

TITLE: An Exploratory Study of College Student Self-Efficacy for Relational Leadership: The Influence of Leadership Education, Cocurricular Involvement, and On-Campus Employment

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OBJECTIVE: To examine the relationship between a leadership education course, cocurricular involvement experience, and on-campus employment experience) with changes in college students' self-efficacy for relational leadership over the course of a 16-week semester.

METHODOLOGY: Measures of self-efficacy for relational leadership, demographics and experience information were obtained from University of Maryland students at the beginning and the end of the Fall 1999 semester. Seventy-seven students were enrolled in a leadership education class and they were matched with 94 students from comparison courses. These numbers represent a 62 percent response rate (considering completion of both the pre and post-test). Fifty-two percent of the respondents were men. Seventy-three percent were Caucasian, 10% were African American and 6.4% were Asian America. Over 51% of the leadership class participants and 44% of the comparison class participants had some prior leadership education. Students completed the Extracurricular Involvement Index (Winston & Massaro, 1987), Porter's (1998) measure of the modes of influence for self-efficacy, and a scale of Influence Others designed by the author to assess capacity to exert influence with others. They also completed a version of the Student Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI-Student) modified to reflect self-efficacy (I can or cannot do this) using an 11-point scale. Internal reliabilities for this modified version ranged between .88 and .95. Influence Others, along with the five leadership practices derived from the Student LPI, comprised the author's measure of Relational Leadership.

KEY FINDINGS: Pre-test self-efficacy for relational leadership was significantly higher for women (all except for Challenge the Process) and for those with prior leadership education (on Inspiring, Enabling, Modeling, and Influencing) but not significantly different for age, race, prior cocurricular involvement experience, or prior employment experience.

Post-test self-efficacy for relational leadership was significantly different by class at the multivariate level but was significant at the univariate level for five of the six measures of self-efficacy for relational leadership (all except Challenging). Post-test self-efficacy was not significantly different by cocurricular involvement, or on-campus employment and leadership class when controlling for pre-test measures and accounting for differences in self-efficacy by gender and prior leadership education. "Completion of a leadership class enhanced students' beliefs in their ability to engage in relational leadership. Participants enrolled in the leadership class had significantly higher scores for self-efficacy to Enable, Encourage, Inspire, Model and Influence Others" (p. 187).