

**TITLE:** The Leadership Practices of Residence Student Leaders

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**OBJECTIVE:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the specific leadership behaviors of student leaders and the influence of demographic variables, experience in the residence system and nature of appointment on leadership behaviors. Furthermore, to examine possible differences between student leaders in a Canadian institutions and those in U.S. institutions.

**METHODOLOGY:** Participants were students participating in the University of New Brunswick's Residential Life and Conference Services required leadership development training day (N=260, 75% response rate). They were either incoming student leaders or current student leaders, and each completed the student version of the Leadership Practices Inventory. Each current student leader was randomly assigned three "observers" (other current student leaders) who completed the student LPI-Observer for them. Fifty-one percent of the sample was male, and current student leaders comprised 42 percent of the sample. Internal reliability for the LPI scales were .77 for Challenging, .79 for Inspiring, .80 for Enabling, .78 for Modeling and .84 for Encouraging.

**KEY FINDINGS:** The LPI scores between self and observers were not significantly different. Enabling was used more frequently than the other four leadership practices. There were no significant differences between Encourage and Model, between Model and Inspire, and between Inspire and Challenge. There were significant differences between Encourage and Inspire, between Challenge and Model, and between Encourage and Challenge.

Differences between males and females were found on all the leadership practices except for Challenge. Female student leaders self reported engaging in the practices of Inspire, Enable, Model and Encourage significantly more than their male counterparts. The results of a factorial analysis revealed that there were no interaction effects between the gender of the student leaders and the gender of students in the residence.

No significant differences were found between selected and elected student leaders (i.e., based upon nature of appointment). The author states: "There is often a perception that house committee elections are a 'popularity contest' within the residence and that students do not necessarily elect leaders based on their abilities as a leader. However, it is worth noting that students elect individuals to be

leaders who report exhibiting the same leadership behaviors as student leaders selected by administration to be in leadership positions” (p. 62).

There were no significant differences on the leadership practices when comparing incoming and current student leaders. The author explains that this is not surprising since most of the incoming student leaders have resided in residence halls and are familiar with both the culture and requirements of leadership in the residential community.

Comparisons between this sample of Canadian and U.S. student leaders revealed significant differences on two leadership behaviors. U.S. student leaders reported engaging in Encouraging and Inspiring more often than Canadian student leaders. However, this may be due to the fact that these two samples compared students from vastly different settings (e.g., fraternity and sorority presidents versus general house committee members).