the group's ability to engage in collective analysis of issues at hand and the task to be undertaken.
- **Controversy with civility:** Recognizes two fundamental realities of any creative group effort: that differences in viewpoint are inevitable, and that such differences must be aired openly, but with civility. Civility implies respect for others, a willingness to hear each others' views, and the exercise of restraint in criticizing the views and actions of others.
- **Citizenship:** The process whereby an individual and the collaborative group become responsibly connected to the community and the society through the leadership development activity. To be a good citizen is to work for positive change on the behalf of others and the community.
- **Change:** The ability to adapt to environments and situations that are constantly evolving, while maintaining the core functions of the group.

Source: Higher Education Research Institute. (1996). *A social change model of leadership development: Guidebook version III*. College Park, MD: National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs.

Participants

A total of 4000 undergraduate students at USD were randomly selected for participation in the study. A total of 928 students responded to the survey in full (24 partial), resulting in a 23.8% response rate and 97% completion rate. The demographic breakdown of the respondents is as follows:

Gender	Race*	Class Standing
Male: 28% (n=263)	White: 63% (n=581)	First-Year: 30% (n=283)
Female: 72% (n=668)	Asian American: 8% (n=71)	Sophomore: 19% (n=180)
	Latino: 14% (n=128)	Junior: 22% (n=205)
	Multiracial: 12% (n=111)	Senior: 29% (n=277)

**Not enough respondents to report for African American, Middle Eastern, & American Indian Students*

The demographic breakdown of the random sample of 4000 surveyed was as follows. Note that the responses are more heavily skewed toward female students.

Gender	Race (different than survey)	Class Standing
Male: 41%	White: 69%	First-Year: 29%
Female: 59%	Asian American: 12%	Sophomore: 24%
	Latino: 15%	Junior: 22%
	Black: 2.4%	Senior: 25%
	American Indian: 1.5%	

Outcome Measure Findings

Note that this survey collected students' self-reported perceptions of their leadership perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors. In examining self-reported leadership scores, it is important to note that with more exposure to leadership and involvement experiences, students may have a more realistic self-appraisal of their leadership capacity than those with less exposure (Rohs, 2002).

The 11 outcome measures of the study are: the eight socially responsible leadership outcomes, which are reflective of the eight social change model values (identified above), a composite measure of the socially responsible leadership scales (SRLS), which is called *Omnibus SRLS*, *leadership efficacy*, and *complex cognitive skills*. The outcomes are measured by students' self-reported scores.

Across the 11 outcome measures, students reported moderate to moderately high scores. There were no significant differences in these outcome measures as compared to the National sample (101 institutions) or the Catholic Consortium sample (13 institutions).

Outcome Measure	Score
Consciousness of Self*	3.98
Congruence*	4.16
Commitment*	4.27
Collaboration*	4.02
Common Purpose*	4.00
Controversy with Civility*	3.79
Citizenship*	3.86
Change*	3.78
Omnibus SRLS *	3.95
Leadership Efficacy **	3.12
Complex Cognitive Skills ***	3.12

* Scored on a 5-point likert scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

** Scored on a 4-point likert scale from Not at all Confident (1) to Very Confident (4)

*** Scored on a 4-point likert scale from Not Grown at All (1) to Grown Very Much (4)

Outcome Measures- Perceived Change Over Time

In examining perceived changes in outcome scores during college, there were significant changes reported by seniors on the outcomes of *consciousness of self*, *congruence*, *commitment*, *change*, *omnibus SRLS*, *leadership efficacy*, and *complex cognitive skills*. Since this study had a cross-sectional design, this statistic was measured by examining seniors' self-reported scores on the outcome measures along with how they believed they measured on these outcomes prior to beginning college.

Findings from the National and Catholic Consortium samples indicate similar findings in addition to perceived significant change (with trivial to small effect sizes) in the additional four outcomes that did not emerge as significant for USD (*collaboration*, *common purpose*, and *controversy with civility*).

Outcome Measure	Prior to	Senior Year	Significant Change?^
Consciousness of Self*	3.65	4.03	Yes, small effect size
Congruence*	4.01	4.19	Yes, small effect size
Commitment*	4.16	4.29	Yes, small effect size
Collaboration*	3.95	4.06	
Common Purpose*	3.95	4.01	
Controversy with Civility*	3.96	3.85	
Citizenship*	3.80	3.82	
Change*	3.65	3.83	Yes, small effect size
Omnibus SRLS *	3.89	3.98	Yes, small effect size
Leadership Efficacy **	2.96	3.21	Yes, small effect size
Complex Cognitive Skills ***	3.10	3.33	Yes, small effect size

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^ Significant at p<.05 level

Outcome Measure Differences by Gender and Race

When examining outcomes by gender significant differences emerge between men and women's outcome measures of *congruence*, *commitment*, *collaboration*, *common purpose*, *controversy with civility*, *citizenship*, and *omnibus SRLS*, whereby women's self-reported scores were significantly higher than men's.

The only significant difference that emerged based on race was a significant difference in *leadership efficacy*, whereby Asian-American students' self-reported leadership efficacy was significantly lower than that of the White and Multiracial students.

Outcome Measure	Female (1)	Male (2)	White (1)	Asian-Am (2)	Latino (3)	Multiracial (4)
Consciousness of Self*	4.01	3.93	3.97	3.82	4.02	4.02
Congruence*	4.22 ^{^(2)}	4.06 ^{^(1)}	4.16	4.11	4.17	4.18
Commitment*	4.34 ^{^(2)}	4.15 ^{^(1)}	4.27	4.24	4.26	4.27
Collaboration*	4.08 ^{^(2)}	3.92 ^{^(1)}	4.00	4.02	4.08	4.06
Common Purpose*	4.05 ^{^(2)}	3.91 ^{^(1)}	3.98	4.01	4.05	4.02
Controversy with Civility*	3.82 ^{^(2)}	3.73 ^{^(1)}	3.79	3.70	3.78	3.79
Citizenship*	3.95 ^{^(2)}	3.70 ^{^(1)}	3.84	3.79	3.90	3.95

Change*	3.80	3.73		3.76	3.72	3.82	3.83
Omnibus SRLS *	4.00 ^{^(2)}	3.86 ^{^(1)}		3.94	3.89	3.98	3.99
Leadership Efficacy **	3.12	3.11		3.13 ^{^(2)}	2.88 ^{^(1,4)}	3.10	3.15 ^{^(2)}
Complex Cognitive Skills	3.15	3.06		3.11	3.03	3.20	3.14

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^ Significance difference reported between students in this gender or racial group as compared to students in the other reported gender or racial groups; 1- female, 2- male; 1- White, 2- Asian American, 3- Latino, 4- Multiracial

Outcome Measure Differences by Class Standing

In examining the outcome measures by class year, significant differences emerge between first-year students and seniors on *consciousness of self*, whereby seniors report a higher score. Seniors also report significantly higher scores in *controversy with civility* than first-year students and sophomores. Significant differences also exist between seniors' self reported measures of *change* as compared to first-year students. For *leadership efficacy*, sophomores, juniors, and seniors report significantly higher self-reported scores than first-year students, and juniors report significantly higher scores than sophomores. For *complex cognitive skills*, juniors and seniors reported significantly higher scores than first-year students and sophomores, and sophomores reported significantly higher scores than first-year students.

Outcome Measure	First-Year (1)	Sophomore (2)	Junior (3)	Senior (4)
Consciousness of Self*	3.89 ^{^(4)}	4.00	3.99	4.03 ^{^(1)}
Congruence*	4.11	4.14	4.21	4.19
Commitment*	4.23	4.25	4.30	4.29
Collaboration*	3.95	4.03	4.06	4.06
Common Purpose*	3.97	3.97	4.03	4.01
Controversy with Civility*	3.73 ^{^(4)}	3.75 ^{^(4)}	3.81	3.86 ^{^(1,2)}
Citizenship*	3.89	3.83	3.91	3.83
Change*	3.71 ^{^(4)}	3.74	3.83	3.83 ^{^(1)}
Omnibus SRLS *	3.91	3.93	3.99	3.98
Leadership Efficacy **	2.92 ^{^(2,3,4)}	3.09 ^{^(1,3)}	3.24 ^{^(1,2)}	3.21 ^{^(1)}
Complex Cognitive Skills	2.83 ^{^(2,3,4)}	3.06 ^{^(1,3,4)}	3.24 ^{^(1,2)}	3.33 ^{^(1,2)}

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^ Significant difference reported between students in that class year compared to students in other reported class years; 1- first-year, 2- sophomore, 3- junior, 4- senior

References

- Higher Education Research Institute (1996). *A social change model of leadership development* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute.
- Rohs, F. R. (2002). Improving the evaluation of leadership programs: Control response shift. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 1(2), 50-61.