

ORIENTATION LEADERS: FOLLOWERSHIP STYLES
AND RISK-TAKING ATTITUDES

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Although researchers have investigated the role of new student orientation and transition programs on college campuses, the focus has been primarily on issues such as retention and persistence rates of program participants, academic preparation techniques, and program content or logistics. Little research has been reported on student volunteers or student leaders who serve as peer educators for these programs. While leadership style indicators and personality inventories are regularly used to assess student leadership skills, no research has been done on followership styles among student leaders in peer educator roles.

In that most new student orientation programs rely on student support and require college student volunteers or employees to be in good standing, decisions made by students about activities that carry risk (e.g., drowsy driving, underage drinking, or cheating on a test) can affect the orientation program that relies on them for help, in addition to their future at the college or university. This study explored the effects of followership styles and possible relationships with risk-taking attitudes and perceptions of undergraduate college students serving in orientation peer education programs.

Fourteen hundred student members from three student orientation peer educator organizations at a large state university were surveyed regarding their followership styles and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. Respondents were asked to respond to a web-based questionnaire that contained questions from the Kelley Followership Style Questionnaire (KFSQ) and the Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale (DOSPERT). A total

of 131 student leaders responded to the questionnaires; frequencies and percentages were reported to determine critical thinking scores, active engagement, followership styles, positional leadership levels, risk-taking intent, and risk-taking perceptions. Correlational analyses were conducted to determine relationships across positional leadership levels, followership styles, and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. Most respondents were classified as exemplary followers and significant relationships were found between positional leadership levels and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. Significant relationships were also found between followership styles and risk-taking attitudes in one or more risk domains.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my entire family: Alice and George Coombes,
May Courtion and Allyson Adair Goodman, Bill and Elise Coombes,
and everyone else who believed in me.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose and Objectives of the Study.....	5
Significance of the Study	6
Limitations of the Study.....	7
Definition of Terms	8
Chapter Summary.....	10
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	11
College Orientation Programs and Peer Educators	11
Followership and Leadership	14
Abraham Zaleznik.....	17
Robert Kelley	18
Ira Chaleff.....	22
Barbara Kellerman	24
Risk	27
Risk Taking.....	28
Risk Taking and Leadership	29
Risk-Taking Domains	30
Theory of Planned Behavior.....	33
Chapter Summary.....	35
CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY.....	37
Purpose and Objectives	37
Research Design.....	38

	Page
Instrumentation.....	38
Kelley’s Followership Styles Questionnaire.....	39
Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale (DOSPERT).....	40
Pilot Test	41
Institutional Approval.....	42
Population.....	42
Data Collection.....	44
Data Analysis	45
Representativeness of the Sample	47
 CHAPTER IV FINDINGS.....	 48
Response Rate	48
Demographics.....	48
Findings Related to Research Objectives.....	55
Risk-Taking Benefits	64
Risk-Taking Intent and Leadership Levels.....	66
 CHAPTER V SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	 79
Summary of Findings.....	80
Research Objective 1	80
Research Objective 2	80
Research Objective 3	81
Research Objective 4	82
Research Objective 5	83
Research Objective 6	84
Conclusions	85
Followership Styles.....	85
Risk-Taking Attitudes and Perceptions	87
Relationships: Leadership Levels and Risk-Taking Attitudes	88
Relationships: Followership Styles and Risk-Taking Attitudes	90
Implications	91
Recommendations	94
 REFERENCES.....	 97

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		Page
1	Kelley's followership styles.....	19
2	Followership typologies.....	26
3	Theory of planned behavior.....	35

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	Page
1	Reliability Coefficients for the Kelley Followership Style Questionnaire (KSFQ) and the Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale (DOSPERT) 43
2	Results of Goodness of Fit Test for Gender for the Sample and Population. 49
3	Results of Goodness of Fit Test for Classification for the Sample and Population 50
4	Results of Goodness of Fit Test for Ethnicity for the Sample and Population 50
5	Results of Goodness of Fit Test for College Affiliation for the Sample and Population 52
6	Results of Goodness of Fit Test for Enrollment Status for the Sample and Population 53
7	Participants' Organization Membership, Years of Experience in an Orientation Leadership Program, and Highest Position Held in the Organization..... 54
8	Descriptive Statistics for Critical Thinking 56
9	Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Active Engagement 57
10	Followership Styles of Participants Based on Responses to the Questionnaire 59
11	Leadership Levels Held by Participants Based on Responses to the Questionnaire 59
12	Kendall's Tau Correlation of Positional Leadership Level and Dimensions of Followership: Critical Thinking and Active Engagement..... 60
13	Item Scores for Risk-Taking Intent by Domain..... 61
14	Overall Descriptive Statistics for Risk-Taking Intent by Domain..... 62
15	Item Scores for Risk-Taking Perceptions by Domain 63
16	Overall Descriptive Statistics for Perceptions of Risk by Domain..... 64
17	Item Scores for Risk-Taking Expected Benefits by Domain..... 65

TABLE	Page
18 Overall Descriptive Statistics for Risk-Taking Expected Benefits by Domain.....	66
19 Pearson’s Correlation of Leadership Level and Risk-Taking Intent Score by Domain	67
20 Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Leadership Levels and Risk-Taking Intent.....	68
21 Pearson’s Correlation of Leadership Level and Risk-Taking Perception Score by Domain	69
22 Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Leadership Levels and Risk-Taking Perception.....	70
23 Pearson’s Correlation of Leadership Level and Expected Risk-Taking Benefits Score by Domain	71
24 Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Leadership Levels and Expected Risk-Taking Benefits.....	72
25 Pearson’s Correlation of Followership Style and Risk-Taking Intent Score by Style	73
26 Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Followership Styles and Risk-Taking Intent.....	74
27 Pearson’s Correlation of Followership Style and Risk-Taking Perceptions Score by Style	75
28 Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Followership Styles and Risk-Taking Perception.....	76
29 Pearson’s Correlation of Followership Style and Risk-Taking Benefits Score by Style	77
30 Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Followership Styles and Risk-Taking Benefits.....	78

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Leadership development and risk-taking behaviors among college students have been topics of interest for student affairs practitioners and higher education researchers for the past 20 years. National conference program agendas for student affairs professionals are filled with programs that focus on student leadership development and college student high-risk behaviors. The 2014 annual NASPA conference for student affairs administrators in higher education featured 89 interest sessions focused on leadership topics, 12 concurrent sessions specific to student leadership programs, and 34 concurrent sessions that addressed high-risk behavior such as binge drinking, sexual assault, and hazing (NASPA, 2014).

The study of leadership and individual leaders in an educational setting is as old as the first “history” class. As Bass (1990) observed, “From its infancy, the study of history has been the study of leaders—what they did and why they did it” (p. 3). Students are introduced to the word *leadership* and the concept of positional leadership at a young age in programs such as 4-H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Future Farmers of America, and other school leadership organizations. As noted by Barbara Kellerman (2012), many programs targeting young people use the term *leadership* in their program titles despite the fact that they are primarily academic or personal skill-building activities.

Used as a part of college recruiting strategies, leadership academies and national conferences and forums are regularly advertised to high school students with the word

leadership associated with success and institutional branding (Centenary College of Louisiana, 2013; LeadAmerica, 2013; National Student Leadership Conference, 2013). Activities, classes or programs that highlight or endorse leadership development, leadership education, and/or leadership training saturate college calendars, promotional brochures, and television marketing commercials (Iowa State University Student Activities Center, 2014; National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA], 2008).

At the same time, college students are encouraged to take advantage of programs and presentations that highlight alcohol education and prevention programs or teach risk management strategies (Texas A&M University, 2014b). In the past 10 years, high-risk behavior among college students such as binge drinking, drunk driving, drug use, unprotected sexual activity, relationship violence, hazing, and/or gambling have been topics of research and professional programming (Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors [AFA], 2013; NASPA Conference, 2013; NASPA, 2002). Studies (e.g., National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism [NIAAA], 2007) show that the rate of high risk alcohol behavior among traditional-age college students (18—25 years old) continues to be extremely high, with 1 in 4 college students reportedly drinking alcohol regularly and more than half of those who drink participating in high-risk drinking behaviors (e.g., binge drinking). There continues to be a significant amount of research on high-risk behavior involving alcohol misuse, hazing and/or violence and, of equal importance, there continues to be regular prevention programming on campuses (NIAAA, 2007).

On some college campuses, it is a requirement for student leaders to undergo training in order to understand and be well versed in organizational risk management concepts (Texas A&M University, Department of Student Activities, 2013). On those campuses, individual student leaders are held to a higher standard regarding their own personal behavior as it relates to risky and/or inappropriate conduct (Florida State University, 2014). Several types of college student organizations are particularly well known for formal training programs or online training modules for their student leaders and members to utilize as a part of their preparation. National Greek-letter organizations host leadership development conferences that highlight risk management training strategies, with special focus on decision making and accountability programs (Association of Fraternal Leadership & Values, 2015; Pi Beta Phi Fraternity, 2014; Southeastern Interfraternity Conference, 2015). Residence life programs regularly utilize the services of student resident advisors, peer health educators are trained to present programs about making healthy choices, and colleges count on the services of older students to mentor and assist new students through first-year orientation and transition programs (Ganser & Kennedy, 2012).

Each of these peer education organizations and programs expects student members and leaders to have strong interpersonal communication and facilitation skills, a sense of commitment and understanding of the college or university, and an appreciation and awareness of social justice issues (Ganser & Kennedy, 2012). As noted by Foubert and Grainger (2006), programs such as new student orientation attract students who are committed to their personal development and future leadership success

(Martin, 2000; Stanford, 1992). A recent study conducted by Sessa, Morgan, Kalenderli, and Hammond (2014) determined that students who were involved in programs such as these not only learned valuable leadership lessons by their involvement but also recognized the importance of their roles as mentors and role models.

Unfortunately, despite such leadership education and training experiences, position expectations, and signed commitment statements to honor codes or mission statements, student leaders and their peers continue to exhibit high-risk behaviors and make poor decisions (Silverstein, 2015). Poor decisions made by college students not only affect their role as leaders of student organizations; risky behavior such as driving while intoxicated or sexual misconduct can also jeopardize their academic careers and future endeavors (Associated Press, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Colleges and universities invest time and resources in leadership education programs and health promotion programs. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), students can and do increase their leadership skills during the college years. However, the majority of people serve as followers 80% of the time and as leaders only 20% of the time (Kelley, 1988, 1992). If this is true, why spend valuable time and resources focused solely on leader-centric skill development when conversations about effective follower skills and behaviors such as goal-focused engagement, ethical decision making, or proactive conflict resolution could be even more crucial for post-graduate success?

Schools treat peer pressure as a leadership issue when actually it's a followership issue. They believe that if they teach leadership skills, they will alleviate the negative effects of peer pressure. A better approach may be to teach better followership skills. (Kelley, 1988, p. 12)

Followership, while gaining momentum in the leadership education, training, and development industry (Kellerman, 2008), is still a very new concept in the realm of higher education and leadership studies. If the concept suggested by Kelley (1988), that one who has particular followership skills can better navigate the influence produced by one's peer group, then the question of whether a college student, equipped with specifically taught followership skills, would be less likely to behave in a manner that is self-destructive or socially destructive becomes very appealing.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate followership styles and behavioral intentions or the likelihood with which peer educators, serving in various types of leadership positions, engage in risk activities/behaviors originating from five domains of life (i.e., ethical, financial, social, health and safety, recreational). The present researcher sought to assess the followership styles and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions of undergraduate college students serving in leadership positions associated with orientation peer educator programs. The study also examined the peer educator student leader experience to determine whether a followership style was predominant among orientation peer educators and to identify risk-taking behaviors among these individuals and determine whether relationship exist among the leadership position, the followership

style, and risk-taking behaviors. Demographic information was collected from participants to determine whether there were trends among the participants. Five research objectives were established:

1. Identify orientation peer educators' followership styles through means and descriptive analysis;
2. Identify orientation peer educators' risk-taking attitudes and perceptions;
3. Investigate relationships between followership style and positional leadership levels;
4. Investigate relationships between risk-taking attitudes and perceptions and positional leadership levels; and
5. Identify relationships between followership style and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will add to existing literature regarding peer orientation leaders and their followership styles and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. This information could provide valuable data to student affairs practitioners, faculty, and academic advisors as they seek to enhance methods for addressing student behavior issues on college campuses. Professionals who work with new student orientation programs, student government organizations, fraternity and sorority organizations, campus conduct, and prevention programming could benefit greatly from knowing what followership skills affect a student's risk-taking behavior. To date, questions regarding college student risk-taking behavior have largely been specific to underage drinking,

drug use, or drinking and driving. There have been few studies that focused on college student followership styles or general risk-taking attitudes and perceptions as they relate to student leadership development, education, or student organizations membership.

Prior studies indicate that students who were involved in leadership positions reported an enhanced “understanding of self” and growth in their commitment to civic responsibility, conflict resolution skills, and ability to plan and implement programs and activities and willingness to take risks (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001). Students have also reported involvement in activities outside the classroom through elected leadership positions (Cress et al., 2001). However, few studies have focused on student leaders and their followership styles or risk-taking attitudes. No studies have targeted peer orientation leaders and their leadership or followership styles. Peer orientation leaders were selected for focus in this study because of the high level of commitment required to serve their college or university, in addition to their involvement in other types of organizations.

Limitations of the Study

The results, conclusions, and implications of this study have several limitations. First, the study is limited by the inherent biased nature of responses to a questionnaire. Respondents to a self-report survey could bias the survey based on answers that they believed to be popular. Second, the population of the study was limited to a nonrandom population of peer orientation leaders involved at a large public southern university. While findings for the study can be generalized to other college students involved in these organizations, they cannot be generalized to students involved in all orientation

leader programs or other student organizations. Third, the study was conducted several weeks into a new school year and 4 weeks after orientation program involvement had concluded. This may have resulted in a decrease in the number of responses or confounded results due to training and experience in the peer educator program. Fourth, the diversity of the pool of participants was representative of the university's ethnic distribution, which limits the extent to which the results can be generalized to a larger population. Fifth, the amount of training associated with risk management required by the institution may have predisposed student participants to present themselves in a more favorable light when asked about their personal behavior or attitudes associated with risky behavior.

Definition of Terms

CAS standards: Standards developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) general standards containing 12 common criteria categories that have relevance for functional areas in student affairs, student services, and student development programs.

Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale (DOSPERT): An instrument used to assess risk-taking attitudes, perceptions of risk, and perceived benefits of risks in five life domains.

Followership: An influence relationship between leaders and followers with the intent to support a goal, purpose, or mission that reflects the mutual purpose of both leaders and followers. "Followership and leadership are a dialectic" (Kelley, 1992, p. 45).

Kelley Followership Style Questionnaire (KFSQ): An instrument used to assess followership styles based on two behavioral dimensions: active engagement and independent critical thinking.

Leadership: “A relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish a positive change” (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2013, p. 14).

Line leader: A position of leadership. In this study, line leaders direct groups of followers and generally report to a mid-level leader, as well as senior-level leadership.

Mid-level leader: A position of leadership. In this study, mid-level leaders generally report to a senior-level leader and provide direction to line leaders in an organization.

Orientation peer educator: A student who is selected to serve as a first point of contact in a formal college orientation program. This student typically leads activities such as campus tours and introduces campus resources and support networks as defined by the respective orientation program office (Theroux, 2012).

Risk attitude: A person’s chosen state of mind or disposition related to a decision to be made or action to be taken based on the uncertain aspect of the positive or negative of that decision or action.

Risk perception: A subjective conclusion or opinion that a person has about behavior, action, or decision that has a characteristic of an uncertain outcome.

Senior-level leader: A position of leadership. In this study, senior-level leaders have the highest rank in the organization, generally directing the tasks of both mid-level leaders and line leaders.

Student leader position level: In this study, the hierarchical rank of a specific leadership or authority position within an organization.

Student orientation program: A formal program for new students at a college or university, typically held prior to the first day of an academic year.

Theory of planned behavior (TPB): A theory that suggests that, if a person evaluates a suggested behavior as being positive (attitude) and in turn thinks that significant others (e.g., friends, family) wants him or her to perform the behavior (a subjective norm), results are an increase in motivation and a greater likelihood to engage in the behavior (Ajzen, 1985).

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the research study reported in this dissertation. The purpose of the study was to understand peer orientation leaders followership styles as they relate to leadership position levels and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. The experience of being involved as a student leader in an orientation program or other type of student organization can influence future success as a leader or follower. Understanding followership styles and risk-taking attitudes or perceptions of orientation peer educators can help to define the success of training and development programs while targeting student leader skills and behaviors at various position levels.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into four major sections. The first section provides an overview of peer education and college orientation programs and associated research into college student leadership development and experiences. The second section provides an overview of followership research, followership typology perceptions, and their importance to leadership education and development programs. The third section examines research on risk-taking behavior and risk-taking attitudes and their relationship to leadership, the DOSPERT risk-taking assessment tool, and five domains of risk taking. The fourth section provides a summary of the theoretical framework selected for this research study.

College Orientation Programs and Peer Educators

While the application of formal orientation programs in the United States is as old as higher education itself, much is still unknown about those who serve as peer educators. In the early 1640s at Harvard, dons and tutors welcomed new young male students into the fold to “council and befriend them” as a part of their orientation process (Gardner, 1989). The support role played by faculty and other students to ensure that newcomers make a successful transition to college is a practice that continues today.

Today, however, orientation programs have evolved to address changing demographics and institutional concerns, such as financial challenges and societal issues. Not only do orientation programs provide a vehicle for new students to register for classes and receive a general introduction to academic policies and practices; such

programs provide information about the social and cultural aspects of the institution. Orientation is no longer seen as a singular program; it is approached by faculty and staff as a comprehensive process designed to ensure acculturation and retention. According to the CAS Standards (CAS, 2011) related to the role of orientation programs, “[orientation] programs rely extensively on highly trained and motivated peer groups (orientation leaders) in the achievement of the orientation mission” (p. 2). However, it is interesting to note that there are few studies or research specific to students serving in these peer groups. As noted by Ganser and Kennedy (2012), the study of undergraduate students serving in peer leader or peer educator roles is relatively recent.

The first documented information regarding the benefits of such leadership positions was provided in 1959 by O. B. Powell in one of the first field study books used by student affairs practitioners: *The Faculty in College Counseling*, edited by M. D. Hardee (1959). Peer leadership positions were most commonly found in residence life, but following World War II when college student populations grew (Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2009), the need for increased staffing brought about the use of students in paraprofessional positions such as orientation leaders and peer health educators.

Changes in college demographics have created the need for orientation leaders to be culturally aware, well versed in the litany of student services available on campus, and confident communicators. Students who seek the role of peer leader or orientation leader are often seen as rising student leaders on campus with excellent communication skills and knowledge of how the campus functions (Sawyer, 1988).

In a study conducted by Drake (1966), student orientation leaders were found to have the following qualities or interests: natural leadership, conscientiousness, interest in taking on responsibility, energetic, seeking opportunity to meet new people, and assuming leadership. While recruitment requirements for new student orientation programs differ across institutions, an orientation leader or peer educator typically must have completed at least one semester at the institution (Whyte, 2007). Historically, a large number of sophomores are recruited, as they are often seen as being a more natural fit for mentorship with freshmen (Branch, Taylor, & Douglas, 2003).

The role and scope of peer leadership responsibilities has increased over the years and the significant role of orientation leaders is critical in fostering successful transition to college (Gasner & Kennedy, 2012). Commonly used by college and university orientation offices, students provide a much-needed service as paraprofessional staff. As cited by Mullendore and Abraham (1993), “The selection, training and supervision of student orientation leaders are the key to a successful orientation program (p. 69). This is consistent with findings by Kuh et al. (1991) that involved students had a positive appreciation for their college experiences; that is, they were more satisfied with their social life, living environment, and academic major and had a higher self-esteem than students who were not involved. The type of training provided to peer orientation leaders normally focuses on responsibilities associated with the roles that they will fulfill. As noted by Robert Wansek (2007), students involved as student orientation leaders have found training activities such as crisis intervention, peer counseling skills, and academic advisement to be both enjoyable and beneficial to their

own development and they tend to rank such opportunities highly. As cited in the 2014 CAS Standards, colleges and universities are developing more expansive and extended orientation programs that span the first year of a new student's college experience. Because most research related to orientation and orientation programs has focused on staff selection, staff training, and the orientation programs, little is known about the impact of being an orientation leader on the student (Hodges & Tankersley, 2013). As funding for higher education declines and enrollments increase, there will be greater need for peer leaders to support established programs such as orientation, health education, and residential living (Gasner & Kennedy, 2012). Learning more about students who serve as peer orientation leaders, in addition to new students, is critical as institutions are now expected to provide evidence of program impact on student learning and developmental outcomes (CAS, 2011).

Followership and Leadership

Institutions of higher education have long touted leadership as a part of their mission statements, goals, and learning outcomes. The study of leadership, as observed by Karen Klenke (1993), "is a subject about which educators, researchers, practitioners, theorists, or students, feel passionate despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that the field is riddled with paradoxes, inconsistencies, and contradictions" (p. 112). Leadership studies continue to garner attention from faculty scholars, student affairs practitioners, and corporate trainers while often crossing academic disciplines from agriculture to business management, education, medicine, and sports. As noted by Barbara Kellerman (2012), "The word *leadership* is used for all sorts of programs targeting young people"

(p. 158) with the probable intent of making the programs seem more desirable or interesting. In her recent book *The End of Leadership*, Kellerman (2008) stated,

The trend extends to undergraduates everywhere, who, assuming they have any interest at all in leadership have a range of options from which to choose.

Students who themselves want to be leaders can engage in any number of undergraduate activities in addition to leadership courses—student government, sports, campus clubs and organizations—that intentionally develop leadership skills. (pp. 158-159)

Despite a long history of positive publicity and attention given to leadership and the study of leadership development, in the late 1980s several brave leadership researchers ventured into what some would consider the antithesis of leadership: *followership* (Chaleff, 1995a, 1995b; Kelley, 1988, 1992; Riggio, Chaleff, & Lipman-Blumen, 2008). Considered to be a negative role, the role of the “follower” had been studied in relationship to leaders and various leadership theories. The irony is, however, that, without followers, leaders would not exist and the study of leadership would not be relevant. As identified by Meindl and Ehrlich (1987), the role of the follower is usually overlooked while the success of a project or initiative is most often attributed to the skills and abilities of the leader. While Abraham Zaleznik (1965) is credited with the first notable attempt to address the role of followers, Robert Kelley’s (1988) controversial *Harvard Business Review* article “In Praise of Followers” opened the door to research that focused solely on followers and followership styles.

Kelley's work led to other influential books on followership such as Ira Chaleff's book *The Courageous Follower* (1995b), Meindl and Boas's (2007) book *Followership: Centered Perspectives on Leadership: A Tribute to the Memory of James R. Meindl*, Barbara Kellerman's 2008 book, *Followership*, and Ronald Riggio, Ira Chaleff, and Jean Lipman-Blumen's 2008 book, *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*. These authors introduced the topic for further study and brought followership into the mainstream of leadership education. In fact, as a result of their work and the legitimacy of the resulting studies, many leadership programs now have a class section or a full course devoted to followership (Riggio et al., 2008).

Like the term *leadership*, which has been variously defined, *followership* suffers from the same conundrum. In his book *The Power of Followership* Kelley (1992) focused on why people choose to follow rather than seek to be the leader. Kelley identified seven specific follower roles that attract people: apprentice, disciple, mentee, comrade, loyalist, dreamer, and lifeway. Kelley (1992) stated that each of these roles or "paths" is characterized by different sets of motivations, only some of which have anything to do with the leader.

As pointed out by Kellerman in her 2008 book *Followership*, followers can be defined by their rank or they can be defined by their behavior. However, it is important to recognize a distinction that, despite rank or position, a follower can behave like a leader, as in the case of a subordinate who steps up to point out illegal or unethical behavior by those in charge. Usually identified as whistle blowers, these individuals, who may have less power, authority, or official influence, may find their voice and

evolve into leaders of peers or an organization (Kellerman, 2008). Kellerman (2008) defined *followers* as “subordinates who have less power, authority, and influence than do their superiors and who therefore usually, but not invariable, fall into line” (p. xx). In the present study, Kelley’s (1988, 1992) role definitions were used to define followership and followership styles and Kellerman’s (2008) definition of a follower was referenced.

Followership research specific to college students and late adolescent followership styles is meager. A review of the literature revealed several dissertation studies and the use of college student or faculty samples; however, most studies and their conclusions focused on military operations or business and industry. While there have been research articles that addressed followership skills since the late 2000s, much of the research on followership can be found in journals specific to the study of leadership, business, medicine, or military organizations. Aside from a study by Tannoff and Barlow (2002), focused on students at a military college and the connection of leadership and followership roles, and a 2014 study published by Strong and Williams (2014) about self-directed learning and the influence of followership styles, there is a shortage of research that speaks specifically to traditional-age college students and their followership styles. The major theorists of follower styles are reviewed below.

Abraham Zaleznik

Abraham Zaleznik introduced the idea of follower types in 1965, using a 2x2 matrix that identified a follower’s tendencies along a continuum of desired control of the follower’s leaders (superiors). At one end of the continuum is a follower’s inclination toward *dominance* and at the other end is the follower’s trend toward *submission*. The

second axis measures the follower's activity as it relates to interacting with the leader. Specifically, a follower's activity or inactivity specific to behaviors, with extreme followers viewed as initiating action and passive followers viewed as doing nothing.

Zaleznik identified four types of followers based on their placement on the 2x2 grid and labeled the types as impulsive, compulsive, masochistic, and withdrawn (Kilburn, 2010). The impulsive and compulsive group of followers are both seen as being dominant; however, compulsive followers lack the activity to achieve their desire for control. The masochistic and withdrawn followers are viewed as submissive; however, the masochistic follower is active within the organization but does not possess any authority, whereas the withdrawn follower has no desire for control and is not an active part of the group or organization. "Zaleznik's effort was the first notable attempt to categorize followers which provided a foundation for future attempts at categorizing followers" (Kilburn, 2010, p. 10).

Robert Kelley

Similar to Zaleznik's observations regarding follower types and styles, Robert Kelley's observation (1988, 1992) that a follower's critical thinking skills combined with active or passive engagement in an organization define the followership style as one of five types: the sheep, the yes people, the alienated, the star followers, or the pragmatics. Recognizing that leaders are also followers more than 80% of the time, Kelley (1988, 1992) used his two-dimensional model of followership styles to explain and assess the differences among various types of followers in an organization. The first dimension contrasts independent critical thinking with dependent noncritical thinking

and the second dimension seeks to measure the extent to which a follower is an active or passive member of the organization (Kelley, 1988, 1992). To illustrate how these two aspects of behavior interact, Kelley (1992) developed the KFSQ, with the goal of assisting others to identify their individual followership style, including its strengths and weaknesses (Figure 1).

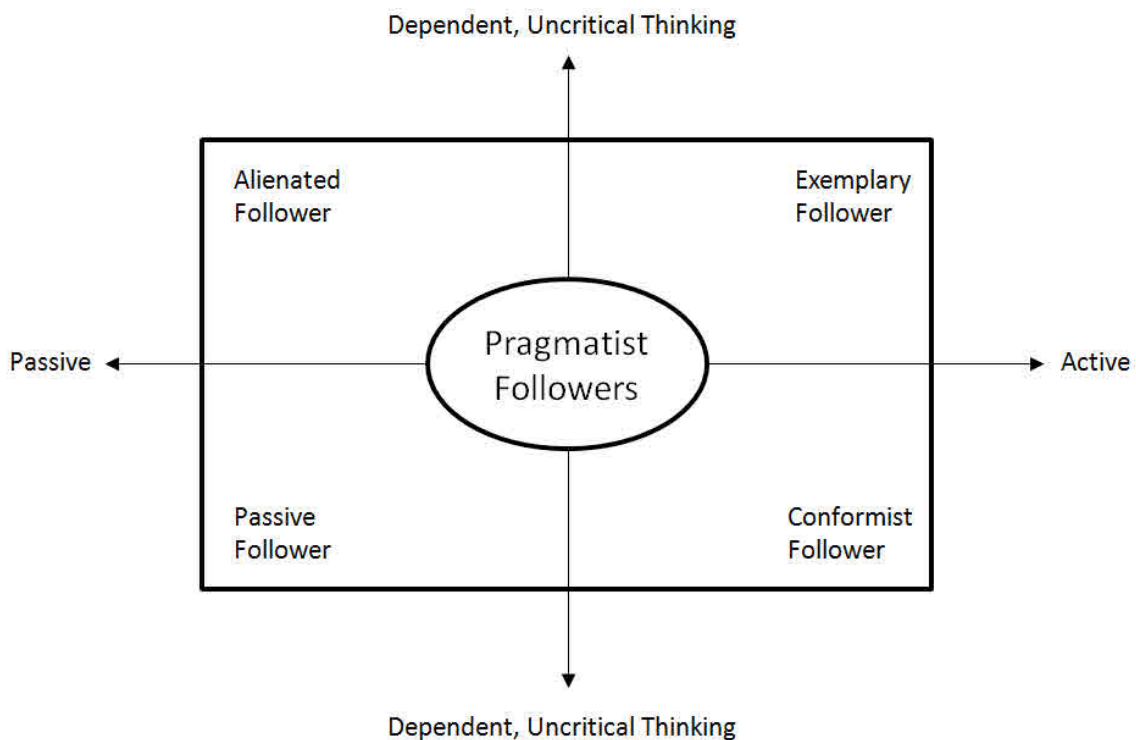


Figure 1. Kelley's followership styles. From *The Power of Followership* by R. E. Kelley, 1992, New York, NY: Doubleday. p. 97. Copyright 1992 by R. E. Kelley. Reprinted with permission.

The instrument consists of 20 items and is scored based on a self-reported level of independent thinking and active engagement, which are considered the primary dimensions of followership (Beebe, 2013; Kelley, 1992). Using a scoring key, scores are plotted along the perpendicular and horizontal axes to reflect a level of independent

critical thinking and active engagement. The combination of the two dimensions forms the basis for the followership style classification (Kelley, 1992).

Kelley's five typologies identify characteristics that highlight critical thinking and engagement in an organization or movement. Similar to the unique skills possessed by exceptional leaders, Kelley (1992) noted that exemplary followers scored high in critical thinking and high in active engagement and were often described as "self-confident" and "innovative and creative." Kelley described exemplary followers as those who put their talents to work for the good of the project or organization and do not stop until goals or tasks are completed. These types of followers often stand out from other followers and often relieve the leader of tasks, rather than letting the leader bear the burden of the success or failure of an initiative.

In contrast to the exemplary follower, the passive follower or "sheep" was recognized as one whose engagement with an organization or activity is low, as is also the desire and/or confidence to contribute or to initiate new ideas. Those who adopt a passive follower style rely on organization leaders to direct, steer, or "herd" them in whatever direction the leader determines is best. According to Kelley (1992), passive followers make up the smallest portion of the population and can often be the result of a directive leader's expectations. Leaders who tend to micromanage employees, dictate specific processes or protocols, and make every decision will often perpetuate a passive followership behavior (Kelley, 1992). The analogy of herding sheep may in this scenario ultimately result in followers getting what they expect. Passive followers ultimately allow the leader to assume all aspects and burdens of thinking and motivation.

Alienated followers, who, according to Kelley (1992), likely began as exemplary followers, often see themselves as victims or martyrs who were treated unfairly. These followers are competent members of an organization, with strong critical thinking skills; however, they choose not to connect or are reticent to engage with organization activities or priorities. Often seen as talented, capable, and intelligent, these cynical followers are known to criticize leaders or second guess directives while giving the least amount of effort possible to get the job done. Kelley noted that alienated followers could again become exemplary leaders if the root of their alienation were resolved. More often than not, trust issues are at the heart of the resentment displayed by alienated followers. Were alienated followers able to confront and resolve the perceived “wrongdoing” or inequity among organization leaders, they might be able to overcome negativity and actively engage with the organization. Such improved active engagement and natural independent critical thinking skills could interact to result in exemplary performance.

Opposite the alienated follower is the highly engaged active follower or “conformist,” who scores low in independent thinking. These followers gladly accept any type of assignment, are loyal to the organization, place complete trust in leadership decisions, and never question a directive, since they are adverse to conflict. Referred to by Kelley (1992) as conformist followers, they presume that the leaders’ position of power dictates the social order and decision-making protocols of the organization. These conformist followers are often considered people pleasers or “yes men”; they appreciate structure and thrive in highly regulated environments. Leaders who prefer an authoritarian style appreciate these followers and their respect for rules and protocols

because they provide structure and stability in the organization without an opportunity for individualism to confound the purpose or mission. Active conformist followers are often well trained and are sought by corporate or process-oriented firms due to the alignment of this type of behavior with traditional hierarchical command and control structures (Kelley, 1992).

Kelley (1992) recognized the pragmatist or survivor as a type of follower. These individuals score neither high or low for critical independent thinking or engagement with an organization. They are often recognized for their ability to keep things in perspective, they know how to work the system to get things accomplished, and they generally play by the rules. However, others may also see them as noncommittal or mediocre workers because they are not passionate or enthusiastic about an assignment. Kelley noted that these followers avoid taking risks and may live by the slogan “Better safe than sorry” (1992, p. 117). The pragmatist’s effectiveness can be compromised by complacency or a need for self-protection through office politics. Like the alienated follower, pragmatists spend a great deal of time and energy ensuring that they can protect their role and status quo in the organization.

Ira Chaleff

Three years following the release of Kelley’s book on followership styles (1992), a new view of followership was introduced by Ira Chaleff (1995b) in the first edition of his book *The Courageous Follower*. Like Zaleznik in 1965, Chaleff addressed the power dynamics between leaders and followers but, like Kelley, recognized the importance of the follower role and impact on organizational success. Recognizing the type of

behaviors that followers should demonstrate, specifically those related to taking on responsibility or challenging leader or group decisions, Chaleff's model has been used to motivate and teach followers the skills necessary to ensure group or organization success. Like Zaleznik (1965) and Kelley (1988, 1992), Chaleff (1995a, 1995b, 2009) used a two-dimensional model with the two axes in the matrix to represent two dimensions of courageous followership. The first dimension was defined as the degree to which followers provide support to leaders, with one end of the continuum being a high degree of support and the other end being a low degree of support. The second dimension addressed the willingness of followers to challenge the leader on critical issues (Kilburn, 2010). Similar to the Zaleznik (1965) and Kelley (1988, 1992) models, the 2x2 model allowed Chaleff (1995a, 1995b, 2009) to create four types of followers.

The first type recognized by Chaleff is the *partner*. Scoring high on both continuums of support for the leader and challenge, this follower provides unwavering support for the leader but is not afraid to challenge the leader or the decisions should a need arise. This follower would likely be seen as a true partner with the leader related to whatever initiative or program is being directed. Opposite the partner is the follower who scores low on both support for the leader and willingness to challenge leadership. The *resource* type of follower, as described by Chaleff (2009) is likely to “do an honest day's work for a day's pay but won't go beyond the minimum expected” (p. 41). The *implementer* is one that most leaders would like to have in the organization. This follower is a strong supporter of the leader and does not require much supervision or follow-up because of the tendency to follow directions in order to please the leader. The

desire to challenge the leader is low and consequently this follower is not likely to speak out of turn, regardless of necessity. The *individualist* is the antithesis of the implementer: high on challenge but low on support for the leader. According to Chaleff (2009), this follower will “not hesitate to tell the leader, or anyone else in the group, exactly what they think of his or her actions or policies” (p. 41) and may often be marginalized by the group.

Barbara Kellerman

One of the most recent interactions of follower typologies is the single continuum model introduced by Barbara Kellerman in an article in the *Harvard Business Review* (2007) and fully described in her book *Followership: How Followers Are Creating Change and Changing Leaders* (2008). A self-reported political scientist, Kellerman was one of the first to identify the importance of context when researching followership and followership styles. For instance, to be a follower in a south Asian country such as India may look entirely different from a follower in the Latin American country of Brazil. The cultural context, as well as the situational context (crisis versus stability) influences what it means to be a follower in an organization (Kellerman, 2008).

Kellerman’s typology is more specific to follower behavior and uses one simple metric: level of engagement. Kellerman divided followers into five types that range in behaviors from “feeling and doing absolutely nothing” to being “passionately committed and deeply involved” (2008, p. 85). Similar to both Kelley (1988, 1992) and Chaleff (1995a, 1995b, 2009), the observation of a follower’s activity level or engagement with the organization is deemed important in describing positive and negative followership

behaviors. At one end of the typology continuum are the *isolates*, who are completely detached from the initiative, program, or organization. They do not care about their leaders nor do they participate in or respond to leadership directives; they are often alienated from the group (Kellerman, 2008). Further along the continuum closer to the middle are the *bystanders*. Declaring their neutrality, these followers will not participate or engage with leader or the group; they make a deliberate decision to step away and observe what is occurring in the group. At the middle of the continuum are the *participants*. These followers connect with the group on some level and often favor the leader or fellow followers to invest energy in one direction or another. They are interested in investing time and money in order to have some type of impact. Slightly higher on the engagement continuum are the *activists*. These followers have strong feelings of support for the leaders, message, and/or organization. These followers are energized to work on behalf of the cause and in support of those who lead; however, in some instances they will work just as hard to undermine or oppose a leader who could be seen as a barrier to the initiative or project. At the far end of the continuum are the *diehards*, who are prepared to give up everything for the cause, whether individual, idea, initiative, or project. The diehards are deeply devoted followers who are consumed by the task at hand. Kellerman noted that these followers are rare and are often found in unusual circumstances where they pay a high price for their involvement.

Research conducted by Brandon Kilburn (2010) provided a comprehensive overview of the followership typologies that provides those who serve in leadership positions an excellent resource of issues to consider when evaluating the actions and

productivity of followers. As shown in Figure 2, understanding why individuals display a certain behavior or take on follower roles (typology) in an organization could be of great assistance in evaluating productivity metrics, membership retention programs, and behavior concerns. Kilburn (2010) reiterated that the role of the follower in each of the typologies is not static and he recognized that followers may move in and out of certain groups depending on the group dynamics and the desires of the followers.

	Criteria	Follower Types
Zalesnik (1965)	Two Axes: Dominance v. Submission Activity v. Passivity	Impulsive: Dominant and Active Compulsive: Dominant and Passive Masochistic: Submissive and Active Withdrawn: Submissive and Passive
Kelley (1988, 1992)	Two Axes: Independent Thinking Activity Level	Effective: High Thinking, High Activity Alienated: High Thinking, Low Activity Yes People: Mid-Thinking, Mid-Activity Sheep: Low Thinking, Low Activity Survivors: Low Thinking, High Activity
Chaleff (1995b)	Two Axes: Level of Support Willingness to Challenge	Partner: High Support, High Challenge Implementer: High Support, Low Challenge Individualist: Low Support, High Challenge Resource: Low Support, Low Challenge
Kellerman (2007, 2008)	Feeling/Doing Nothing Passionately Committed/ Endpoints Continuum: Deeply Involved	Isolates: Feel Nothing, Do nothing Bystanders: Feel Little, Do Little Participants: Partially Committed/Involved Activists: Moderately Committed/Involved Diehards: Highly Committed and Involved

Figure 2. Followership typologies. From “Who Are We Leading? Identifying Effective Followers: A Review of Typologies” by Brandon R. Kilburn, 2010, *International Journal of the Academic Business World*, 4(1), 12. Reprinted with permission.

Risk

The word *risk* is used in everyday conversation by young and old people alike. The concept of risk is often discussed as a part of conducting business, pursuing new adventures, or making decisions about walking or driving to school. Risk spans all walks of life and is that element of uncertainty related to decision-making processes. The word *risk* is defined by Merriam-Webster (2015) as associated with chance and/or decision making, specifically the possibility of injury or loss to an individual; the possibility that something bad may happen because of someone or something; a judgment, ruling, or financial outcome related to a good or bad choice. In many articles related to risk and risk taking, the outcomes are generally focused on the loss or gain of something tangible, such as money, freedom, or physical health and well-being.

The expected utility framework and its variants, such as prospect theory, in research was initially used to determine a person's risk attitude (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, 1982, 2000). Using a mathematically based metric in which "a person's risk attitude describes the shape of his or her utility function (derived from a series of risky choices) for the outcomes in question" (Weber, Blais, & Betz, 2002, p. 264) of risk seeking and risk-averse behavior is framed in terms of losses or gains. Despite the fact that the metric was used as a research tool throughout the 1980s, it was determined that *risk attitude*—a person's standing on the continuum from risk aversion to risk seeking—is more commonly considered to be a personality trait (MacCrimmon & Wehrung, 1990; Weber et al., 2002) and was found to be significant limited in its predictive value (Weber et al., 2002). While the metric was cited in many studies in the 1990s, Stine-Cheyne

found that much of the research identified confounding variables that indicated that utility theory or prospect theory is not applicable to college student behavior because it cannot predict behavior in all circumstances. It was ultimately concluded that risk attitude is more naturally conceptualized in the risk-return framework, as has been applied in the area of finance (Sarin & Weber, 1993)

Risk Taking

Recognizing that decision-making behaviors related to risk assessment are not the same from person to person due to individual differences, some studies by social scientists and psychologists have focused on individual risk attitudes (Pratt, 1964; Weber 1988). People evaluate risks differently, taking into account their own values, their goals, perceptions of others, and their own personalities (Stine-Cheyne, 2002). Parsons, Siegel, and Cousins (1997) found that late adolescents may define risks differently from adults because risk taking is conceptualized based on a person's developmental context. They stated that adolescents' egocentrism and sensation seeking may cause them to disregard risks and focus only on the potential benefits of the risky behavior.

Studies specific to adolescent risk-taking behavior have largely been specific to illegal activities such as underage drinking, drug use, or drinking and driving, however, several not only focused on high-risk behaviors but also explored environmental factors such as campus living arrangements, fraternal affiliations, gender, and age (Bentrim-Tapio, 2004; Rhoads, 1995; Rolinson & Scherman, 2003). A 2008 article in *Time Magazine* (Park, 2008) featured the theory that there was a biological explanation for why people live on the edge. The article entitled "Why We Take Risks: It's the

Dopamine” cited a study that focused on involvement of the neurotransmitter dopamine and explained how the brain responds to risk-taking behavior. Additional articles and studies about risk taking associated with financial investing and/or management decision-making processes can be found in popular news magazines and in research journals from various disciplines, including human resources and the social sciences (McGowan, 2007; Stinchfield, 2008; Wooten & James, 2008).

Risk Taking and Leadership

Many leadership authors, such as Bennis (2009), Kotter and Rathgeber (2006), Chaleff (2009), Kouzes and Posner (1987), and others, regularly suggest that exemplary leaders must be “risk takers.” “Risk is not just about what might be lost, but what can be gained in the process of trying” a dynamic perspective of risk that be found in scholarly literature and popular press related to leadership and effective management” (Stine-Cheyne, 2002, p. 19). “Leaders are pioneers—people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They are people who are willing to take risks, to innovate and experiment in order to find new and better ways of doing things” (Kouzes & Posner, 1987, p. 8).

In an effort to empower student leaders and curb risky behaviors, especially those associated with alcohol use and sexual assault, concepts such as officer or organizational liability, alcohol-serving programs, and conflict resolution skills are often included in college leadership training programs (Borsari, Murphy, & Barnett, 2007). However, despite the time and attention paid to educating high school and college students about the perils of high-risk behaviors as part of leadership programs or workshops, college

students continue to engage in unhealthy risky behaviors (Wechsler et al., 2003).

Perhaps there is more to “why” people choose to take risks.

While several researchers (Cress et al., 2001; Foubert & Grainger, 2006; Posner & Rosenberger, 1997) have studied the benefits or outcomes associated with student organization involvement and resulting leadership skill development, few studies have focused on college student leaders or leadership styles and risk-taking behaviors. In Stine-Cheyne’s (2002) study on risk taking and organizational culture, she stated,

It is generally accepted among behaviorists that individuals will be risk averse if they view a choice in terms of what they have to gain and risk seeking if they frame a choice in terms of what they have to lose—this is called prospect theory. However, college students and leadership professional tend to view risk in terms of benefits to be gained and yet they tend to be risk seeking - this conflicts with the assumptions of prospect theory. (p. 24)

This calls into question how risk-taking behavior relates to a college student’s overall perception of societal behavior expectations and risk for the sake of learning or development. The literature is sparse related to studies on general risk-taking attitudes and student development among college students.

Risk-Taking Domains

Prior to 1998, instruments that assessed risk-taking behavior focused primarily on a single domain or combined scores from risk-related questions across different domains of life, such as with The Choice Dilemma Scale, to report a person’s risk attitude (Kogan & Wallach, 1964). However, MacCrimmon and Wehrung (1990)

identified types of decision domains that influenced individual behavior and perceptions. Similar to the risk-return framework imported from finance, the psychological risk-return models treat perceived riskiness as a variable that can differ among individuals and as a function of content and context (Weber et al., 2002).

In finance, riskiness of an option is equated to its variance, but psychological risk-return models (Weber, 1997, 1998), treat perceived riskiness as a variable that can differ between individuals and as a function of content and context: Preference (X) = a(Expected Benefit(X)) + b(Perceived Risk(X)) + c. This decomposition of preference provides for different (and not mutually exclusive) ways in which the outcome domain can affect people's choices under risk.

(Weber et al. 2002, p. 265)

Weber and Milliman (1997) and Weber and Hsee (1998) designed this formula to break down

observed behavior (risk taking) into an evaluation of benefits and risks as well as a trade-off between perceived benefits and perceived risks, with a person-specific willingness to trade off units of returns for units of risk (i.e., attitude towards perceived risk) that is assumed to be relatively stable across situations and domains. (Blais & Weber, 2006, p. 34)

According to Blais and Weber (2006), one would expect to find differences in the perception of risk and benefits in different domains of decision types because individuals would score differently on the psychological risk dimensions (e.g., dread, familiarity, controllability, all known to affect risk perception; Slovic, Fischhoff, &

Lichtenstein, 1986). Blais and Weber (2006) determined not only that large-scale domains would show different degrees of risk taking and different perceptions of risks and benefits among individuals, but also that personal decisions could be broken into smaller categories that differed in associated goals such as health and safety (e.g., drinking and driving, smoking), social (e.g., confronting a coworker), and ethical decision making (e.g., cheating on a test; Weber, Ames, & Blais, 2005; Weber & Lindemann, 2007).

In 2002, Weber et al. developed the DOSPERT, which examines individual differences in risk perception and risk preference across five domains of risk: ethical, financial, health and safety, recreational, and social. The DOSPERT instrument allows researchers to assess both conventional risk attitudes (the self-reported level of risk taking) and perceived risk attitude (the willingness to engage in an identified risky activity based on perceived riskiness) in each of the five domains (Blais & Weber, 2006).

While Arnett (1992) found that adolescents generally tend to engage in more risky behavior than adults, the results were based on specific behaviors in the health and safety domain (Albert & Steinberg, 2011). In light of the fact that research suggests that risk taking is content, or domain, specific (Blais & Weber, 2006; Weber et al., 2002; Weller & Tikir, 2011), educators would benefit from understanding domain-specific risks and determining whether certain variables influence risk behaviors invariant of domain or whether certain traits can be used to predict domain-specific behavior.

Similar to Weller and Tiker's (2011) research, learning about how behavioral tendencies, leadership positions, or other variables influence risky behaviors by selectively influencing perceptions of risk, perceived benefits, or a combination of both could be used to shape education and prevention efforts offered by community agencies and educational institutions. Risk taking is a part of everyday existence but little is known regarding why people are more inclined to take risks in one aspect of life than in another. Despite studies and articles specific to risk behavior and risk research among adolescents, few have focused on late adolescents, specifically college students.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Understanding people and their behaviors is the focus of the social sciences. Throughout a child's development, teachers, clergy, and parents seek to influence the personality and behavior of those in their care. Similar to leadership, the study of human behavior has a long and distinguished history in personality and social psychology. Personality traits have been the primary focus of much of the research (Ajzen, 2005), with a multitude of personality traits having been identified. Similarly, the study of attitude has garnered a good deal of attention over the past 50 years, with extensive research on attitudes toward religion, politics, various social issues, and medical findings, such as the hazards of smoking and mandatory seatbelt use (Ajzen, 2005).

Not unlike risk-related theory research (e.g., utility theory, prospect theory), attitude is recognized as a person's tendency to respond favorably or unfavorably to a person, place, or thing (Ajzen, 2005; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). First proposed by Icek Ajzen (1985), TPB evolved from the theory of reasoned action that was originally

proposed by Martin Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975. Grounded in various theories of attitude such as learning theories, expectancy value theories, consistency theories, and attribution theory, the theory suggests that, if a person evaluates a suggested behavior as being positive (attitude) and in turn thinks that significant others (e.g., friends, family) want him or her to perform the behavior (a subjective norm), the results are an increase in motivation and greatly likelihood to engage in the behavior (Ajzen, 1985).

“The theory was based, of course, on the assumption that human beings usually behave in a sensible manner; that they take account of available information and implicitly or explicitly consider the implications of their actions” (Ajzen, 2005, p. 117). As shown in Figure 3, Ajzen’s TPB (1985) is comprised of three important features: behavioral belief, subjective norms, and the perceived behavior control. These three elements influence a person’s intention to act and ultimately to behave one way or another. Ajzen (2005) also contended that perceived behavior control has motivational implications for intentions. People who do not believe that they have the skills, abilities, resources, or opportunity to behave in a certain way are unlikely to form strong intentions to engage in the behavior, even if they believe that they should do so and that others (friends or family) would approve. The second important aspect of TPB is the link between perceived behavior control and actual control over the behavior and goal attainment. Factors outside of what is known to the individual related to perceived behavioral control, such as changing environmental conditions or resource availability, can influence the actual intended behavior (Ajzen, 2005).

Theory of Planned Behavior

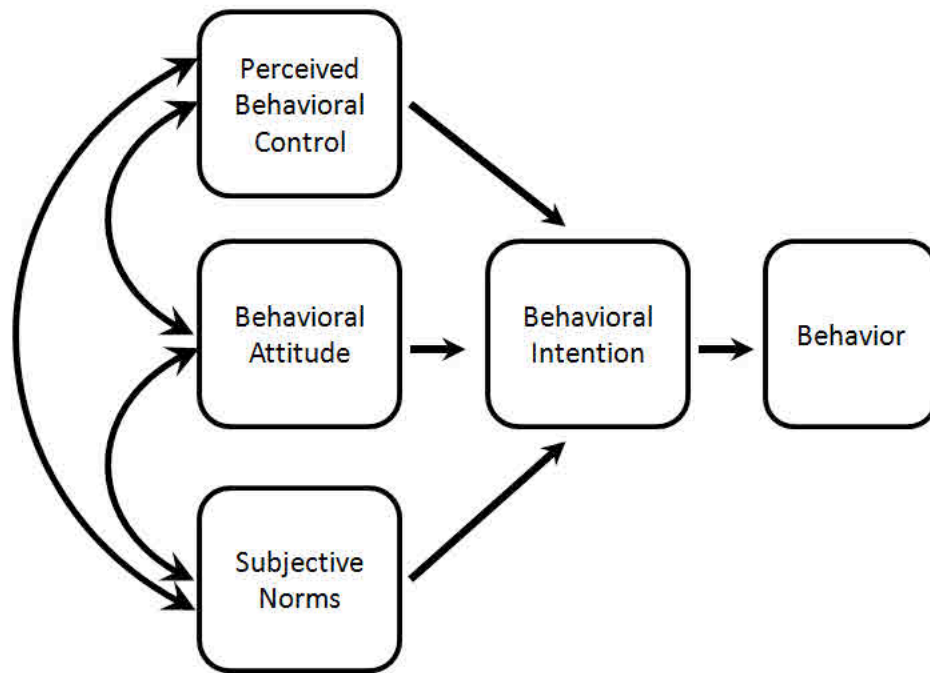


Figure 3. Theory of planned behavior. From “The Theory of Planned Behavior” by I. Ajzen, 1991, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, p. 182. Reprinted with permission.

Chapter Summary

Several important concepts can be illustrated from the review of literature. First, as enrollments increase in colleges and universities and federal and state budgets shrink, the need for and use of peer educators will increase. With this increase, changes in demographics will require peer educators who work in orientation programs to be well versed in many aspects of student services and skillful in mentoring new students. Orientation peer educators must learn to take into account the expectations, attitudes, and desires of new students who assume the role of followers through most formal and extended orientation programs. Second, as is evident in the popular world of social

media applications such as Twitter and Facebook, “following” people has become common place, but what it means to be a good follower and what followership skills should be promoted are still areas that need exploration. Recognizing that most people serve in a follower role more often than in a position of leadership, it is important to learn about followership styles and followership skills exhibited by late adolescent college students. Third, dangerous risk-taking behaviors of college students, whether acting as leaders or followers, continue to afflict college and university communities. Although the research on risk is extensive, much is still unknown about how late adolescent college students make decisions regarding risk. In light of research that suggests that risk-taking behavior may be domain specific, educators would benefit from research about outside factors that influence attitudes and decision-making processes in that age group. Followership styles of peer orientation educators could be a factor in decision making associated with risk behaviors and could be addressed through leadership education and risk management curriculums in higher education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to conduct this study, which involved analysis of college student followership styles, leadership positions, and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. This chapter identifies the population, instrumentation, pilot study, and procedures used in collecting and analyzing data. An account of the methods used to address the research questions follows.

Followership is inextricably linked to leadership and leaders must have the ability to take appropriate risks. Late adolescents must navigate myriad risky decisions and practice new leadership skills during their time in college. How a student learns to follow and lead while making decisions about finances, social norms, and health and safety can have profound influence on his or her future. Understanding the association between followership styles and risk-taking behaviors will provide insight into factors that influence decision making by college student leaders.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of followership styles and interaction on risk-taking attitudes and perceptions of undergraduate college students serving in student leadership positions associated with new student orientation programs. The intention of the researcher was to delve into the college student leader experience to determine whether there is a predominant followership style among orientation peer educators and what their risk-taking behaviors are, and to determine whether there are relationships among leadership position, followership style, and risk-taking behavior.

Research Design

Using a descriptive, correlational design (Field, 2013), data captured via an online modified version of the KFSQ (Kelley, 1992) and the DOSPERT (Blais & Weber, 2006) were analyzed to meet the following research objectives:

1. Identify orientation peer educators' followership styles through means and descriptive analysis;
2. Identify orientation peer educators' risk-taking attitudes and perceptions;
3. Investigate relationships between followership style and positional leadership levels;
4. Investigate relationships between risk-taking attitudes and perceptions and positional leadership levels; and
5. Identify relationships between followership style and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions.

Instrumentation

For this study, a questionnaire was developed by the researcher to measure behavior, attitude, and tendencies using Likert-type and ordinal scales (Dillman, Smith, & Christian, 2009). The KFSQ (Kelley, 1992) was utilized to measure followership styles and categorize them into five types: exemplary followers, sheep, yes people, alienated, and pragmatics. The instrument used to determine risk-taking behaviors was the DOSPERT (Blais & Weber, 2006; Weber et al.). The DOSPERT evaluation tool uses five domains (financial, social, health and safety, recreational, ethical) to evaluate behavioral intentions or the likelihood that respondents might engage in risk activities or

behaviors originating from five domains of life (financial, social, health and safety, recreational, ethical).

The KFSQ (Kelley, 1992) and DOSPERT (Blais & Weber, 2006) risk-taking assessment items were combined into one online survey instrument produced via Qualtrics™ Online Survey Solutions. Use of the KFSQ was allowed by the publisher, Penguin Random House (personal communication, June 3, 2014), and use of the DOSPERT instrument was allowed by Blais and Weber (2006), with appropriate citation.

Kelley's Followership Styles Questionnaire

Created by Robert E. Kelley in 1991 and published in *The Power of Followership* (1992), the KFSQ was developed to identify specific followership styles by measuring the participant along two dimensions: independent critical thinking as a follower or group member and active engagement or involvement in the organization (Kelley, 1992, 2008). The KFSQ has 10 statements about critical thinking skills and 10 statements specific to working in a group or organization. Individual statements are answered using a Likert-type scale (0 = *Rarely*, 3 = *Occasionally*, 6 = *Almost Always*), with the statements for each dimension summed to determine the participant's perception of followership style. Using a scoring key developed by Kelley (1992), possible score results range from 0 to 60 for each of the dimensions: Independent Thinking and Active Engagement. Scores are plotted on a matrix to identify the participant's style as one of the five styles specified earlier. There are minimal empirical data to validate Kelley's followership dimension scoring instrument; however, studies by

Tanoff and Barlow (2002), Blanchard, Welbourne, Gillmore, and Bullock (2009), and Kilburn (2010) have concluded that the KFSQ is one of the most effective instruments available to measure follower characteristics. This study provides the opportunity to add to the data regarding the use of the KSFQ.

Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale (DOSPERT)

Designed in 2002 by Weber et al., the DOSPERT is a robust instrument intended to measure via statistical inference risk taking, risk perception, and perceived benefits of risk taking. Described as one of the most useful measures of risk propensity across a everyday situations (Harrison, Young, Butow, Salkeld, & Solomon, 2005), the DOSPERT is a psychometric scale that assesses risk-taking in five content domains: ethical, financial, social, health and safety, and recreational.

The instrument was developed in 2002, with the alpha version consisting of 10-item subscales in the five content domains (Weber et al., 2002). The results of the 2002 research strongly supported the hypothesis that risk taking is domain specific and that attitudes inferred by behavior or risky choices are also domain specific, rather than reflections of an attitude or trait. The 2006 version of the scale, developed and validated for American college undergraduates, is 25% shorter than the original beta version, with internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alphas) within reasonable levels for each of the five risk domains (Blais & Weber, 2006).

The instrument used for this study measured the dependent variable of the student orientation leader's position level with the independent variables of followership style, risk-taking behavior, and risk-taking perception. Basic demographic information

and the independent variables (followership style, risk-taking behavior, and perception) were quantitatively measured via the KFSQ and the DOSPERT.

Pilot Test

Because this study involved the use of one questionnaire that coupled two established questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted to establish reliability and validity of the combined instrument. A sample of 20 college students who were members of a student government committee responded to the questionnaire as a pilot test. Validity was determined through content-related evidence by having experts in the field of study examine the questionnaire (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Experts included Texas A&M University faculty in the Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications Department and professional staff members from the Department of Student Life Studies. Cronbach's alpha measures of reliability and internal consistency post hoc on the pilot study were .769 ($N = 104$) for the whole instrument, .670 ($n = 20$) for the followership portion, and .714 ($n = 75$) for the risk assessment portion.

While the reliability score for followership was lower than that reported in other studies (Beebe, 2013; Burke, 2009; Favara, 2009; Johnson, 2003; Pack, 2001), the two dimensions of the KSFQ were examined separately using Cronbach's coefficient alpha to further test internal reliability of the KSFQ portion of the study. The reliabilities were .651 ($n = 10$) for items measuring independent critical thinking and .810 ($n = 10$) for items measuring active engagement. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was computed again to assess the internal reliability of the DOSPERT portion of the questionnaire. The reliabilities were .812 ($n = 30$) for items associated with risk-taking intentions, .787 ($n =$

30) for items associated with risk perception, and .788 ($n = 30$) for items associated with benefits of taking risks. Field (2009) indicated that alpha coefficients of .80 or greater are considered good estimates of reliability. However, as reported by Boyd and Murphrey (2001), “Nunnally (1967) suggested that in the early stages of research a modest reliability of .5 or .6 will suffice” (p. 30). Minor changes were made to several items in the demographic portion of the final instrument based on feedback from pilot participants. The survey was determined to be valid and the final instrument (KSFQ, DOSPERT, and demographic questions) had reasonably high reliability. Reliabilities for both the pilot study and final research study are displayed in Table 1.

Institutional Approval

The researcher submitted a proposal for the study that outlined data collection methods, instruments, and proposed participant correspondence to the Texas A&M University Office of Research Compliance, Human Subjects’ Protection Program, and Institutional Review Board prior to the data collection process. Approval was received from the Institutional Review Board: number IRB2014-0505D.

Population

The target population of interest ($N = 1,400$) consisted of all members, ages 18—25, of three peer orientation leader programs at Texas A&M University during the 2013-2014 school year. A census method was utilized so that all students from the target population would have an opportunity to participate in the study. Permission to participate in the study was granted by student organization leadership and associated

Table 1

Reliability Coefficients for the Kelley Followership Style Questionnaire (KSFQ) and the Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale (DOSPERT)

Scale	Test	Measure	<i>n</i>	α
Total Instrument				
	Pilot		20	.769
	Final		131	.798
KSFQ				
	Pilot		20	.670
		Critical Thinking	20	.651
		Active Engagement	20	.810
	Final		131	.831
		Critical Thinking	131	.651
		Active Engagement	131	.810
DOSPERT				
	Pilot		20	.714
		Risk Behavior	20	.812
		Risk Perception	20	.787
		Risk Benefits	20	.788
	Final		131	.773
		Risk Behavior	131	.815
		Risk Perception	131	.787
		Risk Benefits	131	.788

advisors and a list of university email addresses for members associated with each organization was provided to the researcher.

All of the students, both men and women, had specific leadership roles within a peer orientation organization. While each of the three orientation leader programs have their own leadership titles, three types of leadership roles are common to all three organizations (Aggie Orientation Leader Program [AOLP], 2014); Aggie Transition Camps, 2014; Fish Camp, 2014). *Line leaders* are currently enrolled college students

who are selected through an interview process conducted by mid-level leaders and then assigned to plan activities and facilitate a designated discussion group that includes prospective students attending the orientation program; they also fulfill any assignment or task delegated by mid-level or senior leaders. *Mid-level leaders* are currently enrolled college students who are selected through an interview process conducted by senior leaders; they are assigned to interview and select line leaders, coordinate any and all activities of their designated group of line leaders who are responsible for prospective students attending the orientation program, and fulfill any assignment or task delegated by senior leaders. *Senior leaders* are currently enrolled college students who are selected through an interview process conducted by past senior leaders and full-time staff advisors; they interview and select mid-level leaders; coordinate any and all financial, logistical, human resource, and public relations matters associated with parts of or the entirety of the orientation program; serve as the official representatives of their organization; and ensure the success of the program for prospective students who attend the orientation program.

All students involved with the three peer educator orientation programs during the 2013-14 academic school year were invited to complete the questionnaire. This decision was made to gain a precise understanding of the population and to reduce potential errors associated with participant selection and sampling.

Data Collection

The Dillman et al. (2009) social exchange method was used in administration of the questionnaire to increase the benefits of participation, reduce the costs of

participation, and establish trust that the data collected would outweigh the costs of responding (i.e., personal time). The survey was sent online to 1,400 undergraduate students who were members of one of three orientation programs during the third week of September 2014. Personalized emails were sent to participants 2 days before the survey to notify them of the study, the online questionnaire, and planned timeline. A second personalized email was sent 2 days following the prenotice containing specific instructions about the study, a hyperlink to the questionnaire, and a password for entering the survey after reading the Information and Consent Page. Follow-up emails were sent to nonresponding students every 3 days after the initial invitation to participate email had been sent to remind them of the importance of the study and the researcher's sincere desire for their participation. Staff advisors and student leaders in each of the orientation programs were sent a personal email 5 days after the invitation to participate, reminding them of the benefits of the study to their peer orientation leader organizations and asking for assistance in encouraging members to participate in the study. A final email was sent 14 days following the initial distribution to remind participants that the opportunity to participate in the online survey would close 24 hours from that point.

Data Analysis

The data collected via the online questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences[®] (SPSS[®]) Version 22 for Windows[®]. Both descriptive statistics and analytical measures such as correlational coefficients, analysis of variance, and regression were used to measure differences in the participants' followership styles when compared by leadership level, risk attitude, and risk perception.

Utilizing the SPSS reliability procedure, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was computed to determine the internal consistency of the overall instrument.

The SPSS FREQUENCIES procedure was used to generate descriptive statistics such as central tendency and percentages for each of the variables and demographic data. The SPSS CORRELATE procedure was used to measure relationships between variables: positional leadership levels (line leader, mid-level leader, and senior-level leader), followership styles (passive followers, active followers, alienated followers, exemplary followers, and pragmatics). The correlation procedure was also used to measure relationships between variables: followership styles and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions for the five domains (financial, social, health and safety, recreational, ethical).

By analyzing the correlational relationships among positional leadership levels, followership styles, and risk-taking propensity and risk-taking perceptions, there was the possibility of identifying whether there was a dependence of one variable on another (e.g., line leaders, followership styles, and risk-taking propensity).

The KFSQ and DOSPRT instruments used in this study both had scoring instructions that were followed to obtain followership style and risk domain scores.

A total of 137 students completed more than 50% of the questionnaire items. Six respondents did not complete both sections of the questionnaire and were excluded from analysis, resulting in a total sample size of $N = 131$.

Representativeness of the Sample

In addition to highest leadership position level held, each participant was asked to indicate gender, race/ethnicity, academic classification, orientation organization, number of years as a member of the orientation organization, college affiliation, academic entry status (e.g., transfer), and other organization memberships held. The SPSS FREQUENCIES procedure was used to compute demographic information, including gender, classification, ethnicity, college of major, enrollment status, organization type, and leadership position type. The distribution of undergraduate classification, gender, and ethnicity of the sample was representative of Texas A&M University's undergraduate population.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this quantitative survey research was to identify followership styles and risk attitudes and perceptions of peer orientation leaders. The study evaluated the relationships among positional leadership levels, followership styles, and risk attitudes and perceptions to determine whether there were significant differences in risk-taking attitudes and perceptions related to followership styles.

Response Rate

The response rate was 13%, with 185 of 1,400 surveys returned, 131 of which (70%) were complete and suitable for data analysis. Because the response rate was less than 80%, the nonresponse error was handled by contacting a portion of the nonrespondents directly to solicit their cooperation in a telephone interview (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). A sample of 20 students was contacted and a comparison of their responses to each item with the returned responses was done to determine whether the nonresponding sample was biased.

Demographics

As shown in Table 2, 45% of the participants ($n = 59$) were male and 55% ($n = 72$) were female. To determine whether the sample was representative of the target population, a chi-square goodness of fit test was conducted. There were 59 male participants in the sample (45%), compared with 52% in the population, and 55% of the sample were females, compared with 48% in the population, $X^2(1, n = 131) = 2.54$,

Table 2

Results of Goodness of Fit Test for Gender for the Sample and Population

Gender	Sample %	Population %	X^2	df	p
Male	45.0	52.0	2.54	1	.0001
Female	55.0	48.0			

$p > .0001$. This indicates that the proportions of male and female participants in the sample were not significantly different from the proportions of males and females in the population.

The academic classification of the majority of respondents ($n = 88$, 64%) was upperclassmen (juniors or seniors), with four freshmen and one graduate student in the sample. As shown in Table 3, there were 44 seniors in the sample (33%), compared with 45% in the population; there were 40 juniors in the sample (30.5%), compared with 29% in the population; there were 42 sophomores in the sample (32%), compared with 27% in the population; and there were 4 freshman in the sample (3%), compared with 19% in the population, $X^2 (1, n = 131) = 2.54, p > .0001$. This indicates that the proportion of respondents in each classifications in the sample was not significantly different from the proportions in those classifications in the population.

Table 4 shows that 93 participants self-identified as White (71%), compared with 89% in the population; there were 22 Hispanics in the sample (17%), compared with 26% in the population; there were 8 Asian/Pacific Islanders in the sample (6.1%),

Table 3

Results of Goodness of Fit Test for Classification for the Sample and Population

Classification	Sample %	Population %	X^2	df	p
Freshman	3.1	13.0			
Sophomore	32.1	18.0			
Junior	30.5	20.0			
Senior	33.6	30.0			
Graduate	0.8	19.0			
Goodness of Fit			2.54	1	.0001

Table 4

Results of Goodness of Fit Test for Ethnicity for the Sample and Population

Ethnicity	Sample %	Population %	X^2	df	p
African American	0.8	3.0			
Hispanic	16.8	20.0			
Native American/ Alaskan Native	0.8	1.0			
White	71.0	69.0			
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.1	5.0			
Biracial or Multiracial	4.6	2.0			
Goodness of Fit			6.791	5	.237

compared with 6.7% in the population; there were 6 biracial/multiracial participants (4.6%), compared with 3.2% in the population, $X^2(5, n = 131) = 6.791, p > .0001$. This indicates the proportion of ethnicities in the sample was not significantly different from the proportion of ethnicities in the population.

The number of participants from each college is displayed in Table 5. The majority of participants were from liberal arts ($n = 29, 22\%$), engineering ($n = 29, 22\%$), agriculture and life science ($n = 22, 16.8\%$), and education ($n = 17, 13\%$). Table 5 shows that 29 participants were affiliated with the College of Engineering (22%), compared with 28% in the population; 29 participants were affiliated with the College of Liberal Arts (22%), compared with 21% in the population; 22 participants were affiliated with the College of Agriculture and Life Science (17%), compared with 20% in the population; and 13% of the participants were affiliated with the College of Education, compared with 16% in the population, $X^2(9, n = 131) = 13.674, p > .0001$. The Chi square goodness of fit test indicated that the proportion of participants enrolled in the 11 colleges in the sample was not significantly different from the proportion enrolled in those 11 colleges in the population.

Because new student orientation programs must serve both freshman and transfer students, participants were asked whether they had enrolled as a first-time freshman or transferred to Texas A&M University from another college or university. As shown in Table 6, 87% of the participants ($n = 115$) identified as first-time enrollees and 12% ($n = 16$) identified as transfer enrollees. In order to determine whether the sample was representative of the target population, a chi-square goodness of fit test was conducted.

Table 5

Results of Goodness of Fit Test for College Affiliation for the Sample and Population

College affiliation	Sample %	Population %	X^2	df	p
Agriculture/Life Science	16.8	15.0			
Business	7.6	12.0			
Architecture	1.5	4.0			
Liberal Arts	22.1	16.0			
Veterinary Medicine/ Biomedical Sciences	7.6	4.0			
Science	5.3	6.0			
Education	13.0	12.0			
Engineering	22.1	22.0			
General Academics	3.1	6.0			
Geosciences	0.8	2.0			
Goodness of Fit			13.67	9	.134

There were 115 first-time enrollee participants (89%), compared with 97% in the population, and 12% of the participants were transfer enrollees, compared with 4% in the population, $X^2 (1, n = 131) = 38.216, p < .0001$. This indicates that the proportion of first-time enrollees and transfer enrollees in the sample was significantly different from the proportion of undergraduate first-time and transfer enrollees in the population.

Table 6

Results of Goodness of Fit Test for Enrollment Status for the Sample and Population

Enrollment status	Sample %	Population %	X^2	df	p
First-time enrollee	87.8	96.0			
Transfer enrollee	12.2	4.0			
Goodness of Fit			38.216	1	< .0001

Table 7 shows the organization membership, years of experience in the peer orientation program, and highest position held in the program by the participants. The majority (67.9%, $n = 89$) were part of the Fish Camp extended orientation program; 19.8% ($n = 26$) served in Aggie Orientation Leader Program (AOLP), 9.2% ($n = 12$) were members of Aggie Transition Camps (ATC), and 3.1% ($n = 4$) were members of multiple peer orientation programs. These percentages are representative of the size of each of the three programs overall. Regarding years of experience in the peer orientation program, 54.2% ($n = 71$) reported that they had been members for 1 year or less, and 39.7% ($n = 52$) reported involvement with the orientation organization for 2 or 3 years. Most participants reported having served in line leader positions (e.g., counselors, orientation leaders). Participants who reported serving in mid-level leadership roles and/or senior-level leader roles comprised 13.0% and 11.5%, respectively, of reporting participants.

Table 7

Participants' Organization Membership, Years of Experience in an Orientation Leadership Program, and Highest Position Held in the Organization

Variable and classification	%
Organization	
Aggie Transition Camps (ATC)	9.2
Aggie Orientation Leader Program (AOLP)	19.8
Fish Camp	67.9
Two or more organizations	3.1
Years of experiences as peer orientation leader	
1 or less	54.2
2	22.9
3	16.8
4	6.1
Highest leadership position held in orientation program	
Line leader	75.6
Mid-level leader	13.0
Senior-level leader	11.5

In addition to participating as student leaders in peer orientation programs, participants reported involvement in other student organizations, with 40% having membership in service organizations and academic organizations, 25% in a student

governance or programming type of organization, 13.7% in a Greek-letter social fraternity or sorority, and 7.6% in cultural organizations.

Findings Related to Research Objectives

The following research objectives were established related to the examination of peer orientation leaders specific to their followership styles, risk attitudes, and risk perceptions:

1. Identify orientation peer educators' followership styles through means and descriptive analysis;
2. Identify orientation peer educators' risk-taking attitudes and perceptions;
3. Investigate relationships between followership style and positional leadership levels;
4. Investigate relationships between risk-taking attitudes and perceptions and positional leadership levels; and
5. Identify relationships between followership style and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions.

To determine followership styles, items specific to followership were scored using KFSQ scoring instructions (Kelley, 1992). The items were divided into two groups: independent critical thinking (Items 1, 5, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20, shown in Table 8) and active engagement (Items 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, and 15, shown in Table 9) and the scores were summed and plotted on the axes of a graph to determine followership styles as per Kelley's (1992) quadrant descriptions.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Critical Thinking (N = 131)

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Does your work help you fulfill some societal goal or personal dream that is important to you?	4.76	1.09
Instead of waiting for or merely accepting what the leader tells you, do you personally identify which organizational activities are most critical for achieving the organization's priority goals?	4.61	1.08
Do you independently think up and champion new ideas that will contribute significantly to the leader's or organization's goals?	4.51	1.09
Do you try to solve tough problems (technical or organizational), rather than look to the leader to do it for you?	4.80	1.08
Do you help the leader or group see both the upside potential and downside risks of ideas or plans, playing the devil's advocate if need be?	4.78	1.15
Do you actively and honestly own up to your strengths and weaknesses rather than put off evaluation?	5.10	0.88
When the leader asks you to do something that runs contrary to your professional or personal preferences, do you say "no" rather than "yes"?	3.42	1.49
Do you act on your own ethical standards rather than the leader's or the group's standards?	4.17	1.39
Do you assert your views on important issues, even though it might mean conflict with your group or reprisals from the leader?	4.07	1.46
Do you make a habit of internally questioning the wisdom of the leader's decision rather than just doing what you're told?	6.08	0.88

Note. Overall $M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.16$. Scale: 7 = *Almost Always*, 4 = *Occasionally*, 1 = *Rarely*.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Active Engagement (N = 131)

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Are your personal work goals aligned with the organization's priority goals?	4.71	1.10
Are you highly committed to and energized by your work and organization, giving them your best ideas and performance?	5.38	0.84
Does your enthusiasm also spread to and energize your co-workers?	5.03	1.05
Do you actively develop a distinctive competence in those critical activities so that you become more valuable to the leader and the organization?	4.88	0.99
When starting a new job or assignment, do you promptly build a record of successes in tasks that are important to the leader?	4.25	1.36
Can the leader give you a difficult assignment without the benefit of much supervision, knowing that you will meet your deadlines with highest-quality work and that you will "fill in the cracks" if need be?	5.39	0.92
Do you take the initiative to seek out and successfully complete assignments that go above and beyond your job?	5.02	0.98
When you are not the leader of a group project, do you still contribute at a high level, often doing more than your share?	5.02	1.00
Do you help out other co-workers, making them look good, even when you don't get any credit?	4.95	1.04
Do you understand the leader's needs, goals, and constraints, and work hard to help meet them?	5.07	0.95

Note. Overall $M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.16$. Scale: 7 = *Almost Always*, 4 = *Occasionally*, 1 = *Rarely*.

The participants earned the highest scores for critical thinking for the items "Do you make a habit of internally questioning the wisdom of the leaders decision rather than just doing what you're told?" ($M = 6.08$, $SD = 0.88$) and "Do you actively and honestly

own up to your strengths and weaknesses rather than put off evaluation?" ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 0.88$).

The participants earned the highest scores for active engagement in the peer orientation organization for the items "Are you highly committed to and energized by your work and organization, giving them your best ideas and performance?" ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 0.84$) and "Can the leader give you a difficult assignment without the benefit of much supervision, knowing that you will meet your deadlines with highest-quality work and that you will 'fill in the cracks' if need be?" ($M = 5.39$, $SD = 0.92$). The item with the lowest score was "When starting a new job or assignment, do you promptly build a record of successes in tasks that are important to the leader?" ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 1.36$).

The plotted location represented each participant's style based on a high, medium, or low rating in the two dimensions of active engagement and independent critical thinking. It is interesting that the majority of participants ($n = 126$, 96.2%) scored high as critical thinkers and high as engaged exemplary followers, with less than 3% ($n = 4$) identifying as pragmatists by scoring moderately in both dimensions. Table 10 illustrates followership styles among orientation peer educators.

The second objective of the study was to investigate relationships between followership style and positional leadership levels. A Pearson's chi-square was used to examine the relation between positional leadership levels and followership style. The relationship was not significant, $X^2(4, N = 131) = 1.351$, $p > .05$. To assess followership styles more specifically, the relationship of positional leadership levels and the two dimensions of followership (critical thinking and active engagement) were examined.

Table 10

Followership Styles of Participants Based on Responses to the Questionnaire

Style	%
Exemplary	96.2
Active (Conformist)	0.8
Pragmatist	3.1

Given the small size of the data set and large number of participants identified with one positional leadership level (Table 11), a Kendall's tau test was used to analyze the data (Table 12). According to Field (2013), Kendall's statistic may be a better estimate of the correlation in the population and, as a result, more accurate generalizations may be drawn from data analyzed with this statistical method. Leadership position level was not significantly related to critical thinking, $\tau = .13, p > .05$, nor was it significantly related to active engagement, $\tau = .05, p > .05$.

Table 11

Leadership Levels Held by Participants Based on Responses to the Questionnaire

Leadership level	%
Line leader	76
Mid-level leader	13
Senior-level leader	11

Table 12

Kendall's Tau Correlation of Positional Leadership Level and Dimensions of Followership: Critical Thinking and Active Engagement

Followership dimension	Pearson correlation	<i>p</i>
KSFQ Critical Thinking	.131	.065
Active Engagement	.049	.490

The third objective of the study was to identify orientation peer educators' risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. Participants reported their likelihood of participating in various types of activities categorized into five domains: financial, recreational, ethical, social, and health and safety. Table 13 provides data per item for each domain. Table 14 provides overall means and standard deviations for each domain for risk-taking intent.

Based on scale responses, participants reported that they would not likely engage in the risky activities described in each risk domain. The highest scores indicating a participant's inclination or intention to participate in risky activities were found in the social domain ($M = 4.94, SD = 1.56$) and the recreational domain ($M = 4.17, SD = 2.13$). The lowest scores were found in the ethical risk domain ($M = 2.00, SD = 1.37$). In order to assess orientation peer educators' perceptions of risk, participants self-reported their perception of risk associated with various types of activities in each of the five domains: financial, recreational, ethical, social, and health and safety. Table 15 provides specific data per item for each domain and Table 16 provides the overall means and standard deviations for each domain specific to the perception of risk-taking in that domain.

Table 13

Item Scores for Risk-Taking Intent by Domain

Domain and item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Financial risk domain	2.87	0.94
Betting a day's income at the horse races	1.70	1.17
Investing 10% of your annual income in a moderate growth mutual fund	4.69	1.45
Betting a day's income at a high-stakes poker game	1.76	1.27
Investing 5% of your annual income in a very speculative stock	3.49	1.53
Betting a day's income on the outcome of a sporting event	2.06	1.43
Investing 10% of your annual income in a new business venture	3.50	1.58
Recreational risk domain	4.17	1.51
Going camping in the wilderness	4.79	2.07
Going down a ski run that is beyond your ability	3.36	1.84
Going whitewater rafting at high water in the spring	4.41	1.75
Taking a skydiving class	4.74	2.25
Bungee jumping off a tall bridge	3.99	2.30
Piloting a small plane	3.73	2.18
Ethical risk domain	2.00	0.69
Taking some questionable deductions on your income tax return	2.67	1.45
Having an affair with a married man/woman	1.18	0.53
Passing off somebody else's work as your own	1.37	0.79
Revealing a friend's secret to someone else	2.48	1.50
Leaving your young children alone at home while running an errand	2.59	1.60
Not returning a wallet you found that contains \$200	1.73	1.14
Social risk domain	4.94	0.82
Admitting that your tastes are different from those of a friend	5.93	0.91
Disagreeing with an authority figure on a major issue	4.29	1.50
Choosing a career that you truly enjoy over a more secure one	5.66	1.21
Speaking your mind about an unpopular issue in a meeting at work	4.79	1.42
Moving to a city far away from your extended family	4.85	1.81
Starting a new career in your mid-thirties	4.11	1.51
Health and safety risk domain	3.15	1.21
Drinking heavily at a social function	3.88	2.01
Engaging in unprotected sex	2.56	1.90
Driving a car without wearing a seat belt	2.13	1.72
Riding a motorcycle without a helmet	2.15	1.78
Sunbathing without sunscreen	4.87	2.01
Walking home alone at night in an unsafe area of town	3.31	1.97

Note. Scale: 7 = *Extremely Likely*, 6 = *Moderately Likely*, 5 = *Somewhat Likely*, 4 = *Not Sure*, 3 = *Somewhat Unlikely*, 2 = *Moderately Unlikely*, 1 = *Extremely Unlikely*.

Table 14

Overall Descriptive Statistics for Risk-Taking Intent by Domain

Domain	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Overall	3.43	1.15
Financial Risk	2.87	0.94
Recreational Risk	4.17	1.51
Ethical Risk	2.00	0.69
Social Risk	4.94	0.82
Health and Safety Risk	3.15	1.21

Note. Scale: 7 = *Extremely Likely*, 6 = *Moderately Likely*, 5 = *Somewhat Likely*, 4 = *Not Sure*, 3 = *Somewhat Unlikely*, 2 = *Moderately Unlikely*, 1 = *Extremely Unlikely*.

Overall, participants' perceptions of the risk described for each activity in the instrument was that all held some risk (Table 16). The highest scores indicated that a participant's risk perceptions were highest or most extreme for those activities in the health and safety domain ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.65$) and ethical domain ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.77$). The lowest perceived risk score was in the social domain ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.50$), which indicated that risks in this domain were perceived to be "somewhat risky." These findings reflect that participants perceived that activities in the health and safety and ethical domains were "risky."

Table 15

Item Scores for Risk-Taking Perceptions by Domain

Domain and item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Financial risk domain	4.97	1.57
Betting a day's income at the horse races	5.75	1.33
Investing 10% of your annual income in a moderate growth mutual fund	3.72	1.67
Betting a day's income at a high-stakes poker game	5.62	1.43
Investing 5% of your annual income in a very speculative stock	4.68	1.38
Betting a day's income on the outcome of a sporting event	5.19	1.43
Investing 10% of your annual income in a new business venture	4.89	1.29
Recreational risk domain	4.05	1.71
Going camping in the wilderness	2.66	1.21
Going down a ski run that is beyond your ability	4.91	1.33
Going whitewater rafting at high water in the spring	4.35	1.51
Taking a skydiving class	3.70	1.77
Bungee jumping off a tall bridge	4.59	1.71
Piloting a small plane	4.11	1.72
Ethical risk domain	5.13	1.77
Taking some questionable deductions on your income tax return	5.15	1.38
Having an affair with a married man/woman	6.50	1.01
Passing off somebody else's work as your own	5.91	1.07
Revealing a friend's secret to someone else	4.59	1.68
Leaving your young children alone at home while running an errand	5.02	1.59
Not returning a wallet you found that contains \$200	3.61	2.08
Social risk domain	3.10	1.50
Admitting that your tastes are different from those of a friend	2.14	1.26
Disagreeing with an authority figure on a major issue	3.54	1.43
Choosing a career that you truly enjoy over a more secure one	3.22	1.52
Speaking your mind about an unpopular issue in a meeting at work	3.51	1.37
Moving to a city far away from your extended family	2.73	1.54
Starting a new career in your mid-thirties	3.48	1.33
Health and safety risk domain	5.20	1.65
Drinking heavily at a social function	4.64	1.79
Engaging in unprotected sex	5.98	1.26
Driving a car without wearing a seat belt	5.52	1.157
Riding a motorcycle without a helmet	5.98	1.30
Sunbathing without sunscreen	4.04	1.63
Walking home alone at night in an unsafe area of town	5.07	1.37

Note. Scale: 7 = *Extremely Likely*, 6 = *Moderately Likely*, 5 = *Somewhat Likely*, 4 = *Not Sure*, 3 = *Somewhat Unlikely*, 2 = *Moderately Unlikely*, 1 = *Extremely Unlikely*.

Table 16

Overall Descriptive Statistics for Perceptions of Risk by Domain

Domain	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Overall	4.49	0.90
Financial Risk	4.98	1.06
Recreational Risk	4.05	1.10
Ethical Risk	5.13	0.94
Social Risk	3.10	0.97
Health and Safety Risk	5.13	0.94

Note. Scale: 7 = *Extremely Likely*, 6 = *Moderately Likely*, 5 = *Somewhat Likely*, 4 = *Not Sure*, 3 = *Somewhat Unlikely*, 2 = *Moderately Unlikely*, 1 = *Extremely Unlikely*.

Risk-Taking Benefits

In order to assess the benefits associated with various types of activities in each of the five domains, orientation peer educators self-reported their expected level of benefit to be obtained from participation. Table 17 presents specific data per item for each domain and Table 18 presents the overall means and standard deviations specific to the perceived benefit found for risk-taking for each domain.

The scores for participants' understanding of the benefits of participating the activities described were highest in the social domain ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.36$) and the recreational domain ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.46$). The lowest score related to participants' belief of expected benefits was in the health domain ($M = 1.78$, $SD = 1.03$), indicating that participants saw few to no expected benefits of participating in risk-taking activities.

Table 17

Item Scores for Risk-Taking Expected Benefits by Domain

Domain and item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Financial risk domain	2.96	1.21
Betting a day's income at the horse races	2.78	1.20
Investing 10% of your annual income in a moderate growth mutual fund	3.51	1.21
Betting a day's income at a high-stakes poker game	2.66	1.20
Investing 5% of your annual income in a very speculative stock	2.92	1.04
Betting a day's income on the outcome of a sporting event	2.67	1.17
Investing 10% of your annual income in a new business venture	3.24	1.17
Recreational risk domain	3.29	1.46
Going camping in the wilderness	4.05	1.74
Going down a ski run that is beyond your ability	2.75	1.11
Going whitewater rafting at high water in the spring	3.22	1.16
Taking a skydiving class	3.65	1.46
Bungee jumping off a tall bridge	2.95	1.45
Piloting a small plane	3.14	1.38
Ethical risk domain	2.03	1.17
Taking some questionable deductions on your income tax return	2.39	1.07
Having an affair with a married man/woman	1.53	0.83
Passing off somebody else's work as your own	2.08	1.07
Revealing a friend's secret to someone else	1.62	0.86
Leaving your young children alone at home while running an errand	1.84	0.95
Not returning a wallet you found that contains \$200	2.73	1.60
Social risk domain	3.83	1.36
Admitting that your tastes are different from those of a friend	4.39	1.52
Disagreeing with an authority figure on a major issue	3.10	0.98
Choosing a career that you truly enjoy over a more secure one	5.15	1.07
Speaking your mind about an unpopular issue in a meeting at work	3.19	0.95
Moving to a city far away from your extended family	3.49	1.24
Starting a new career in your mid-thirties	3.64	1.05
Health and safety risk domain	1.78	1.03
Drinking heavily at a social function	2.44	1.31
Engaging in unprotected sex	2.03	1.05
Driving a car without wearing a seat belt	1.18	0.50
Riding a motorcycle without a helmet	1.30	0.62
Sunbathing without sunscreen	2.10	1.06
Walking home alone at night in an unsafe area of town	1.66	0.79

Note. Scale: 7 = *Great Benefits*, 6 = *Good Benefits*, 5 = *Moderate Benefits*, 4 = *Beneficial*, 3 = *Some Benefits*, 2 = *Low to No Benefits*, 1 = *No Benefit at All*.

Table 18

Overall Descriptive Statistics for Risk-Taking Expected Benefits by Domain

Domain	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Overall	2.78	0.86
Financial Risk	2.96	0.94
Recreational Risk	3.29	1.03
Ethical Risk	2.03	0.68
Social Risk	3.83	0.70
Health and Safety Risk	1.78	0.54

Note. Scale: 7 = *Great Benefits*, 6 = *Good Benefits*, 5 = *Moderate Benefits*, 4 = *Beneficial*, 3 = *Some Benefits*, 2 = *Low to No Benefits*, 1 = *No Benefit at All*.

Risk-Taking Intent and Leadership Levels

The fourth objective of the study was to investigate possible relationships between orientation peer educators' risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. The DOSPERT (Blais & Weber, 2006) scoring instructions were followed to obtain risk domain scores. Participants self-reported their leadership level in each organization, as well as their likelihood of participating in various types of activities that were categorized into five domains: financial, recreational, ethical, social, and health and safety. Table 19 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlation data for each domain related to leadership levels and risk-taking intent.

Table 19

Pearson's Correlation of Leadership Level and Risk-Taking Intent Score by Domain

Risk domain	Line (<i>n</i> = 99)		Mid-level (<i>n</i> = 17)		Senior-level (<i>n</i> = 15)		Overall (<i>n</i> = 131)		Corr.	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Financial	2.98	0.95	2.56	0.75	2.48	0.99	2.87	0.94	-.20	.02*
Recreational	4.23	1.51	4.16	1.14	3.80	1.89	4.15	1.51	-.08	.34
Ethical	1.97	0.66	2.40	0.82	1.77	0.58	2.00	0.69	-.01	.95
Social	4.91	0.85	5.04	0.68	5.06	0.78	4.94	0.82	.07	.43
Health/Safety	3.10	1.24	3.63	1.24	2.90	0.88	3.15	1.21	.01	.94

Note. Scale: 7 = *Extremely Likely*, 6 = *Moderately Likely*, 5 = *Somewhat Likely*, 4 = *Not Sure*, 3 = *Somewhat Unlikely*, 2 = *Moderately Unlikely*, 1 = *Extremely Unlikely*.

**p* < .05 (two-tailed).

To determine whether a relationship existed between orientation peer educators' position level and risk-taking intentions per domain, a Pearson correlation was computed and determined weak to negligible negative associations between positional leadership levels and the financial risk intentions domain, $r(129) = -.20, p = .02$, the recreational risk intentions domain, $r(129) = -.84, p = .34$, and the ethical risk intentions domain, $r(129) = -.01, p = .95$. As shown in Table 20, there was an insignificant positive association between positional leadership levels and the social risk intentions domain, $r(129) = -.07, p = .43$, and the health and safety risk intention domains $r(129) = .01, p = .94$.

Table 20

Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Leadership Levels and Risk-Taking Intent (N = 131)

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Highest leadership position held	__	-.20*	-.84	-.01	.07	.01	1.36	0.68
2. Financial risk intention domain score	-.20*	__	.37**	.22*	.27**	.32**	2.87	0.94
3. Recreation risk intention domain score	-.08	.37**	__	.27**	.26**	.44**	4.17	1.51
4. Ethical risk intention domain score	-.01	.22*	.27**	__	.07	.40**	2.00	0.69
5. Social risk intention domain score	.07	.27**	.26**	.07	__	.23**	4.94	0.82
6. Health risk intention domain score	.01	.32**	.44**	.40**	.23**	__	3.15	1.21

Note. For all scales, higher scores are indicative of more extreme responses in the direction of the construct assessed.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Participants self-reported their leadership level in each organization and their perception of the risks associated with participating in various types of activities categorized into five domains: financial, recreational, ethical, social, and health and safety. Table 21 present the means, standard deviations, and correlation data for each domain related to leadership levels and risk-taking perception.

Table 21

Pearson's Correlation of Leadership Level and Risk-Taking Perception Score by Domain

Risk domain	Line (<i>n</i> = 99)		Mid-level (<i>n</i> = 17)		Senior-level (<i>n</i> = 15)		Overall (<i>n</i> = 131)		Corr.	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Financial	4.87	1.08	5.31	0.77	5.31	1.13	4.98	1.06	.17	.054
Recreation	4.05	1.11	4.18	0.90	3.92	1.30	4.05	1.10	-.02	.83
Ethical	5.08	0.99	5.17	0.79	5.40	0.72	5.13	0.94	.10	.25
Social	3.11	0.98	3.08	0.84	3.07	1.04	3.10	0.97	-.02	.84
Health/Safety	5.08	0.99	5.17	0.79	5.39	0.72	5.13	0.94	-.003	.97

Note. Scale: 7 = *Extremely Risky*, 6 = *Very Risky*, 5 = *Risky*, 4 = *Moderately Risky*, 3 = *Somewhat Risky*, 2 = *Slightly Risky*, 1 = *Not at All Risky*.

To determine whether a relationship existed between orientation peer educators position level and risk perception per domain, a Pearson correlation was computed and determined weak to negligible positive associations between positional leadership levels and the financial risk perception domain, $r(129) = .17, p = .05$, and the ethical risk perception domain, $r(129) = .10, p = .25$. Table 22 shows an insignificant negative association between positional leadership levels and recreational risk perception, $r(129) = -.02, p = .83$, the social risk perception domain, $r(129) = -.02, p = .84$, and the health and safety risk perception domain, $r(129) = -.003, p = .97$.

To determine whether a relationship existed between orientation peer educators' position level and risk benefits per domain, Pearson correlation was computed and

Table 22

Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Leadership Levels and Risk-Taking Perception (N = 131)

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Highest leadership position held	__	-.17	-.02	-.10	-.02	-.00	1.36	0.68
2. Financial risk intention domain score	.17	__	.31**	.41**	.28**	-.03	4.98	1.06
3. Recreation risk intention domain score	-.02	.31**	__	.40**	.54**	-.11	4.05	1.10
4. Ethical risk intention domain score	.10	.41**	.40**	__	.41**	.25**	5.13	0.94
5. Social risk intention domain score	-.02	.28**	.54**	.41**	__	-.12	3.10	0.97
6. Health risk intention domain score	-.003	-.03	-.11	-.25**	-.12	__	1.78	0.54

Note. For all scales, higher scores are indicative of more extreme responses in the direction of the construct assessed.

** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

determined weak to negligible negative associations between positional leadership levels and the financial risk benefits domain, $r(129) = -.05, p = .57$, the ethical risk benefits domain, $r(129) = -.10, p = .93$, and the health and safety risk benefits domain $r(129) = -.003, p = .97$. As shown in Table 23, there was a significant but weak positive association between positional leadership levels and social risk benefits, $r(129) = .21, p = .02$. There was an insignificant positive association between positional leadership levels and recreational risk benefits, $r(129) = .14, p = .11$ (Table 24).

Table 23

Pearson's Correlation of Leadership Level and Expected Risk-Taking Benefits Score by Domain

Risk domain	Line (<i>n</i> = 99)		Mid-level (<i>n</i> = 17)		Senior-level (<i>n</i> = 15)		Overall (<i>n</i> = 131)		Corr.	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Financial	3.00	0.93	2.84	0.88	2.89	1.16	2.96	0.94	-.05	.56
Recreation	3.24	0.10	3.08	0.78	3.83	1.31	3.29	1.03	.14	.11
Ethical	2.02	0.69	2.16	0.74	1.94	0.63	2.03	0.68	-.01	.93
Social	3.76	0.70	3.84	0.53	4.25	0.78	3.83	0.70	.21*	.02
Health/Safety	1.78	0.57	1.76	0.44	1.779	0.42	1.78	0.54	-.003	.97

Note. Scale: 7 = *Great Benefits*, 6 = *Good Benefits*, 5 = *Moderate Benefits*, 4 = *Beneficial*, 3 = *Some Benefits*, 2 = *Low to No Benefits*, 1 = *No Benefit at All*.

**p* < .05 (two-tailed).

The fifth objective of the study was to investigate possible relationships between orientation peer educators' followership styles and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. The KSFQ (Kelley, 1992) was utilized to identify participants' followership styles; the DOSPERT (Blais & Weber, 2006) had scoring instructions that were followed to obtain risk domain scores. Participants self-reported their followership styles through items focused on independent, critical thinking and active engagement in their organization, as well as their likelihood of participating in various types of activities categorized into five risk domains: financial, recreational, ethical, social, and health and safety. Table 25 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlation data for each domain related to followership styles and risk-taking intent.

Table 24

Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Leadership Levels and Expected Risk-Taking Benefits (N = 131)

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Highest leadership position held	__	-.05	.14	-.01	.21*	-.003	1.36	0.68
2. Financial risk intention domain score	-.05	__	.12	.40**	.01	.11	2.96	0.94
3. Recreation risk intention domain score	.14	.12	__	.15	.27**	.21*	3.29	1.03
4. Ethical risk intention domain score	-.01	.40**	.15	__	-.07	.45**	2.03	0.68
5. Social risk intention domain score	.21*	.01	.27**	-.07	__	.10	3.83	0.70
6. Health risk intention domain score	-.003	.11	.21*	.45**	.10	__	1.78	0.54

Note. For all scales, higher scores are indicative of more extreme responses in the direction of the construct assessed.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

To determine whether a relationship existed between orientation peer educators' followership styles and risk-taking intentions per domain, a Pearson correlation was computed and determined a significant medium positive association between followership style and the ethical risk intentions domain, $r(129) = .25, p = .004$. There were weak to negligible positive associations between followership style and the financial risk intentions domain, $r(129) = .25, p = .004$, and the health and safety risk

Table 25

Pearson's Correlation of Followership Style and Risk-Taking Intent Score by Style

Risk domain	Exemplary (<i>n</i> = 125)		Conformist (<i>n</i> = 1)		Pragmatist (<i>n</i> = 5)		Overall (<i>n</i> = 131)		Corr.	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Financial	2.98	0.95	2.56		2.48	0.87	2.87	0.94	.09	.31
Recreation	4.19	1.50	1.67		4.17	1.63	4.17	1.51	-.04	.63
Ethical	1.96	0.65	3.17		4.17	1.14	2.00	0.69	.25**	.004
Social	4.97	0.81	3.50		4.60	0.79	4.94	0.82	-.13	.16
Health/Safety	3.12	1.21	4.00		3.60	1.45	3.15	1.21	.90	.31

Note. Scale: 7 = *Extremely Likely*, 6 = *Moderately Likely*, 5 = *Somewhat Likely*, 4 = *Not Sure*, 3 = *Somewhat Unlikely*, 2 = *Moderately Unlikely*, 1 = *Extremely Unlikely*.

***p* < .01 (two-tailed).

intentions domain, $r(129) = .09$, $p = .307$. As shown in Table 26, there were weak to negligible negative associations between followership style and the recreational risk intentions domain, $r(129) = -.04$, $p = .627$, and the social risk intentions domain, $r(129) = -.13$, $p = .155$.

As shown in Table 27, exemplary followers reported that their perceptions of behaviors described in the financial, ethical, and health and safety risk domains were risky, with behaviors described in the recreational and social risk domains as moderate to somewhat risky. Participants identified as pragmatist followers reported that their perceptions of behaviors described in the financial, ethical, and health and safety risk

Table 26

Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Followership Styles and Risk-Taking Intent (N = 131)

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Highest leadership position held	__	.09	-.04	.25**	-.13	.09	1.13	0.60
2. Financial risk intention domain score	-.09	__	.37**	.22*	.27**	.32**	4.98	1.06
3. Recreation risk intention domain score	-.04	.37**	__	.27**	.26**	.44**	4.05	1.10
4. Ethical risk intention domain score	.25**	.22*	.27**	__	.07	.40**	5.13	0.94
5. Social risk intention domain score	-.13	.27**	.26**	.07	__	.23**	3.10	0.97
6. Health risk intention domain score	.09	.32**	.44**	.40**	.23**	__	5.13	0.94

Note. For all scales, higher scores are indicative of more extreme responses in the direction of the construct assessed.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

domains were moderately risky and behaviors described in the recreational and social risk domains were somewhat to slightly risky.

To determine whether a relationship existed between orientation peer educators followership styles and risk-taking perceptions per domain, a Pearson correlation was computed and determined a significant medium negative association between followership style and the financial risk perception domain, $r(129) = -.196, p = .025$, the ethical risk perception domain, $r(129) = -.273, p = .002$, and the health and safety risk

Table 27

Pearson's Correlation of Followership Style and Risk-Taking Perceptions Score by Style

Risk domain	Exemplary (<i>n</i> = 125)		Conformist (<i>n</i> = 1)		Pragmatist (<i>n</i> = 5)		Overall (<i>n</i> = 131)		Corr.	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Financial	5.02	1.05	3.17		4.13	1.63	4.98	1.06	-.20*	.03
Recreation	4.07	1.10	4.17		3.63	1.12	4.05	1.10	-.07	.42
Ethical	5.19	0.89	2.33		4.17	0.84	5.13	0.94	-.27**	.002
Social	3.12	0.97	1.83		2.97	0.95	3.10	0.97	-.06	.45
Health/Safety	5.19	0.89	2.33		4.17	0.84	5.13	0.94	-.27**	.002

Note. Scale: 7 = *Extremely Risky*, 6 = *Very Risky*, 5 = *Risky*, 4 = *Moderately Risky*, 3 = *Somewhat Risky*, 2 = *Slightly Risky*, 1 = *Not at All Risky*.

***p* < .01 (two-tailed).

perception domain, $r(129) = -.273, p = .002$. As shown in Table 28, there were weak to negligible negative associations between followership style and the recreational risk perception domain, $r(129) = -.071, p = .420$, and the social perception domain, $r(129) = -.061, p = .488$.

Participants self-reported their followership style and perception of benefits to taking risks in various types of activities that were categorized into five domains: financial, recreational, ethical, social, and health and safety. Table 29 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlation data for each domain related to followership styles and perceptions of risk-taking in each domain. Both exemplary and pragmatist followers reported that the benefits of engaging in behaviors described in the financial,

Table 28

Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Followership Styles and Risk-Taking Perception (N = 131)

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Highest leadership position held	__	-.20*	-.07	-.27**	-.06	-.27**	1.13	0.60
2. Financial risk intention domain score	-.20*	__	.31**	.41**	.28**	.41**	4.98	1.06
3. Recreation risk intention domain score	-.07	.31**	__	.40**	.54**	.40**	4.05	1.10
4. Ethical risk intention domain score	-.27**	.43**	.40**	__	.41**	1.00*	5.13	0.94
5. Social risk intention domain score	-.06	.28**	.54**	.41**	__	.41**	3.10	0.97
6. Health risk intention domain score	-.27**	.41**	.40**	1.00*	.41**	__	5.13	0.94

Note. For all scales, higher scores are indicative of more extreme responses in the direction of the construct assessed.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

recreational, and social domains would have some to low benefit. Taking part in behaviors found in the ethical and health and safety risk domains was reported as having low to no associated benefits. Conformist followers found fewer benefits in each of the risk domains.

To determine whether a relationship existed between orientation peer educators' followership styles and risk-taking benefits per domain, a Pearson correlation was computed and determined an insignificant weak to negligible negative association

Table 29

Pearson's Correlation of Followership Style and Risk-Taking Benefits Score by Style

Risk domain	Exemplary (<i>n</i> = 125)		Conformist (<i>n</i> = 1)		Pragmatist (<i>n</i> = 5)		Overall (<i>n</i> = 131)		Corr.	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Financial	2.96	0.92	1.17		3.53	1.13	2.96	0.94	.07	.45
Recreation	3.33	1.01	1.00		2.80	0.98	3.23	1.03	-.15	.09
Ethical	2.02	0.67	1.00		2.43	0.94	2.03	0.68	.07	.40
Social	3.85	0.69	1.83		3.57	0.15	3.83	0.70	-.14	.10
Health/Safety	1.79	0.54	1.17		1.77	0.35	1.78	0.54	-.04	.69

Note. Scale: 7 = Great Benefits, 6 = Good Benefits, 5 = Moderate Benefits, 4 = Beneficial, 3 = Some Benefits, 2 = Low to No Benefits, 1 = No Benefit at All.

between followership styles and the recreational risk-taking benefits domain, $r(129) = -.15, p = .09$, the social risk-taking benefits domain, $r(129) = -.14, p = .10$, and the health and safety risk-taking benefits domain, $r(129) = -.04, p = .69$. Table 30 shows an insignificant weak to negligible positive association between followership styles and the financial risk-taking benefits domain, $r(129) = .07, p = .45$, and the ethical risk-taking benefits domain, $r(129) = .07, p = .40$.

Table 30

Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Followership Styles and Risk-Taking Benefits (N = 131)

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Highest leadership position held	__	.07	-.15	.07	-.14	-.04	1.13	0.60
2. Financial risk intention domain score	.07	__	.12	.40**	.01	.11	2.96	0.94
3. Recreation risk intention domain score	-.15	.12	__	.15	.27**	.21*	3.29	1.03
4. Ethical risk intention domain score	.07	.40**	.15	__	-.07	.45**	2.03	0.68
5. Social risk intention domain score	-.14	.01	.27**	-.07	__	.10	3.83	0.70
6. Health risk intention domain score	-.04	.11	.21*	.45**	.10	__	1.78	0.54

Note. For all scales, higher scores are indicative of more extreme responses in the direction of the construct assessed.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This nonexperimental, quantitative study examined the followership styles and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions of college students related to their experience as leaders in peer orientation programs. The study used two primary instruments: the KFSQ and the DOSPERT. Combined, the two primary instruments produced four dependent variables. The study also explored participant demographics as independent variables to observe the influence of these variables on students' followership styles and risk-taking behaviors and perceptions.

The data for this study were obtained via an electronic, online survey distributed to students enrolled at Texas A&M University. The study's target population consisted of 1,400 student leaders involved in one of three extended orientation programs offered at Texas A&M University during the spring 2014 semester. The response rate was 13%, with 137 students completing the questionnaire. Of 185 surveys started, 137 were completed and 131 were usable.

The study included both descriptive and correlational statistical tests in order to analyze the data collected via the questionnaire. Responses to the questionnaire were analyzed using a correlational approach that examined the direction and strength of relationships among the four dependent variables.

The theoretical blueprint used in this study had not been used before in this context and the researcher posited that there might be variation among students with different followership styles and how they approach risk-taking behavior in five domains

of life. The intention of the study was to examine the college orientation student leader experience to determine whether there a specific followership style was predominant among college/university orientation peer educators, what risk-taking behaviors or perceptions about risky behavior existed in that group, and the possible relationships among peer orientation educators' leadership positions, followership styles, and overall risk-taking attitudes or perceptions.

This chapter discusses findings for each research objective and provides a summary of the study, conclusions and implications, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

Summary of Findings

Research Objective 1

The purpose of the first research objective was to identify orientation peer educators' followership styles through descriptive analysis. Frequencies and percentages were reported for each of the two dimensions identified on the KFSQ, organizational active engagement and independent critical thinking, as well as the resulting overall followership style. The majority of participants scored themselves high as critical thinkers and high as engaged members, with more than 95% classified as exemplary followers, 3% as pragmatists, and less than 1% as active followers (conformists).

Research Objective 2

The purpose of the second research objective was to investigate relationships between followership style and positional leadership levels. A Kendall's tau analysis of scores reported on the KFSQ indicated no relationship between independent critical

thinking and active engagement, nor did a Pearson's chi square test indicate a relationship for overall followership style and positional leadership levels.

Research Objective 3

The purpose of the third research objective was to identify orientation peer educators' risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. Mean scores reported from the DOSPERT specific to risk-taking behavior or intent indicated that orientation peer educators were somewhat unlikely to participate in risk-taking activities identified in the financial, ethical, and health and safety risk domains. Mean scores for the recreational risk-taking domain indicated that orientation peer educators were not sure about participating in such activities but were somewhat likely to participate in social risk-taking activities

Mean scores related to the orientation peer educators' perception of risk associated with activities in the financial, recreational, ethical, and health and safety domains were that the activities were moderately risky to risky. The mean score for participants' risk perception of activities in the social domain indicated that the activities described were perceived as somewhat risky.

As for the orientation peer educators' perceptions of the benefits to be gained by participating in activities found in each domain, the mean scores followed a similar pattern in that participants reported low to no benefits in the financial, recreational, ethical, and health and safety domains. Participants' perceptions of benefits associated with activities in the social domain, reflected in the mean score, indicated a perception of some benefits to participation.

Research Objective 4

The purpose of the fourth research objective was to investigate relationships between risk-taking attitudes and perceptions and positional leadership levels. Relationships were tested for risk-taking intent, risk perceptions, and risk-taking benefits in each of the five domains. A Pearson correlation determined a significant weak to negligible negative relationship between positional leadership levels and risk-taking intention for the financial domain. Specifically, the more experienced leadership positions were less likely to take risks in the financial domain. The more experienced leadership position holders perceived greater benefits to taking social risks. While not statistically significant, there was a negative relationship between positional leadership levels and risk-taking intent specific to activities in the recreational and ethical domains, while there was a positive association between positional leadership levels and activities in the social and health and safety domains.

A Pearson correlation determined that, while there was a weak to negligible, positive association between positional leadership levels and perception of risk for the financial and ethical domains, the relationship was not significant. Specifically, the more experienced the position leadership level, the more likely that the activities in the financial and ethical domains were perceived to be risky. There was a negative association, not significant, between positional leadership levels and risk perception specific to the recreational, social, and health and safety risk domains.

A Pearson correlation determined a significant weak positive association between positional leadership levels and perceived benefits of risk-taking in the social risk

domain. There was also an insignificant positive association between positional leadership levels and the recreational risk domain. The weak negative relationship between positional leadership levels and perceived benefits in the financial, ethical, and health and safety risk benefits domain was not significant.

Once again, holders of senior leader positions perceived that there were benefits to taking risks in the social domain and, to a lesser degree, some benefits to taking risks in the recreational domain. However, these senior leaders did not see a benefit to taking risks associated with the financial, ethical, or health and safety risk domains.

Research Objective 5

The purpose of the fifth research objective was to identify relationships between followership style and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. A Pearson correlation analysis identified a significant medium positive association between followership style and ethical risk-taking intent. There were also weak to negligible (nonsignificant) positive associations in the financial and health and safety risk domains. There were weak to negligible negative associations between followership styles and the recreational and social risk domains. In particular, exemplary followers were less likely than conformist or pragmatist followers to participate in activities identified in the ethical risk domain. In each of the other domains, there was little difference in the propensity of the three followership types with regard to risk-taking intent.

As related to followership styles and risk-taking perceptions, the Person correlation results indicated a significant medium negative association between followership style and perception of risk in the financial, ethical, and health and safety

risk domains. There were insignificant weak to negligible negative associations between followership style and the perception of risk in the recreational and social domains.

There was a distinct difference between exemplary and pragmatist followers compared to conformist followers related to their perceptions of risk in each of these domains.

The findings related to followership style and risk-taking benefits, per a Pearson correlation analysis, indicated an insignificant weak to negligible negative association in the recreational, social, and health and safety risk domains. There was also an insignificant weak to negligible positive association between followership styles and benefits associated with the financial and ethical risk domains.

Essentially, conformist followers reported low to no benefits to engaging in behaviors described in the financial, recreational, and social domains, while exemplary and pragmatist followers reported the benefits as being slightly higher, some to low benefit, across these domains. The primary difference in the follower styles was their reported independent critical thinking behaviors, with conformist followers having an overall lower independent critical thinking score.

Research Objective 6

The purpose of the sixth research objective was to determine significant differences in risk-taking attitudes and perceptions among the five followership styles. However, more than 96% of the participants scored as exemplary followers, with only two other followership styles being identified. Thus, an analysis for this research objective was not possible.

Conclusions

Several conclusions were drawn from this nonexperimental research study of followership styles, positional leadership levels, and risk-taking attitudes and perceptions. However, as conclusions are considered, one must bear in mind the limitations of the study. First, the combination of the KSFQ and DOSPERT risk assessment tools was used for the first time in this study. While the instrument was validated, some items could be refined to reflect the experience of a traditional-age college student population. Second, the questionnaire was distributed following the membership training and development programs, which could have influenced how participants responded. This study was conducted after their orientation programs had concluded and their roles as leaders in the organization had come to a close. Third, the results of the followership style portion of the study were skewed, with more than 95% of participants scoring as exemplary followers. Fourth, the study was conducted with orientation peer educators at Texas A&M University; the results can be generalized only to that population.

Followership Styles

The clear majority of the orientation peer educators identified their followership style as being exemplary followers, with only five pragmatists and one active follower (conformist). Exemplary followers are characterized as independent critical thinkers, with pragmatists questioning leadership decisions but not often or critically. People with these followership styles would also be considered to be engaged to highly engaged in their organization.

The study did not find a difference in the followership styles among the three position leadership levels. With more than 96% of the participants scoring as exemplary followers, one could reason that these three peer orientation organizations are attracting exemplary followers because of the stated mission and purpose of the organization and their reputation for achieving desired results. All but one of the participants classified as a pragmatist and the active follower (conformist) were line leaders. One senior leader, who scored as a pragmatist, moderate on both the critical thinking and active engagement scales, was classified academically as a senior. However, this finding should be studied further because self-report studies are prone to various limitations, such as social desirability effect (Thomas & Kilmann, 1975). In this case, peer educators who participated in this study may have answered the followership questions based on their expectation of how a “good” orientation leader should answer versus recognizing their actual behavior.

Recognizing that the focus of the organization’s mission and purpose is what exemplary followers tend to value leads one to conclude that this aspect of the organization has greater influence on followers than the type of leadership role in the organization (Kelley, 1988). In other words, students who choose to participate in the orientation peer educator activity are focused on the organization’s mission, purpose, and tasks at hand rather than on rank, title, or leadership role. That said, it could be that understanding and committing to the mission is the part of the culture (i.e., frequent emphasis on the purpose of the organization) that eventually developed members into exemplary followers rather than attracting them.

Risk-Taking Attitudes and Perceptions

Overall, the study found that participants serving in orientation peer educator roles were risk averse to behaviors identified in the financial, ethical, and health and safety risk domains but were risk seeking in the social domain. The hesitancy reported by participants regarding their risk-taking intentions in the recreational domain may have been influenced by the nature of the actions described in the questionnaire. Some of the activities referenced in the items associated with recreational domain could have been activities with which they were not familiar, considered to be too expensive, or would not be possible due to inaccessibility of outdoor features such as mountains, tall bridges, and rivers.

Related to the perception of risks associated with each domain, all of the activities described in the questionnaire, with the exception of those associated with the social domain, were considered by participants to be moderately risky or risky. These peer educators perceived that the risks described in the social domain were only somewhat risky. This disparity in the perception of risk could be attributed to their training or expected roles in communicating with new students. While the peer educators still perceived the behaviors such as “admitting that your tastes are different from those of a friend” or “moving to a city far away from your extended family” are somewhat risky, the training provided to orientation peer educators specifically focuses on personal communication, appreciating diversity, and helping new students to focus on their goal of graduating with a degree and beginning their adult journey may affect their perception of such risks.

Findings specific to risk-taking benefits among orientation peer educators were consistent with the results from risk-taking intentions. Overall, participants did not perceive benefits to be gained by participating in behaviors described in the financial, recreational, ethical, or health and safety domains. Participants, primarily senior leaders, did perceive benefits to taking the risks described in the social domain. This refers again to the role and expectations of an orientation leader to relate with new and transitioning students while challenging and encouraging them to graduate and embrace their desired careers. Challenges such as “choosing a career that you truly enjoy over a more secure one” is just one of many questions that arise regularly and are discussed by college peers upon their arrival at college and throughout their college career. Similarly, learning to take a stand and “disagreeing with an authority figure on a major issue” is part of the adolescent development process and healthy dialogue and debate are often encouraged by faculty who seek to enhance a student’s critical thinking skills.

Relationships: Leadership Levels and Risk-Taking Attitudes

An examination of a relationship between risk-taking attitudes and perceptions and positional leadership levels indicated a statistically significant finding of a very weak negative association between risk-taking intent and positional leadership level in the financial risk domain. The data indicated that senior leaders were less likely to take financial risks than those in line leader or mid-level leadership positions. Negative associations between risk-taking intent and positional leadership levels found across the recreational and ethical domains also indicated that senior leaders would be less likely to take risks in these areas. As for the social and health and safety domains, a weak positive

association also showed that senior leadership was more likely than line leaders and mid-level leaders to take social and health or safety risks. This risk-taking behavior could be attributed to the fact that senior leaders have had more life experience and more decision-making practice and so are more confident and inclined to take risks that could shape their career or bring instant pleasure or contentment. For instance, “speaking your mind about an unpopular issue in a meeting at work” may result in respect from others or resolution of a concern which a person in a senior leader position may consider to be personally or professionally beneficial. Likewise, taking risks in the health and safety domain may result in personal or immediate satisfaction that a senior leader may determine is worth the risk based on experience and understanding of the risk and the return.

While none of the risk perception correlations was significant, relationships between risk-taking perception and positional leader levels were very weak negative across the recreational, social, and health and safety domains. Senior leaders perceived experiences in those three domains to be less risky than did line leaders or mid-level leaders, while weak positive relationships were found between leadership levels and the financial and ethical domains. These findings indicated that senior leaders perceived those type of experiences to be more risky than did line leaders or mid-level leaders.

There was no apparent consistent relationship between risk-taking benefits and positional leadership levels. However, it was interesting that senior leaders perceived that taking risks in the financial domain would have low to no benefits and taking risks in the social domain would be more beneficial more so than did line leaders and mid-

level leaders. This was consistent with the risk-intent finding that people in higher leadership positions were less likely to take risks in the financial domain and more likely to take risks in the social domain.

Relationships: Followership Styles and Risk-Taking Attitudes

While three followership styles were identified among the orientation peer educators, one type was represented by only one participant; thus, the correlational analysis of relationships between risk-taking attitudes and followership styles is largely dependent on the relationship between two follower types: exemplary followers and pragmatists. A statistically significant finding of a very weak positive association was found between risk-taking intent and followership styles in the ethical risk domain. In particular, exemplary followers were extremely unlikely to take ethical risks while pragmatist followers were not sure whether they would take the same ethical risks. A significant negative association indicated that exemplary followers and pragmatists were more inclined to take risks than active followers (conformists) in the social risk domain. In reviewing the traits of the three followership styles, active followers (conformists) were generally less inclined to question their leaders, were comfortable in the follower role, and relinquish thinking responsibilities to the leaders, while pragmatists were more conservative in their approach to decision making and were risk averse, remaining neutral in most areas (Kelley, 1988). These followership style traits were consistent with the risk-intent responses in each of the five risk domains.

Relationships between followership styles and risk-taking perceptions were all negatively associated, with significant differences noted between exemplary and

pragmatist followers and active followers (conformists) in the financial, ethical, and health and safety domains. Once again, the tendency for exemplary followers to think strategically and assess circumstances more than active followers is apparent in their perception of risk. Given the inclination for active followers to let others do the thinking and make decisions, this may be associated with their perception of risks being more liberal in all but the recreational domain.

This same concept of an exemplary follower's active critical thinking behavior may also be related to how a participant's evaluation of benefits associated with the risks described in each domain. Generally, both the exemplary followers and the pragmatists were optimistic in their perceptions of the benefits to be gained by taking risks, while the active followers perceived few to no benefits to risk taking. These results may be based on an elevated critical thinking inclination in those follower types versus the pessimistic assessment of benefits to be gained perceived by the active follower. However, in that only one participant represented the active follower type, this conclusion is strictly suppositional.

Implications

This study demonstrates that students who participated in the peer educator programs and were surveyed considered themselves to be focused, motivated, and committed to the organization's mission and their role as a part of the team. In that the orientation peer educator role is to assist new students through their first-year transition process (Martin, 2000; Stanford, 1992), it would be logical that a traditional orientation

leader or extended orientation organization would attract students with exemplary followership styles.

Knowing that this type of experience is attractive to persons with job and organizational skills demonstrated and preferred by persons with elevated critical thinking performance (e.g., exemplary followers), recruitment advertisements, informational presentations, and interviews should demonstrate an organizational environment that values independent critical thinking and active engagement. In addition, utilizing an instrument such as the KFSQ to measure peer educators' followership styles during the interview or screening process and throughout the membership period could assist in maintaining a positive and productive organizational environment with high-quality leadership performance. While some leaders may prefer to select or appoint peer educators who have exemplary followership style characteristics, a membership that is represented by different styles may be beneficial. For instance, having peer educators who are satisfied with just doing their job and who give little thought to critical issues may decrease conflict for leaders as they give directives at busy or stressful times.

Another noteworthy implication is that senior leaders recognized the benefits of taking risks in the social domain, an area that is directly tied to the role of a peer educator. The ability of a peer educator to communicate with confidence, make difficult decisions related to personal goals, and manage conflict is critical to academic and professional success and supports observations by Sawyer (1988) that peer leaders or orientation leaders have excellent communication skills and firm understanding of the

campus environment. Recognizing that senior leaders tend to be more liberal in the social domain and conservative in the financial, recreational, ethical, and health and safety domains, it seems logical to use that observed trait and the experience as senior leaders to educate and train members in other leadership roles.

Because most students were found to be somewhat risk seeking in the social and recreational domains, the implications of this finding point to the need for continued training and education associated with practical methods of communication, conflict resolution, judgment, and decision making at all leadership levels. It also suggests that sharing this assessment of what student leaders perceived to be risky, what their risk intentions would be, and their perception of the benefits of taking such risks could influence how one frames the decision to participate and take the risk, as noted by Fishbein and Ajzen in their theory of reasoned action (1975) and the theory of planned behavior introduced by Ajzen (1985).

Because it is likely that most people involved in peer orientation organizations are not aware of their risk-taking attitudes and perceptions, sharing current and former orientation peer educators' risk-taking attitudes and perceptions could influence the subjective norms associated with the activity, choice, or decision and influence others in the organization, supported by the social norm model (Lederman & Stewart, 2005). This strategy of data sharing, coupled with effective peer training, could influence the followership styles and risk-taking behaviors of new orientation peer educators and ensure healthy organization climates and personal safety.

Recommendations

While the combined KSFQ/DOSPERT online instrument was validated, items in the financial domain and health and safety domain should be refined to meet the age and experience of a traditional college population. In addition, the timing of conducting this research should be taken into account. This study was conducted at the end of the 2013-2014 academic school year. The three target orientation programs had concluded with their activities and leadership roles in the organization had come to an end. It is not known whether the timing of the study influenced the overall results. However, because each peer education program conducts extensive risk management training and personal development workshops throughout the academic year, it is possible that the research influenced participant answers related to followership style or risk attitudes and perceptions. It is also not known whether this timing influenced the response rate because the recruited students were no longer actively engaged in organization activities.

A larger sample of followership styles is necessary to examine possible relationships between positional leader levels and risk attitudes and perceptions. A larger study of multiple orientation programs or other student organizations would provide a larger data sample from which broader generalizations could be made to other institutions or environments.

Additional research is needed to explore the extent to which followership style is common among orientation peer educators and student leaders in general. While it is possible that the mission and purpose of orientation programs naturally attracts exemplary followers, it would be beneficial to assess followership styles among peer

educators at various times throughout the academic year to determine the predominant followership style overall. Kelley (1992) noted that followership style is fluid and that labels are not who one is but rather how one carries out one's role, depending on variables such as organizational environment, career or work experience, or age. It cannot be overemphasized that a followership style is a pattern of behavior that is cultivated and perpetuated by both the leader and the followers.

There are many peer educator groups on college campuses, such as resident advisors, peer counselors in health and wellness programs, and peer leaders on judicial boards. Does the mission and purpose of the organization dictate the type of follower who is attracted to join? Or does the mission and purpose of the organization dictate the type of follower one becomes? Research to compare and contrast organizations that have different goals and missions in order to test the hypothesis that organization mission influences the type of follower who is attracted to join and the type of follower the members become would be worthwhile.

Although the research on risk is extensive, there is still much that is not known about its connection to undergraduate students or student organization climate. Further research is needed regarding followership styles and risk-taking attitudes from a predictive perspective. With more data, using a variety of student organization types (e.g., academic, athletic, fraternities/sororities, military), a more robust analysis could assess the risk-taking predisposition of students in various types of organizations. This information could be used to develop effective training and education not only for

orientation peer educators but for students in general, as it applies to issues such as academic integrity, bullying, and bystander behavior.

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