BUILDING THE LEADERS OF THE FUTURE: A COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE ON COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

by

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ABSTRACT

VANESSA DE JESUS CESAR BEZERRA ALONSO. Building the Leaders of the
Future: A Communication Perspective on Student Leadership Programs.
(Under the direction of Dr. LORIL GOSSETT)

While leadership communication has been the focus of interest for communication

scholars in the last 20 years, no work has been done to understand the

conceptualizations of leadership and its implications for the communication

discipline in the higher education setting. With an interpretive lens and drawing

upon post-positivist and social constructionist approaches to leadership, this study

uses constant comparative analysis of interviews with instructors of college

student leadership programs and documents to promote new insights into the

ways in which communication theory can contribute to the interdisciplinary study

of leadership training and development. Key findings of this work include the

view of leadership as having voice, achieving common goals or creating positive

transformation. This study also found that both the motives for the existence of

leadership programs and its target populations influence not only the

understandings of leadership, but also communication, which is viewed as not

important, as simply public speaking or a set of soft skills.

DEDICATION

First and foremost, this accomplishment is dedicated to my family. To my parents, Hanilda Alonso e Jorge Otavio Alonso: your endless efforts to provide me with the best education opportunities will be forever appreciated. While it should be a guaranteed right for every person, attending graduate school is a privilege that a few Latin women from the global south have access to. To my sister Veronica: your determination and incentive were fundamental for me not only to start, but specially being able to conclude this milestone. For my brother Tavinho: your example of authenticity and simplicity inspires me every single day.

To the main supporter of this long-awaited project, my partner Rodrigo: your daily pills of encouragement, love and understanding will be forever remembered.

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Finally, thank you to Miki Kashtan, Davide Nuzzolo and the whole Non Violent Global Liberation Community for continuously challenging me and showing me that it is possible to envision and co-create a world that works for all.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Personal Experience

I believe I was gifted with leadership, so that's why I am often involved in

activism and also different volunteering initiatives. So I know I will enjoy

this position.

The words above were spoken by an undergraduate student during an

interview for an internship opportunity in the Department of Leadership and

Community Engagement of an American university. During graduate school, I

had the opportunity to work in this department for two years, where I was

responsible for promoting volunteering opportunities for students. I also assisted

with hiring and mentoring undergraduate interns on planning and executing

various volunteering events that could potentially engage other students.

Additionally, I worked for a year as a Teaching Assistant in one program focused

on civic engagement leadership. As a result of these different activities, I had the

opportunity to learn about and participate in several different programs dedicated

to student leadership development. In some occasions, I heard leadership

described as a gift that people are born with. I wondered if the instructors of

student leadership programs on campus also defined leadership as a set of traits

that some people were simply blessed with, while others were not.

Due to my communication background, I also noticed that several of the

leadership programs offered to students on campus included specific

communication components in their curricula (e.g., developing your elevator

pitch, creating impactful presentations). A few programs even required students to

take leadership communication classes for academic credit, taught in the Communication Studies Department. As a result of these experiences, I was curious to understand the scope of the leadership development programs offered on campus and what role communication studies played in these various organizations.

Rationale

My personal experience and academic curiosity resonate with current issues in leadership and communication research. While the leadership literature presents several definitions, conceptual dichotomies and dualisms (Collinson, 2014; Fairhurst, 2001; Fairhurst, 2007; Gronn, 2002), communication scholars argue that the manner in which one conceptualize leadership has implications regarding the way one approaches and understand communication (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2018). With a higher education institution as the research setting, I utilized a social constructionist framework to leadership (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn & Ganesh, 2004; Fairhurst & Barge, 2008; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Mumby 2013) to explore how leadership is conceptualized in student leadership programs and what implications these conceptualizations might have for the communication discipline.

Higher education is a particularly important setting for examining how leadership is conceptualized. Since the early 1990s, there has been increasing interest in developing leadership programs for college students, including higher investments of time, money, and human resources (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Southwell & Morgan, 2009). A study coordinated by the *Center for Creative*

Leadership, found that at least 700 college leadership programs existed across the country (Freeman, Knott & Schwartz, 1996). By 2011, the number of student leadership programs on American college campuses had grown to more than 1,000 (Guthrie, Teig, & Hu, 2018). This continued growth necessitates leadership educators and scholars to understand the outlook of leadership-identified academic programs within the United States…Researchers need a clear picture of how many and what kind of leadership programs exist to fully understand the state of academic leadership programs in higher education today (Guthrie, Teig & Hu, 2018, p. 4). Within the current literature, there is a gap in the research about the conceptualization of leadership initiatives in student-focused programs (Knight, 2014; Schroder, 2018; Westover, 2016), especially due to the fact that the effectiveness of the initiatives is often the priority (Bayer, 2012; Cress et al., 2011; Dungan & Komives 2007; Dungan et al. 2011).   Additionally, within the communication discipline, there is a call from leadership researchers to extend the implications of communication theory to practice (Fairhurst, 2007). Scholars in other disciplines have also recognized the importance of integrating communication research more fully into leadership development programs. A recent report from the interdisciplinary *Leadership Learning Research Center* argued:

[A] critical element of successful leadership entails capacity and acumen in communication skills...[ranging] from topics in business communication, strategic communication, interpersonal communication, global and multicultural

communication, and communication and leadership. (Guthrie, Teig, & Hu, 2018, p. 10)

This study aims to contribute by providing new insights into the ways in which communication theory can contribute to the interdisciplinary study of leadership training and development. A qualitative approach was the method chosen due to its potential to "let us understand how people see the world" (Davis, Powell & Lachlan, 2013, p. 320). Using an interpretive approach, I interviewed eight instructors of college student leadership development programs in a higher education institution in the southern United States. These voices are important due to the fact that recent studies of student leadership development in higher education consider the discourses of students and business leaders regarding the conceptualization of leadership (Knight, 2014; Schroder, 2018; Westover, 2016), but often fail to include the perspective of the instructors teaching these programs.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides the rationale for conducting this research project. Chapter two summarizes the previous literature related to the intersection of communication and leadership. In the third chapter, I explain the research design for this project, data collection methods, process of data analysis, and review ethical considerations. In chapter four, I discuss the main findings of this study and relate these back to the research questions. Finally, in chapter five, I discuss the implications of this study for both theory and practice. I conclude with a review of this study's limitations and provide several recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Relevant research and literature about the intersection of leadership and communication theories are reviewed in this chapter. Multiple approaches to leadership over the years are explored, in an effort to consider the influence communication has had on the study and practice of leadership. Lastly, I'll provide a brief overview of student leadership development in higher education. Thus, this chapter is divided into five sections: (1) The Complexity of Leadership Studies, (2) Post-Positivist Approaches to Leadership (3) Limitations of Post-Positivist Approaches to Leadership, (4) Communicative and Social Constructionist Approaches Leadership and (5) Student Leadership Development in Higher Education.

The Complexity of Leadership Studies

This section illustrates how different perspectives and theories on leadership have emerged during different milestones in history. Although the Art of War (Sun Tzu) and The Prince (Machiavelli) are considered classics books about leadership, the rise of leadership studies is attributed to the growth of industrial societies in the modern era (Grint, 2011). In his attempt to explain the history of leadership studies, Grint (2011) suggests that different perspectives on leadership vary according to the "Zeitgeist of the day" (p. 12), that is, the political moment of the time. Different milestones in history such as industrialization, war, and economic depression can gave rise to different assumptions of leadership. Additionally, Grint (2011) argues that there may not be a clear theme or pattern defining the evolution of leadership studies, since it is very likely that any identified patterns

are a result of one's own culture and assumptions (Grint, 2011). According to

Timothy (2014), "the extensiveness to which leadership could be defined is

connected to the breadth of disciplines, situations, and contexts it could be

applied" (p. 9). In their book chapter called *The Confusion about Leadership*,

Cheney and colleagues (2004) enumerate six reasons why it is difficult to form

precise definitions or conclusions about the nature of leadership.

1. First, there is confusion between the concepts of *leadership* (which is usually

    defined as a process) and *leader* (a person, anyone in a position of authority).

2. Second, there is also confusion between the terms *leadership* (often described as a

    positive elevated term) and *management* (often describe as random business

    activity).

3. Third, there is a temptation to describe only successful actions as leadership.

4. Fourth, the fact that very different phenomena (from a child *leading* a group of

    girls to play a game, to a supervisor *leading* a small workgroup, or a CEO *leading*

    a multinational company) are described as *leadership* brings varying levels of

    analysis to this process.

5. Fifth, research on leadership styles are often conducted by studying one specific

    group of participants and then generalized to entirely different populations.

6. Sixth, the tension between leadership scholarly research and its strong

    commercialization potential promotes the creation of popular management books

These "one-minute methods" do not contribute to clarifying the leadership phenomena,

due to its oversimplification (Cheney et al., 2004). In sum, "leadership is difficult

to define for several reasons beyond the fact that language and meanings are

inherently ambiguous, slippery, an evolving" (Cheney et al., 2004, p. 182).

Therefore, not surprisingly, different perspectives about leadership have given

room to the creation of numerous theories and definitions over the years.

Post-Positivist Approaches to Leadership

This section includes a summary of selected psychological traditional and

contemporary approaches to leadership. These post-positivist approaches

primarily focus on individual and cognitive aspects of leadership. Fairhurst and

Connaughton (2014) highlight the importance of examining post-positivist

approaches to leadership. These approaches are also classified as psychological

perspectives (Bryman, Collinson, Grint, Jackson & Uhl-Bien, 2011), and focus

upon individual characteristics that predict leadership and usually view leaders as

individuals who have formal authority and the ability to influence subordinates

(Mumby, 2014). Within this body of literature, when communication is addressed,

the model adopted in simplistic, with communication conceived as the

transmission of information between leaders and subordinates (Mumby, 2014).

According to Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014), these approaches are often

concerned with leader-follower communication effectiveness and leadership style.

Leadership as Traits

With the turn of the twentieth century, social scientists defined leaders as

individuals (mainly male) with particular qualities and characteristics that

differentiated them from non-leaders (Zaccaro, Kemp & Bader, 2004).

 Researchers believed that the best leader would be someone who was born with

certain physical and psychological characteristics that would determine one's

leadership potential (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). The importance of cognitive abilities, personality traits, motivation, social appraisal and problem-solving skills for leadership outcomes remain alive in recent leadership research (Hackman & Johnson, 2013; Zaccaro, Kemp & Bader, 2004).

Leadership as Behaviors or Styles

In the spotlight from 1940s to 1960s, the style or behavioral approach (sometimes called the functional approach) to leadership went beyond the trait theory of leadership. Interest moved from "what leaders are to what leaders do" (Clifton, 2012, p.149). Researchers working in this tradition argued that leaders could be defined by a set of behaviors rather than simply a set of innate characteristics. Specific behaviors differentiate leaders from non-leaders. This behavioral approach to the study of leadership was important because it implied that leaders could be developed through education and training (Robbins & Judge, 2018).

Leadership as Contingency and Situational

From the early trait and styles leadership theories, leadership researchers moved to a "leader situationism model" (Zaccaro, Kemp & Bader, 2004). This approach suggests that "different situations call for different styles of leadership" (Hackman & Johnson, 2013, p. 84). This means that traits and styles are important but only in the context of a specific circumstance, that is, not all of them are important for all situations.

Leadership as an Exchange between Leaders and Followers

The relationship-based approach to leadership focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers rather than their characteristics (traits and

situational approaches) or behaviors (functional approach) (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). This perspective presents a shift away from studying leadership purely through an individual lens. Researchers working in this tradition consider relationship development central to the process of establishing and maintaining leadership. Within this approach, the Vertical Dyad linkage model (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975) and later the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982) found that leaders behave differently according to the quality of relationships they develop with their followers. In this sense, leadership would be the capacity to establish partnerships with followers (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). A partnership is described as the strongest phase of relationship maturity between leaders and followers, which increases performance and satisfaction (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Leadership as Transformation and Charisma

First coined by James MacGregor Burns (1978), the concept of transformational leadership became popular in the 1980s (Bryman, 1992; Conger & Kanugo, 1998). This approach differentiated leadership from management. It argued that managerial, supervisory and administrative functions focus on short-term, day-to-day operations with the intention to maintain the status quo. In contrast, leadership requires long-term objectives designed to create change (Conger & Kanugo, 1998). In this context, "the essential characteristics of leadership become (1) challenging the status quo, (2) engaging in creative visioning for the future of the organization, (3), promoting appropriate changes in followers' values, attitudes and behaviors, using empowering strategies and tactics" (Conger &

Kanugo, 1998, p. 8). This approach also draws on the concept of charisma to explain why some leaders are able to create change and challenge the status quo. Hackman and Johnson (2013) explain, "charisma is the product of communication" (p. 125). They argue there are four core functions of communication in which charismatic leaders excel: (1) relationship building, (2) impression management, (3) visioning, and (4) influencing. Although charismatic and transformational leadership may share some common concepts, the transformational leader is more group-centered, appealing to values and needs of her/his followers and empowering them to make change. In contrast, studies of charismatic leaders focus primarily on the unique characteristics of the leader and his/her ability to direct (rather than empower) followers (Hackman & Johnson, 2013).

Followership

While most post-positivist studies focus primarily on the leader, there is a body of researchers in this tradition who study the role of followers in the leadership literature (Bligh, 2014; Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe & Cartsen, 2014). The essence of followership seems simple to understand: there are no leaders without followers, because "if leadership involves actively influencing others, then followership involves allowing oneself to be influenced" (Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007, p. 196). In a recent review of followership literature, Uhl-Bien and colleagues (2014) identified two theoretical frameworks for this approach: (1) a role based perspective on followership, that is, a follower centric view of leadership, and (2) a constructionist approach that views followership as a social

process. The former creates an image of followers as individuals who possess a passive and powerless role in a hierarchical context and therefore "romanticizes leadership and subordinates followership" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 89). The latter examines how leaders and followers together co-create leadership. This perspective highlights the importance of follower roles and behaviors in the leadership process, distributes responsibility for leadership construction and outcomes to all participants, reinforces the importance of context in the leadership process, and also highlights a gap in the current post-positivist leadership literature (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Limitations of Post-Positivist Approaches to Leadership

As explained above, post-positivistic approaches to leadership focus upon the unique characteristics, behaviors, and relationships of leaders. It tends to view leaders as individuals who possess formal authority, who act on behalf of some organization, to influence others to achieve specific outcomes. Mumby (2014) argues that this body of research fails to consider followers as active partners in the leadership process and therefore represents "some of the more boring, tedious approaches to leadership" (p. 262). As noted above, some post-positivistic research examines the role of followers in the leadership process; these studies primarily focus on the psychological aspects of leadership and give very limited attention to communication issues, such as language use and organizational discourse.

The communicative nature of leadership is "an extremely useful and often underutilized lens for investigating leadership dynamics" (Ruben & Gigliotti,

2016). According to Ruben & Gigliotti (2016), post-positivistic approaches to leadership have traditionally focused on a formal leader and particular communication tools these individuals have used to influence others. However, such approaches "unfortunately contribute to a romanticized view of leadership influence, and will often lead to disappointing outcomes for practitioners who uncritically and narrowly embrace narrow views of human communication" (Ruben & Gigliotti, 2016, p. 469)

Communication Approaches to Leadership

This section discusses leadership research within the communication discipline and explains how it advances the concept of leadership as a socially constructed process. It emphasizes how communication is inseparable to the development of leadership. Within the communication studies discipline, scholars have been challenging the largely psychological approach to leadership discussed above. One of the primary researchers in this area is Dr. Gail Fairhurst. Over the past 20 years, she and her colleagues have developed a distinctly communicative approach to conceptualizing the nature of leadership. (Fairhurst, 2001; Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014, Tourish, 2014). This social constructionist approach to research connects the study of leadership to changing conditions in the world (e.g., globalization, technological advancement). It embraces a complex, irrational and continuously changing view of organizing and influence (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Trethewey & Aschcraft, 2004). This approach argues that the process of communication is central to leadership and not simply a set of skills or tools people in authority use to achieve their goals. (Fairhurst &

Counnaghton, 2014; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Mumby, 2014; Tourish, 2014).

Scholars working in this tradition reject the post-heroic view of leadership,

embedded in individualist and cognitive leadership theories. Instead leadership is

defined as a process that can be distributed throughout a group or organization. A

communication approach to leadership is neither leader-centric nor follower-

centric because, "there is no essence of leadership to be discovered" (Mumby,

2014, p. 271). In this context, the process of communication (interaction patters,

language use, non-verbal performances, etc.) are fundamental to the definitional

and conceptualization of leadership (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). Fairhurst

and Connaughton (2014) suggest a communication approach to leadership would

prioritize social over cognitive factors. They argue:

1. Leadership communication is transmissional and meaning-centered;

2. Leadership (communication) is relational, neither leader-centric nor follower-

centric;

3. Influential acts of organizing are the medium and outcome of leadership

communication;

4. Leadership communication is inherently power-based, a site of contestation

about the nature of leadership;

5. Leadership (communication) is a diverse, global phenomenon;

6. Leadership communication is alive with the potential for reflexivity, moral

accountability and change.

Discursive Leadership

Building off the social construction approach discussed above, Fairhurst (2007) coined the term Discursive Leadership to represent a distinct set of epistemological and ontological assumptions defining a communication approach to the study of leadership. By providing a clear definition for the discursive approach to leadership, Fairhurst provided a clear contrast to psychological approaches to leadership research. She explained, "I call it discursive leadership because of its focus on organizational discourse, both as language use in social interaction and the view of Discourse made popular by Foucault" (Fairhurst, 2007, p. ix). Fairhurst (2007) argued that this distinction was necessary because even leadership psychologist consider leader-member dyads, groups, or entire organizations, they focus on the perceptions and judgments of individuals within these ontological units. A psychological approach to leadership focuses on cognitive, rather than social and cultural processes. As a result, these studies tend to dismiss issues such as subjectivity, member identities, linguistic repertoires, relationship dynamics, and culture. Discursive approaches to leadership focus on "language in use, interaction process, and/or discursive formations" (Fairhurst, 2007, p. 9).

In sum, she establishes six differences between psychological and discursive approaches to leadership. She argues that Psychological approaches to leadership focus on "mental theater", thin actors and essences, exaggerated agency, dualistic conceptions of power and influence, variable analytic traditions, and communication as secondary (Fairhurst, 2007). In contrast, discursive approaches to leadership focus on discourse, decentered subjects, reflexive

agency, encompassing notions of power and influence, contextual variables, and view communication as primary (Fairhurst, 2007).

Resistance Leadership

Taking a critical communication perspective, Zoller and Fairhurst (2008) have also challenged the view of leadership as embodied in one individual who has exaggerated agency and is responsible for managing dissent. In this perspective, any resistance of leadership is seen as a problem. However, by considering leadership as a process rather than a managerial role, these scholars argue that resistance is a form of leadership accessible to all organizational members. Scholars working in this tradition view leadership as a political act that can be decoupled from formal management positions. In this sense, leadership actors can enact resistance to the degree that they have access to or develop sources of power that "is often linked to access to formal power, or critical resources, which include information, money, reward power, and expertise" (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2007, p. 1346). Tourish (2018) agrees with the notion that power and agency are widely dispersed among organizational members, rather than concentrated in the hands of formal leaders. He defines leadership as a "communicative process that produces leader-follower categories, identities and relationships" (p. 80).

In recent work about the intersection between communication and leadership, Ruben and Gigliotti (2016), define leadership as social influence, emphasizing the importance not only of intentional verbal efforts used by a leader, but also the idea that influence dynamics happen in unplanned and

accidental ways, in verbal and nonverbal activities, through formal and informal role-based behaviors. Ruben and Gigliotti (2016) reject the emphasis on "leader-as-source-of-influence" (p. 477), along with the notion that influence is a consequence of planned and formal leadership activity.

Student Leadership in Higher Education

Due to the nature of this study's research site, it is also important to provide a brief overview of leadership development within Higher Education settings, In the 1990s, a group of higher education scholars began to review student leadership programs in American universities. (Astin, 1996; Astin & Astin, 2000; Heri, 1996). The intention was to change the traditional assumption that a "student leader" is one who occupies a formal hierarchical position in organizations or is visible on campus due to some individual achievement, such as athletes (Astin, 2001). Concerned that traditional paradigms of leadership were mainly positional rather than relational, they developed the Social Change Model of Leadership (SCM) (Heri, 1996; Komives, Wendy & Associates, 2017). This approach consists of the "Seven Cs" of leadership and divides the concept into individual values (Consciousness of Self, Congruence, and Commitment), group values (Collaboration, Common Purpose, and Controversy with Civility) and society values (Citizenship) (Komives, Wendy & Associates, 2017). The model is based on a set of foundational premises:

1. Leadership is concerned with effecting change on behalf of others and society.

2. Leadership is collaborative.

3. Leadership is a process rather than a position.

4. Leadership should be value-based.

5. All students (not just those who hold formal leadership positions) are potential leaders.

6. Service is a powerful vehicle for developing students' leadership skills.

While SCM was developed for specific use with undergraduate students (Komives et al., 2009), it is not clear that higher educational institutions have embraced or applied this approach when developing campus student leadership programs (Bayer, M., 2012; Knight, 2011). "There are a plethora of philosophies and frameworks for teaching leadership" (Komives et al, 2001, p. xvi). More recently, these efforts were reinforced by studies that show that leadership is a learnable capacity (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 2001; Dungan et al., 2011) and that intentional student leadership programs result in positive educational gains (Cres et. al, 2001; Dungan et al. 2011). As a result, colleges have been increasingly interested in developing leadership training and development programs in the last decades.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

This study's aims are to contribute to the literature about student leadership development and its relationship to communication studies. Drawing on a social constructionist framework (Berger & Luckman, 1966), this study examined how the directors of college leadership programs defined the nature of leadership and communication through their discourse and interactions. According to Fairhurst & Grant, 2010) social constructionist approaches to leadership view it as a co-constructed reality, made possible via communicative practices such as talk and discourse (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Drawing upon this approach, I propose the following research questions:

RQ1. How is *leadership* defined in students leadership development programs on campus?

RQ2. How is *communication* defined in these programs?

Research Methodology and Design

This study used several qualitative methods to examine how instructors of leadership programs define leadership and the implications of those meanings for the role communication plays in these programs. Bryman (2004) explains, "qualitative research on leadership has been particularly likely to emphasize the importance and significance of the leader as a manager of meaning who actively manipulates symbols in order to instill a vision, manage change, and achieve support for his or her direction" (p. 724). Since leadership has a "symbolic and subjective" component (Conger, 1998, p. 110), using qualitative methods is important to capture information that could not be gathered with other methods. Qualitative interviews are the most frequent data collection method used in

qualitative studies of leadership, followed by the analysis of documents and participant observation (Bryman, 2004).

Research site

My research was conducted with instructors (faculty or staff members) of leadership programs at a university in the southeastern United States. This institution's population consists of approximately 29,000 students and 3,400 faculty and staff members. Its mission is to offer internationally competitive academic programs, while focused on community engagement initiatives. According to the institution's website, the university was founded in the 1940s, immediately after World War II to serve returning veterans in response to rising education demands generated by the war and its technologies.

Defining Participants

To be eligible for this study, participants needed to be instructors of either (1) formal student leadership programs or (2) leadership experiences. Haber (2011) defined formal leadership programs as "an intentional collection of leadership experiences that are integrated into an overall experience designed with the purpose of developing or enhancing leadership skills, knowledge and capacity" (p.232). He defined leadership experiences as specific courses or retreats that "when combined with other experiences comprise the various dimensions of a formal leadership program, but may also serve as stand-alone experiences unattached to a greater whole" (Haber, 2011, p.232).

In order to have a more comprehensive view of the leadership programs offered on campus, I performed a brief search on the university's website using

the terms "student leadership". The result showed 287 entries, from which I found 10 instructors of formal student leadership programs and individual leadership experiences, responsible for a total of 18 programs (one participant was often responsible for more than one program) on the main campus. I also engaged in snowball sampling to identify eligible participants and leadership programs on campus. I asked my interview participants to identify other instructors or programs fit the criteria for the study. Through this process, I ended up with a list of 12 instructors, representing 22 programs on campus. All 12 instructors were contacted by email and invited to participate in a one hour interview.

About the participants

Of the 12 participants contacted, interviews were conducted with eight (See Appendix A), who were responsible for 16 programs on campus (See Appendix B). All participants were either Assistant or Associate directors for the programs discussed in the interviews. Five participants were female and three were male. The majority of them (seven) had been in the position for 2-7 years, while only one had held the same position for more than 20 years. Six of the participants were between 30 and 45 years old, while the remaining two were over 60 years old. All participants had completed a Bachelor's Degree, all but one had a Master's degree, and one held Ph.D.

Half of the participants (*n*=4) were only responsible for one program each. Two were in charge of two different programs, and two participants were responsible for three or more programs on campus. In total, the 16 programs discussed in this study served approximately 900 students each year. The majority

of the programs (*n*=10) were hosted within the University's Division of Student

Affairs, while others were located in the University's Academic Affairs Office

(*n*=4), within a specific Academic College (*n*=1) or were formed through a

partnership between the Academic and Student Affairs Offices (*n*=1). The

majority of the programs (*n*=12) were completely extracurricular and did not offer

academic credit to student participants. The other four programs required students

to complete a curricular (academic credit) component. The length of the programs

varied from one day to four years. In terms of audience, all but four programs

targeted specific segments of the student population. Five programs focused on

underrepresented minorities on campus (two programs for female-identified

students, two for underrepresented minorities, and one for African-American

males). Three programs were restricted to first-year students. The other four

programs focused respectively on senior, non-first year students, or students

within a specific college (See Appendix C).

Data Collection

For this study, I used two primary methods of data collection: (1) In-depth,

semi-structured interviews with program directors and (2) the collection of

official program documents (syllabi, promotional literature, websites, etc). The in-

depth nature of the interviews allowed for participants to explain their own

definitions of leadership and allowed them to "provide accounts- or rationales,

explanations and justifications for their actions and opinions" (Tracy, 2013, p.

132). The semi-structured design promoted flexibility and organic discussion

(Tracy, 2013). After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, the following steps were used to gather data:

1. Invitation email: All eligible interview participants received an email to their professional university-account containing an invitation to participate in the study. This message included the purpose of the research and the time commitment related to their participation. Each person had the option to confirm participation by choosing a time on a Doodle Poll or replying the invitation with a preferred time.

2. Follow up Invitations: Any potential interview participants who failed to respond to the initial email invitation were contact a week later through alternative communication channels (phone call to office number or personal invitation to shared contact) and issued an additional invitation to participate in the study.

3. Interview Confirmation: All those who indicated a willingness to participate were sent a confirmation email with the date, time and location for the one-hour interview. All interviews took place in a location of the participants' choice (their office or the library on the main campus). The email also included the consent form and a request to provide printed or digital materials about the program to complement interviews. All interviews were audio recorded and consent forms were signed prior to the beginning of the interviews.

The eight interviews resulted in a total of 278 minutes of audio recordings (approximately 4 hours and 40 minutes). The interviews ranged in length from 27 minutes to one hour and seven minutes. The interview guide used in this study

asked for some demographic information about the participants (education, time in position, etc), followed by a series of open-ended questions. The open-ended aspect of the interview was divided into three parts: participants' beliefs about leadership (e.g., How do you define leadership), the design and goals on their different programs (e.g., What are the results you expect from the program) and the role of communication within their programs (e.g.,To what extent is communication important for this program?). (See Appendix C).

As noted above, participants were asked in the invitation email to provide any printed documents or other material felt sharing about their programs such as brochures, syllabi or any other official written materials produced by the programs with the intention to disseminate information. All but one program in this study hosted a publically available website that served as an additional source of information. According to Hodder (2003), the analysis of texts (also called material culture) allows you "to understand the perspectives of others and to pay attention to your own understandings of and experiences with those same texts; and because texts endure and give historical insight and social context" (as cited in Davis, 2013, p. 369). All eight participants voluntarily provided additional printed or digital materials about their programs. Participants provided copies of their syllabi from the curricular components of their programs. For the programs that did not have a curricular component, participants provided brochures or manuals containing public information about their programs. These documents, combined with printed screen shots from 15 programs websites resulted in 232 pages of documents for analysis. Finally, my own experiences working in a

campus-based leadership program and as an overt observer of another program also helped to inform my research questions and the development of the interview guide used in this study.

Data Analysis

The interview audio files were transcribed within a week and resulted in 89 single-spaced pages of data for analysis. Following the transcription, materials were loaded to NVIVO software for coding and analysis. The software made it easier to maintain a consistent and rigorous coding process as new themes emerged and concepts were refined. I utilized a version the constant comparative method to conduct systematic inductive analysis of data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The coding process followed the two-step process described by Tracy (2013): primary-cycle coding and secondary-cycle coding. During the primary-cycle or "data immersion phase" (Tracy, p. 188), the data were analyzed through open coding in order to identify descriptive basic activities present in the data. Drawing upon the three-part design of the interview guide, the interview data were first examined to identify common themes, similarities, or differences related to the participants' conceptualizations of leadership, program goals and design, and approach to communication. Through this coding process, the researcher continues ask the question "what is happening here?" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This primary-cycle of coding involved several readings through the data to promote deep understanding and notice meaningful themes. These open codes revealed themes such as influence, self-confidence, self-awareness, communication skills, retention, employability and social change.

A secondary-cycle of coding followed to "organize, synthesize and categorize them into interpretive concepts" (Tracy, 2013, p. 194) to identify patterns in the data. With sensitizing concepts (Charmaz, 1996) from the literature review in mind hierarchical codes were created to categorize data (Tracy, 2013). This process resulted in three core parent nodes: leadership motives, view of leadership and view of communication. Other nineteen child notes were also created to help further understand and organize data (See codebook on Appendix D).

As a last step in the data analysis process, I examined the materials provided by participants and collected from the programs' websites. I compared the syllabi, brochures and other documents with participants' responses in the interviews, as a form of *source triangulation* (Denzin, 1978) to ensure credibility. As I went through this process, it became clear that materials were aligned with the themes emergent from the interviews. For example, when participants mentioned the importance of self-awareness in the interviews, I could find in the syllabi of their courses that they offered personality assessments for students. The primary themes presented in the findings section on this study reflect both interviews and documents. Finally, I also shared the preliminary findings with three faculty members who have expertise in the area of communication and leadership research. These conversations helped to refine my understandings of the data and enriched the analysis presented in this study.

The participants in this study were informed and reminded that contribution to this study was voluntary. They were also made aware that the

findings of this study would be made public, with the goal to improve the quality of leadership education provided by higher education institutions. However, all efforts were made to protect identities of participants and maintain their confidentiality. Participants names were removed from transcriptions and pseudonyms were assigned to them and to their respective programs. Additionally, I conducted all interviews, completed the transcriptions, and am the only person with access to the signed consent forms. Audio files were deleted from recording devices and all documents related to this study have been stored on a secure network, only accessible with a password.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This study sought to understand how instructors of leadership development programs for college students conceptualize leadership and what implications this might have for the communication discipline. To answer these questions, the results of this study is divided into two sections: (1) View of Leadership and (2) View of Communication.

View of Leadership

As mentioned in the section above, conceptualizations of leadership within the programs varied based on their primary motives, with some overlaps between the categories. Therefore, to answer the first research question of this study, with respect to the participants' conceptualization of leadership, three key themes emerged in the data:

1. Leadership is having voice
2. Leadership is creating positive change
3. Leadership is achieving goals

Leadership is Having Voice

The importance of self-confidence for leadership was a theme predominant in programs focused on first year students and under-represented minorities ($n = 7$). Mariah, responsible for a program focused on female-identified students, explains it:

Research that has been done shows that women leave college with less confidence than they came in with. And so that's... that's a big deal, you know, so we started the

She Leadership program really to increase the confidence of the women in the program. And to help them identify strategies for being confident, and overcoming challenges. *(Mariah/ She Leadership)*

According to participants, if students possess the quality of self-confidence, they will be able to voice their opinions, as Tracy explain:

With our model we were thinking that you come in, you start to understand the program, and then as you gain confidence in the material, as gain confidence, as you gain trust, you are given a more autonomy in the program. Look, nobody is going to make you director of anything necessarily, but you would start to contribute to that program… that form of leadership, right? That form of leadership, starting to say "oh, I have some ideas about this", or "from my perspective…", "what if we did this?"… as so developing that kind of initiative as one way of contributing to your organization, but them we saw them as leaders on campus, by being able to speak about the issues that they were learning about, right? (*Tracy / Best Leaders*)

The model used by She Leadership Program to increase empowerment and voice is by invitation of women as guest speakers, so they can act as role models for students:

We bring in guest leaders, so women in the community, whether it is on campus or people in the greater community to tell their stories. And that is really what we want them to do: tell their stories and what are some things that have happened in your life, some challenges you have had, how did you make decision to have children, do not have children, relocate for a job, deal with a family situation that has been rough...So we've had, you know, all kinds of women tell their personal stories, and their workplace stories. (*Mariah / She Leadership*)

Along with self-confidence, the idea that one cannot be a leader without having a strong

sense of who he/she is as an individual also emerged in the data of all programs

focused on first year students. For example, one program (Leadership

Community) requires students to complete the StrengthsQuest personal

assessment survey as part of graded class assignment. As explained in the

program's syllabus:

Strengthsquest Assignment

Complete the Strengths assessment and bring the results to the class. A code for the

Strengths assessment (completed online) will be provided to each person in the

course overview. Write a 2-3 page reflection paper on your strengths (from the

completed assessment). In this paper, please reflect on your top 5 strengths and

how you see these strengths within your life and leadership ability or if you do not

agree with a strength why you do not believe it is reflective of your leadership

style. *(Leadership Community / Course Syllabus)*

Interview participants explained that self-awareness helps to boost self-confidence for

students. By knowing who they are, hopefully students will be able to speak their

truth and feel empowered to act:

It is central making sure our students have the awareness of who they are, how they learn

what their values are, what their ethics are and then I think making them get there

is a bigger picture how your actions impact both you or a larger community. And

that they hopefully feel empowered to go and make a difference based on this.

(*Matthew / Multiple programs)*

Retention and graduation. This study found that by promoting self-confidence and self-awareness among first year students and underrepresented minorities, many of the programs in this study hoped to increase retention and graduation rates for these students in the university ($n = 7$). While participants that work with both of these target populations attested the importance of these experiences to help students stay in the university, the way they do it differ. For first year students ($n=2$), the idea is to ensure students don't quit college by engaging them in a cohort-based experience where they receive social support and get to know resources on campus to help them feel acclimated. As the website of the New Leaders Program attests:

New Leader provides leadership training and mentorship to approximately 60 freshmen. The purpose of the program is to maximize the ability of these individuals to succeed and contribute to the university as student leaders in the coming years. (*New Leaders / Website*)

As it is possible to see in the text, the ability of the students to succeed comes first than the leadership development. By succeeding in their first years, students will then be able to contribute to the university as leaders. Matthew, responsible for the Leadership Community, also focused in first year students provides a detailed explanation:

The program has a goal of just indoctrinating the students into our campus community and making sure that they feel supported. But then, also, I think it is like the idea of how do we set them for success after their first year, in a way that they hopefully be involved on campus, they are taking on leadership opportunities on campus, that they are going out. So a lot of that, I think, it is us trying to make

sure they are aware of all the different opportunities and bringing in campus folks.

(Mathew / Leadership Community)

The idea of "campus folks" mentioned by Matthews is also present in the VIP Mentors

Program's brochure, including all resources they offer for first year

underrepresented students, such as library, counseling and psychological

services, disabilities services, financial aid, Greek life, center for wellness

promotion, multicultural resources center, writing and speaking center, among

others.

Besides the importance being aware of campus resources, the importance of social

support in the first year is emphasized on the Leadership Community website:

Being part of this community of leaders and learners establishes a more positive

academic and social experience from the start. It helps you integrate into the

larger university, and allows you to make friends and connections easily and

quickly. Even if you never considered yourself a leader – and maybe especially so

– the Leadership Community has much to offer you. *(Leadership Community /*

Website)

The intention to create programs to improve retention and graduation rates for first year

students and underrepresented students as its primary goals is also highlighted by

Mariah, below:

I think it is very intentional what we are trying to do. You know, these programs are

retention tools, in addition to the fact that we're building leadership skills. They

feel like they belong, so they stay. So I think that's why we are spending the time

on the social pieces with them. *(Mariah / She Leadership)*

While the main focus of programs for first year students (*n=2*) is to improve retention

rates via social support and campus involvement, for underrepresented minorities

(*n=5*), an additional component is included in the leadership curriculum:

academic support. Stephen, responsible for more than one program focused on

this population explains that academic success is more important than leadership:

Our programs focus first and foremost in the academics. Everything else is great:

leadership stuff, personal stuff, service. All this stuff is great, but the number one

priority is academics. Getting those students used the college level courses,

making sure they get out of the program between 3.5 and 4.0 GPA. *(Stephen /*

Multiple Programs)

Students that participate in the Better Friends program, targeted for underrepresented

male-identified students, receive what they call "academic advisement and

enrichment":

Better Friends participants will meet with an academic advisor once each semester (mid-

term) either in a one-on-one or group session. A one-on-one session will be

required for participants who are struggling academically (mid-term deficiencies,

low cumulative GPAs, etc.). This Academic Check must be completed before

registration for the next term; a hold will be placed on student's account that will

prevent registration. *(Better Friends / Website)*

In sum, seven out of 16 programs in this study presented a view of

leadership as having voice, which emphasizes self-awareness and self-confidence

as important qualities for leaders to possess. The instructors and programs

embracing this perspective primarily worked with *at risk* students and argued that

self-confidence was especially important for first year students and under-represented minorities on campus, because it helped with the retention and graduation rates for these populations. Additional examination of the data revealed that none of the nine other leadership programs in this study (programs for advanced students or not restricted to marginalized communities) emphasized the importance of "voice" for leadership. The "having a voice" leadership programs seem to assume that their participants lacked the confidence or self-awareness necessary to become leaders (or complete college) without additional support. By emphasizing the importance of "voice" as a quality necessary for leadership, these programs reminded their students that they needed to develop and demonstrate these qualities in order to succeed both on and off campus.

While some programs embraced the "having a voice" view of leadership development, other programs emphasized a different view of leadership to their participants. These programs described leadership as having the ability to influence or persuade others. As Nancy puts it:

In regards to my personal definition, I just feel like its influence, because you have to have community around you in order for leadership to happen. Operating alone is not necessarily leadership. (*Nancy/Multiple Programs*)

According to these participants, the ability to influence others is how leaders create positive change and/or achieve goals.

Leadership is Creating Positive Social Change

Through the coding process, a second approach to leadership development programs emerged in the data. Rather than emphasize the importance of fostering

"voice," instructors for these programs argued that leaders needed to learn how to create *positive* change (*n* = 7). One program's website stated that "serving others" was a key learning outcome and noted: **"**good leaders pay attention to the world around them and actively seek opportunities to make positive change. They use their power and authority to benefit others" (*Leadership Academy/Website*). Additionally, the idea of creating positive social change and transformation was also evident in the interview data. Nancy, who is responsible for more than one program on campus explained:

Depending to whom you talk to…society right now, especially, can feel kind of negative,

> corrupt. Can feel like… You can feel hopeless. And I think leadership
>
> development allows us to be a little bit more hopeful, and helping people
>
> understand that, yes, you can make an impact, and it doesn't have to be some
>
> monumental program, or some monumental event or a monumental change. I can
>
> start small and can grow bigger over time. And you may not see that change in
>
> your lifetime but at least you've made an impact. Or you kind of started the
>
> process of whatever that change is going to be. (*Nancy/Multiple Programs*)

In order to encourage students to influence others towards positive change, many of the programs in this study provided students with opportunities for community engagement and service learning. For example, *The Leadership Academy* dedicates the last year of its two-year curriculum to a capstone project in which students work in teams in order to design and implement a community service project. According to the program's website, "upon successful completion of the project, students receive transcript notation for the Leadership Academy" (*Leadership Academy/Website*). Another program (The Best Leaders) described

itself as a "program committed to the belief that students can address critical social issues, providing them with an avenue to positively affect their campuses, the local community, and the world through leadership and excellence in service" (*Best Leaders/Website*). This program also requires students to complete an individual capstone project in community-based research.

I personally experienced this "positive social change" approach to leadership development in my role as a graduate assistant for a student leadership program at the university. I was invited by one of the program instructors to prepare and present a 15-minute lecture about service learning for approximately 60 students in one of the "first- year" student programs. After my lecture, the students would be divided in groups to plan and execute a service learning initiative within the program.

Vision. Unlike the "having a voice" definition, this conceptualization of leadership was not limited to under-represented or at risk student programs, but spread in different programs. However, two of the programs analyzed were created with the primary intention to offer opportunities for students to reflect upon community issues and create an individual action plan for change: Leaderform and Citizen Student. Both programs are open for all students, though Leaderform requires sponsorship from a department or a student organization. The Citizen Student is annual programs were students learn topics such as civic engagement, integrity, compassion, activism and advocacy. The program's purpose is defined on its website:

Through meaningful dialogue and building strengths while focusing on specific values,

students will understand and be better prepared to be stronger campus and

community citizens.*(Citizen Student / Website)*

Similarly, the Leaderform Program's brochure included the statement:

Are you ready to change the world? We believe you can. Within every leader, lies an

extraordinary vision for the future. (*Leaderform/Promotional Brochure*)

As noted above, the discourse and structure of the leadership programs in this study

reinforced the notion that change is an outcome carefully and intentional planned

by a heroic leader who had a vision for a better future. All it required was

individual ill and exposure to community service. Programs in this study

embraced the notion that leaders are particularly powerful agents of positive

change. Similar to the "having a voice" theme, this view of leadership is in an

individual accomplishment, in which followers are absent.

Leadership is Achieving Goals

In addition to creating positive change in others and society, several of the

program directors provided a third perspective of leadership that they felt defined

their programs. These instructors mentioned that leadership entails the ability to

influence others towards specific goals (*n*=7). Daniel, responsible for the

Leadership Academy, explains the importance of leaders being able to get things

done and accomplish tasks:

Leadership to me is the ability to influence by providing the tools and techniques,

capabilities for groups of people to accomplish uncommon goals. Not just goals,

but uncommon goals. (*Daniel / Leadership Academy*)

A statement on the Leadership Academy's program website reinforces this idea:

First and foremost, good leaders focus on goals that have personal, organizational or

community meaning. They know how to plan strategies to achieve their goals and

are quick to take action toward those goals. They take time to evaluate their

progress, which allows them to make adjustments when necessary. Good leaders

also evaluate outcomes to measure success and learn from failure.

The Kayak Leadership Program reinforced this definition of leadership on its

"Competency Checklist." The program has the following expectations of student

leaders: "Demonstrates the ability to plan and implement a program based on the

group's stated objectives and needs" (*Kayak/Checklist*).

Employability. A review of the data revealed that all of the programs that

adopted the view that leadership is about achieving goals were also created to

increase students' employability or promote opportunities for professional

development (*n*=7). These programs offered leadership roles for students within

their activities or aimed to prepare students for future leadership positions. For

example, in the Leadership Folks' website this idea is on the description about the

program:

Promotes, trains, and develops specific skills desired by students interested in leadership

roles. A special training program targeting upper-division students which exposes

aspiring leaders to leadership skills beyond the basics. *(Leadership Folks /*

Website)

Daniel, from the Leadership Academy, explains that although his program is not

positional, he expects students to achieve leadership positions once they graduate:

Every company needs leaders. People that are going to be visionary, people that are going

to be able to set expectations for other folks that are going to put the processes

and procedures in place. They need those. But they don't need all of their

employees to be like that, because every company also needs the employee that is

going to sit there and turn out the work, turn out the work, turn out the work, and

turn out the work. Can you take somebody who's there, sitting out there turning

out the work and make them one of those leaders? It is kind of tough. And so,

what we need to do is to help make sure that our the companies, that are hiring

our graduates are getting some of those people to guide and direct and help those

who just want to crank out the work. *(Daniel/Leadership Academy)*

Daniel explained that his program is fully sponsored by private companies, that all have

representatives in the program's advisory board. He mentioned that these

companies decided to sponsor the Leadership Academy after talking to their own

human resource departments. The companies sponsor the Leadership Academy

as a way to address their own recruitment needs:

We've got multiple students who are at places like [private companies]. We've got

students at [name of the company], we've got students at [name of the company]

on the west coast. The people that hired them tell us part of what caused them to

want hire the student, or even look at them, was because they had our leadership

program on their resume. *(Daniel / Leadership Academy)*

For this reason, the Career Center is often an important partner for some of these

programs. As Mariah, from the Executive Program, explains:

So, for example, I had the director of the Career Center come in, because I thought it was going to be a selling point. You know, that the student was part of this program. And so he and I spent a lot of time talking about what the program would look like. *(Mariah / Executive Leadership)*

Four out of seven programs with this view of "leadership involves achieving goals" were positional, that is, offered roles such as mentors, tutors or chairs of committees for students. In this positions, students work with others to accomplish projects such as trips or events. The Campus Leaders Program is one example. The program trains students in event and marketing management skills, so students can organize an annual even with a famous guest speaker on campus. Executive positions are offered as part of the program, as informed in the website:

The Committee is organized into 2 teams: the Marketing Team and Outreach Team, as well as three executive positions. The Committee decides when it will add new members, and will announce when applications and what positions are open during those times.

However, despite of offering leadership roles as part of their programs, or their intended outcomes, participants emphasized the importance of students in these positions to act as facilitators of group's outcomes. As Kate, from Kayak Leadership explains:

So student leaders… Most of our programs are run by our student leaders, so they will facilitate teambuilding programs, they facilitate our trips. We sometimes have them help on academic classes, but academic classes are mainly for our full time staff. So student leaders, as much as possible, their leadership development is

coming from literally from leading these groups, whether it is in the woods or on

campus. (*Kate/ Kayak Leadership).*

To attract employers attention to students resume, Kate, from Kayak leadership,

recommends students to substitute the word "facilitator" as they use in their

program, to "leader":

I feel like leadership is a buzz word that people see and think "I need that on my resume."

So I think it is appealing in that sense. I think the word leadership right now says

transferable skill. It is what employers want to see. So I think in that sense it is

marketable. Sometimes…. when we do the resume workshops... last semester, we

were sort of looking on how students write about Kayak. We were like... oh, you

don't want to get too specific about what you do, because if you say facilitator, no

one even knows what that means, but if you say leader, they are going to have an

idea about what it is in their head. *(Kate / Kayak Leadership*)

Hayley, from Co-Leader Training, also reinforce the idea that, although students have

specific positions of authority in her program, they are expected to act in

facilitative ways:

I think better understanding their role…. it isn't about telling other people what to

do, it's about being responsive to people and I think that a lot of their reflective

answers show that, right? So here... a peer leader is more about the peer and less

about the leader. It's about effective and respectful communication skills, it's

about understanding they are complex people with complex needs. (*Hayley / Co-*

Lead)

In sum, unlike the view of leadership as "having voice" or positive change, the instructors of student leadership development programs in this study define leadership as the ability to influence others to achieve goals. However, the primary motivations of these programs are employability and professional development. In terms of structure, programs with this view of leadership offered opportunities for students to occupy leadership roles such as mentors or tutors or expected that they would occupy these positions in future organizations. In these positions, instructors expected students to guide others in a facilitative way. As detailed above, although participants defined leadership in terms of influence to accomplish goals, the discourse and structure of these programs reinforced the notion that leaders were people with legitimate power or authority that need to be prepared to guide others in order to achieve goals. Although these leaders take a facilitative role and democratic style, but still have a specific role or position of authority, either in their current programs or in future positions. Also, by teaching skills such as event management and marketing management, they are assuming leadership is synonymous to good management. Shared models of leadership or acts of resistance or dissent may not fit within this framework.

View of Communication

This section addresses the second research question of this study, about how the conceptualizations of leadership have implications for communication discipline. This inquiry was based on the fact that communication scholars see communication as primary to leadership, as detailed in the literature review (Chapter 2). Moreover, this work found that two programs have required

communication classes as part of their curricula (Leadership Community and VIP Mentors). Other two programs (Speaking Team and Leadership Academy) outsourced communication training from third parties outside of the university for their students. However, despite of their apparent interest in leadership communication theory and practice, this study found that the way communication is addressed in the programs is very limited. Also, this study found that both the main why the programs were created and the leadership conceptualizations adopted by the programs had implication in the way communication is addressed. In the context of the student leadership programs analyzed in this study, communication is either not seen as important to leadership, is limited to public speaking skills or a set of soft skills.

"It is not about communication"

When asked to what extent to what communication was important to leadership development in their programs, three instructors (Tracy, Mariah and Stephen) objectively answered, during the interviews, that communication was not an important part of their programs (*n*=5). Interestingly, all of them are responsible for programs focused on under-represented minorities. Mariah, responsible for a program focused on female-identified students, called She Leadership, mentioned that the program is different from other ones since it is not focused on teaching communication skills to the students. The goal is to invite female leader from the community to talk to the students:

We don't really have something that we set [in terms of communication], because if I say "come in and tell your story", it's going to be different for everybody, so it's not

really about communication, we're not teaching them skills. Which is very different from our other leadership programs. It's more kind of that taking it in, by hearing other people. Because the big thing is confidence, we want them to leave with more confidence. *(Mariah/She Leadership)*

Her explanation for discounting communication illustrates how narrow her understanding is of the discipline or what it might offer to leadership programs. This program is built around teaching students through narratives, social support, and feedback; three topics heavily studied and taught in the communication discipline. However, in another moment of the interview, Mariah mentioned the importance of students to be able to speak up:

"We talked about speaking up. You know, finding your voice and speaking up. But nothing really beyond that, because it's really about confidence." (Mariah/She Leadership).

Her explanation for discounting communication illustrates how narrow her understanding is of the discipline or what it might offer to leadership programs. By saying that it is not about communication, but confidence, Mariah illustrates that she does not associate issues of voice, difference and representation with communication. In fact, this program is built around teaching students through narratives, social support, and feedback; three topics heavily studied and taught in the communication discipline.

Tracy, who also responded that communication was not a specific focus of her program when directly asked. However, in a different section of the interview she

described how communication training resulted in a successful outcome for one of the students in her program:

So I've seen students who come from very socially awkward… to kind of being campus leaders and taking initiatives that… there is no way for us to take credit for this, of course, but we have a student, for example, who was placed with an organization, and she was very shy. And she was required to give tours of this organization, and she was very reluctant to do that, she wasn't comfortable. So she trained herself to give the tours and gave a couple. *(Tracy/Best Leaders)*

Tracy also mentioned that she offered "pitch development" training for students in their first year in the program, so they would be able to talk about the program with external stakeholders.

We worked with that first group of students, to develop their pitches. So when they bumped into the chancellor, you know, into the provost, they can communicate who they were, what they were doing with the program and how it tied into something in these elevator speeches. (*Tracy / Best Leaders*)

Taken together, Tracy's statements indicate that training student to speak in public was an important skill here students needed and valued. She noted that one student was able to overcome her "socially awkward behavior" and gain enough confidence to lead public tours as a result of her public speaking training. The "pitch development" training that Tracy organized for her students is another example of the value this program places on public speaking skills. Even though she claimed that communication was not part of the curriculum or focus of her program. The actions Tracy described in her interview illustrate that

communication skills are part of this leadership program, even if not officially acknowledged.

In the interviews, the directors of programs focused on underrepresented minorities or at risk students routinely dismissed "communication" as an important aspect of their leadership development curricula.   Public speaking was only relevant to these programs because it was seen as a way to improve student self-confidence.

Public Speaking

Contrary to the programs focused on underrepresented minorities, who either dismissed the importance of communication or saw it exclusively as a way to build self-confidence, other programs saw more opportunities for communication studies to contribute to their curricula. For example, one instructor (Nancy) explained:

So the confidence in being able to share your ideas publicly and openly is one. Conflict management is the other one. Leadership, I think, as I said earlier, that a lot of times leadership can be non-verbal, and just through your actions, people watching you… a large portion of leadership is communication, whether verbal or non-verbal, but mostly verbal. (*Nancy/Multiple Programs*)

Nancy's encourage students to get comfortable communicating with others, by keeping track of how often the students spoke up in meetings. Nancy explains:

In the beginning of the year, you can see the same 10 students standing up to share ideas and thoughts, because they are involved and doing different things. By the end of the year, you'll see two to three, or maybe even 10 more students, who weren't

speaking up at the beginning, but through time have built up their confidence,

through different activities that we have done each week. So by towards the end

of the program, they are like "you know, I do feel more confident in sharing my

thoughts, my ideas, my upcoming events, etc." So you can visibly see the change

in students. (*Nancy / New Leaders*)

In total, public speaking was explicitly mentioned by 5 of the 8 interview

participants (or 9 of the 16 programs in this study) as an important

communication skill for their programs.

For example, The Speaking Team is a program completely focused on the

development of public speaking skills for students. Its website states:

Join Our Team!

Do you enjoy public speaking? Want to sharpen your skills in facilitating meaningful

conversations about leadership? Each October, we recruit and train an elite team

of facilitators.

What We Do

Facilitate workshops on leadership topics

Critique and evaluate campus speakers

Staff tables at promotional events

Provide supplemental training for new facilitators

Support office functions. (*Speaking Team/ Website*)

What unites the programs that embraced the value of public speaking training was the

assumption that these skills would also teach students how to communicate

effectively in other contexts and emerge as leaders. This approach fails to

consider other ways in which communication theory might improve student self-confidence and help them overcome leadership challenges.

Soft Skills

Programs that adopted a view of leadership "as creating positive change" or "achieving goals" embraced a broader view of communication. Communication training was considered to be valuable for teaching "soft skills" to students (e.g., relationship development, conflict management, networking, teamwork, feedback, etc.) (n=11). The Leadership Academy's director (Daniel) explains:

We're seeing good technical students, but they have little or no communication skills, leadership skills, the softer skills that we need in the marketplace.

(*Daniel/Leadership Academy*)

Daniel's affirmation about the need to prepare students for the job market by teaching them soft skills was also mentioned by other interview participants. These were the leadership programs designed to improve student employability or encourage civic engagement.

The Leadership Academy, for example, is fully sponsored by private companies. It was created by HR professionals from several companies who felt students would be better employees if they received more "soft skill" training in college. As explained on the program's website:

The Leadership Academy is a two-year, extra-curricular program, modeled after leadership training programs for young professionals in industry. It prepares undergraduate students to successfully fulfill leadership roles on campus and

within the industry by building their leadership abilities. (*Leadership Academy/Website*)

Programs that felt communication was valuable for teaching soft skills offered a broader range of communication skills in their curricula. For example, the only program in the study to mention *collaboration* as an important topic was a civic engagement motivated program. As described in programs' website:

Benefits of Participation:

Discussion of issues and training in social justice topics

Membership in a cohort of the Student Citizen Institute

Certificate designating completion

Citizen Student Paraphernalia

Networking and Collaboration

Skill Building and Leadership Ethics Credits (Student Citizen Website)

Additionally, this program also emphasized the concept of *dialogue* as a valuable leadership skill on its website:

[This] is an annual event which reflects the values of Scholarship, Integrity, Respect, Accountability, Dignity, Honor, Compassion, Character and Nobility. Through meaningful dialogue and building strengths while focusing on specific values, students will understand and be better prepared to be stronger campus and community citizens. *(Student Citizen / Website)*

None of the other programs in this study discussed the ways in which dialogue or collaboration might play a role in leadership development training. According to its website, the Student Citizen program appeared to hold a more relational or co-

constructed approach to leadership. However, in the interview with the program

director these topics were never discussed. The director did not explain how the

program taught collaboration skills to their students. Nor was it clear in the

interview or in other program documents how the concept of dialogue played a

role in leadership development for this program.

Giving and receiving feedback was also present in all programs that defined

leadership as creating change. Conflict management and teamwork appeared to be

important communication skills in half (*N*=4) of the programs in which the

definition of leadership was related to the goal achievement. As Kate, from Kayak

Leadership, explains:

We did one in conflict… if you have a difficulty with a participant, or you are not getting

along with your co-leader… how do you manage this group when you have these

conflicts there...The easy thing is to ignore it and hope it goes away because

maybe you have only two more hours left in the trip, like...what is the big deal?

And trying to get them understand the benefit of engaging in those conversations,

to engage them in those conversations. *(Kate/ Kayak Leadership)*

In terms of listening, this skill was only emphasized in two programs. For example, as

stated by Leadership Academy's website:

Communicate Effectively: Good leaders listen to others to understand their thoughts,

opinions and ideas. They provide accurate information to appropriate audiences

at appropriate times. They have the skills to successfully navigate conflict and

can negotiate effectively. (*Leadership Academy/Website*)

In sum, the data revealed that the "soft skill" view of communication moved the contributions of the discipline beyond public speaking. However the leadership programs in this study reduced the value of communication to a set of specific "soft" skills employees needed to learn in order to be marketable to employers. Teaching students how to engage in dissent, resist the influence of others, or engage in collective action might not be of interest to future employers. As such, it isn't clear that the leadership programs in this study would consider training in these "soft skills" relevant for their curriculums.

One particularly interesting finding from this study was a tentative relationship between the goals of the various leadership programs and their views toward communication. Programs that focused on promoting leadership as a way of creating positive change and civic engagement (*n*=2) provided students with communication training in teamwork and feedback. None of the other programs in this study incorporated these two communication topics in their curricula. The programs that considered leadership to be focused on goal accomplishment (*n*=7) tended emphasize the value of leadership training for improving student employability and professional development. These programs provided students with communication training in public speaking, conflict management, and facilitation. No other leadership programs in this study provided this combination of training to its members. Finally, programs that focused on developing leaders by helping them find their voice were dividing into two distinct sub-groups. Some of these "voice" programs focused on first year students (*n*=2) the other programs focused on servicing underrepresented students (*n*=5). The first year

students received communication training in public speaking and conflict management. Most of the underrepresented students programs lacked any formal communication training. (n=4). Only one of the underrepresented student programs offered some type of public speaking training, and it was limited to a single lecture on how to give an "elevator pitch." In general, the underrepresented student leadership programs lacked any formal communication training, while all of the other programs included communication-related topics in their curricula.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

I began this study to understand the ways in which leadership was defined in higher education student leadership programs. In considering post-positivist and social construcionist approaches to leadership as theoretical frameworks for this study, the findings suggest that despite the growing number of leadership development programs available to college students across the country, these programs primarily embrace psychological, individualistic approaches to the study of leadership and may not reflect more contemporary or interdisciplinary approaches to this topic. This theoretical framework helps to illuminate the ways in which one's conceptualizations of leadership has important implications in the way one approaches communication (Fairhurst, 2001; Fairhust, 2007, Mumby, 2014; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2016). The findings identified three primary motivations for creating leadership programs on this particular college campus: (1) the need to improve retention and graduation among first years and underrepresented minorities, (2) the desire to increase student employability and professional development, (3) to promote civic engagement among the student body. These different motivations led to three different constructions of what it means to be a leader: (1) having voice, (2) ability to achieve goals, and (3) ability to create positive change. Table 1 below provides a summary of the findings and provides a helpful visualization of its implications.

Table 1

Programs motives, view of communication and view of leadership

Program	Participant	Public	View of communication	View of Leadership	Motive/Purpose
The Rockets	Stephen	Underrepresented (female-identified) students	It is not About Communication	Having voice	Retention and graduation
Better Friends	Stephen	Underrepresented (male-identified) students	It is not About Communication	Having voice	Retention and graduation
Vip Mentors	Stephen	Underrepresented students	It is not About Communication	Having voice	Retention and graduation
She Leadership	Mariah	Underrepresetned (female-identified) students	It is not About Communication	Having voice	Retention and graduation
Best Leaders	Tracy	Underrepresented students	It is not About Communication Public Speaking (Pitch Development)	Having voice / Influence others towards social change	Retention and graduation
New Leaders	Nancy	First year students	Public Speaking Conflict Management Interviewing	Having voice / Influence others towards social change	Retention and graduation
Leadership Community	Matthew	First year students	Public Speaking Conflict Management	Having voice / Influence others towards social change	Retention and graduation
Kayak Leadership	Kate	Open	Public speaking Teamwork Feedback Facilitation	Influence others towards common goals	Employment
Leadership Academy	Daniel	Major specific	Public speaking Conflict management Teamwork Feedback Perspective taking Listening	Influence others towards common goals / Towards social change	Employment
Executive Leadership	Mariah	Senior students	Public speaking Conflict management Networking Interviewing	Influence others towards common goals / Towards social change	Employment
Co-Leaders	Hayley	Open	Facilitation Listening Empathy	Influence others towards common goal	Employment
Leaderform	Nancy	Open	Teamwork Feedback	Influence others towards social change	Civic Engagement
Citizen Student	Matthew	Open	Teamwork Networking Collaboration Feedback Dialogue	Influence others towards social change	Civic Engagement

Table 1 (Continued)

Programs motives, view of communication and view of leadership

Program	Participant	Public	View of communication	View of Leadership	Motive/ Purpose
Campus Leaders	Nancy	Open	Public Speaking Teamwork Event Management	Influence others towards common goals	Professional Development
Leadership Folks	Matthew	Upperclassmen students	Public Speaking Conflict management Teamwork Interviewing	Influence others towards common goals	Professional Development
Speaking Team	Nancy	Open	Public speaking Conflict management Feedback Facilitation	Influence others towards common goals	Professional Development

Having Voice

First, participants in this study defined leadership as having voice, based in the idea that, in order to be leaders, students need to voice their opinions and speak in public. The aspect of voice was particularly important in the context of programs focused on underrepresented minorities on campus such as women and ethnic minorities, whose voices have been historically marginalized and unheard (*n*=5). However, by not having a communication approach to the study of leadership, the instructors took for granted that *voice* was synonymous to speaking up, and as a result the complexity of engaging in voice was often underestimated. For feminist communication scholars, the term "voice" presupposes that what is said is acknowledged by others and has consequence (Rakow & Wackitz, 2004). These scholars explain that voice requires more than simply the courage to stand up and speak. Voice requires "the means and ability to speak and to have one's speech heard and be taken into account in social and

political life" (Rakow & Wackitz, 2004, p. 95). At the same time, feminist communication scholars also oppose to the idea that all silence is bad and disempowering. In fact, silence or refusing to speak can be a demonstration of power or a means of resistance (Rakow & Wackitz, 2004).

Furthermore, the data reveal that the student leadership programs in this study have a fairly limited understanding of the ways in which communication theory might be applied to leadership development programs. Communication issues were limited managing the transmission of information and to the development of public speaking skills. A broader view of communication would, for example, consider the possible negative consequences of engaging in voice (Rakow & Wackitz, 2004). The programs in this study did not appear to question the value of speaking up or disrupting the status quo. As long as students demonstrated self-awareness and self-confidence the programs implied that their students would be able to speak up, succeed in school, and become leaders.

Finally, a review of all 16 programs examined in this study revealed that leadership was conceptualized as an individual activity or set of characteristics that did not require the active participation of others. Communication with others was rarely discussed or treated as an outcome (e.g., ability to speak in public). Programs that included more communication topics or issues in their curricula, typically focused on improving the ability of leaders to transmit or exchange information, such as giving tours. Many of the programs simply focused on helping students gain self-confidence and self-awareness, as they assumed those are traits that a good leader needs to have. These programs appear to embrace

charismatic and authentic approaches to leadership. Research shows that self-awareness is an important predictor of authentic leadership, while self-confidence is a predictor of charismatic leadership (Robbins & Judge, 2018). By adopting this vision of leadership, these programs assumed that students could eventually become leaders. The development programs didn't create leaders, but gave these students the skills and characteristics necessary to emerge as leaders elsewhere.

Creating Positive Change

Several programs focused on developing leaders who could be agents of social change. These programs placed a strong emphasis on the leader serving as a source of influence, along with the notion that influence is a result of a formal and planned leadership activity. This orientation to change is a characteristic of the transformational model of leadership (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Robbins & Judge, 2018). Programs with this leadership orientation aligned with the Social Change Model of Leadership (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996), created exclusively for teaching leadership in higher education setting. This model assumes that higher education has the responsibility of creating better leaders for society (Astin & Astin, 2000). Two programs in this study fit within this approach and emphasized the value of developing communication skills in the areas of collaboration, dialogue and feedback. These programs were the shortest ones in the study (ranging from one to six days). In contrast some of the other programs required four years of student involvement. In sum, programs that considered leadership to be the ability to "create social change" seemed to be unique in their approach to communication. Although they emphasized a heroic

view of leadership and maintained an exaggerated sense of a leader's ability to create change, they also seemed to move towards the direction of dialogue and collaboration.

Achieving Common Goals

Although many of the programs defined leadership in terms of a person's ability to accomplish common goals, the discourse and structure of these programs reinforced the notion that leaders were people with legitimate power or authority over others. However, these programs also emphasized that leaders should exercise their power thorough non-coercive ways and take on a facilitative role. Programs with this view were mainly created to increase student's employability in future organizations. In addition, some of these programs provided members with professional development, by teaching skills such as event management and marketing. According to Rost (1993), two problems for defining leadership include: "(1) equating leadership with the leader and (2) the confusion caused by understanding leadership as good management" (p. 98). The discourse and structure of these employment, goal accomplishment leadership programs reinforced the idea that leaders are people with legitimate power or influence that help others "turn out the work." Therefore the data revealed that the leadership programs in this study reduced the value of communication to a set of specific skills needed in the marketplace. The "soft skill" view of communication moved the contributions of the discipline beyond public speaking. However these additional skills (conflict management, feedback, etc.) were still focused on transferring information from one party to another, reflecting the idea that

leadership is an individual accomplishment rather than experienced in social interaction.

Participants in many of the programs examined in this study have a narrow view of the communication discipline or a view communication as a topic or skill set unimportant for leadership development programs. Given these findings, it seems appropriate for communication scholars and practitioners to translate leadership communication theory into practice and demonstrate where and why it can improve leadership development programs. In the following section, I will address theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

Theoretical implications

Even though the student leadership development programs analyzed in this study are located in different divisions within the university, serve different types of students on campus, and expect different learning outcomes from their participants, all of the instructors had remarkably similar notions of what counts as "good" leadership. Even the programs that allowed the students to work in groups or on collaborative projects still focused on cognitive and individual processes, rather than social processes. The social construcionist perspective to leadership used by communication scholars (Fairhurst, 2007, Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014, Mumby, 2014, Ruben & Gigliotti, 2016; Tourish, 2014) argue that this post-positivist view of leadership romanticizes and overemphasizes the role of the leader in achieving desirable organizational or group outcomes. This approach does not take into account the idea that leadership is an "emergent property of group interaction" (Fairhurst, 2001, p.383), and fails to consider wider

systemic dynamics often associated with leadership (cultural norms, etc.). By emphasizing the psychological approach to leadership at the expense of others, relational concepts such as followership and reciprocity are neglected (Fairhurst, 2001).These programs create a unidirectional approach to leadership and construct the idea of the leader as being uncontested by constituents, and view followers as passive agents in the leadership process (Fairhurst, 2001). As Tourish (2008), explains this approach is predominantly "unitarist and uncritical, assuming that (a) members of organizations have an overwhelming common interest, whatever power differentials suggest to the contrary, and (b) senior managers are best equipped to articulate a compelling vision that captures this interest" (p. 524). This assumption seem particularly disadvantageous to at risk or underrepresented students who may benefit from understanding other models participative and inclusive models of leadership, such as distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002) and resistance leadership (Zoller & Fairhurst, 2014). This is where a communicative approach to leadership might contribute meaningfully to the growing body of research on leadership development programs.

The findings of this study also suggest communication is understood to be one of the many soft skills leaders need to have in order to be successful. Therefore, campus leadership programs provide students with an opportunity to acquire these desirable soft skills before entering the job market. These programs claim to value communication as an important part of leadership development but fail to consider communication as anything more than a set of skills. These programs promoted the idea that a leader is a person who uses communication as

a tool to accomplish a specific task, rather than consider leaders as jointly constructed identities that are created and sustained through communication. This view of communication seems to be influenced by the way the conceptualize leadership, in individual and cognitive ways, rather than socially constructed.

Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014) argue that it is important for leadership development program to embrace relational and socially constructed approaches to leadership training. Traditional bureaucratic forms of authority and organizational leadership are becoming outdated in face of "the new global market conditions, technological advance, and hyperentrepreneurialism" which challenge the rational view of organizations (p. 8). Complexity, irrationality, and continuous change are now part of the world we live in, consequently requiring new ways of seen communication and leadership (Farihurst & Connaughton, 2014). In the contemporary work environment, students are expected to be more that simply effective public speakers. They also need to be good listeners, good facilitators, and adaptable leaders.

In sum, the main theoretical implications of this study relate to the fact that although communication theories can offer a more expansive view of leadership than other traditional approaches that currently dominate leadership development programs. According to Fairhurst "generally speaking, leadership psychologists do a much better job of drawing out these implications than discursive leadership scholars to date (Fairhurst, 2007, p. 167). In this study, I suggest that although communication scholars have made an effort to approach communication as a fundamental process in which leadership occurs, leadership

practitioners seem to routinely reduce our field to public speaking and a set of soft skills important to the employers. In the student leadership development programs analyzed in this study, there is a potential to move towards a different direction, as some programs have already included topics such as feedback and collaboration into their curriculum, although with less emphasizes and as one of many expected outcomes. Therefore, this study adds to communication studies of leadership by showing the reasons why this separation occurs and suggests next steps for communication scholars to connect leadership communication theory with practice. The field of student leadership development can be an important area for this advancement. In the next section, I will address the practical implications of this study.

Practical implications

The current study shows that a considerable investment of time, financial and human resources in student leadership development programs. In order to help leadership and communication scholars and practitioners to reach maximum benefit of their efforts, some considerations are provided below.

This study suggests that there is a potential for a broader view of communication in student leadership programs. Communication scholars would argue that communication is not one of many soft skills used by leaders. A communication perspective offers practitioners with a new way to understand and engage in leadership activities (Fairhurst, 2001). In this sense, by looking at the way some programs are constructed and how they explain the successful outcomes of their programs, it is possible to suggest that cohort-based programs,

with focus on collaboration, feedback giving and receiving, conflict management, are potential environments for leadership communication scholars to put their theoretical knowledge into practice. A socio-constructionist and critical communication approach to leadership, rather than a post-positivist psychological perspective, would be more aligned to the current thinking in higher education in terms of more participatory models of leadership (Ballard et. al, 2000), required in this millennium (Rost, 1993).

Second, this study demonstrates that these student leadership programs are embedded in a hierarchical institution (and broadly, in a patriarchal society). As such, their approach to leadership development reflects the context in with these programs operate. It may be difficult for these programs to envision and execute different models based on distributed or shared approaches to leadership. These programs must serve the needs of the students and also meet the objectives of the organizations that sponsor their existence on campus. The companies funding leadership training programs for their future employees may not appreciate a program that included resistance and shared authority as part of its curriculum. Likewise, leadership programs designed to increase retention and improve the graduate rate of underrepresented students may not want to take time away from academic tutoring in order to provide additional communication training or instruction on the competing theories of leadership. However, as suggested by Astin (2000), it is important to use these opportunities to "model the way" (p. 6). In this direction, programs would benefit from exchanging experiences and

adopting a coordinated strategy to expand our collective understanding of leadership development and communication in higher education.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the total number of leadership program instructors interviewed (n=8) in this study is relatively small, it represents 66% of the total population available in this research site. In addition, the result of interviews was triangulated with the analysis of 232 pages of documents, resulting in a rich data set for analysis. It is important to mention that the current data set is restricted to one university in the southern United States, attending to the purpose of interpretive research to provide a rich description of context, rather than generalizations. Similarly to the limitations of the study developed by Knight (2014), generalizations from this study about the concept of leadership should remain cautious. Future research would benefit from recruiting instructors participants from different organizations and backgrounds to raise a more comprehensive result.

Another limitation of this study is not including the voices of students. Although some materials analyzed provided a testimonial of leadership programs' participants, this was not the focus of this study. Further research should consider how students understand and conceptualize leadership to better understand if there is a mismatch in terms of students and instructors views and the reasons for these similarities and differences. Also, it would be interesting to analyze if demographic information such as race, age and gender of instructors and students influence their views of leadership and communication.

Future research could take a critical communication perspective to investigate student leadership development programs that challenge traditional leadership approaches and focuses on issues of power and control, including possibilities of leadership as resistance (Mumby, 2013; Zoller & Faurhurst, 2007). Understanding the circumstances that make that possible would add to leadership communication practice in higher education settings.

Finally, future research could using a feminist communication lens to issues of voice in student leadership development programs address could be an important contribution to the field of leadership communication as it intersects with leadership development in higher education.

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender	Graduate Degree
1	Tracy	Female	Geography
2	Nancy	Female	Higher Education Administration
3	Mariah	Female	College Student Personnel
4	Matthew	Male	Education
5	Stephen	Male	Liberal Studies
6	Kate	Female	Parks and Recreation Management
7	Daniel	Male	None
8	Hayley	Female	Rethoric and Composition

APPENDIX B: LIST OF PROGRAMS

Program	Pseudonym	Target population	#Students	Length	Division	Curricular Component	Website description
1	Best Leaders	First year low income students	31	Four	Academic and Student affairs	Yes	Students are embedded in city-based institutions and agencies, participate in weekly skills development seminars, earn course credit, conduct community based research, and contribute to public policy initiatives.
2	Campus Leaders	Non targeted	7	Year-	Student Affairs	No	Students ae responsible for gauging the interests of the campus community and supplying the community with dynamic, diverse, and engaging speakers involved in those identified interests.
3	New Leaders	First year students	60	Year-	Student Affairs	No	Provides leadership training and mentorship to freshmen. The purpose of the program is to maximize the ability of these individuals to succeed and contribute to the university as student leaders in the coming years.
4	Speaking Team	Non targeted	14	Varies	Student Affairs	No	A group of student trainers who facilitate workshops on a variety of leadership topics. Team members provide workshops and are also able to present workshops for classes, clubs, and student organizations on campus. This program improves the public speaking skills and overall knowledge in specific leadership areas for its trained facilitators.

Program	Pseudonym	Target population	#Students	Length	Division	Curricular Component	Website description
5	Leaderform	Freshmen, sophomores and juniors	66	Week-	Student Affairs	No	Six-day immersion program that challenges participants to lead with integrity while working towards a vision grounded in their deepest values. Participants explore what they want to do and who they want to be.
6	Executive Leadership	Senior students	34	Semester-	Student Affairs	No	Focuses on the transition from undergraduate leadership to leadership as a new professional.
7	She Leadership	Female identified students	19	Semester-	Student Affairs	No	A cohort-based women's leadership conversation series for students who identify as women and currently act as leaders (whether in positional roles or not) to interact with and learn from women leaders in our community.
8	Leadership Folks	Upperclassmen	60	Semester-	Student Affairs	No	Promotes, trains, and develops specific skills desired by students interested in leadership roles. A special training program targeting upper-division students (sophomores, juniors, and seniors) which exposes aspiring leaders to leadership skills beyond the basics.
9	Leadership Community	First year students	11	Year-	Student Affairs	Yes	First year students, during which students live and learn amongst each other. The learning community offers the advantage of being a member of a small group of students living and learning in a comfortable environment created specifically to help you discover the leader within. Caring faculty, staff, and peer mentors provide encouragement, support, and advice.

Program	Pseudonym	Target population	#Students	Length	Division	Curricular Component	Website description
10	Student Citizen	None	49	Once a	Student Affairs	No	Is an annual event which reflects the values of Scholarship, Integrity, Respect, Accountability, Dignity, Honor, Compassion, Character and Nobility. Through meaningful dialogue and building strengths while focusing on specific values r, students will understand and be better prepared to be stronger campus and community citizens.
11	Better Friends	Underrepsented males	90	One to	Academic Affairs	No	Program is designed to increase the retention and graduation rates of minority and underrepresented males.
12	The Rockets	Female identified students	12	One to	Academic Affairs	No	The central goal is to help minority and underrepresented females matriculate through their collegiate career at UNC Charlotte and produce graduates with high academic achievement and preparedness for post-graduate life. IGNITE will also create a sisterhood amongst its members that supports and expects excellence academically, socially and professionally.
13	Vip	First year under repr esented students	90	Six	Academic Affairs	Yes	Facilitate the underrepresented student's transition from high school to college. The program builds upon the scholastic abilities of the students through college courses and contact with University academic support services.

Program	Pseudonym	Target population	#Students	Length	Division	Curricular Component	Website description
14	Cayak Leadership	Non targeted	30	Semester-	Student Affairs	Yes	Workshop series were students are exposed to an overview of basic adventure leadership theories and begin putting theory into practice by participating in Outdoor Leadership programs, such as the low ropes course, weekend adventure trips, and team building activities.
15	Leadership Academy	Major specific sophomores and juniors	25	Two-year	College of Engineering	No	A two-year, extra-curricular program, modeled after leadership training programs for young professionals in industry. It prepares undergraduates to successfully fulfill leadership roles on campus and within the industry.
16	Co-lead training	Non targeted	300	Varies	Academic Affairs	No	Contribute o student success by promoting the intellectual, professional and personal development of their peers thorough supportive learning environment and collaborative relationships. By educating and empowering their peers, peer leaders also develop their own communication, leadership, and problem solving competencies.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview guide will start with demographic questions, then will move to three parts to explore the participants' beliefs about leadership, their expected program's outcomes and their beliefs about communication within their programs.

Demographic questions

- · In which program(s) are you involved as an instructor?
- · In which department is your program allocated?
- · What is your role in the program?
- · How long have you been involved in the program?
- · What is your academic and professional background?

Part 1 – Beliefs about leadership

1. What is the purpose of the program?
2. Why is leadership development important?
3. In the context of your program, how do you define leadership?
   a. What does it mean to be a leader?

Part 2 – Expected program's outcomes

4. Who is the audience of your program? Who is this program developed for?
5. What are the results you expect from the program?
   a. Why do you think these results are important?
6. What topics do you think are the most important to cover in this program?
   a. Have these topics changed over time?
7. How do you know your program was effective?
   a. Tell me one example of when you saw this program being effective for a student in terms of leadership development.
   b. Tell me one example of when of when you saw this program being ineffective for a student in terms of leadership development?

Part 3 – Beliefs about communication within their programs

8. To what extent is communication important for this program?
9. Are there specific student communication challenges that you address in the program?
10. Are there any communication outcomes that you expect from students as a result of your program? (e.g., listening, persuading, negotiating, delegating, appraising, interviewing, explaining, encouraging, etc.)?
    a. What communication outcomes?
    b. Why are these important?
11. Consider a time that one student strategically and successfully used communication as a result of the program. I am interested in your story of that event.

APPENDIX D: CODEBOOK

Categories/ Codes	Description	Example
Category 1. Leadership Motives	**Motives of creation of different leadership programs**	
1.1 Society – Civic / Community Engagement	Leadership is important because prepare students to be good citizens. Importance of making impact and having cultural awareness. Relates to the idea of influence towards change.	"So i think it is important for not only students personally, but for our country and our world, that colleges be in the forefront in preparing students to engage in the global community".
1.2 Employment	Leadership is important because it add value on students' resume, prepares them for the job market, increase attractiveness of employers, especially as it offers transferable soft skills	"I feel like leadership is a buzz word that people see and think "I need that on my resume". So I think it is appealing in that sense. I think the word leadership right now says transferable skill. It is what employers want to see. So I think in that sense it is marketable."
1.3 Improve retention and graduate rates for first year students and underrepresented minorities	Programs serve as retention and graduation tools especially for first year students and underrepresented students, as it improves self-confidence	I think it is very intentional that we are trying to, you know, these programs are retention tools, you know. In addition to the fact that we're building leadership skills. They feel like they belong, so they stay.
Community building / social support	Topics related to community building for students, social support, representatives, role models, sense of belonging. Especially for first yea students and underrepresented minorities	I will say that peer-to-peer engagement is the most important part of our programs to me because that just builds a sense of community, that a lot of our students are looking for. Programs like these give them a sense of home, sense of belonging.
Academic success	Programs offer prospect for success courses, academic components, academic support, study skills and study habits. Information about resources on	So I think a lot of leadership development goes with the idea of... we want to ensure that our students succeed yes, like the

	campus.	academic component needs to be competitive, needs to prepare students for working in their field.

Category 2. View of leadership	Assumptions about leadership made by participants in the study	
2.1 Leadership is having voice	Leaders know who they are and are confident to express their ideas.	rm of leadership, starting to say "oh, I have some ideas about this", or "from my perspective…", "what if we did this?"… as so developing that kind of initiative as one way of contributing to your organization, but them we saw them as leaders on campus, by being able to speak about the issues that they were learning about, right?
Self-awareness	Personality assessments, self-care, wellness, self-critic, resilience	The other thing we did, we did the Myers-Briggs type indicator and then have them do some activities based on some of... what are their type, and then talked about those different types in the workplace.
Self-confidence	Students/leaders need to be confident to act and speak their truth.	Because if you're not confident in yourself, or in your ideas, who's going to want to follow you?
2.2 Leadership is the ability to achieve common goals	Leaders influence group outcomes	Leadership to me is the ability to influence by providing the tools and techniques, capabilities for groups of people to accomplish uncommon goals
2.3 Leadership is positive change	Idea of leadership as creating change, pushing a vision	I think initially we kind of wanted to kind of create students who graduate with a sense of themselves as Leaders, Civic leaders, a sense of the Charlotte community, a sense of how they are going to use their careers to stay engaged, to push for social change

Category 3. View of Communication	How participants perceive the importance of communication as it relates to leadership	
3.1. It is not about communication	Participants deny the importance of communication or see it as transmission of information	It's really not about communication, it's about confidence
3.2 Public speaking	Sending verbal messages constructively	The pitch development I think it was an outcome that we wanted to have. Again it wasn't explicitly written down, what we probably should do, but something about this communication of self and program externally is something that we want them to do and train them to do in their first year.
3.3 Set of Soft Skills	Communication is seen as a set of soft skills	They all hold a similar purpose of giving students practical and tangible leadership skills that they then can apply.
Conflict management	Ability to manage and handle conflict	They participate in weekly workshops, so they leadership skills, interview building, conflict management, public speaking, etc.
Giving and Receiving Feedback	Crucial conversations, initiating difficult conversations, receiving feedback from supervisors	I think one of the things we focus a lot in my intro class is feedback. So it is giving and receiving feedback.
Listening	Active listening to others	As part of course...it breaks communication into... first, listening. So it's basically subsets of what is effective communication...We set it up as listening verbal and nonverbal communication.

Networking and interviewing	Meeting new people and participating in job interviews	We talked about interviewing, talked about networking in two different sessions
Teamwork	Initiatives related to working on groups	e teambuilding initiatives through the semester to teach our curriculum. And so, really, what they are learning is how to present in front of a group, how to manage a group, how to critically think and problem solve and how to certainly communicate, I mean, with each other, on a one on one standpoint as well as in the group context.
Collaboration	Collaborative decentralized participation in groups	Networking and Collaboration with fellows