

TITLE A Quantitative Study of the Perceived Leadership Practices of Business and Educational Leaders in North Georgia

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived leadership practices of business and educational leaders using Kouzes and Posner's (2002) Leadership Practices Inventory and to identify the differences and similarities discovered in both types of leaders.

METHODOLOGY

The population of this study consisted of business and educational leaders in a specific area of Georgia. A census was conducted as an attempt to gather data on all leaders in the population. The Chamber of Commerce used in this study had 192 private business members. The Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) consisted of 16 school districts. There were 16 superintendents and 175 principals served by this RESA. All business and educational leaders were contacted via email requesting their participation in the survey. The Leadership Practices Inventory was completed by 86 (45% response rate) educational leaders and 60 (32% response rate business leaders. Of the respondents, 70 (48%) were female and 76 (52%) were male and there was no significant difference between the two samples by gender.

KEY FINDINGS

Enable, Encourage and Model were the leadership practices most frequently reported by business leaders, followed by Challenge and Inspire. The rank order from educational leaders was very similar, with Model and Encourage switching places. No significant differences were found on 25 of the 30 leadership (83%) behaviors between business and educational leaders; with business leader's scores on four of the five differing behaviors being lower than educational leaders. Male and female responses were the same on 73 percent (N=22) of the LPI statements; with females reporting higher average scores on the eight different leadership behaviors. No significant differences were found on the basis of respondent age or on the basis of length of employment.

The author concludes:

Overall, the use of the five exemplary practices of leadership are utilized by business and educational leaders in similar ways (p. 100).

Due to the fact that constant change is a guarantee in the technological world we

live in today, it is crucial that current leaders and aspiring leaders recognize the similarities and differences in the leadership practices documented in this study that exist between these two types of leaders.

With similarities existing in the use of five exemplary leadership practices between business and educational leaders and the biggest difference being the context in which they work, the ability to positively collaborate with one another is a good place to start for both types of leaders. Collaboration and comparing similar leadership practices and scenarios while learning about the differences in their contexts could lead to stronger organizations, sustainability through leadership changes, better private-public partnerships, and a broadening of the number of effective business and educational leaders in our country. By recognizing the core practices of effective educational and business leaders are similar and the main element an effective leader needs when placed in a new position is the understanding of the context, the number of effective leaders available to organizations would grow. No longer should organizations only look at industry specific leader candidates but they should consider all candidates who possess the five practices of exemplary leadership as noted by Kouzes and Posner (pp. 116-117).