

# Social Responsibility and Leadership Behaviour among Higher Educational Students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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<https://doi.org/10.24191/ajue.v18i4.20043>

*Received: 21 June 2022*

*Accepted: 11 August 2022*

*Date Published Online: 7 October 2022*

*Published: 7 October 2022*

**Abstract:** There has always been a healthy interplay between education that promotes the formation of an educated and active citizenry and more specialised, practical education for employment creation that fosters social responsibility and leadership behaviour. Modern college students, who have professional theoretical knowledge, are the backbone of society's future growth, which affects the future growth of our country. A self-developed structured questionnaire was utilised for the survey after verifying for reliability to examine the social responsibility and leadership behaviour of college students. Purposive sampling was used to choose 500 respondents from different institutions in Coimbatore, who were then surveyed using the questionnaire. The primary data were analysed using the independent sample t-test. For the study, only a few demographic variables were used, including College, Subjects, Gender and Location of prospective teachers, Age, and social responsibility variables such as environmental-related responsibilities, society-related responsibilities, family-related responsibilities, education-related responsibilities, and nation-related responsibilities. The research revealed an association between education, social responsibility, and leadership behaviour among a sample population. In addition to education, when social responsibility and leadership behaviour is considered, students may be able to create an atmosphere that supports the sustainable development of the economy.

**Keywords:** Social Responsibility, Leadership behaviour, Higher Education, College students, 21<sup>st</sup> century, Education system.

## 1. Introduction

In India, education is viewed as a means of climbing the social hierarchy. People believe that obtaining a quality education is the first step toward a prosperous career. India has a highly developed system of higher education that allows students to study and train virtually in all creative and intellectual domains. Since India's independence, the higher education system has expanded significantly. This is due to the Indian government's decision to establish several universities, technical institutes, research institutions, and professional/non-professional colleges around the nation to develop and disseminate information (Singh, 2016).

"Education is how God's perfection, which already exists in man, manifests itself." - Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902). Mondal and Mete (2012, p.79) reflected that such perfection through education can occur when a person develops in all aspects of life, including physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth. Obtaining an education is the single most significant thing a person

can do to come closer to this wholesome objective, as education fosters personal development. Education is the key to our species' advancement (Sharma, 2021). Therefore, in India, education must serve as a potent vehicle for the required social, economic, and cultural transformations for the achievement of the country's national objectives. The national objectives of India include instilling 'Social Responsibilities' and 'National Integration Values'. In this sense, teachers with strong leadership qualities are essential. During their teaching education, aspiring educators should be made aware of this issue.

Social responsibility is the assurance that the residents have towards their community to assist a safe and moral environment as it encompasses the value of community service and other good duties. It is an ethical theory that an organisation or individual, should act to benefit society at large. Social responsibility is an obligation any individual or organisation needs to do to maintain stability between the economy and the environment. Social duty implies keeping the equilibrium between the two. It refers not just to corporate companies but also everyone whose behaviour influences the environment (Eshach, 2006; Olah, et al., 2010; Dima, 2013).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) motivates higher learning institutions to follow certain beliefs and moral aspects that can be set through their managerial ethics, instructional languages, studies and societal based activities (Adomssent et al., 2007; Pachón, 2009; Balas, et al., 2008). According to Shelley et al. (2017), although colleges deal with various societal issues, universities seem to exhibit more moral commitments to CSR activities. Shelley et al. (2017), Lozano (2011), Lozano et al. (2013), and Moneva and Martin (2012) concluded that universities have mostly failed to integrate sustainability into their core functions. Notably, Spanish colleges did not adopt the notion of CSR until the late 1990s (Quezada, 2011). While Social responsibility and leadership behaviour of students has been on the radar of academicians as independent variables, the interlink between these variables has not been explored. Thus, this study intends to explore the prospective students from colleges of education in the Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu, India, which is one of the most vibrant southern states of India. The district itself is a major hub for education, commerce, textile, information technology, which makes it a fertile ground for research. The research questions are as follow:

- Is there any relationship between pursuing a degree and the social responsibility of students?
- Is there any relationship between pursuing a degree and the leadership behaviour of students?
- Are leadership behaviour and social responsibility of students correlated?

Based on the above research questions, the objective of the study is to find the relationship between the pursuing degree, social responsibility, and leadership behaviour of students. The correlation between social responsibility and leadership behaviour is also explored.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Leadership behaviour**

Teacher education entails teaching teachers to perform their duties effectively. As stated by Aristotle, education is the process of training a man to fulfil his aim by exercising all the faculties to the fullest extent as a member of society (Donskikh, 2019)

Education helps individuals prepare for family, society, and their nation. Through a value-based approach, the objective is to encourage creativity, train individuals to be devoted, and instil in them a strong desire to assist at the best possible level of effectiveness. It is a crucial approach for individuals to help enhance the quality of education. It is the process that makes people aware of its size and potential, and if it is fostered and cultivated properly, it might have a significant impact on the designated industries. It provides individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to advance in their own lives. Although previous studies in worldwide contexts have hypothesised a possible association between instructional leadership techniques and job success, there is currently a paucity of study on the subject as it pertains to high-performing vocational schools (Puruwita et al., 2022)

When appropriate leadership ideals are not taught, people may have difficulty adjusting to society, get into more disputes, cease caring about others, exhibit faux patriotism, behave recklessly on

the job, and behave in a variety of unacceptable ways that could go against socially accepted norms. We suggest that the sensitive process of imparting leadership skills can be accomplished effectively through educational programs involving study, games, and activities. Students should acquire a sense of what it means to be a good citizen, be aware of their social roles, and learn how to lead others. Social responsibilities are the tasks that individuals owe to their community to maintain its safety and decency. Social responsibilities create the moral responsibility of a community or an individual to make decisions or actions that are in favour and useful to society (Davis et al., 2017). Social responsibility is the ideology that organisations should not conduct unethically or act immorally but should instead endeavour to contribute to the well-being of society or societies (Tamunomiebi & Ehior, 2019)

Rosario and Ancho (2020) attempted to explain the encounters of Filipino school managers at foreign schools in Doha, Qatar, focusing on their experiences with (a) Planning; (b) Organising; (c) Leading; and (d) Controlling. In addition, the problems of leading foreign schools in Doha were explored. Four (4) topics arose from the research that describes the compliance of Filipino school leaders with mandates and regulations, the adaptation of school leaders to culture, the conformity of school leaders with programmes, and the conformity of Filipino school leaders with resources. (Del Rosario & Ancho, 2020) The transformation of a school into a learning organisation requires a substantial cultural shift, a mentality shift, and a school-wide devotion to self-reflection and assessment. For the school to achieve its intended goal, the presence and initiative of the headmaster are essential. Different leadership styles will describe a leader's behaviour in carrying out their responsibilities. It is of the utmost importance that school principals improve their abilities and skills in instructional leadership practice (Lim & Bishen Singh, 2020).

In terms of social duties, the significance of community service and other useful studies have been emphasised. Social responsibility variables include helpfulness, cooperation, social relation, nature conservation, social media usage and national interest (Khan et al., 2021). Social responsibility can populate the country with good people who stress helpfulness and who assist in the needed time (Dhiman, 2012). These good people also treasure cooperation as a sort of social interaction in which two or more individuals collaborate to achieve a common goal (Murray et al., 2010). They practise social relations and natural conversation. (Sanborn & Jung, 2021) Nature conservation is the moral concept and conservation movement centred on preventing the extinction of species, preserving, and restoring ecosystems, providing ecosystem services, and safeguarding biological variety (Hoffmann, 2022) Social media usage is the use of technologically enabled online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation between interconnected and interdependent networks of people, communities, and organisations (Bialkova & Paske, 2020). Meanwhile, national interest refers to the overarching, long-term objective that the state, the nation, and the government regard themselves as serving (Nincic, 1999).

As for leadership behaviour variables, there are personal leadership and group leadership. Personal leadership is an essential aspect of modern companies. This type of pioneering action is the foundation of comprehensive quality management and team-oriented operations (Dunwell et al., 1971). Group leadership is the practice of providing direction and emphasis to a particular group of individuals. This form of leadership frequently entails aiding and directing the actions of group members as well as bearing responsibility for the outcome of their efforts (Thomas et al., 2013)

## **2.2 Socially responsible leadership:**

Mydin and Amran (2019) aimed to determine the effects of student government participation and leadership activities on students' perceptions of leadership for social change. Students' opinions of their leadership ability, the congruence between their ideas and actions, and their dedication to the work were explored using a qualitative technique using semi-structured interviews. Ten student leaders engaged willingly in this research. They were chosen using systematic sampling. The framework of the interview process was based on the SCM fundamental principles of Individual, Group, and Community. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then analysed using the approach of a theme analysis. The findings indicate that the pupils, directly and indirectly, practised the SCM model ideals.

Kovar and Simonsen (2019) investigated the factors influencing the leadership development of college students. This research examined the influence of engagement elements (membership in groups, community service, and leadership education) on college student leadership development using

descriptive relational survey methodologies. In the analysis of leadership outcomes, the mean for the result of commitment was the highest and the mean for the outcome of change was the lowest. During their undergraduate careers, the majority of students were active in two to five groups. Although many respondents did not engage in community service regularly, the majority of students reported engaging in community service throughout their college careers. Students stated that they participated in short-term leadership education programmes, but not in long-term ones.

There are several, rather divergent definitions of responsible leadership. Waldman et al. (2020) distinguished between strategists and integrators as the most typical distinction in responsible leader approaches. Hamann (2016) used the 2009 and 2012 Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership data sets to assess the predictive usefulness of selected demographic characteristics, pre-collegiate experiences, and college experiences for community college students' socially responsible leadership. Sociocultural dialogues with peers and community service were revealed as major indicators of students' socially responsible leadership ability using hierarchical multiple linear regression analyses. In addition, students' grade point average, sexuality, and high school leadership training were strong indicators of their aptitude for socially responsible leadership.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Design**

The present study used the conceptual framework research design which employed the survey technique. This study is mainly about analysing the socio-demographic and educational details of the respondents, dimensions of social responsibility and leadership behaviour, the association between the degree pursued and the dimensions of social responsibility and leadership quality as well as the correlation between social responsibility and leadership quality of 500 prospective students from colleges of education in the Coimbatore district, India. The acquired data were examined statistically, and conclusions were drawn.

#### **3.2 Sampling**

520 questionnaires were distributed to the arts and science college students in and around the Coimbatore district. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents. Four colleges participated in the study and 130 questionnaires were distributed in each college. From the 520 questionnaires distributed, only 508 questionnaires were collected. Of the collected questionnaires, 500 questionnaires are valid, and which was taken for the study.

#### **3.3 Research Instrument**

The instrument used in the present study to collect data from among students is a self-developed structured questionnaire. Limited independent variables such as College, Subjects, Gender, Locale of prospective teachers, and Age, were taken for this study. Leadership behaviour and social responsibility variables such as environmental-related responsibilities, society-related responsibilities, family-related responsibilities, education-related responsibilities, and nation-related responsibilities were also taken. To obtain the necessary data for this study, the researcher utilised primary data. Students' social responsibility and leadership behaviours were assessed by the administration of a structured self-developed questionnaire to the representative sample.

The reliability of the scale was measured by using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Cronbach alpha for the scaled statements in the questionnaire was 0.803, which is considered a good criterion. Hence, consistency is attained. So, all the constructs are reliable and fit for further analysis.

According to Pearson Product Moment Values, the total sample size for the study taken is 500. The degree of freedom (N-2) at a 0.05 significance level is 498. The Pearson moment value of 498 at 0.05 is 0.087. From the validity test, it has been identified that the total score for all the Social Responsibility and Leadership behaviour variables is more than 0.087 of Pearson Product Moment Values at a 5% level of significance. Hence it can be concluded that all variables are valid.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

An Independent sample t-test was used to compare the mean score of those pursuing a degree in social responsibility and leadership with those pursuing a degree in another field. To determine the relationship between social responsibility and leadership behaviour, a correlation was used.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Socio-demographic and educational details of respondents

Table 1 shows the 500 participants from various Coimbatore colleges and universities in India. The gender classification of the selected college students revealed that 57.8 percent were female respondents and 42.2 percent were male respondents. 42.8 percent were between the ages of 20 and 25 years, followed by 36.8 per cent between the ages of 25 and 30 years, and 20.4% were less than 20 years of age. 43.8 percent of the selected college students reside in metropolitan areas, according to their domicile whereas 33.4 percent reside in a semi-urban setting and 22.8 percent come from a rural background. The majority of college students were female and between the ages of 20 and 25 years old, and the majority of them lived in metropolitan areas, according to their demographic characteristics.

Meanwhile, Table 2 shows the educational details of the respondents of the present study. From the table, 46.6 percent of students were enrolled in a college, followed by 34.8 per cent in a university, and 18.6 percent in a deemed university, according to the type of institution in which they were pursuing their higher education. The sources of institutions revealed that 39.6% were private, 31.4% were government, and 29.6% were government aided. 51 per cent came from co-ed colleges, whereas 49 per cent attended women's colleges, as indicated by the kind of institution. 52 per cent were pursuing a postgraduate degree, 26.6% were pursuing an undergraduate degree, and 20.6% fell into the "others" group, which included teachers in training and research scholars, among others. 42.2 percent of the educational institutions were located in a semi-urban area, while 30.4% were in an urban area and 27.4% were in a rural area, as indicated by their locality.

The bulk of the students came from private or government-funded co-ed colleges, and their educational institutions were located in semi-urban areas, as indicated by their educational backgrounds.

**Table 1.** Demographic information of respondents

S. No	Variable	Frequency
1	<b>Gender</b>	
	Male	211 (42.2)
	Female	289 (57.8)
2	<b>Age</b>	
	Below 20 years	102 (20.4)
	20 – 25 years	214 (42.8)
	25 – 30 years	184 (36.8)
3	<b>Place of Residence</b>	
	Urban	219 (43.8)
	Semi-Urban	167 (33.4)
	Rural	114 (22.8)

**Table 2.** Educational details of respondents

S.No	Variable	Frequency
1	<b>Type of Institution</b>	
	College	233 (46.6)
	University	174 (34.8)
2	<b>Source of Institution</b>	
	Government	157 (31.4)
	Govt.Aided	145 (29.0)
3	<b>Type of Institution</b>	
	Private	198 (39.6)
	Women's	245 (49.0)
4	<b>Pursuing Degree</b>	
	Co-ed	255 (51.0)
	UG	133 (26.6)
5	<b>The locality of the Educational Institute</b>	
	PG	264 (52.8)
	Others	103 (20.6)
	<b>The locality of the Educational Institute</b>	
	Urban	152 (30.4)
	Semi-Urban	211 (42.2)
	Rural	137 (27.4)

#### 4.2 Association between social responsibility and the degree pursuing

The researchers tried to examine the student's social responsibility along with the degree they were pursuing, and the result is given in Table 3. The degree that the selected students are pursuing is related to the selected social responsibility variables, including helpfulness, cooperation, social relations, nature conservation, social media usage, and national interest, as the t value was 5.68 and they were significant at the 1% level. The study concludes that there is a correlation between college student's pursuit of degrees and their civic duty.

**Table 3.** Association between degrees pursuing and Social Responsibility

Variables	Categories	Mean	SD	't' value	.Sig
Pursuing Degree	Helpfulness	3.98	2.65	5.689	.000*
	Co-operation	3.78	2.11		
	Social Relation	4.25	2.98		
	Nature Conservation	3.65	1.26		
	Social Media Usage	4.97	2.65		
	National Interest	4.56	2.18		

#### 4.3 Association between leadership behaviour and the degree pursuing

The degree pursued by the selected college students and leadership behaviour studied for this t-test was used; the result can be seen in Table 4. The t value of 6.74 and the significance value of 0.000 indicate that there is a relationship between the degree pursued by the selected college students and their leadership behaviour, meaning their leadership attitude and group leadership attitude, at the 1% level of independence. Thus, the degree pursued by selected responders is associated with their leadership conduct.

**Table 4.** Association between degrees pursued with Leadership Behaviour

Variables	Categories	Mean	SD	't' value	.Sig
Pursuing Degree	Personal Leadership Attitude	4.98	1.59	6.745	.000*
	Group Leadership Attitude	4.25	1.62		

#### 4.4 Correlation between Social Responsibility and Leadership Behavior among students

The study examined the correlation between social responsibility and leadership behaviour of the selected college students using correlation and the results are given in Table 5.

**Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significant correlation between Social Responsibility and Leadership Behaviour

**Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>):** There is a significant correlation between Social Responsibility and Leadership Behaviour

**Table 5.** Correlation between Social Responsibility and Leadership Behaviour

		Correlations							
		Helpfulness	Cooperation	Social Relation	Nature Conservation	Social Media Usage	National Interest	Personal Leadership Attribute	Group Leadership Attribute
Helpfulness	Pearson Correlation	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)								
Cooperation	Pearson Correlation	.265*	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003							
Social Relation	Pearson Correlation	.296*	.452*	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000						
Nature Conservation	Pearson Correlation	.426**	.325**	.212**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.003	.005					
Social Media Usage	Pearson Correlation	.326*	.268**	.632*	.368*	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.006	.000	.002				
National Interest	Pearson Correlation	.125**	.326*	.256*	.365*	.125**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.000	.002	.001	.025			

		Correlations							
		Helpfulness	Cooperation	Social Relation	Nature Conservation	Social Media Usage	National Interest	Personal Leadership Attribute	Group Leadership Attribute
Personal Leadership Attribute	Pearson Correlation	.325*	.259**	.365**	.214*	.159**	.321*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.005	.006	.004	.036	.002		
Group Leadership Attribute	Pearson Correlation	.654*	.159**	.248*	.365*	.248**	.365*	.485*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.021	.004	.000	.006	.000	.000	

\* Significant at 1% level, \*\* Significant at 5% level

The selected social responsibility variables, namely helpfulness, cooperation, social relationships, nature conservation, social media usage, and national interest, and leadership behaviour variables, namely personal leadership attributes and group leadership attributes, are positively correlated at the 1% or 5% level of significance, indicating a correlation between social responsibility and leadership behaviour.

## 5. Discussion

It could be observed from the analysis that there is a significant relationship between the educational level or degree pursued and the social responsibility of students. It was seen that the educational level is related to variables such as helpfulness (Ross et al., 1996), cooperation (Susilawati, 2017), Social relation (Ingholt et al., 2015), nature conservation (Yilmaz & Taş, 2018), social media usage (Dhyab & Varol, 2018) and national interest (Richard F. Elmore, 1990). A similar situation was observed in the case of degree pursued and leadership. The nature of the education of an individual and their leadership traits were related (Green et al., 2011).

Looking into the interrelationship between social responsibility and leadership behaviour, it was again observed that all the variables were interrelated. This leads to the conclusion that socially responsible leadership among students is possible through a strategically designed educational curriculum as education has an impact on both social responsibility and leadership.

## 6. Conclusion and implications

Every individual must be imbued with the spirit of national integration principles, leadership qualities, and social obligations, as well as the values that follow. Citizens are obligated to ensure a safe and moral environment for their community through their social obligations. At a time when society and its agencies are searching for persons with leadership skills and social responsibilities, colleges of education must include activities and programs that assist their development. All potential values wisely infused are the optimal method for cultivating a spirit of socially responsible leadership.

In the survey, it was determined that the majority of respondents were females between the ages of 20 and 25 who were enrolled in post-graduate programs. There is a correlation between students' social responsibility and leadership conduct and the degree they were pursuing at the time of the study. In addition, there is a correlation between social responsibility and leadership conduct among the chosen students. It can be deduced from the study that as the educational level of students rises, so does their social responsibility, culminating in the creation of a sustainable environment for the country's development. It was discovered that the leadership behaviour of selected students increases as they progress from undergrad to postgrad. The education that is delivered to the students in this 21st century should broadly focus on covering aspects related to the environment due to which the students will take

up the initiative to build the best environment for the future. The leadership behaviour of the students should be identified during their courses, and they can be motivated to use their leadership skills towards developing the nation along with eco-friendly attitudes. A sustainable nation leads to a sustainable country. Students are the backbone of the nation; their education should enrich both the environment and leadership for the future generations.

## 7. Co-Author Contribution

The corresponding author has undertaken the study under the guidance of the second author and has completed the work through discussions with the second author as per the agreement. The second author also helped in structuring the paper, fine-tuned the study and reviewed the paper for any conflict of interest.

## 8. Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank the staff members of the department of Pedagogical sciences, Tamilnadu Teachers Education University for their kind support and for providing pertinent data for the successful completion of this study. Additionally, the author would like to extend his appreciation to Mr P.Ganesan, Dr M.Govindan and Dr N.Kalai Arasi for their unreserved commitment to ending the language aspect of this study.

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