

## **The effects of an introductory leadership course on socially responsible leadership, examined by age and gender**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of age and gender on student leadership capacity during a 16-week, for-credit academic leadership course at a regional mid-western university. The course promoted the tenets of the Social Change Model of Leadership (SCM) through theoretical and application-based projects. Participants completed the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) as a pre/post test. The findings suggest age does not mediate students' capacities for socially responsible leadership, but gender does for the SCM domains of collaboration and citizenship.

### **Introduction**

Can leadership be taught and learned in a classroom setting? This question has received attention in both the academic world and the practitioner world alike (Buschlen & Dvorak, 2011; Daloz Parks, 2005). Developing leaders in a collegiate setting has been a goal for institutions of higher learning since their inception (Astin & Astin, 2000; Roberts, 2007). Colleges and universities offer myriad experiences to build students' leadership capacities, including weekend trainings, workshops, and even academic majors and minors in leadership (Brungardt, Greenleaf, Brungardt, & Arensdorf, 2006). Students also grow and mature outside of the classroom by participating in co-curricular activities, social endeavors, student organizations, and immersion into the larger university culture (Buschlen & Dvorak, 2011). Past research has outlined how college students build their leadership capacities while attending and participating in the college experience (Dugan, 2006a; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005). This participation encompasses many aspects of student development such as personal, intellectual, spiritual, philosophical, and skill-based growth (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

Leadership development is process oriented, dynamic, and involves self, groups, and service to the larger community (HERI, 1996). A student's personal identity is formed and re-formed through the process of attending college and through personal maturation (Chickering & Reiser, 1993). Therefore, attending college is valuable for the development of future leaders in both curricular and co-curricular venues. However, a struggle still exists in how best to define leadership training for the next generation of leaders (Billsberry, 2009). Even after decades of research on this topic, there is still a lack of consensus on how leadership can be best taught or learned, as well as how it emerges within individuals over time (Daloz Parks, 2005).

Very few research projects test models to examine leadership development that would eventually inform practitioners (Dugan, 2006b). Recent leadership research has focused on individual students and how they develop their individual leadership identities (Komives et al., 2005). Therefore, the process of studying how a traditionally-aged college student (18-22 years of age) develops leadership over time is still in its infancy. Early studies of leadership focused strictly on males in positions of power, while the study of female leadership has only been a focus in recent years (Eagly, 2007). In addition to a more inclusive focus, there has been an increase in research focused on undergraduate leadership growth from a developmental perspective (Komives et al., 2005). This current research project aims to address a gap by further testing the impact of age and gender on students learning the social change model of leadership (HERI, 1996) in an academic setting. This paper examines these relationships through a study of students' experiences learning the social change model of leadership (SCM) and discusses the results and implications of the study. A literature review is first presented, followed by an overview of the theoretical framework (i.e., social change model of leadership) and a discussion of the study design.

## Literature Review

Developing the leadership capacities of students has received greater attention in the past two decades (Astin & Astin, 2000; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Roberts, 2007). Through a wide array of curricular and co-curricular experiences, college students have myriad experiences to develop their leadership capacities. With campuses increasing their focus on leadership development, research examining the effects of these experiences has developed alongside (Roberts, 2007). While much of the focus on college students' leadership development has focused on the impact of various college experiences (e.g., service-learning, student organization membership, academic coursework) (Dugan & Komives, 2007), demographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender) have also been studied and shown to be significant (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Two important demographic characteristics that have been shown to mediate students' leadership development are age and gender (Astin, 1993; Eagly, 2007; Haber, 2012). Age and gender have gained more attention as emergent leadership theories and models posit definitions of leadership built on inclusion and shared leadership (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007; Rost, 1991).

### Leadership Development and Age

The relationship between college student leadership development and age is understudied and complex. Since the majority of research on college student leadership development concerns which specific collegiate experiences contribute to developing leadership, demographic characteristics such as age receive less attention. Further complicating this line of inquiry is that class year is often used as a proxy for age in college student leadership development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). For instance, research

from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (Dugan & Komives, 2007) shows that students increase their capacities for engaging in leadership for social change on seven of the eight values contained in the social change model of leadership from before college to their senior year. In the same data, students report having significantly higher levels of leadership self-efficacy during their senior year than when they started college. That students increase their leadership development the further they progress through college is a consistent finding in leadership research (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

For studies that specifically examine age as opposed to age proxies (e.g., class year), the results are mixed. In a study of 1100 undergraduate students, Haber (2012) found important differences by age when students were asked to articulate their individual definitions of leadership. On the other hand, Astin's (1993) landmark longitudinal analyses on nearly 25,000 students showed that age was not a significant predictor of college students' leadership development when compared to same-age peers who did not attend college. This result suggests that age may not be predictive of college students' leadership development, but rather the experiences students gain as they progress through college are most significant. Astin's study is rare in that it compares college and non-college students of similar ages. He contends, "By almost every indication, increases in leadership appear to be associated with the college experience" (p. 123), which suggests that age may not be a significant mediating variable in the development of leadership. Thus, the relationship between age and leadership development is unclear and warrants further investigation.

### **Leadership Development and Gender**

Gender differences in leadership are prevalent in contemporary research (Book, 2000; Grant, 1998; Haber, 2012; Oshagbemi & Gill, 2003), despite most early leadership theories, which were simply known as "great man" theories (Northouse, 2013). Some of the earliest leadership models were developed by observing and quantifying behaviors of high-ranking males in the military and in business (Northouse). In the 21st century, however, women now have more access to leadership roles and directing teams than at any other time in history (Eagly, 2007). The ability of a team or organization to successfully practice leadership is vital to the team's success (Astin & Astin, 2000). As more women enter leadership roles in their communities, new and different approaches to leadership have emerged (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Kezar (2006) found women in leadership roles tend to be more participatory, relational, and interpersonal when compared to males. Female leaders, in contrast to males, also utilize power differently and sought out reciprocating and collective teams. In contrast to the industrial paradigm of the early 20th century (Rost, 1991), female leaders view the act of leadership as a collective responsibility rather than an individual's task (Kezar, 2006). The literature in the last twenty years has begun to conceptualize this non-hierarchical and increasingly democratic pathway that more closely aligns with how many women conceptualize and practice leadership (Book, 2000; Daloz Parks, 2005; Kezar, 2006).

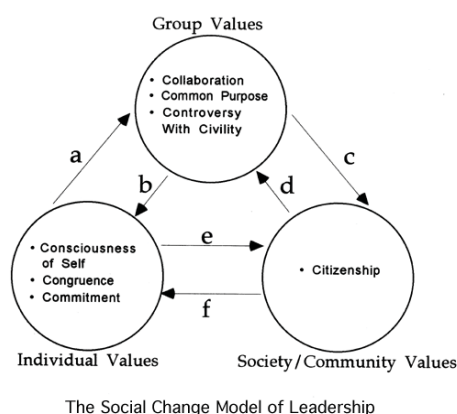
As more democratic and shared leadership models took hold in higher education, research exploring their effects followed (Dugan & Komives, 2007); however, relatively few studies specifically examined gender differences. Dugan (2006a) found that the female participants scored higher on the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) when compared to males within the eight constructs of the social change model of leadership (SCM). After more complex analyses, the differences were still significant across six of the eight scales (Dugan, 2006a). Similarly, Astin (1993) also showed that gender was a significant predictor in a host of college outcomes, including leadership development. Haber's (2012) study also showed that

women demonstrated more contemporary understandings of leadership than men. These studies suggest women may possess a leadership advantage while functioning in this newer, post-industrialized model. However, more research is needed to corroborate these findings.

### Theoretical Framework

The social change model of leadership (SCM) (HERI, 1996) is one of many leadership development models used in higher education and it reflects a post-industrial, shared, and democratic leadership paradigm. This model was also used as a thematic backdrop for the development of the intervention. The SCM (Figure 1) was developed to depict the process of engaging in leadership with others toward social change. The model contains a set of eight values grouped at the *personal*, *group*, and *community* level: *consciousness of self*, *congruence*, *commitment*, *common purpose*, *collaboration*, *controversy with civility*, *citizenship*, and the eighth is *change*. *Change* is depicted as the overarching outcome of engaging in the leadership process. The model includes feedback loops, depicted as arrows, to outline how development at one stage impacts the other stages. The SCM contains two basic assumptions about leadership: everyone has the capacity to develop leadership and leadership is a process and not a title or position. The SCM model promotes the values of social justice, equality, self-knowledge, empowerment, collaboration, citizenship, and service to the community. The SCM is often used as a framework for leadership programs, experiences, and academic courses.

**Figure 1: The Social Change Model of Leadership**



In the current study, participants were exposed to an intervention in the form of an academic class based on the SCM. The course was designed to model the three phases outlined in the SCM of *Individual*, *Group*, and *Community* Values. Participants took a pre- and post-test before and at the end of a 16-week, semester-long experience. Since the SCM is based on *Individual*, *Group*, and *Community* Values, all three facets serve as scaffolds during the course through applied projects, role-playing, local and national service, and through other academic interventions. The intervention was a 16-week, for-credit academic leadership course that utilized the tenets of the SCM along with service to the community, theoretical, and application-based projects.

### Individual Values

During the course, students were asked to examine *Individual* values by completing several personal reflection papers based on self-assessment tools. Students completed well-known self-assessment tools such as: The Style Questionnaire, Skills Inventory, LMX7, Least Preferred Co-Worker Measure (LPC), to name a few. Students completed the self-scored assessments, discussed their scores with peers, and increased their understanding of both themselves and others.

### **Group Values**

Students learned about *Group* values by means of graded group projects (by faculty and by peers) and several group activities and simulations. The culminating assignment in the course focused on analyzing a peer-authored case study. The students negotiated the case, the protocol for solutions, and then applied a leadership theory from the course text to solve the case. The group presented their findings and the teams authored a paper outlining their decision-making process. These activities become important opportunities for students to practice leadership and were designed to build students' capacities in the group values domain of the SCM.

### **Community Values**

To examine *Community* values, students were required to complete a set of service hours at a non-profit agency and also work together as a class to fundraise for a local non-profit agency. This aspect fits well with the millennial generation as they are often defined by dedicating large amounts of service to their communities (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Students were evaluated by the site and received immediate feedback based on their service. This helps to build the *Community* values of the SCM as students receive immediate feedback about how they conceptualize leadership in a larger community context.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to determine whether age or gender affect how students develop their capacities for socially responsible leadership, as measured by the Social Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) (University of Maryland, 2010) over a 16-week semester. The SRLS consists of a set of statistically reliable and valid scales designed to measure students' self-reported leadership capacities based on the eight values of the SCM. To better explore possible differences in the development of socially responsible leadership by age and gender, two hypotheses were tested:

*H<sub>1</sub>*: An 18-20 year old experimental group member's cumulative SRLS scores will show a greater increase than the 21+ year-old participant's scores of the experimental group.

This hypothesis tested whether or not students that were in the younger age group of 18-20 would show more leadership growth at the end of the semester when compared to those ages 21 or older. This hypothesis is in line with Haber's (2012) study that showed age is a significant mediating factor for undergraduate students' leadership development.

*H<sub>2</sub>*: A male group member's cumulative SRLS scores, as a result of the intervention, will show a stronger increase when compared to the female participant's scores of the group.

The second hypothesis tested whether male students would show more leadership growth (statistically higher scores) at the end of the semester when compared to females. This hypothesis was formed based

on research that shows that men demonstrate lower capacities for socially responsible and shared leadership (Dugan, 2006a; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Haber, 2012. If male students score lower initially (pre-test), they would thus likely have a greater increase in their capacities for socially responsible leadership.

## Sample

Participants were undergraduate students from a regional, mid-western university. The total sample consisted of 108 student participants. This sample was broken into four groups for this project. Group 1 represented 18-20 year olds ( $n = 77$ ) and Group 2 represented 21 year olds and older ( $n = 31$ ). Also, gender was examined from the sample with Group 3 representing females ( $n = 65$ ) and Group 4 representing males ( $n = 43$ ). Thus, students were placed into one of two groups for both age and gender. The participants in this project self-selected to take the introduction to leadership course. All participants voluntarily completed the surveys with only minimal outliers removed at the end due to blank or incomplete surveys. Participants were given a unique code at the pre-test and were then matched with that code for the post-test to provide comparative data. Sixty percent of the respondents were female and the average age of the sample was approximately 20 years old ( $\mu = 19.9$ ). Seniors represented the largest class standing size (32%) with sophomores and juniors combining for over half (51%) of the sample. Participants were tested at the same university in the same time frame and they were relatively similar in many demographics details when compared to the population of the entire university.

## Methodology

To measure the impact of the intervention, participants took the 68 item Social Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS). Participants completed a paper and pencil version of the SRLS as a pre-test on the first day of class and again as a post-test at the end of the semester. The SRLS is commonly used to measure the impact of leadership experiences (e.g., weekend retreats, seminars, academic courses) (University of Maryland, 2010). The SRLS measures the eight values of the SCM based on students' self-reports. Questions are formatted in a Likert Scale, ranging from 1-5, with 1 as Strongly Disagree and 5 as Strongly Agree. Validity and reliability of the scale was evaluated during its original testing (Tyree, 1998; University of Maryland, 2010) with Cronbach alpha scores ranging from 0.69-0.92. Similarly, the SRLS exhibited strong internal reliability in the current study, with Cronbach alpha scores from 0.70-0.85.

Mean scores were calculated for individuals on each of the eight constructs. A difference score between pre- and post-test means on each construct was also calculated for each individual using an independent-samples t-test (Lomax, 2007). To determine if differences existed between the two sets of groups – age and gender mean scores were examined as unique sets. Two independent-samples t-tests (i.e., one test for gender, one test for age) were chosen because mean scores from different groups were compared for each independent variable. Second, independent-samples t-tests were used because only two groups were compared. Lastly, an overall mean score for all items on the SRLS was calculated for individuals in both groups. Pre-test, post-test, and difference scores for the participants are presented in the next section.

## Findings

Results of an independent-samples t-test investigating mean score differences in self-reported scores on the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) by age found no significant differences for any of the

eight domains of the SCM. An additional independent-samples t-test investigating gender differences on the SRLS found significant values in two of the eight domains: collaboration and citizenship. Table 1 contains differences in mean scores for age related to the eight domains for the SRLS, while Table 2 contains differences in means scores for gender related to the eight domains for the SRLS. Table 3 contains results of both independent-samples t-tests comparing mean score differences for age and gender on the SRLS. Results for age are discussed first, followed by a discussion of results for the gender comparisons.

### Findings for Age

Mean scores and standard deviations for the SRLS based on age are presented in Table 1. Results from an independent-samples t-test showed no significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) by age for the eight domains on the SRLS. Table 3 contains the results of the t-tests. These results suggest that student growth in practicing socially responsible leadership does not differ by age. Although Group 1 (18-20) started with a  $\mu = 4.021$  and ended with a  $\mu = 4.228$ , and Group 2 (21 and older) started with a slightly higher mean score (when compared to Group 1) of  $\mu = 4.044$  and ended with  $\mu = 4.121$ , the mean differences were not significant ( $p > .05$ ). With this significance level, the null hypothesis is retained.

Table 1  
*SRLS Mean Score Differences for Age*

| SCM Construct            | Pre-test                         | Post-test | Diff. | SD   | Pre-test                       | Post-test | Diff. | SD   |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-------|------|--------------------------------|-----------|-------|------|
|                          | <i>Age Group 1: 18-20 (n=77)</i> |           |       |      | <i>Age Group 2: 21+ (n=31)</i> |           |       |      |
| <i>Individual Values</i> |                                  |           |       |      |                                |           |       |      |
| Consciousness of Self    | 3.917                            | 4.110     | .193  | .554 | 4.000                          | 4.064     | 0.64  | .531 |
| Congruence               | 4.067                            | 4.344     | .277  | .605 | 4.212                          | 4.215     | .003  | .486 |
| Commitment               | 4.093                            | 4.279     | .186  | .577 | 4.404                          | 4.417     | .013  | .464 |
| <i>Group Values</i>      |                                  |           |       |      |                                |           |       |      |
| Collaboration            | 4.093                            | 4.279     | .186  | .458 | 4.096                          | 4.159     | .063  | .406 |
| Common Purpose           | 4.094                            | 4.328     | .234  | .476 | 4.184                          | 4.192     | .008  | .398 |
| Controversy w/ Civility  | 3.951                            | 4.099     | .148  | .465 | 3.958                          | 4.120     | .162  | .418 |
| <i>Community Values</i>  |                                  |           |       |      |                                |           |       |      |
| Citizenship              | 4.058                            | 4.341     | .288  | .621 | 3.933                          | 4.120     | .187  | .592 |
| Change                   | 3.813                            | 3.992     | .179  | .496 | 3.796                          | 3.939     | .143  | .544 |

### Findings for Gender

Mean scores and standard deviations for the SRLS based on gender are presented in Table 2. Two domains (collaboration and citizenship) were shown to be significant ( $p < .05$ ) as a result of the

independent-samples t-test. Table 3 contains the results of the independent-samples t-test and notes the significant differences. These results suggest that gender mediates student growth in practicing socially responsible leadership within the domains of collaboration and citizenship, thus rejecting the null hypothesis. Females started with a  $\mu = 4.154$  and ended with a  $\mu = 4.337$  on the collaboration value, while males started with a lower mean score (when compared to females) of  $\mu = 4.003$  and ended with  $\mu = 4.119$ . This difference suggests that women not only began with higher mean scores on collaboration, they grew more in their capacities for collaboration as a result of the intervention than men.

Table 2  
*SRLS Mean Score Differences for Gender*

| SCM Construct            | Pre-test              | Post-test | Diff. | SD   | Pre-test            | Post-test | Diff. | SD   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------|------|---------------------|-----------|-------|------|
|                          | <i>Females (n=65)</i> |           |       |      | <i>Males (n=43)</i> |           |       |      |
| <i>Individual Values</i> |                       |           |       |      |                     |           |       |      |
| Consciousness of Self    | 3.923                 | 4.121     | .198  | .433 | 3.958               | 4.070     | .112  | .582 |
| Congruence               | 4.139                 | 4.313     | .174  | .423 | 4.047               | 4.298     | .251  | .580 |
| Commitment               | 4.454                 | 4.549     | .095  | .433 | 4.287               | 4.477     | .190  | .531 |
| <i>Group Values</i>      |                       |           |       |      |                     |           |       |      |
| Collaboration            | 4.154                 | 4.337     | .183  | .338 | 4.003               | 4.119     | .116  | .459 |
| Common Purpose           | 4.159                 | 4.327     | .168  | .353 | 4.049               | 4.248     | .199  | .461 |
| Controversy w/ Civility  | 3.948                 | 4.327     | .144  | .373 | 3.959               | 4.078     | .119  | .463 |
| <i>Community Values</i>  |                       |           |       |      |                     |           |       |      |
| Citizenship              | 4.125                 | 4.375     | .250  | .524 | 3.880               | 4.157     | .277  | .637 |
| Change                   | 3.868                 | 4.045     | .177  | .488 | 3.721               | 3.879     | .158  | .541 |

Table 3

Age Comparisons – Group 1: 18-20 (n=77); Group 2: 21+ (n=31)

| SCM Construct            | MS                     | F     | p    | MS                        | F     | p            |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------|------|---------------------------|-------|--------------|
|                          | <i>Age Comparisons</i> |       |      | <i>Gender Comparisons</i> |       |              |
| <i>Individual Values</i> |                        |       |      |                           |       |              |
| Consciousness of Self    | .012                   | .023  | .879 | .003                      | .007  | .940         |
| Congruence               | .001                   | .001  | .974 | .146                      | .356  | .552         |
| Commitment               | .129                   | .390  | .533 | .739                      | 2.271 | .135         |
| <i>Group Values</i>      |                        |       |      |                           |       |              |
| Collaboration            | .135                   | .474  | .496 | 1.755                     | 6.486 | <b>.012*</b> |
| Common Purpose           | .020                   | .086  | .771 | .459                      | 1.954 | .165         |
| Controversy w/ Civility  | .018                   | .067  | .797 | 8.116                     | .001  | .986         |
| <i>Community Values</i>  |                        |       |      |                           |       |              |
| Citizenship              | 1.185                  | 3.201 | .076 | 2.764                     | 7.780 | <b>.006*</b> |
| Change                   | .049                   | .109  | .742 | 1.263                     | 2.880 | .093         |

Gender Comparisons – Group 1: Male (n=43); Group 2: Female (n=65)

#### *Mean Comparison Results for Age and Gender*

\*p < .05

Significant differences between males and females were found for the citizenship domain.

Females started with a  $\mu = 4.125$  and ended with a  $\mu = 4.375$ , while males started with a lower mean score (when compared to females) of  $\mu = 3.880$  and ended with  $\mu = 4.157$ . Although female scores started and ended higher than males, males experienced more growth than females in this domain. These results suggest that females are significantly higher on citizenship values, but males demonstrated more growth as a result of the intervention.

## Discussion

This study sought to examine the roles of age and gender on students' development of socially responsible leadership (HERI, 1996). Results of the independent-samples t-test comparing means for age on the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) found no significant differences. A similar test examining the role of gender on students' development of socially responsible leadership showed significant differences for the collaboration and citizenship values.

Since age is based on physical maturation of years, it was hypothesized that younger students in this study would be impacted more as they were still developing their identity. Many development theories argue that maturity and development closely follow age (Chickering & Reiser, 1993; Erikson, 1950; Komives et al., 2005). Further, since class year and age are closely related, college impact research suggests that older students often demonstrate greater levels of development (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Haber, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Thus, the hypothesis was that younger students would see greater gains in their self-assessed leadership development than older students. This hypothesis was not supported in the current study, thus indicating that age may not be a significant mediating factor in the development of socially responsible leadership. Like Astin's (1993) finding that the college experience was more impactful than age on college outcomes, the current study suggests that students' collegiate experiences—not their age—are most beneficial to develop students' leadership capacities. Leadership, then, is not something that one develops simply with age, but with impactful leadership experiences such as learning and practicing leadership theory, service-learning, leadership workshops, or living-learning communities.

Gender did not play a significant role in how females or males developed six of the eight tenets of the social change model (SCM). Dugan (2006a) argues that shared, post-industrial (Rost, 1991) views of leadership offer certain benefits to previously under-represented groups such as females. This emerging paradigm of leadership diverged from traditional male-dominated leadership approaches and seemed to align more closely with female perceptions of leadership (Dugan, 2006a). In the current study, both samples increased their mean scores from the pre-test to the post-test. However, females started with higher means and ended with higher means in all but two of the eight constructs (i.e., consciousness of self and controversy with civility). These data only partially supported Dugan's (2006a) study that showed females scored higher on all of the tenets of the SCM. Since the current study was longitudinal and similar studies are cross-sectional (Dugan, 2006a; Dugan & Komives, 2007), these data shed new light on the potential nuances in how gender mediates leadership development.

When mean score differences (pre-post) for gender were compared, two constructs – collaboration and citizenship showed significant differences. This supports Eagly and Carli (2003) who suggested females were more collaborative and managed conflict better in a team setting as democratic leadership roles were becoming less hierarchically based. Related to prior research corroborating the current study's results, the pedagogy for the course was likely an important mechanism for females to develop their leadership capacities. Since the course pedagogy was based on the social change model and females tend to resonate more with this post-industrial model of leadership, it stands to reason that females would be more impacted and thus show greater gains in the social change model domains.

In short, males and females increased their leadership capacities during the intervention. In most of cases, however, females started and ended with higher scores than did the males but this was not supported with significant values and may be due to the limited sample size. The scores seem to support the claim that the tenets of the SCM resonate more with females (Dugan, 2006a). In addition, the current study suggests that using the social change model as pedagogy has a greater effect on females than males.

### **Implications for Practice and Research**

Building on prior research (Dugan, 2006a; Dugan & Komives, 2012; Haber, 2012), leadership programs—especially women’s leadership programs—should consider adopting the social change model of leadership as pedagogy. Mounting evidence suggests that females not only resonate with the tenets of the social change model, but it is also effective at building their leadership capacities. Campus administrators and faculty looking to expand the impact of their leadership offerings by reaching out to groups who may not currently be involved in leadership programs may find similar benefits to using the social change model. Future research should investigate if the same effects hold true for other groups such as students of color or first generation college students.

Future research should continue to examine the uniqueness between group differences in the development of leadership. Disaggregating data by various identities (e.g., race, class, gender) continues to show compelling differences in how students develop their leadership capacities. Understanding the nuances of how different students develop leadership will lead to better pedagogies and ultimately a better understanding of “best practices” for undergraduate leadership education.

Future research examining these unique between group differences should employ a longitudinal design by following students from their first-year to graduation at the undergraduate level. Following a group of students longitudinally through immersion into the many facets of university life (e.g., student organizations, lectures, leadership roles) would provide a richer understanding of how students develop their leadership capacities over time. Along with retention and persistence data, it may also allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits of leadership education. Future research projects of this nature should also look to implement a mixed methods approach to provide voice to students’ experiences.

### **Conclusion**

How to best develop college students’ capacities for socially responsible leadership continues to be a pressing concern for higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000; Daloz Parks, 2005; Roberts, 2007). The SCM, rooted in a post-industrial, shared paradigm (Rost, 1991), remains a prominent model and pedagogy for building students’ leadership capacities (Dugan, 2006a; Dugan & Komives, 2007). Some evidence exists that these models resonate more with traditionally underrepresented groups (e.g., women, students of color) (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Haber, 2012). Using the SCM as pedagogy for a 16-week course, the current study sought to examine the role of age and gender in how students develop their capacities for socially responsible leadership. Results showed no differences in mean score differences for age, but differences related to gender for females on the collaboration and citizenship domains. These findings corroborate research suggesting females develop leadership differently than males (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Haber, 2012).

Whether the teaching and learning of the SCM takes place in a classroom or within a co-curricular leadership training, the outcomes of this project are encouraging. This project outlines how students, regardless of age or gender, understand and comprehend the tenets of the SCM and increase their personal knowledge after participating in a structured, intentional setting. Overall, the findings support that college students were aligned with the post-industrial view of leadership and that it can be learned (Buschlen & Dvorak, 2011; Dugan, 2006a). Also supported was Buschlen and Dvorak’s (2011) assertion that the

intervention seemed to show effectiveness with this sample and there should be more intentional, structured leadership opportunities made available for college-aged students based on the SCM both inside and outside of the classroom.

Building students' leadership capacities is a highly complex enterprise. Yet the findings for this research illustrate that college students can implement the strategies found in the SCM regardless of age or gender and that females seem to resonate more with the tenets of the SCM. Therefore leadership programs should consider adopting similar teaching models as it offers an effective approach to leadership education. The SCM model, the imbedded philosophy, and related pedagogy can be adopted for use at other colleges and universities for either academic or co-curricular leadership experiences.

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