

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT TEACHING IN A UNIVERSITY
VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS CENTER
ENSINO DE LIDERANÇA E GESTÃO EM UM CENTRO DE PROJETOS DE
VOLUNTARIADO UNIVERSITÁRIO**

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Derson Lopes-Jr¹

Doutorando em Administração da Faculdade de Ciências Aplicadas (FCA) da Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp)

Coordenador de Graduação e Pós-Graduação em Administração do Centro Universitário Adventista de São Paulo (Unasp)

Antonio Braga Moura Filho²

Mestre em Ciência da Religião da Universidade Metodista de São Paulo

Diretor Espiritual do Centro Universitário Adventista de São Paulo (Unasp), Campus São Paulo

Marco Antonio Figueiredo Milani Filho³

Coordenador do Programa de Pós-Graduação Mestrado e Doutorado em Administração da Faculdade de Ciências Aplicadas (FCA) da Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp)

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to show the importance of leadership and management teaching in a social project and volunteering context. It was analysed a leadership and management school inside a University Volunteering Center. The sample was composed of 11 people: the LMS coordinator, four professors, and six students. The answers revealed that the students interviewed received a different vision of leadership and they demonstrated to be impacted by professors' approach and shared experience. In

¹ Autor para correspondência: Centro Universitário Adventista de São Paulo – UNASP. Estr. de Itapeçerica, 5859 - Jardim Iae, São Paulo - SP, 05858-001. Brasil. derson.lopes@fca.unicamp.br

² antonio.moura@unasp.edu.br

³ marco.milani@fca.unicamp.br

addition, the students showed a higher motivation and willingness to be part of volunteering projects after the leadership program. This article may be a contribution to volunteers' associations and universities, presenting the power of leadership and management skills development. At first sight, people can think that just social subjects are relevant to motivate volunteers, but this study showed that teaching people about leadership and management can be a significant motivation source, either playing a rewarding role or giving tools and skills to keep volunteers able to serve and help others.

Keywords: Leadership Teaching; Management Teaching; Volunteering Projects; Volunteer's motivation.

RESUMO

Este estudo teve como objetivo mostrar a importância do ensino da liderança e da gestão em um contexto de projeto social e de voluntariado. Foi analisada uma escola de liderança e gestão dentro de um Centro de Voluntariado Universitário. A amostra foi composta por 11 pessoas: o coordenador da escola de liderança, quatro professores e seis alunos. As respostas revelaram que os alunos entrevistados receberam uma visão diferente de liderança e demonstraram ser impactados pela abordagem e experiência compartilhada pelos professores. Além disso, os alunos demonstraram maior motivação e vontade de fazer parte de projetos de voluntariado após o programa de liderança. Este artigo pode ser uma contribuição para as associações e universidades, apresentando o poder de desenvolvimento de habilidades de liderança e gestão. À primeira vista, as pessoas podem pensar que apenas os assuntos sociais são relevantes para motivar os voluntários, mas este estudo demonstrou que ensinar as pessoas sobre liderança e gestão pode ser uma fonte significativa de motivação, desempenhando um papel recompensador e oferecendo ferramentas e habilidades para manter os voluntários capacitados para servir os outros.

Palavras-chave: Ensino de Liderança; Ensino Gerencial; Projetos de Voluntariado; Motivação de Voluntários.



1. INTRODUCTION

Changes in workplaces and organizations are creating new demands of leadership. Differing expectations on the goals of leadership training and development are also emerging. To meet these expectations, few comprehensive models to guide evaluation research and practice in the field of leadership training and development have appeared in the literature (Clarke, 2012). As Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) comment, approaches about leadership have been questioned by different perspectives, urging for a more in-depth view of the leader's activities. The past decade witnessed considerable expansion



in leadership training and development. At the same time, changes in our understanding of leadership are broadening horizons of what might constitute leadership development and our expectations about its impact (Clarke, 2012).

In addition to the performance and relational perspective, leaders need to handle other deep issues, such as ethics, diversity, and social problems. These changes have brought reflections about the leadership teaching – including MBA programs –, and senior leadership approach (Cunliffe, 2009). Most of these reflections, studies, and research explore big companies' context, especially global enterprises, which usually have leaders in formal education, sizeable managerial experience, and reliable business knowledge (Muscat & Whitty, 2009).

Some authors have argued that measures of team effectiveness are the most appropriate indicators of leadership. Studies have shown that leaders influence both team processes and the results they achieve (Clarke, 2012). Some studies have found the impact of leadership on people's commitment. Bang (2011) says that effective leadership is the key to the success of nonprofit organizations because the leader-member relationship increases the member commitment. Sefora and Mihaela (2016), also Dwyer et al. (2013) sought the fundamental role of leadership for nonprofit organization especially in promoting volunteer commitment. Business skills and visionary organizational leadership are necessary for Social Business to provide the synergy needed to create new paradigms which cope with the vast societal needs not easily addressed under current business models (Muscat & Whitty, 2009).

The volunteering movement has been increasing around the world. According to the United Nations Volunteer Sector Report, in 2015 about 1 billion people were involved in some volunteer activity (UNV, 2016). Whether considered in economic terms, the volunteerism in the United States was estimated at \$169 billion in 2009 (Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development, 2010). Although this activity is not new, especially in recent years, volunteering has acquired different perspectives. Companies have sought to develop voluntary projects intentionally and with different motivations, as analysed by Fisher and Falconer (2001) and Azevedo (2007). Also, they have started to value some experiences in voluntary work as characteristics to choose candidates for the positions available (Cook & Jackson, 2006).

To fulfil its social role, contribute to the integral formation and also strengthen the personal and professional development of its students through practical experience, São Paulo Adventist University Center (Unasp – São Paulo Campus) started in 2012 an intensification of the national and international volunteer projects, offering and engaging students in this activity. The campus created a new department, called the Berndt Wolter Volunteering Center, aiming to promote and manage strategies for establishing partnerships with disadvantaged communities, fostering projects among teachers and students, and also demonstrating the importance of volunteering as personal fulfilment and growth.

The institution established a monthly training school focused on social development practices and yet, preparing the participants in emotional, personal, and professional issues, seeking to develop a great team of volunteers. An English language school was implemented as well, increasing the likelihood in international projects participation. Called "Change your World" the program has developed over six years more than 60 projects in five continents and in all regions of Brazil, engaging more than 1,000 students.

The hands-on experience, project by project, revealed that despite all trainings offered by the center, one of the problem often faced was the fact that participants presented lack of leadership skills. Given that, Unasp established a Leadership and Management School (LMS) to offer leadership and management classes in social projects and volunteering context. The LMS had the goal to increase volunteer's motivation as well. Although the first incentive for participation in volunteer projects is to contribute to society (Rothwell & Charleston, 2013), Wilson and Hicks (2010), results have shown that the most important reward for volunteers is their training and development.

This article aims to study the LMS implementation process and evaluate its real impact on the participants under the research question: "What were the contributions of LMS for all the areas of its participants' life?" This question was elected because the LMS can have plenty of different perspectives, but in this case the institution was worried not just with technical issues in leadership and management, but also topics related to ethical, spirituality, and human relations. To understand the evaluation in many ways, the coordinator, four professors, and six students of the LMS were interviewed. The paper was built in an inter-subjective theory vision, seeking to analyse the participant's answers and understanding their feelings about the program's impact.

2. THEORY REVIEW

The university has long been expected to be more than an information center. It is expected to be a privileged locus of thinking. "A thought capable of not closing in on the place and in particular, but of conceiving the ensembles, being able to increase the sense of responsibility and that of citizenship" (Morin, 2011, p. 97). The university must offer personal education, and it should work for a thought's reform. "Thinking about society having the human being as a parameter, requires overcoming the dehumanizing logic of capital, which has its foundations in individualism, profit, and competition" (Mészáros, 2005, p. 9). Education should contribute to the person's self-formation – teaching to take on the human condition, teaching to live – and teach how to be a citizen. A citizen is defined, in a democracy, by his solidarity and responsibility towards his homeland.

The university could make a clear commitment to citizenship and democracy, promoting them beyond the theory of classrooms. Volunteering emerges as a program capable of being part of this educational vision since it leads the student to have contact with something more than just theories. Volunteering, according to the Universal Declaration on Volunteering, can bring to life the noblest aspirations of humanity – the searching for peace, freedom, opportunity, security, and justice for all people.

This statement elucidates the educational character of volunteering. To be educational is focus its activities on the core of citizen education and man's commitment to society and its environment. Taking the concept presented by Marques (2006), which defines volunteering as the activities carried out by an individual "without any financial reward, another material reward or counterpart" (p.26), it is emphasized that people work without financial retribution expectations, which promotes altruism, the look of alterity, and vocation by the interest of the other. This factor was empirically emphasized by Rothwell and Charleston (2013), who reported unpaid service interest, and Cook and Jackson (2006), whose research revealed that 79% of volunteer project participants had the wish to offer something to society rather than take some advantage from it.

This idealism, which could be the leaven of thought reform and still following the interpretative trail mentioned above, would then be appropriate for this new person, not the capitalist one but the citizen. This scenario challenges every person to develop his skills and competencies not only for the market, although this is essential in days when



human capital are strongly necessary, but also for their contribution, radically required to the existence as a human being.

2.1 VOLUNTEER PROJECT AND LEADERSHIP

The leadership is an important subject when studying people motivation and development. In volunteering projects, this point has even more importance. Effective Leadership is the key to success, especially on nonprofit organizations. Since the majority of the workforce in nonprofit organizations is voluntary, maintaining healthy relationships between leaders and followers is essential (Bang, 2011).

Studies has shown that leaders influence both team processes and the results they achieve (Clarke, 2012). Some studies have found the impact of leadership on people commitment. Sefora and Mihaela (2016) as well as Dwyer et al. (2013) sought the fundamental role of leadership for nonprofit organization especially in promoting volunteer commitment. Business skills and visionary organizational leadership are necessary for Social Business to provide the synergy needed to create new paradigms which cope with the vast societal needs not easily addressed under current business models (Muscat & Whitty, 2009).

Social projects offer opportunities for volunteers to play their role as leaders, but this leadership model is a big challenge. One of the main reasons for this struggle is that these leaders do not recognise that volunteer members choose to follow them; and they cannot be forced to it. Therefore, to reach success, leaders in this field must learn how to use their influence to motivate volunteers and perform specific tasks or goals (Camplin, 2009). As volunteers can withdraw their service from an organization anytime, the relationship between leaders and volunteers may play an even more significant role in fostering commitment within the volunteer context (Catano et al. 2001). Ellis (2005) presents the ten best practices of leaders who have been working successfully on volunteering projects: (a) value the volunteers' role, (b) define rules and expectations, (c) develop volunteer management skills, (d) reduce client and group risks, (e) create clear assignments, (f) reach beyond the circle, (g) invest on volunteers direction and training, (h) provide supervision, (i) make volunteers feel the sense of belonging, and (j) recognise volunteer contributions.

One standard way to analyse the leadership impact on organizational success is the Leader-member Exchange (LMX) theory, what explains the nature of dyadic relationships between leaders and followers. The LMX is helpful in describing the satisfaction of volunteers in their jobs and their intention to stay with their nonprofit organizations. One of the strengths of the LMX theory is its positive association with a wide range of organizational outcome variables (Northouse, 2001). Bang (2011) finds a significant impact of leadership especially in the context of nonprofit volunteering. Good interpersonal relationships can be a non-monetary reward for the time and unpaid efforts offered by volunteers.

As leadership is so crucial for volunteering projects development, raising leaders is a fundamental point to increase projects. Promote the leadership development is the condition that will enable an institution – no matter whether for a university, company or church – to increase their social project, otherwise they will struggle for lead their volunteer team and recruit new people for their challenges. In this context, leadership and management teaching is a priority task on volunteering programs.

2.2 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT TEACHING

Changes at work environment and in organizations are creating new demands of leadership. Differing expectations on the goals of leadership training and development are also emerging. In order to meet these expectations, some comprehensive models to guide evaluation research and practices in the field of leadership training and development have appeared in the literature (Clarke, 2012). As Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) comment, leadership approaches have been challenged by different perspectives, urging for a deeper insight into the leader's activities. The past decade witnessed a considerable expansion in leadership training and development. At the same time, shifts in our understanding of leadership are broadening the horizons of what leadership development can mean and our expectations about the impact it might have (Clarke, 2012).

In addition to the performance and relational perspective, leaders need to handle other deep issues like ethics, diversity, and social problems. These changes have brought reflections on leadership, teaching – including MBA programs –, and senior leadership approach (Cunliffe, 2009).



The demands of leadership in volunteer projects are different from the marketplace but in the same way or even more challenging. Managing social projects requires a new bundle of business knowledge, skills, and insights needed for the vast arena of projects and problems that are not quickly addressed by traditional market models (Muscat & Whitty, 2009). In a scenario that could be described as “leading without formal power” executives of nonprofit institutions seem to lack the conventional tools of authority to get others to follow their suggestions or orders. Moreover, they face growing competition for scarce and valuable resource of volunteers. Given that, specific human resource management instruments with the aim at attracting volunteers and preventing turnover are increasing the importance of management in nonprofit organizations (Jäger, Kreutzer, & Beyes, 2009).

The complex environment of volunteering requires more than new skills and knowledge, but behaviour and relational abilities. According to Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011), relational leadership, which requires a way of engaging with the world, is morally accountable to others; recognises the inherently needs of a diversity of discourses in nature of life; and engages in relational dialogue.

This demand for new skills and behaviour generates a movement looking for new ways of learning. Leadership and management teaching in the context of volunteering requires a new program, offering participants a new way of looking at the society and people around them (Jäger, Kreutzer, & Beyes, 2009). This leadership package needs to support the new leaders to understand people, community, motivation, and service. It involves soft and hard skills, self-awareness and tools of influence to lead people to transformational action in their contexts.

Leadership training and development has another perspective. Personal development and career benefits are a motivating factor in leading people to volunteer services (Clary et al., 1998). As Drucker (2005) states, training, development, and learning are ways of rewarding the unpaid work of volunteers. Given this, the offering of leadership and management education to volunteers, as well as a strategic action to increase and develop social projects, is a particular way of motivating volunteers in a leadership position for these projects.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative study. According to Roesh (2013), qualitative research uses in-depth interviews, participant observation, group interviews, and analyses of people involved in the project. It seeks to capture the perspective of interviewees without starting from a pre-established model. Besides, following Creswell (2009), the research has an interpretive character, having the researcher involved in the experience of data collection and intensive interaction with the respondents.

Following Cunliffe (2011), this research aims to have an inter-subjective approach, handling "interrelationships emerging and shifting in a dialectical interplay between ourselves, others and our surroundings" (p. 8). This perspective brings social realities with regard to interactions between people in moments of time and space.

The selection of individuals for the research was intentional due to the searching for specific people who were inserted in the experiment object of study of the researcher (Creswell, 2009). The sample was composed of 11 people: the LMS coordinator, four professors, and six students. They answered three questions: "How was your experience with the LMS program?" and "How did the LMS contribute to leadership and management skills development?".

The third question was different for each group. The coordinator answered the following question: "Did the LMS program reach your expectation? If so, in which way?" For professors: "Was your experience as a professor in the LMS program different from a traditional one? If so, how was it?". Lastly, the third question and addressed to the students was "Has the LMS program increased your motivation to engage in volunteering projects? How has it been?".

The interviews were conducted at the Berndt Wolter Volunteering Center headquarter, one year after the end of the first LMS course. We chose this season because the participants had finished their studies and they had attended a real volunteer project as an associate leader. The answers were discussed and analysed from the perspective of literature review and methodological approach to achieving the goals of understanding the contribution of the LMS in the development and motivation of volunteers.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Leadership and Management School was held at the Bernd Wolter Volunteering Center headquarters. Lessons were offered on Sundays. The coordination team chose the subjects based on the students needs observed in previous projects and also focusing on the desired leadership profile. The classes had as their themes: leadership foundation, project management, people leadership, emotional intelligence, conflict management, financial planning, spiritual and ethical leadership, volunteer motivation, coaching, personal awareness, servant leadership, and Christian leadership perspective.

The course lasted 6 months. Even though 38 students have started the course only 23 could correctly carry out the program to receive the certification. The coordination of the projects chose six of them to be the assistant leaders on a project in following year, and these students were chosen to participate in this study with professors and the coordinator. The next topics will analyse the questionnaire results. The answers were aggregated by questions. The analyses were a reflection of each perspective, expectations, and vision of self-development. All participants received the questions by email and submitted the responses typed.

4a. QUESTION 1

The Question 1 “How was your experience with the LMS program?” aimed to detect the participant’s experience with the program in all its points, such as environment, classes, contents, colleagues, and professors. The coordinator evaluated the experience as a “rich environment of learning, practices, and sharing experiences.” For him, each student had the opportunity to see an overview of leadership and some particular leadership points in volunteering contexts. As coordinator, he highlighted the opportunity to contribute not only to the development of the students, but also to “the consolidation of the Volunteer Center, as the leadership development is a condition to increase the number of projects and the volunteer participation.”

The professors agreed with the coordinator, they all pointed out the process as a great chance to hear the students about their challenges in leading social projects and contributing to their development. Professor 1, who led a project with a student as an associate, talked about how he could see the development and maturity of this student

after leadership classes. Another professor, who was led by a student, stood out the relationship and commitment of this student in every project, demonstrating her leadership learning.

The students seemed very grateful to participate in this leadership program. Student 1 said, “we do not have so many opportunities to talk about leadership in our undergraduate degree, then the LMS has led us to an issue that will be important not only for social project and volunteers, but for all our lives.” Student 3 emphasised that “the professors’ experience was a strength of the program; they could teach with real life examples.” Student 5 said he could make a professional contribution to program participation. “We are looking forward to a new training season, maybe an advanced leadership program,” said the student 6.

We can see in Question 1 an alignment between the vision and expectations of the coordinator and the professors in relation to the student’s vision and expectations. Students could see the contribution not only to volunteer leadership, but to all areas of their lives.

4.b QUESTION 2

With Question 2 “How did the LMS contribute to leadership and management skills development?” we tried to be more specific in relation to leadership and management skills and teaching and learning management. We were especially concerned that there were not so many common classes, as Ethics, Relationships, and Spiritual Leadership. The coordinator spoke about his high expectation of sharing with students not only the technical skills, such as planning, budgeting, project management and so on, but also spreading the desire for excellence and contribution in each student. In this case, human-related and ethical classes received particular attention. He talked about the professors' selection process, which was very restricted, even if the professors were volunteers. The coordinator and his associates searched for professors with practical experience and high commitment to ethics, relationships, and spiritual development. These items were more important than the technical skills.

These were the best points for professors as well. Professor 2, a technical teacher, said: “we were worried to develop their high sensitivity to the needs of the people around them.” Professor 4 pointed out, “we especially worked with the idea of leadership as an



influence, which means that I do not need to have a chief position to influence people and contribute to their development.”

Students responses revealed a high level of satisfaction with the leadership and management skills learned. The experimental program approach was stressed as a significant advantage. Student 2 commented: “we were able to see leadership and management in a very practical way and I could apply the concepts in the project; they were handy to me.” Student 3 said: “every professor was concerned with all our development as a leader, not just focusing on technical skills but as individuals and human being. I can say now I know what it means to be a leader.” Student 5 spoke especially about classes related to ethics and spirituality: “I saw ethics in a meaningful way, as something possible and desirable. Spirituality was presented in a practical and comprehensive way, showing how we need to take care of ourselves as a whole person so that we can be prepared to take care of our team.” The answers showed that students learned different approaches from different points of view about leadership and management. In fact, the LMS was a significant shift in leadership development. The expectation of the coordinator and professors seems to have been accomplished. Students not only learned technical skills but also leadership in a decidedly more prominent way, searching for their contribution.

4c. QUESTION 3

Question 3 was different for each group. We asked the coordinator “Did the LMS program reach your expectation? If so, in which way?” He demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with the results achieved. “We had amazing feedback from students, leaders, and groups. The LMS students were recognised as the best leaders and highly committed to the projects.” In addition, the coordinator talked about the students’ transformation: “they showed be a different person after the program.”

To professors we asked a different question: “Was your experience as a professor in the LMS program different from a traditional one? If so, how was it?” All professors recognised this experience as very different from traditional classes. “We have a bigger commitment to the development of all students,” professor 2 said. Professor 4 stood out his own learning: “After this experience, I am planning to change my way of teaching,

seeking a more practical approach.” For professor 5, “the teaching of spiritual leadership was an in-depth experience. I could see a transformation in the students view.”

“Has the LMS program increased your motivation to engage in volunteering projects? How has it been?” That was the third question for the students. Everyone answered yes, that being part of the LMS increased their motivation to engage in volunteering projects. They pointed to the new skills learned as a new way of seeing themselves as contributors to volunteer programs. “Now I am feeling confident to lead people on projects, to help them and to motivate them, because I am motivated by myself,” said student 1. Student 2 believes that the LMS gave him tools to tackle difficult situations in volunteer projects and even in life, but he kept on moving forward to achieve the goals. Student 6 talked about learning spiritual leadership as the most important point of motivation: “when I can take care of myself with a healthy spiritual life, I can be motivated to serve people in my community.”

The third question revealed great satisfaction in each group involved in the LMS. The coordinator and professors could see themselves playing a meaningful role in students’ life. Likewise, students have learned how to keep their own motivation and willingness of their groups to serve.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to show the importance of leadership and management teaching in a context of social project and volunteering. The program studied was the Leadership and Management School of the Berndt Wolter Volunteering Center, part of the Adventist University of São Paulo (Unasp). Aside from the technical skills, this program had as a purpose the development of skills related to ethical, human relations, and spirituality. The answers revealed that they achieved their goals. Students were given a different vision of leadership and demonstrated be impacted by the professors’ shared approach and experience. And yet, students demonstrated greater motivation and willingness to be part of volunteering projects after the leadership program.

Due to limitations, the study allowed just a small sample applied at one university only. We suggest new researches involving more universities and students, with comparisons between institutions and schools of leadership and management, and other institutions without this approach.

This article can be a contribution to volunteer associations and universities by presenting the power of leadership and management skills development. At first, people may think that only social issues are relevant to motivating volunteers, but this study has shown that teaching people about leadership and management can be a significant source of motivation, playing a rewarding role or giving them tools and skills to keep volunteers motivated and able to serve and help others.

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