

# **SUMMARY OVERVIEW**

**The Effects of Formal Leadership Lessons on the Emergence of Positive Social-Leadership Skills of Pre-Kindergarten Students**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment**

**of the requirements**

**for the degree of**

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

**to the faculty of**

**THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY**

**New York**

**By**

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## Summary of the Research

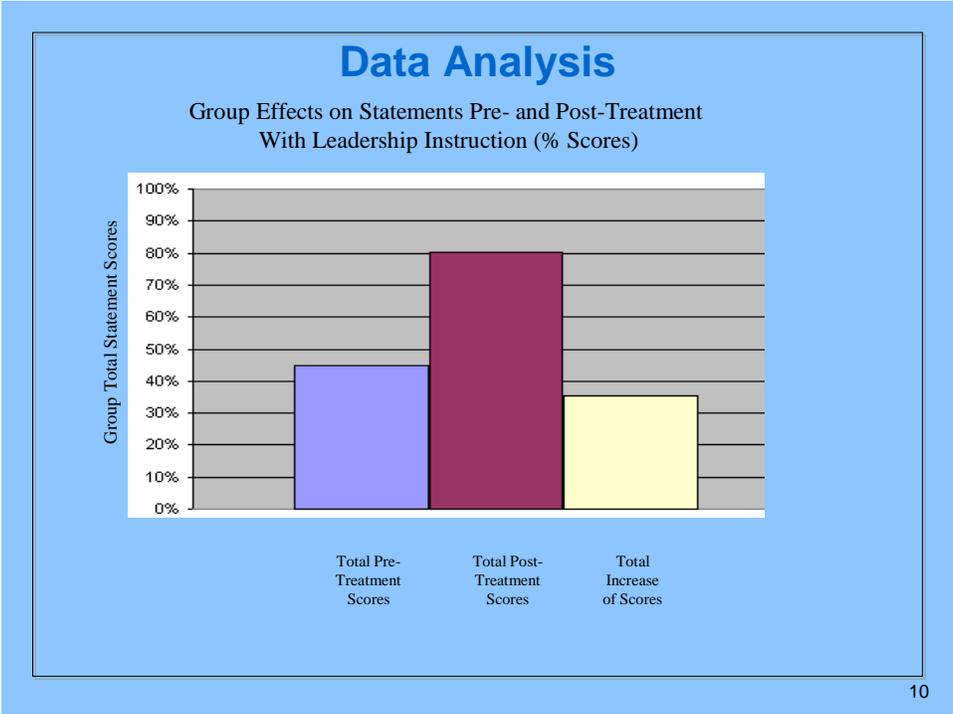
**(The full dissertation is contained on The Leader in Me website in PDF format.)**

The purpose of this study was to contribute additional research knowledge about the development of pre-kindergarten children's emerging social leadership skills. Trained teachers/raters conducted pre- and post-treatment observational assessments of thirty-one pre-kindergarten students using the social/emotional section of an early childhood developmental testing tool that had high reliability and validity properties as well as scoring compatibility with *The Seven Habits of Happy Kids* (Covey, 2008).

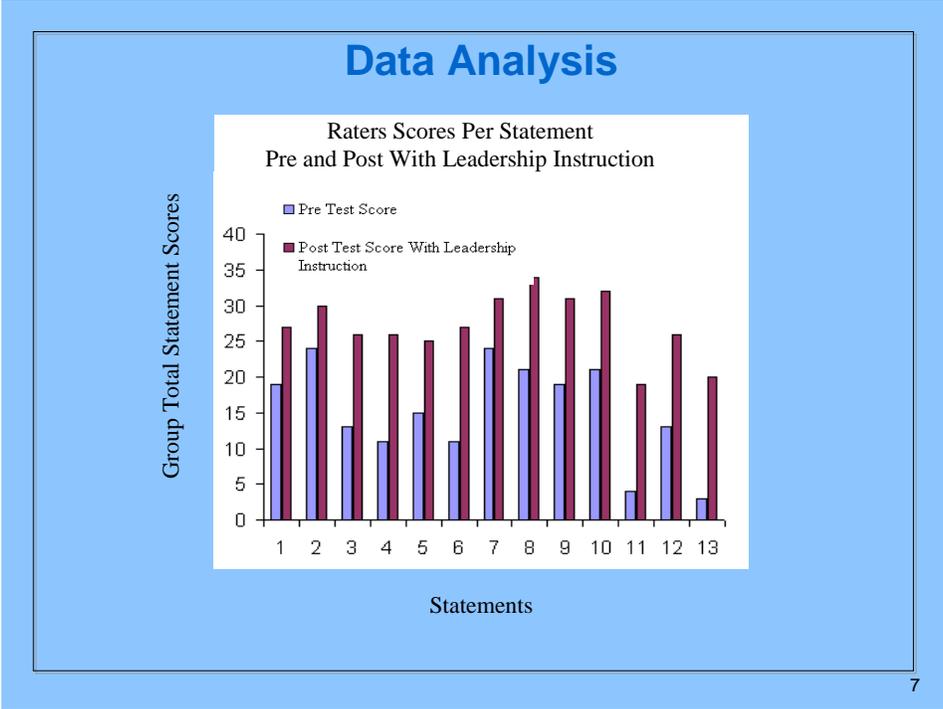
After initial pre-treatment observations were conducted, the experimental class was exposed to formal leadership lessons based on *The Seven Habits of Happy Kids* (Covey, 2008) for seven weeks. Using age-appropriate stories from children's picture books and seven handmade stick puppets, each of which represented one of the seven habits story characters, the researcher read to the preschool students and had the puppets discuss/act out what happened in the story. Post-treatment ratings were conducted in both the experimental and control classes.

Results from an analysis of the collected data indicated that students who had been given formal leadership lessons received significantly higher post-raters' scores of observable positive social-leadership behaviors compared with their peers who had not received such lessons. A separate analysis of percentage of increase in each observable social/emotional behavior detailed in statements and previously equated with specific Habits (Covey, 2008) showed a 41% increase in observable interdependent behaviors and a 33% increase in observable independent habits. Further analyses indicated that both males and females regardless of age were equally affected by the habits lessons. Additionally, teachers' informal notes indicated that since implementation of the Seven Habits lessons, the children appeared to be less quarrelsome over toys. In fact, children were heard singing the leadership song to dolls in the dramatic play center and using vocabulary words associated with the Seven Habits of Happy Kids (Covey, 2008) in their conversations with one another.

There was an overall 34% increase in post-treatment raters' scores for positive social-leadership skills as illustrated in the following figures:



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**Relative increase of 33% of Statements 1 through 6 (Covey’s Habits 1, 2 and 3; Independent skills).**

**Relative increase of 41% of Statements 10 through 13 (Covey’s Habits 4, 5, 6; Interdependent skills).**

The overall results of this study indicate that exposure to formal-leadership lessons using puppets and age-appropriate picture-book stories based on *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids* (Covey, 2008) and *The Leader in Me* (Covey, 2008) process, is related to an increase in pre-kindergarten students' observable positive social skills / effective leadership habits. Both independent and interdependent behaviors of the youngsters increased after the lessons, with interdependent skills enhanced the most.

By learning and practicing good habits that are emphasized in *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids* (Covey, 2008), and integrating such behaviors into their free play through *The Leader in Me* (Covey, 2008) process, pre-school children were capable of developing positive social-leadership skills. This process, which has its own unifying language, kept students connected with vocabulary typical of high social/emotional intelligence. As the young children learned to think proactively, show empathy to one another and work together peacefully, they expanded their emerging independent and interdependent positive social-leadership skills

Since such skills are necessary for successful communication and problem solving in the twenty-first global society, then encouraging the growth of good habits of thought and action would seem a wise thing to do. The results of this study not only strengthen the beliefs about social-emotional intelligence and positive social-leadership skills, but also provide a practical way to encourage the growth of these traits in young children.

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## ABSTRACT

### THE EFFECTS OF FORMAL LEADERSHIP-LESSONS ON THE EMERGENCE OF POSITIVE SOCIAL-LEADERSHIP SKILLS OF PRE-KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS

Loreta Andersen

This study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of The Leader in Me© (Covey, 2008) process, which focuses on developing positive social-leadership skills in young students. Thirty-six Pre-Kindergarten students in two separate classrooms, each containing 18 students in an urban public-school, were rated two different times for positive social-leadership skills using the Social/Emotional section of *The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum for Ages 3-5*® (Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2002). One classroom ( $n = 18$ ) acted as a control and did not receive any formal leadership lessons. The other classroom ( $n = 18$ ) acted as an experimental and received formal leadership lessons for seven weeks that were focused on *The Seven Habits of Happy Kids* (Covey, 2008). Inventory yielded two sets of total scores obtained on 13 checkpoint statements of social/emotional development both before and after the implementation of the formal leadership-lessons in the experimental classroom. Results obtained from a one-way ANOVA conducted on the scores of each classroom indicated that students who had received formal leadership-lessons based on *The Leader in Me*© (Covey, 2008) and *The Seven Habits of Happy Kids* (Covey, 2008) received significantly higher raters' scores of observable positive social-leadership behaviors than those students who had not received such lessons. The experimental class had a greater percentage of gains in raters' scores than the control class. A comparison made of which of the habits lessons, if any, had more impact than others on the emergence of specific social/emotional skills indicated a slightly greater percentage increase in interdependent social/emotional behaviors (Habits 4, 5, and 6) than independent behaviors (Habits 1, 2, and 3). In addition, a univariate ANOVA revealed no significant differences due to gender or due to age in months of each child. Both males and females regardless of age in months were equally affected by all the habits lessons.