**TITLE**          A Study of the Impact of a Leadership Development Program on a
               Community College's Front-Line and Middle Managers

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**OBJECTIVE**      The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of a
               leadership development program in the development of leadership skills in
               community college front-line and middle managers.


## METHODOLODY

The population for the study was front-line and middle managers at a large southwestern United States community college who were selected by the college administration to participate in a two year leadership development program, and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Forty-nine completed the Leadership Practices Inventory before the program began and 40 completed it following one year in the program.  Twenty-nine of their supervisors completed the LPI-Observer on 48 participants in the pre-training and 19 completed the LPI-O on 31 participants for the post-test.  Eight participants (randomly selected) were interviewed before the program began and three years after its completion.  All observers with more than three employees in the leadership development program were also interviewed (N=3).

Just over two-thirds of both the pre- and post-assessment group was women. The group's ages were spread evenly through the age range of 30-55, with 22 percent of the group aged 55 and above and seven percent under the age of 30. The demographic of years of management experience was spread evenly from 0 to over 10 years of experience. Data on ethnicity was not available for the respondents, but 69 percent of all college employees are white.  No demographic information was provided about the interviewees.  Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the pre- and post-LPI assessments was above 0.93.

The author ran a confirmatory factor analysis on the LPI, "which yielded five interpretable factors, consistent with Kouzes and Posner's five factors—the five leadership practices of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The a priori hypothesis had five dimensions and the scree plot confirmed the five dimensions/factors were correct.  The five factors were rotated using a Varimax rotation. The rotated solution yielded the following five factors: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart, which accounted for 90% of the item variance" (p. 89).


## KEY FINDINGS

All five of the post-assessments showed higher use of the five leadership practices, although

none of these differences reached statistical significant. The mean scores increased an average of 12 percent.  No significant pre and post-test differences were found on the basis of gender, participant age, or years of management experience.

Conclusions from the qualitative data analysis also indicate a leadership development program does have an effect or effects on community college front-line and middle managers. Overall, the one-on-one interviews with participants and observers were positive. Participants stated the training gave them enhanced communication skills, confidence to handle tough situations, and overall, it had made them better managers or leaders. Through interviews, the in-person training and the mentoring sessions were deemed most beneficial, while most deemed the brown bag sessions to be unhelpful.

The author concludes:

> While statistical tests indicated there were no significant differences found between the pre- and post-LPI assessment scores and the five leadership practices, the quantitative and qualitative data collected during this mixed methods study do show that a leadership development program does have an effect or effects on community college front-line and middle managers. Overall, the post-LPI assessments mean scores of the five leadership practices of Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart (N = 71), had increased at the conclusion of the first year of the college's leadership development program. In addition, when the scores of both the pre- and post-LPI assessment means were combined (n =168), four of the leadership practices, Model the Way, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart were in the high quartile of almost always engaged in the described leadership behavior. Inspire a Shared Vision was in the high interquartile of often engages in the describe leadership behavior (pp. 126-127).