
THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

research

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

TITLE	Ethical Perspectives and Leadership Practices in the Two-Year Colleges of South Carolina
RESEARCHER	Shirley L. Butler School of Education Clemson University Unpublished doctoral dissertation: May 2009
OBJECTIVE	The purpose of this study was to examine the ethical perspectives and leadership practices of those in leadership positions in community colleges.

METHODOLOGY

The sample consisted of 68 presidents and chief institutional officers from the 16 two-year colleges in South Carolina. All participants completed the Leadership Practices Inventory and the Ethics Position Questionnaire (Forsyth, 1980). The typical respondent was male (56%), Caucasian (91%), over 46 years of age (82%), not the institution's president (88%), and had served for 10 years or less in their position (75%). Internal reliabilities coefficients in this study were quite high: .98 Model, .99 Inspire, .99 Challenge, .97 Enable and .88 Encourage.

KEY FINDINGS

Enabling was the most frequent leadership practice, followed by Model, and then Encourage and Challenge, and Inspire. Model, Challenge and Encourage were significantly correlated (positive) with the ethical orientation of Idealism. Model and Challenge were significantly correlated (negative) with the ethical orientation of Relativism. Encourage and Inspire were not significantly related to either orientation but in the same direction of relationship as noted for the other leadership practices. No significant relationships (ANOVA) were found between the leadership practices of Model, Inspire, Enable and Encourage and the respondent's ethical perspectives (absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism). Overall significant differences were found for Challenge and post hoc tests revealed that they were between subjectivism and the other three ethical orientations.

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE®

The author concludes: "The findings of this study suggested that relationships do exist between leader effectiveness and ethical ideology, but further research is needed to more closely examine the complexities of these relationships" (p. 92).