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Self-Efficacy and Student Leaders: The Effects of Gender, Previous Leadership Experiences, and Institutional Environment

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This study assesses the self-efficacy of 188 undergraduate student leaders at a large, public, Research-I institution in the Midwest. Specifically, this study examines the impact of prior leadership experiences, gender, and perceptions of institutional support on student leaders' self-efficacy. Findings suggest that men and women differ in leadership self-efficacy and perception of their environment. Support and organizational type appear to impact self-efficacy, but past leadership experiences do not.

Introduction

On college and university campuses, students play an essential role in the development and implementation of policies, events, and campus climate (Astin, 1984; Kuh 1993a, 1993b, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Strange, 1996). Student leaders emerge and direct their peers in these efforts (Depp, 1993). In order to effectively promote development and growth in these student leaders, a student affairs practitioner must be educated about student leadership. Typically, student leadership theories focus on personality traits, innate abilities, established positions of authority, and leadership styles (Rost, 1991). In contrast to focusing on how students lead, this study considers leadership self-efficacy, a different and distinct approach in examining student leadership.

Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as the "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Self-efficacy is highly domain specific (Pressley & McCormick, 1995) in that it can be unique and separate for specific tasks or situations (Bandura, 1997). Leadership self-efficacy ultimately determines how leaders behave, think, and become motivated to be involved with particular roles (Bandura, 1993, 1995, 1997). As a leader develops greater levels of self-efficacy, motivation to complete the specific task also increases (Pintrich & Schunk, 1995; Stage, 1996). Therefore, increased self-efficacy strengthens motivation which in turn influences a student's behavior to complete the given task. Though the main factors in the development of self-efficacy are based on personal experiences and continued participation in a particular activity (Bandura, 1993, 1995, 1997; Pajares, 1996; Stage, 1996), other factors such as gender (Depp, 1993; Mayo & Christenfeld, 1999) and institutional environment (Bloland, Stamatakos, & Rogers, 1996; Kuh, 2000) can also have strong effects.

This study assesses the impact of prior student leadership experiences, gender, and perceived institutional support on student leaders' self-efficacy. As a result of this study, student affairs practitioners can gain a greater understanding of the factors contributing to and the effects of self-efficacy on student leaders. In turn, student affairs practitioners can have more effective developmental interactions with the student leaders they advise, supervise, and mentor.

Literature Review

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy develops as an individual processes information from four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and intense psychological states (Bandura, 1986, 1995, 1997). Mastery experience occurs when an individual gains confidence in their ability for a specific task through increased participation in that task (Bandura, 1986, 1995, 1997; Depp, 1993). Individuals also develop self-efficacy beliefs through vicarious learning which occurs when students observe others performing a given task and then interpret those results as if they themselves had participated in the task (Bandura, 1986, 1995, 1997; Pajares, 1996; Stage, 1996). Further, self-efficacy beliefs are developed through social persuasion as the opinions of others cause the individual to reassess their beliefs regarding their capabilities in a particular situation (Bandura, 1997). Finally, psychological states, when emotional reactions such as anxiety or stress arise, affect the development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996; Stage, 1996).

Ultimately, self-efficacy is important because it assesses the role of one's self-beliefs as it plays into the context of behavior (Stage, 1996). Specifically for college students, self-efficacy affects involvement by determining whether or not a student will aspire to become involved in an organization and take a leadership position (Stage, 1996). Further, perceptions of self-efficacy influence the amount of effort put forth on a specific task (Stage, 1996). Therefore, leadership self-efficacy has a strong impact on the actual leadership behaviors of student leaders (Depp, 1993; Stage, 1996).

Student Leadership

In order to describe student leadership, one must first define leadership. Rost (1991) posits that leadership is a characteristic of individuals and how they act in influencing others. Adding to this, Prince and Associates (1985) define leadership as "the process of influencing human behavior so as to accomplish the goals prescribed by the organizationally appointed leader" (p. 7). Further, the Higher Education Research Institute (1993) asserts that leadership is not just the behavior of a single individual, but rather is characterized by a collaborative relationship between the individual and those he or she is leading.

Though defining leadership as a characteristic is a difficult task, distinguishing someone as a leader proves to be just as challenging. Although anyone can be a leader (Higher Education Research Institute, 1993; Kouzes & Posner, 1995), positional leadership (leadership through an elected and/or appointed position) has been shown to be a predictor of actual leadership ability (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000). Student leaders who demonstrate leadership through the positional theory model are those most frequently referred to by their peers and campus administrators as leaders (Wielkiewicz, 2000).

As students learn and grow in their leadership abilities, their effectiveness as a leader increases (Depp, 1993; Endress, 2000; Posner & Rosenbergerg, 1997). Kouzes and Posner (1995) identified five practices of effective leaders: Challenging the Process, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Enabling Others to Act, Modeling the Way, and Encouraging the Heart. First, "Challenging the Process" can be characterized by seeking out opportunities to improve one's organization and one's self through experimentation and risk-taking. Next, leaders that "Inspire a Shared Vision" enlist others to embrace common goals. Third, "Enabling Others to Act" involves empowering others and encouraging collaboration. Kouzes and Posner's "Modeling the Way" involves setting an example for others through role modeling. Finally, "Encouraging the Heart" is characterized by motivating others through recognition of individual and group accomplishments (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Several researchers (Endress, 2000; Mayo & Christenfeld, 1999; Posner & Rosenberger, 1997) also focused on the aforementioned five leadership practices by conducting their own research using the operational definition of effective leadership established by Kouzes and Posner (1995). These studies using Kouzes and Posner's model lend credibility to the process of determining leaders' effectiveness by their successful use of the five leadership practices.

Leadership Self-Efficacy

Leadership self-efficacy is an important factor in becoming an effective leader (Stage, 1996). Self-efficacy has the capability to increase or decrease motivation (Bandura, 1993; Pintrich & Schunk, 1995; Stage, 1996). Specifically for student leaders, motivation serves as an important contributor to a leader's success, as students who are motivated "display interest in activities, persist at tasks, and typically use effective task[s] and cognitive skills" (Pintrich & Schunk, 1995, p. v). Ultimately, high self-efficacy promotes not only a vested interest in activities in which they are involved, but it also fosters a strong level of commitment to those activities (Bandura, 1993, 1997). As students become more motivated to work on a specific task, their self-efficacy for that task increases (Bandura, 1993, 1997; Stage, 1996).

Thus, a positive relationship exists between leadership self-efficacy and willingness to take on a leadership role (Endress, 2000; Posner & Rosenberger, 1997).

Leadership self-efficacy remains important as the student leader aspires to recognized leadership roles (Endress, 2000; Mayo & Christenfeld, 1999; Posner & Rosenberger, 1997). Kuh and Lund (1994) found that mere participation in campus leadership positions significantly impacts the level of leadership self-efficacy for student leaders. In addition, rating one's self as an effective leader seems to imply confidence in one's personal ability to be a good leader, thereby demonstrating high leadership self-efficacy (Depp, 1993; Endress, 2000). Despite a focus on high levels of self-efficacy, self-perceptions of performance level do not inherently represent actual performance of a given task (Mayo & Christenfeld, 1999), implying that high self-efficacy does not necessarily lead to better leadership. However, Mayo and Christenfeld (1999) also noted that long periods of low self-efficacy could negatively affect the actual performance of the task in the future. Therefore, low self-efficacy can lead to less effective leadership while high self-efficacy promotes more effective leadership (Depp, 1993; Endress, 2000; Mayo & Christenfeld, 1999).

Gender and Leadership Self-Efficacy

As previously stated, individuals develop self-efficacy through four specific processes (Bandura, 1986, 1995, 1997). These basic forms of self-efficacy development, however, do not consider input factors such as gender that may affect the way in which individuals develop their self-efficacy. Fixed traits such as gender have strong effects on many levels of student development, including self-efficacy (Astin, 1993; Depp, 1993; Leonard and Sigal, 1989; Mayo & Christenfeld, 1999).

A study by Mayo and Christenfeld (1999) found that women tend to have lower self-efficacy than men in their ability to perform specific leadership tasks. Depp's (1993) study found women to be more active in the community, but to have lower levels of self-efficacy. Further, this study found that men were less likely to be active in organizations, but actually held more leadership roles and had higher levels of leadership self-efficacy than women. According to Astin (1993) and Leonard and Sigal (1989), female students are reluctant to lead campus-wide student organizations and might not achieve their full potential as student leaders. Female student leaders struggle with being taken seriously, having to work harder than men to gain respect, being intimidated by male competitiveness, and fearing the loss of approval if they assert themselves (Leonard & Sigal, 1989). Further, women, in comparison to men, use leadership styles focusing on interpersonal interactions, encouragement of reciprocity and collective thoughts, empowerment of others to act, and de-emphasis of hierarchical relationships within an organization (Astin & Leland, 1991). In addition, women tend to seek out high levels of involvement in their organizations but do not necessarily aspire to leadership roles as often as their male counterparts (Depp, 1993). When women do seek formal leadership roles, they are more likely to seek out stereotypical "female roles" in an organization, such as "secretary" rather than other positions of leadership (Depp, 1993). In summary, men and women have varied levels of leadership self-efficacy and leadership styles.

Environmental Factors on Self-Efficacy and Leadership

Failing to address the campus environment ignores an essential aspect of a student leader's self-efficacy (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Lewin (1936) posits that all aspects of the environment must be explored in order to gain a full perspective of a person's behavior. By gaining a clearer understanding of students' environment and their interaction with that environment, campus administrators can better understand their students' needs (Lewin, 1936). Additionally, Sanford (1966) theorizes that a student receiving appropriate levels of challenge and support from the university (via advising, programming, allocation of space, etc.) will be more likely to achieve their goals thereby developing higher levels of self-efficacy.

Student leaders who receive positive reinforcement from their environment develop heightened levels of self-efficacy and increased motivation, demonstrating that the university environment plays a significant role in a student leader's motivation, involvement, and self-efficacy (Schunk, 1996). Through deliberate attention to the design of the environment, student affairs professionals can help ensure that the student-environment interaction is not only healthy, but also conducive to student development and heightened leadership self-efficacy (Kuh, 2000; Strange, 1996). Thus, the university can provide accessible resources and support that enable students to achieve goals, improve their leadership skills, and develop heightened levels of self-efficacy (Bloland, Stamatakos & Rogers, 1996; Kuh, 2000).

Hypothesis and research questions

As previously stated, the researchers seek to assess the self-efficacy of student leaders. Specifically, researchers designed this study to evaluate the following: the effect of gender on leadership self-efficacy, the effect of previous leadership experiences on leadership self-efficacy, and the effect of the campus environment on leadership self-efficacy.

Based upon the literature review, the researchers hypothesize that women will have lower leadership self-efficacy than men. Further, a positive relationship between the number of previous leadership experiences and leadership self-efficacy was anticipated. In addition, the researchers believe that there will be a positive relationship between positive perceptions of university and advisor support with leadership self-efficacy.

Methods

Sample

Researchers invited 532 student leaders to participate in this study. The respondents consisted of 188 undergraduates at a large, public, Research-I institution in the Midwest. Respondents were one hundred women and 88 men, ranging from 18 to 30 years old. Student leaders were identified and asked to participate based upon their status with the Student Activities Office as a contact person for any registered student organization or as any elected/appointed officer of a campus student organization.

Instrument

Participants were given an online modified version of the Student Leadership Practices Inventory (SLPI) (Kouzes & Posner, 1998) that assesses leadership self-efficacy on an 11-point scale (Endress, 2000). Endress (2000) modified the existing SLPI to assess leadership self-efficacy and include an additional six questions that addressed participants' abilities to "Influence Others," the sixth practice of effective leadership. Statements were changed to address how well individuals thought they could or could not perform the particular task rather than the frequency with which they completed the task as in the original SLPI (Kouzes & Posner, 1998). This instrument was specifically chosen by the researchers because it directly measures the self-efficacy of student leaders. Furthermore, it has internal reliabilities between .88 and .95 (Endress, 2000).

Section II of the survey was developed by the researchers to gather information regarding the participants' perceptions of the organizational purpose, size, and amount of support their organization received from the university. Participants were asked to estimate the size of their respective organization and to identify on a 5-point Likert scale how well each of the following characteristics represents their organization: Academic and Professional, Activism, Arts and Theatre, Cultural, Governance, Greek, Honorary, Political, Programming and Support, Recreational and Club Sport, Religious, and Service. Questions also collected information about prior leadership experiences, previous leadership training, other leadership experiences, gender, age, and perceptions of support from their environment.

Procedure

This study utilized a web-based survey which asked participants to respond within five days. Student email contact information was collected from the Student Activities Office and organizational websites. Participants received a scripted, personalized email complete with their name and the name of their organization. Participants were tracked via their university

username and those failing to complete the initial survey later received a second invitation. The modified SLPI was scored to determine self-efficacy for each of the six leadership practices

One of the dependent variables in this experiment was self-efficacy. For each participant, a score was calculated for each area of effective leadership behavior. Individual scores were then grouped according to gender, previous leadership experiences, type of organization, and perceived environmental support. Independent T-tests analyses were used to assess the relationship between self-efficacy and the following factors: gender, leadership training, and organizational type. Correlations were then calculated to examine the relationship between perceived environmental support and self-efficacy. Finally, the relationship between gender and the perception of support and organizational type was analyzed using correlations and T-tests.

Limitations

Three major limitations were inherent within the study. First, the sample was dependent on self-reported information by students to the Student Activities Office which was outdated or inaccurate in several cases. Another limitation was that the study only considered student leaders who held positional leadership roles but excluded Resident Assistants and Orientation Assistants. Finally, the use of an online survey posed a challenge for access to technology and proper participant notification. However, the researchers had only limited concerns about this issue because the survey was distributed on a campus where access to technology is widespread and expected from all students.

Results

The findings suggest that student leaders generally tend to have high self-efficacy for leadership practices. Student leaders felt most confident in their ability to motivate others via Encouraging the Heart ($M = 8.42$) and reported lowest self-efficacy in Challenging the Process ($M = 8.02$). Most respondents had previously been involved in other organizations and participated in leadership training. Although all participants were confident in their abilities, men and women differed in leadership self-efficacy and in their perceptions of the environment. Further, support and organizational type seem to have some impact on self-efficacy, while past leadership experiences do not. The following section will report the findings of gender's impact on self-efficacy and perception of the environment, the impact of past leadership involvement and environmental variables on self-efficacy, along with how gender affects those variables.

Gender

It was hypothesized men would have higher levels of self-efficacy than women. Contrary to previous research, women in this study tended to report equal or higher levels of self-efficacy (see Table 1). However, a t-test analysis indicated men and women differed significantly in self-efficacy for Modeling the Way. Women tend to have significantly higher levels of self-efficacy in this area with t = 2.10 ($p < .05$). This may be attributed to changes in leadership style and increasing participation of women in higher education. Further, men's scores seemed to vary more than women as noted by the differences in standard deviation (see Table 1).

Researchers also found that men and women varied in their perceptions of the environment on their self-efficacy. Using a five-point scale, participants were asked to rate how much they agreed with a statement concerning their perception of the campus environment in relation to their organization. On average, participants felt that their advisor supported the organization (M = 4.21) and encouraged leadership development (M = 4.07). However, men and women perceived these differently. As shown in Table 1, t-tests indicate that women feel more supported by their advisor than men (t = 2.36, $p < .05$) and were more likely to feel that their advisor encourages leadership development (t = 2.18, $p < .05$). Women tended to rate individual support higher than that from the general university as indicated by support variable means. They may place a higher value on the direct relationship with an advisor and feel more concrete support because of the closer relationship.

Table 1

Self-efficacy and Environmental Factors by Gender

	Female (*N* = 100)		Male (*N* = 88)		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*
Self-efficacy[a]					
Challenging the Process	8.13	1.08	7.90	1.22	1.38
Inspiring a Shared Vision	8.42	1.08	8.13	1.37	1.64
Enabling Others to Act	8.50	1.11	8.18	1.13	1.95
Modeling the Way	8.53	1.00	8.16	1.35	2.10*
Encouraging the Heart	8.55	1.02	8.28	1.14	1.65
Influencing Others	8.55	1.07	8.48	1.13	0.46
Environmental Variables[b]					
Advisor Support	4.38	1.01	4.02	1.06	2.36*
Advisor encourages leadership	4.25	1.18	3.88	1.17	2.18*
Redo leadership experience	4.32	1.20	4.31	1.05	0.08
Univ. support	4.09	1.06	3.81	1.20	1.72
Univ. promotion	3.47	1.40	3.17	1.32	1.50
Univ. provides resources	3.64	1.40	3.32	1.38	1.59
Organization well known	3.64	1.23	3.48	1.30	0.88
Univ. encourages leadership	4.01	0.99	3.82	1.00	1.33
Satisfied with Univ. leadership experience	4.21	0.94	4.05	1.02	1.16

* $p < .05$
[a] Responses based on an 11-point scale
[b] Responses based on a 5-point scale

Past Leadership Experience

Researchers determined past leadership experiences by number of high school organizations participated in during senior year in high school, number of leadership positions held in high school, and participation in leadership training. Because self-efficacy develops with practice (Bandura, 1986, 1995, 1997; Depp, 1993) it was hypothesized that past leadership experience would encourage higher levels of self-efficacy. The mean number of high school organizations individuals participated in was 3.39 (N = 181). The mean number of leadership positions held was 2.44 (N = 183). Due to the high frequency of leadership training among the participants, comparisons could not be made between those who received training and those who did not. Thus, levels of self-efficacy could not be attributed to leadership training.

Environmental Factors

The majority of participants responded that they would be the leader of their organization again (80.9 %) and a majority further replied that they were generally satisfied with their leadership experience (78.2 %). Correlation analyses indicated that there are positive relationships between the feeling that one's advisor encourages leadership development and leadership self-efficacy. Specifically, the more an individual agrees that his or her advisor encourages leadership development, the more capable that individual feels he or she can Inspire a Shared Vision (r = .35), Enable Others to Act (r = .33), and Model the Way (r = .36). A perception of support by an advisor seems to have a stronger impact than general university support. Further, satisfaction is also moderately correlated with leadership self-efficacy. The more an individual wants to repeat his or her leadership experience, the more likely that individual feels like he or she can Inspire a Shared Vision (r = .43), Model the Way (r = .47), Encourage the Heart (r = .42), and Influence Others (r = .39). The more likely an individual is satisfied with their leadership experience, the more likely that individual feels like he or she can Inspire a Shared Vision (r = .41), Encourage Others to Act (r = .36), Model the Way (r = .38), and Influence Others (r = .35). Students who are willing to repeat an experience may draw confidence from their previous or current experience, which affects their self-efficacy. Further, confidence in one's ability may be drawn from the satisfaction with relationships with others in the organizations or the organization's constituents. Many of the correlations seem to coincide with practices that involve including and incorporating others.

Gender also impacts the perceptions of environment. Correlation analyses were conducted to examine the impact of the perception of environmental support variables on self-efficacy for men and women as groups (See Table 2). Positive perceptions of support variables tended to correlate

Table 2

Correlations by Gender

	Challenging the Process		Inspiring a Shared Vision		Enabling Others to Act		Modeling the Way	
	Female (*N*=100)	Male (*N*=88)	Female (*N*=100)	Male (*N*=88)	Female (*N*=100)	Male (*N*=88)	Female (*N*=100)	Male (*N*=88)
Advisor support	.22*	.33**	.23*	.39**	.28**	.26*	.30**	.35**
Advisor encourages Leadership	.21*	.29**	.33**	.34**	.36**	.27*	.37**	.32**
Redo	.24*	.40**	.38**	.51**	.21*	.43**	.38**	.58**
Univ. support	.22*	.28**	.20*	.23*	.19	.27*	.23*	.31**
Univ. promotion	.24*	.05	.21*	.07	.20*	.00	.25*	.10
Univ. provides resources	-.02	.03	.03	-.05	.18	-.04	.04	.03
Organization well known	.22*	.08	.18	.20	.07	-.02	.23*	.16
Univ. encourages leadership	.27**	.27*	.19	.21*	.25*	.16	.27**	.20
Satisfied with univ. leadership experience	.16	.43	.28**	.51**	.24*	.42**	.25*	.47**
Size	.15	.10	.11	.17	-.04	.05	.07	.11
HS leadership (N_F=97; N_M=84)	.08	.15	.13	.16	.00	-.03	.18	.06
HS leadership positions (N_F=98; N_M=85)	-.01	.20	-.03	.24*	-.01	.21	.03	.25*

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

with higher self-efficacy more for men than for women. Looking specifically at advisor support, the more men perceive that their advisor supports them, the more confidence they have in Challenging the Process (r = .33), Inspiring a Shared Vision (r =.39), Encouraging the Heart (r = .33) and Influencing Others (r = .37). Therefore, although women perceive support from their advisor more than men, it might be hypothesized that advisor support may have a greater impact on men.

Researchers investigated relationships between organizational type and level of leadership self-efficacy. Those in activist organizations tended to have higher leadership self-efficacy in Challenging the Process, Inspiring a Shared Vision, and Modeling the Way. Cultural organization participants tended to feel more confident in their ability to Encourage the Heart compared to those in other organizations. Those in professional organizations tended to have a higher leadership self-efficacy in Enabling Others to Act, Encouraging the Heart, and Influencing Others. Individuals involved in programming and support organizations demonstrated more confidence in Enabling Others. Members of service-related organizations tended to demonstrate higher levels of leadership self-efficacy in Inspiring a Shared Vision, Enabling Others to Act, Modeling the Way, and Influencing Others (See Table 3). The different levels of self-efficacy among organizational

types may be a result of characteristics of the organizational type that coincide with particular leadership practices.

It is important to note that because participants could identify their organization with more than one characteristic, relationships between types of organizations may exist. Activism groups correlated with governance (r = .378), political (r = .413), and service organizations (r = .405). There was a correlation between organizations being identified as both professional and political (r = .370 as well as organizations identified as both programming and governance (r = .358). These findings are important in that some organizational types encouraged leadership self-efficacy more than others even though, to some degree, the different types represented the same organization. For example, there was a moderate positive correlation between activist and governance organizations, implying that at least some groups had components of both characteristics. At the same time, governance groups tended not to encourage self-efficacy as well as activist groups.

Discussion

In examining the results, several variables of leadership self-efficacy proved noteworthy. Specifically, results for gender, past leadership experiences, environmental support, and type of organization revealed the most

Table 3

Organizational Means and Standard Deviations

		Challenging the Process		Inspiring a Shared Vision		Enabling Others to Act		Modeling the Way	
	N	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Academic	95	8.18	1.08	8.38	1.19	8.47	1.12	8.40	1.18
Non-Acad.	93	7.86	1.20	8.19	1.26	8.22	1.12	8.31	1.20
Activist	108	8.17	1.08	8.45	1.10	8.44	1.07	8.53	1.04
Non-Act.	80	7.82	1.21	8.06	1.36	8.23	1.19	8.12	1.34
Cultural	61	8.13	1.20	8.37	1.20	8.53	1.09	8.49	1.17
Non-Cult.	127	7.97	1.12	8.24	1.24	8.26	1.13	8.29	1.20
Governance	103	8.07	1.11	8.27	1.21	8.32	1.12	8.41	1.13
Non-Gov.	85	7.97	1.20	8.30	1.26	8.39	1.14	8.28	1.26
Greek	63	8.09	1.18	8.34	1.30	8.17	1.20	8.42	1.19
Non-Greek	125	7.99	1.13	8.25	1.19	8.44	1.07	8.32	1.19
Political	60	8.12	1.23	8.40	1.31	8.34	1.24	8.39	1.39
Non-Poli.	128	7.98	1.11	8.23	1.19	8.35	1.06	8.34	1.09
Professional	88	8.19	1.04	8.46	1.04	8.54	1.02	8.47	1.17
Non-Prof.	100	7.88	1.22	8.13	1.36	8.18	1.18	8.25	1.20
Programming	126	8.04	1.07	8.31	1.10	8.52	0.99	8.47	0.98
Non-Prog.	62	7.98	1.29	8.22	1.46	7.99	1.29	8.11	1.51
Recreational	72	7.91	1.16	8.13	1.27	8.31	1.17	8.22	1.23
Non-Rec.	116	8.09	1.14	8.38	1.20	8.37	1.10	8.44	1.16
Service	127	8.12	1.03	8.46	1.06	8.51	1.03	8.51	1.05
Non-Service	61	7.82	1.34	7.92	1.46	8.01	1.24	8.03	1.38

essential findings. In general, the majority of student leaders had a positive sense of themselves in regards to leadership self-efficacy. One can assume that if student leaders are demonstrating high levels of self-efficacy, they must have a clear understanding of their role as a leader, and confidence in their own leadership abilities. Extrapolating from these findings, student affairs professionals need to understand and incorporate this strong sense of self-efficacy to challenge and support organizational leaders. As this study demonstrates, student leaders feel that they excel as leaders and perform leadership tasks to the best of their ability. Advisors can utilize this information to help student leaders continue to develop in aforementioned six areas of leadership and to challenge the students to exceed beyond their current abilities.

Gender

The relationships between gender and leadership self-efficacy provide the next point of interest from the findings. In a marked improvement from past research (1970s-1990s), women in this study demonstrated gains in leadership self-efficacy. In this study, women were found to have significantly higher levels of self-efficacy than men. One potential rationale for this improvement in women's leadership self-efficacy could reside in the growing majority of women in institutions of higher learning. Because college and universities generally have a higher percentage of women in recent years (Brimelow, 2000), leadership opportunities in college can offer women experiences that will help them build their leadership self-efficacy and skills for the future. By developing high leadership self-efficacy in college, where the climate for women is more comfortable, female leaders are better preparing themselves for future leadership roles in the non-academic environment. Therefore, student affairs practitioners can significantly influence women's leadership development through intentional mentoring throughout their college years.

In directly comparing the six leadership practices, women's self-efficacy for Modeling the Way was statistically higher than that of men. This characteristic of leadership is defined as setting an example for others through role-modeling (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). In agreement with other literature, women often describe their leadership style as being based upon relationships that have been formed between themselves and individuals in an organization (Romano, 1996). Previous research also suggests that women are more relationship-oriented, non-hierarchical and concerned with sharing power and information (Helgesen, 1990; Rosener, 1990). This leadership practice enables women to build strong personal relationships and role-model behaviors to other members of the group.

Past Leadership Experiences

The researchers hypothesized that students with the most previous leadership experiences would demonstrate higher levels of leadership self-efficacy. Based upon the development of self-efficacy through mastery experiences (Bandura, 1986, 1995, 1997; Depp, 1993), it follows that students with the most previous experiences would have the highest self-efficacy. However, the findings do not support this notion. In this study, participants ranked their levels of leadership self-efficacy as very high across all six practices, thus indicating that all participants, regardless of the amount of previous leadership experiences, had very high levels of leadership self-efficacy. Because of the high level of involvement in previous leadership experiences of all participants, perhaps it is not the sheer number of experiences, but the inherent quality of those leadership experiences that most affect the development and level of leadership self-efficacy. Keeping this in mind, student affairs practitioners should encourage all students, regardless of their past record of leadership experiences, to take on leadership roles. Results of this research indicate that all students, both those with high and low levels of previous involvement, have high levels of leadership efficacy and thus can all be confident leaders.

Environmental Factors

In comparing leadership self-efficacy with environmental factors, women believed there was more of a support structure for them in the form of advisor encouragement and support of the organization. For student affairs professionals this information is beneficial in showing that women feel supported and encouraged as student leaders. Ultimately advisors need to continue to acknowledge their important role in mentoring student leaders of both genders throughout their leadership development process.

While students had high self-efficacy in the six leadership practices, Challenging the Process had the lowest means. Since all six leadership practices are essential for effective leadership (Endress, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Posner & Rosenberger, 1997), perhaps advisors of student organizations and university student activities departments need to focus more energy on helping student leaders develop their competency in Challenging the Process through intentional support and formal training exercises in this area. Based upon this research, student affairs practitioners should note the inherent importance of being an active advisor in supporting student organizations and encouraging leadership for students.

Student affairs practitioners might find it significant to examine the different types of student organizations and the different levels of leadership efficacy that each supports. Leaders of activist organizations are the only participants to indicate a statistically higher level of self-efficacy for Challenging the Process. As a whole, all participants ranked Challenging the Process as the aspect of leadership in which they have the lowest self-efficacy. Student affairs practitioners should analyze the ways in which activist organizations enhance this aspect of leadership so that they can then encourage student leaders of other types of organizations to use similar methods to improve their own abilities in Challenging the Process. Additionally, it seems that leaders of all types of student organizations feel high levels of self-efficacy for different aspects of the six leadership practices. Future research should evaluate the ways in which organizational type affects leadership self-efficacy and effective leadership behaviors.

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Here today, gone tomorrow? A Historical and Contemporary Analysis of Black Student Participation and Affirmative Action Policy in Higher Education

Ontario S. Wooden

This paper reviews literature on Black student participation in higher education and how affirmative action programs have impacted it. Trends in Black student participation at predominantly White institutions and historically Black colleges and universities form the historical foundation for this piece. The evolution of affirmative action in employment and higher education is introduced and explored. Further, legal cases challenging affirmative action are reviewed. The paper concludes with recommendations for higher education practice and directions for future research.

Introduction

The 1960s sparked increased involvement by the federal government in numerous social issues. Believing that Blacks needed "equality as a result," President Lyndon B. Johnson shifted the widely accepted American concept of equality of opportunity to one that meant government would guarantee opportunities through preferential policies for Blacks and later, other racial minorities and women (Rai & Critzer, 2000). One of the most famed of Johnson's policies was affirmative action. Since its inception, affirmative action policy has been altered numerous times and is defined differently by a myriad of groups. Currently, affirmative action policies have come under fire in both the employment and educational arenas. While the roots of affirmative action lie in the employment arena, the discussion of affirmative action in this paper will focus on its relationship with higher education.

First, the early enrollment trends of Black students at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) will be reviewed, followed by a discussion of the founding and subsequent enrollment of Blacks at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Second, this paper will move toward an understanding of the initial purposes of affirmative action in employment and its introduction into higher education settings. Third, the paper will transition to a discussion of the pros and cons of affirmative action, citing arguments from both camps. Fourth, legal challenges surrounding the use of affirmative action in college and university admissions will be explored. Finally, the paper will conclude with a discussion and analysis, as well as a presentation of implications relative to the future participation of Blacks in higher education.

Literature Review

History of Black Higher Education in America

With the founding of Harvard College in 1636 in Cambridge, Massa-