

Title: Leadership Behaviors in Hospitality Management Students

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LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS IN HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

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Introduction

Many researchers have noted the importance of leadership in hospitality management curricula. Alumni, employers, and faculty members all report the need for leadership in hospitality management graduates (Breiter & Clements, 1996; Kay & Russette, 2000; Nelson & Dopson, 2001; Okeiyi, Finley, & Postel, 1994). Casado (2003) found that alumni and lodging professionals perceived hospitality leadership to be the most important course in hospitality management curricula. A few hospitality management programs have developed leadership courses (Hill & VanHoof, 1997; Sneed & Scheule, 2001).

Leadership has been studied extensively and thousands of pieces of literature have been published. Multiple leadership models have been described including a popular model by Kouzes and Posner (1987). Their initial work looked at the five best practices common to leaders based on interviews with hundreds of leaders. After interview analyses, practices were defined as:

1. Challenging the Process: A leader's willingness to take risks and question the status quo in order to find a better solution.
2. Inspiring a Shared Vision: A leader's ability to get others to see the same exciting future ahead.
3. Enabling Others to Act: A leader's ability to empower others, and develop teamwork and collaboration.
4. Modeling the Way: A leader's consistency between actions and beliefs.
5. Encouraging the Heart: A leader's encouragement of others to continue when they are exhausted/frustrated and celebrate accomplishments.

Posner and Kouzes (1988) developed a tool to assess leadership behaviors called the Leadership Practices Inventory and have studied over 30,000 respondents. Posner and Brodsky (1992) then developed the Student-Leadership

Practices Inventory (S-LPI); the only known tool that assesses leadership behaviors in students that has been tested as valid and reliable.

Limited leadership research has been conducted in the hospitality field. The majority of research has focused on characteristics/traits (Tracey & Hinkin, 1994; Worsford, 1989) and skills of leaders (Greger & Peterson, 2000). Little work has been done in the area of leadership behaviors. Leadership behaviors, as compared to traits, are visible actions that one can witness a leader doing (Howell & Costley, 2001).

Study Purpose

The purposes of this study were to 1) assess self-reported leadership behaviors in undergraduate hospitality management students and determine which behaviors were most frequently exhibited; 2) compare leadership practices based on demographics such as age, gender, classification status, leadership coursework, supervisory experience, and leadership experience, and 3) determine the context in which leadership behaviors were reported most frequently.

Methods

Sample Selection

This study was part of a larger study (Arendt, 2004) that also assessed dietetics undergraduate students; therefore, university selection was based on having both a hospitality management and dietetics program and having these two programs located in the same college. A list of 11 possible universities was identified using these criteria. Hospitality management directors at each university were contacted by telephone to obtain their commitment to the project prior to data collection. As an incentive, program directors were offered a report and summary of their students' scores compared to the total study sample. Eight universities agreed to participate providing a potential of approximately 500 hospitality management students.

Data Collection

A student leadership questionnaire was developed through the aid of five faculty members with expertise in leadership, indepth interviews with four hospitality management undergraduate students, and pilot testing of the questionnaire with a class of 21 hospitality management students. The final version of the questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part one included 30 leadership action statements from the S-LPI (Posner & Brodsky, 1992), used with author permission. Two scales were used for each of the 30 statements. Scale A referred to the frequency of the leadership behaviors/actions and was rated using a 5 point Lickert-type scale with anchors 1 = seldom or rarely, 2= once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = fairly often, and 5 = very frequently. Scale B was a unique addition for this research and referred to the location where the respondent most often exhibited the listed leadership behaviors/actions designated as follows: H = home, S = school, W = work, C = Clubs/Groups, and O = other.

Part two included nine yes/no questions asking about respondents' perceptions of themselves as a leader in all context areas (home, class, work, and clubs/groups). Questions about self reflection, changing behaviors based on reflection, seeing self as a leader, having others treat self as a leader, and seeing self exhibiting the five best practices of leadership were in this section.

Part three contained seven demographic questions including gender, major, classification, age, and leadership coursework. Students also were asked to report supervisory and leadership experiences.

A packet containing a cover letter, program questionnaire, student questionnaires, and a self addressed return envelope was mailed to the educator(s) at each of the eight universities. Educators were asked to complete a short program questionnaire regarding numbers of students and leadership content in the curriculum and return the materials within five weeks of receipt. Telephone calls and e-mail were used to remind educators of the deadline and answer questions.

After collection of questionnaire data, two focus groups were conducted to explore actual examples of how students perceived they demonstrated these leadership behaviors and practices. A total of 13 hospitality management seniors (6 or 7 per group) from one university participated. Focus groups were facilitated by the researcher and an assistant moderator kept notes. Debriefing sessions were held between the assistant moderator and facilitator immediately following each focus group. Focus groups, along with debriefing, were audio taped.

Data Analysis

SPSS (11.5, 2002) was used for all data analyses. Descriptive statistics (including means, standard deviations, and frequencies) were calculated for all items on the student questionnaire. Scores for each leadership practice were calculated as the summed ratings for leadership action statements as recommended by Kouzes and Posner (1998). Leadership practice scores were only calculated for those students who had answered all six action statements in the practice. Reliability estimates were calculated for the leadership scores. Analysis of variance was used to compare ratings based on demographic characteristics.

Focus group audiotapes were transcribed by an experienced transcriptionist. Data were coded by leadership practices.

Results and Discussion

Student and program survey questionnaires were returned from eight schools. Seven returned questionnaires from both freshman and senior-level courses, one returned only the senior-level student responses. The average student enrollment in the programs was 141 students. A total of 345 student questionnaires were returned and analyzed. All educators reported they had leadership coursework in their program, generally as a class component.

The majority of the students who responded were female (62%), under the age of 25 years (94%), and an upper classman (70%). Table 1 details additional demographic data including how many students have had a leadership course or coursework (64%), supervisory work experience (74%), and leadership positions in extracurricular activities (55%).

Mean ratings for the leadership action statements within each leadership practice are included in Table 2. Action statements perceived to occur most frequently were: I treat others with dignity and respect, I praise people for a job well done, and I follow through on promises and commitments I make. Nearly all action statements had mean ratings of 3.5 or higher suggesting students perceived they at least sometimes performed these actions.

Scores were computed for each of Kouzes and Posner's (1998) leadership practices (Table 3). Reliability estimates for the scores ranged from .65-.78. Reliabilities reported in this study were comparable to those reported by Kouzes and Posner (1998). The mean score for the leadership practice, Enabling Others to Act, was the highest of the five practices. This is consistent with other student populations that have been studied and reported in the S-LPI Facilitator's Guide (Kouzes & Posner, 1998). Greek chapter presidents, resident assistants, student body presidents, a random student sample, and even high school students all scored highest in Enabling Others to Act.

No significant differences for mean leadership practice scores were seen based on age or supervisory work experience. However, significant differences ($p < .05$) were noted in several practices. Female students had overall mean scores higher than males in Enabling Others to Act ($m = 24.4 \pm 3.2$ vs. $m = 23.4 \pm 3.3$). This is in contrast to other findings where overall mean practice scores did not differ based on gender (Edington, 1996; Posner & Brodsky, 1994). Upperclassmen had significantly higher scores ($m = 21.8 \pm 3.8$) in Challenging the Process as compared to lowerclassmen ($m = 20.8 \pm 3.4$).

Students who had been appointed or elected to a leadership position in the past three years had higher mean scores than those who had not held a leadership position in Enabling Others to Act ($m = 24.6 \pm 3.1$ vs. $m = 23.8 \pm 3.2$) and in Encouraging the Heart ($m = 24.1 \pm 4.0$ vs. $m = 23.0 \pm 4.1$). Students who indicated they had leadership coursework, lectures, or readings had higher overall mean scores than those without such academic preparation in three practices: Modeling

the Way ($m=23.5 \pm 3.4$ vs. $m= 21.9 \pm 3.8$), Challenging the Process ($m=21.8 \pm 3.6$ vs. $m= 20.9 \pm 34.8$), and Inspiring a Shared Vision ($m=21.8 \pm 3.5$ vs. $m= 20.5 \pm 4.3$).

Leadership Context

Table 4 illustrates the context in which students reported that leadership action statements were done. The context most commonly reported was either in class or at work. Home and clubs/groups were the least reported context areas. There did not appear to be a consistent context for the action statements within a leadership practice. For example, in the leadership practice, Encouraging the Heart, the action, praising people for a job well done, was more often exhibited at work while the action, encouraging others as they work on activities, was more often exhibited at school.

Perceptions as a Leader

The majority of students (61-81%) perceived themselves as leaders in all context areas (Table 5) however fewer perceived themselves as leaders in class (61%) as compared to at home or at work. Again, when asked if others treated them as leaders, fewer reported this in class compared to the other context areas. Students reported that they often reflected on their actions and made changes based on their reflections; more than 90% of students reported that they did this at work. Almost all students (89%) reported that at work they led by example and believed in collaboration.

Examples of Leadership Behaviors

Table 6 provides examples of illustrative comments shared by students in the focus groups reflecting leadership behaviors within each of Kouzes and Posner's (1987) leadership practices. Students were able to provide some personal examples of each of the leadership practices during their discussion in the focus groups, however much of the input students provided in the focus groups pertained to the leadership behaviors they had observed in others rather than behaviors the students themselves exhibited.

Limitations

There are limitations to the study. The questionnaire was distributed at eight universities and therefore results may not be generalizable to all hospitality management students. The survey method has several limitations including potential misinterpretation of the questions and scales by respondents as well as potential fatigue by respondents when completing a lengthy questionnaire. Respondents needed approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Students were asked whether they had leadership coursework, lectures, or readings, however, specific data on content covered in courses was not explored.

Recommendations

Results from this study indicate that hospitality management students perceive they do perform leadership practices most often at work and in the classroom. Hospitality educators may be able to draw these examples into the classroom to have students discuss. Hospitality management recruiters have indicated leadership skills are important. Hospitality management educators may be able to help students identify and articulate their leadership skills to recruiters.

This study assessed self reported leadership behaviors in hospitality management students; something that has not been reported before in the literature. Additionally, it supported using the S-LPI as a reliable tool for measuring leadership behaviors in hospitality management students. More work is needed regarding student leadership behaviors and the best way to develop these behaviors in future hospitality management professionals. Evaluation is needed to determine which components of leadership are most important for students' success after graduation.

Findings from this study suggest that exposure to leadership in the classroom either through coursework, lectures or readings can positively impact students' perceptions of their leadership practice particularly in; Modeling the Way, Challenging the Process, and Inspiring a Shared Vision. Hospitality educators can play a key role in helping develop leadership behaviors in students through incorporation of leadership activities into the classroom.

The S-LPI may be beneficial as a self-assessment leadership tool for hospitality management students. Additional work is needed to determine how leadership concepts are presented in the classroom as well as what educators are doing to enhance leadership behaviors in hospitality management students.

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Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Hospitality Management Students

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Female	214	62
Male	131	38
Age		
18-20 years old	123	36
21-25 years old	201	58
26-30 years old	17	5
31-40 years old	1	<1
41-50 years old	2	<1
51 years or older	1	<1
Classification Status		
Freshman	62	18
Sophomore	41	12
Junior	83	24
Senior	159	46
Leadership coursework ^a		
Yes	224	64
No	119	36
Supervisory Work Experience ^b		
Yes	224	74
No	79	26
Leadership Position ^c		
Yes	126	55
No	103	45

^a Students reporting that they had a leadership course, coursework, lecture, or readings.

^b Students reporting that they had held positions at work with supervisory responsibilities some time during the past three years.

^c Students reporting that they had held an elected or appointed position within an organization or club.

Table 2: Hospitality Management Students' Mean Ratings for Leadership Actions by Practices (n = 330-345)

Practice^a Action Statements	Mean ^b	SD
Enabling Others to Act		
I treat others with dignity and respect.	4.6	.68
I support decisions that other people make on their own.	4.0	.79
I include others in planning activities and programs.	4.0	.88
I foster cooperative rather than competitive relationships with people with whom I work.	3.9	.91
I give others a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	3.8	.90
I provide opportunities for others to take on leadership responsibilities.	3.8	.93
Encouraging the Heart		
I praise people for a job well done.	4.2	.82
I give people support and express appreciation for their contributions.	4.0	.87
I make sure that people are recognized for their contributions.	4.0	.84
I encourage others as they work on activities and programs.	3.8	1.02
I make it a point to tell others about the good work done by our group.	3.8	.99
I find ways to celebrate accomplishments publicly.	3.4	1.15
Modeling the Way		
I follow through on promises and commitments I make.	4.3	.81
I set a personal example of what I expect from other people.	4.0	.95
I make sure that we set goals and make specific plans for the projects our group undertakes.	3.8	.99
I share my beliefs about how things can be run most effectively.	3.8	.96
I break projects and work into manageable steps.	3.5	1.07
I talk about values and principles that guide my actions.	3.5	1.05
Challenging the Process		
I look for ways to improve projects or tasks in which I am involved.	3.9	.92
I look for opportunities that challenge my skills and abilities.	3.7	.86
I let others experiment and take risks even when outcomes are uncertain.	3.5	.92
I keep current on events and activities that might affect others with whom I interact.	3.5	.94

Table 2: (continued)		
Practice ^a Action Statements	Mean ^b	SD
Challenging the Process		
I ask, "What can we learn from this experience?" when things do not go as expected.	3.5	1.14
I take initiative in experimenting with the way we do things.	3.4	.96
Inspiring a Shared Vision		
I am upbeat and positive when talking about what our group is doing.	4.0	.92
I show enthusiasm and excitement about what others and I are doing.	3.9	.89
I look ahead and communicate about what I believe will affect others in the future.	3.5	.96
I describe to others what we should be capable of accomplishing.	3.5	.99
I talk with others about how their interests can be met by working toward a common goal.	3.3	1.00
I speak with conviction about the higher purpose and meaning of what we are doing.	3.2	1.09

^a Leadership action statements and practice taken from Posner and Brodsky (1994)

^b Scale for statements: 1=seldom/rarely 2=once in awhile 3=sometimes 4=fairly often 5=very frequently

Table 3: Mean Ratings for Leadership Practices by Hospitality Management Students (n = 330-345)

Leadership Practice	Alpha^a	Mean^{b,c}	SD
Enabling Others to Act	.68	24.0	3.3
Encouraging the Heart	.78	23.2	4.1
Modeling the Way	.68	22.8	3.6
Challenging the Process	.65	21.5	3.7
Inspiring a Shared Vision	.75	21.3	3.9

^aCoefficient alpha reliability estimates.

^bSum of action statement ratings; possible scores 5-30.

^c Scale for mean scores: 5=seldom/rarely, 10=once in awhile, 15=sometimes, 20=fairly often, and 25=very frequently

Table 4: Context of Leadership Actions and Practices by Hospitality Management Students (n=330-342^a)

Practice Action Statements ^b	Home		School		Work		Clubs/ Groups	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Enabling Others to Act								
I treat others with dignity and respect.	54	21	85	33	104	40	16	6
I support decisions that other people make on their own.	84	29	91	31	73	25	44	15
I include others in planning activities and programs.	77	25	93	30	50	16	85	28
I foster cooperative rather than competitive relationships with people with whom I work.	22	7	60	20	200	66	19	6
I give others a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	34	11	107	36	123	41	34	11
I provide opportunities for others to take on leadership responsibilities.	18	6	105	35	114	38	63	21
Encouraging the Heart								
I praise people for a job well done.	31	11	83	28	136	46	43	15
I give people support and express appreciation for their contributions.	56	19	87	30	101	35	48	16
I make sure that people are recognized for their contributions.	28	9	93	31	121	40	60	20
I encourage others as they work on activities and programs.	35	11	126	41	91	29	58	19
I make it a point to tell others about the good work done by our group.	18	6	156	53	69	23	52	18
I find ways to celebrate accomplishments publicly.	77	26	86	30	77	26	51	18
Modeling the Way								
I follow through on promises and commitments I make.	85	33	54	21	84	33	35	13
I set a personal example of what I expect from other people.	61	21	85	30	115	40	26	9
I make sure that we set goals and make specific plans for the projects our group undertakes.	17	6	178	59	56	19	49	16
I share my beliefs about how things can be run most effectively.	51	16	73	23	149	47	41	13
I break projects and work into manageable steps.	13	4	242	79	43	14	9	3

Table 4: (continued)									
Practice Action Statements ^a	Home		School		Work		Clubs/ Groups		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Modeling the Way									
I talk about values and principles that guide my actions.	118	40	73	24	80	27	27	9	
Challenging the Process									
I look for ways to improve projects or tasks in which I am involved.	23	8	147	49	93	31	37	12	
I look for opportunities that challenge my skills and abilities.	28	9	123	40	124	40	32	10	
I let others experiment and take risks even when outcomes are uncertain.	62	21	108	37	80	27	41	14	
I keep current on events and activities that might affect others with whom I interact.	89	29	109	36	58	19	49	16	
I ask, "What can we learn from this experience?" when things do not go as expected.	58	20	87	30	101	35	48	16	
I take initiative in experimenting with the way we do things.	53	17	107	34	114	37	37	12	
Inspiring a Shared Vision									
I am upbeat and positive when talking about what our group is doing.	27	9	164	53	54	17	64	21	
I show enthusiasm and excitement about what others and I are doing.	59	20	94	32	87	30	51	18	
I look ahead and communicate about what I believe will affect others in the future.	11	35	90	29	80	26	31	10	
I describe to others what we should be capable of accomplishing.	37	12	123	39	100	32	52	17	
I talk with others about how their interests can be met by working toward a common goal.	45	15	134	44	91	30	35	11	
I speak with conviction about the higher purpose and meaning of what we are doing.	69	23	120	40	69	23	39	13	

^aSome students indicated multiple responses or "other" category; therefore, totals in context areas on table do not equal total sample number indicated.

^bStatement order based on Table 2

Table 5: Hospitality Management Students Perceptions of Self as a Leader by Context Area (n=324-341)

Statement	Home ^a	Class ^a	Work ^a	Club/Group ^a
	←————— % —————→			
I reflect on my actions by thinking about what I do and why I do what I do.	89	89	92	83
I make changes in my actions after reflection about them.	85	84	91	81
I consider myself a leader.	81	61	81	68
Others treat me as a leader.	76	61	78	65
I see myself as a leader who leads by example.	82	70	89	75
I see myself as a leader who has a vision and can get others to buy into that vision.	72	61	75	68
I see myself as a leader, who believes that collaboration, team building, and empowering others are essential.	81	82	89	82
I see myself as a leader who encourages others to continue on even when they are exhausted, frustrated, and disenchanting.	82	78	86	79
I see myself as a leader who takes risks, innovates, experiments, and is willing to fail in order to find a different and better way to do things.	79	70	80	75

^a Percent answering "Yes" to each statement

Table 6: Hospitality management students' examples of leadership behaviors

Leadership Practice	Comment
Enabling Others to Act	<p>"I'm the oldest– so I feel like that's my job, as being the oldest, is to set a good example and be a good model. I have to figure everything out first, and then tell them what I've learned. I have to help them. "</p>
Modeling the Way	<p>"An employee might be like, 'I don't know how to enter this into the computer properly. So, I'll be like, 'Let me go ahead and show you how this is done.'"</p>
Encouraging the Heart	<p>"I was working with my group (at Bible Study). I would say, "Okay, you guys are fine, you can do whatever you (want to) do. If you want to do something, you can do it, you can do it." I just tried to help people get it done and think [in a] positive way."</p>
Inspiring a Shared Vision	<p>"My brother just broke his neck and is paralyzed. , When I'm at home - it's kind of experimenting, I guess, to make him realize that it's not, the future can be bright, we find different ways that he can get things off the counter. I was on the phone with my mom the other day and he had gotten a piece of gum off the counter, put it in his mouth, unwrapped it in his mouth and spit the wrapper back out at her. I feel helped him realize that it's kind of fun to find other ways and just surprise people. "I can still do this," and I feel like, maybe inspiring."</p>
	<p>"My boyfriend went down the wrong path and was in prison for a couple years, and realized that that's not thing he needed to do, and that's not the path that he wanted to go down. Because of that, he didn't get to Inspiring a Shared Vision graduate high school. Now that he has gotten his life back together and everything, I feel like I have constantly been encouraging him to go back and do his GED classes, and work hard, and he's been working full-time with his father's</p>

Table 6: (continued)

Leadership Practice	Comment
Challenging the Process	“I live with four other girls. There was also a beehive in the basement that continually hatched bees. And none of the rest of my roommates –they just don’t take the initiative. I ended up writing a letter to the city inspector and they also sent it to the property management company to get them to come and take care of this. Nobody else will call any place, they’re too scared, because they don’t want to be mean. But sometimes it has to be done.”
