Exploring QU health students' behavioral determinants, perspectives, and experiences toward student leadership
A quantitative study

Menatallah Rayan[1], Dhabya Al-Khater[1], Myriam ElJaam[1], Mohammed Diab[1], Derek Stewart[2], Dr. Alla El-Awaisi[1]*
[1]College of Pharmacy, Qatar University, [2]QU Health, Qatar University, Qatar. *Principal Investigator

Background

- Leadership is the ability to motivate a group of people to work together towards a common goal to meet the needs of an organization
- Leaders in society are viewed as agents of change
- Many international bodies recommend that leadership development should be incorporated in healthcare students' education
- Student organizations are important avenues for leadership development
- Qatar University's Strategy 2018-2022 stresses on graduate excellence, and aims to prepare graduates who are well-rounded, with qualities and principles that maximize their impact

Study Objective

The objectives of this study were to explore the perspectives of QU Health students towards student leadership in terms of the following:

- Behavioral determinants influencing involvement in student leadership
- The qualities of successful student leaders
- The required support and training for student leaders

Methods

Design	• Quantitative methodology • Cross-sectional, web-based, survey
Setting & Participants	• All 1352 Qatar University Health Students (Pharmacy, Medicine, Health Sciences, Dental Medicine)
Data collection	• Survey contained five sections consisting of items derived from the 14 domains of the Theoretical Domains Framework (TDF)[1] and items partially adapted from the National Student Leadership Survey[2]
Data Analysis	• Descriptive statistics using IBM SPSS® v27 • Inductive content analysis of open-ended questions • Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency
Ethics Approval	• Qatar University Institutional Review Board with the approval number QU-IRB 1456-EA/21

Results

- A total of 179 participants completed the survey
- 27.4% (49/179) students had a current or previous leadership role at QU
- 40.8% (73/179) held a student leadership position prior to their enrollment at the university
- Participant characteristics are shown in Table 1
- Figure 1 shows the positive, negative, and neutral behavioral determinants of student leadership based on the TDF domains
- Figure 2 shows the key responsibilities mentioned by students with leadership positions at QU

Results... continued

Table 1: Participants' Characteristics (n = 179)

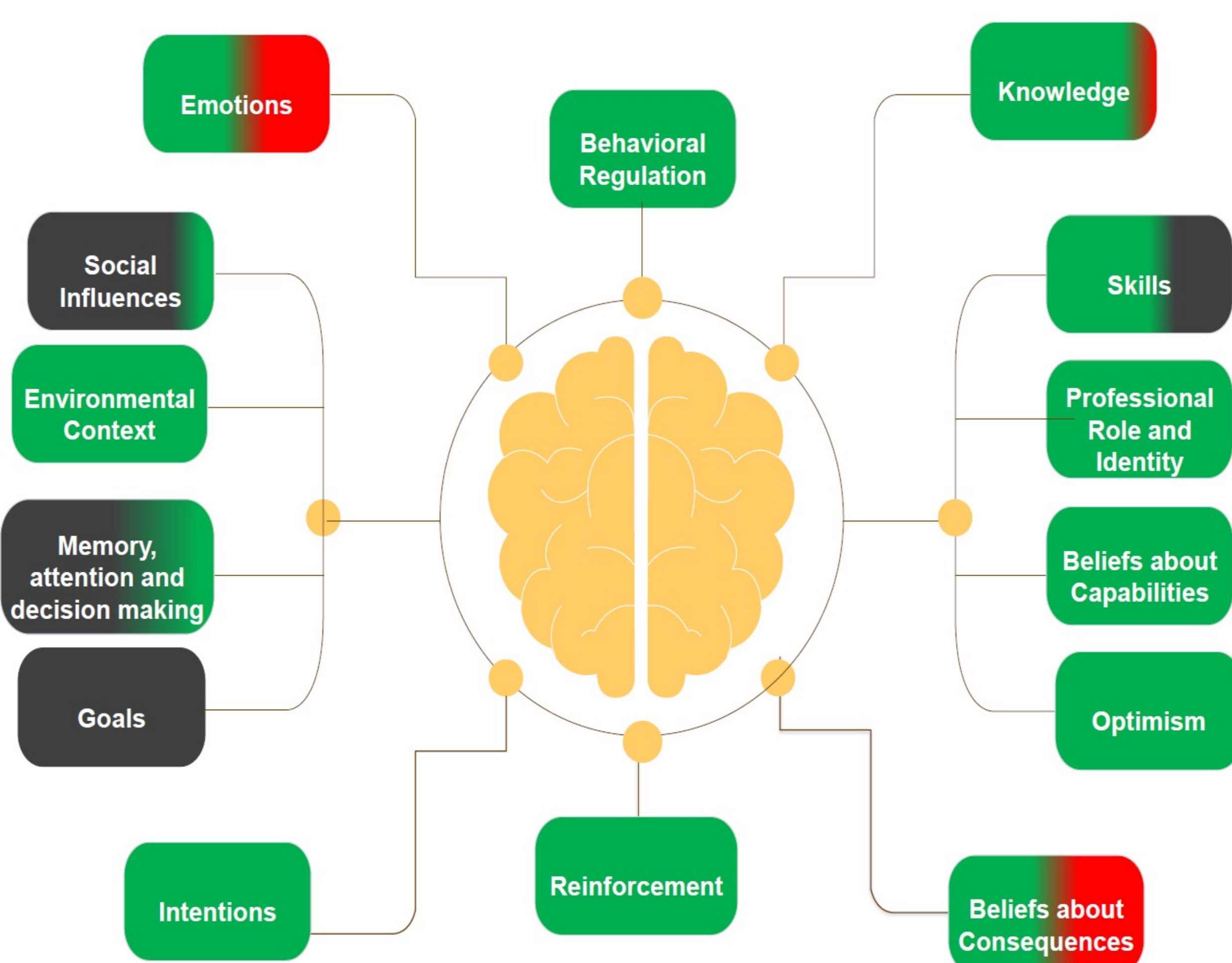| Characteristic	Frequency, n (Percentage, %)
Age (years)	
17-22	146 (81.6%)
23-28	28 (15.6%)
29-34	2 (1.1%)
35-40	3 (1.7%)
Gender	
Male	24 (13.4%)
Female	155 (86.6%)
College	
Medicine	33 (18.4%)
Pharmacy	83 (46.4%)
Dental Medicine	8 (4.5%)
Health Sciences	55 (30.7%)
Level of Study	
Undergraduate	165 (92.2%)
Graduate	14 (7.8%)
Nationality	
Qatar	55 (30.7%)
Non-Qatari	124 (69.3%)

Figure 1 Behavioral Determinants of Student Leadership Based on TDF domains (Red: negative, Green: positive, Gray: neutral)

Figure 2 Word Cloud of Responsibilities Mentioned by Students with Current/Previous Leadership Positions at QU

1 | Characteristics of a Successful Student Leader:

- Nearly all participants rated all the capabilities as very important to extremely important. The most highly rated capabilities were:
  - Organizing and managing time effectively
  - Admitting and learning from mistakes
  - Listening to different points of view
  - Working productively with others
  - Effective negotiation
- None of the capabilities were rated as not important by any of the participants

2 | Indicators of a Student Leader's Success:

- Positive feedback was the most important indicator of a student leader's success

3 | Required Support and Training by Student Leaders:

- Most students (63.3%) declared that they did not receive training for their leadership role
- The most suggested type of training identified by student leaders included: negotiation, communication, teamwork, and effective planning skills

Strengths

1. First study to investigate student leadership in Qatar University.
2. First study to include all healthcare students.
3. First study to investigate behavioral determinants based on a theoretical framework of behavioral change.
4. First study to investigate support and training required by student leaders.
5. High internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.906) of the TDF items used in this questionnaire.

Limitations

1. Low response rate (13.2%) & unable to switch to paper-based survey due to COVID-19 pandemic
2. High risk of non-response bias
3. Potentially skewed towards pharmacy students' (46.4%) perspectives
4. Possibility of social desirability bias

Conclusion

- Most of the TDF domains were positive, indicating that they were facilitators for student leadership
- Barriers included:
  - Belief that leadership would be time consuming and distract from academics
  - Negative emotion
  - Unawareness of how to apply for leadership positions
- Time management, learning from mistakes, listening, negotiation & working with others, were the most important capabilities for student leaders
- Positive feedback was the most important indicator of a leader's success
- Most student leaders did not receive leadership training and suggested training sessions to develop the needed skills

Recommendations

- To perform inferential statistics to identify relationships between variables measured
- To conduct focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of student leaders' experiences
- To design leadership development training based on the findings of the study and test its effect
- To investigate students' perspectives about leadership in practice settings

References

1. Cane J, O'Connor D, Michie S. Validation of the theoretical domains framework for use in behaviour change and implementation research. Implementation science : IS. 2012;7;37-.
2. Deane E, Stanley K. Student leadership in curriculum development and reform [Internet]. Sydney: Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching; 2015 [cited 4 April 2021]. Available from: https://ltr.edu.au/resources/LE13_2839_Deane_Report_2015.pdf.

كلية الصيدلة
College of Pharmacy
جامعة قطر QATAR UNIVERSITY
Member of عضو في الصحة HEALTH