TITLE   The Impact of University Religious Affiliation on Presidential Leadership Practices

RESEARCHER   Richard David Savior
                   Graduate School of Education
                   Fordham University
                   Unpublished doctoral dissertation: March 2014

OBJECTIVE   The purpose of this study was to measure and analyze the senior leadership practices at private/secular and private/religious affiliated colleges and universities to identify differences in leadership practices as they relate to personal and institutional demographics.

METHODOLODY

The target population for this study was the presidents of 100 private/secular and 100 private/religious affiliated colleges and universities. All were four-year private institutions; ranged in size from 1,000 to more than 10,000 enrollments; from 29 states; reflected urban, suburban and rural communities; and Carnegie classifications ranging from baccalaureate colleges through doctoral research institutions. Of the 103 respondents (36 from secular and 67 from religiously affiliated institutions), they were typically male (67%) and over 50 years of age (88.3%). Experience at the respondents' current institution was well distributed, with 29.1 percent reporting 1–4 years total employment at their current institution, 28.2 percent with 5–9 years, 22.3 percent with 10–14 years, 7.8 percent with 15–19 years, and 12.6 percent with 20+ years. Looking at these milestones combined, 80 percent of the respondents had been employed at their current institutions fewer than 15 years. With respect to the number of years that the respondents have held their current positions, 35.9 percent have been in their current position for 1–4 years, 31.1 percent for 5–9 years, 15.5 percent for 10–14 years, 10.7 percent for 15–19 years, and 6.8 percent for 20+ years. Sixty-seven percent have been presidents for fewer than 10 years and 82.5 percent had been in their positions for fewer than 15 years. In addition to completing the Leadership Practices Inventory, respondents were asked to define the degree that their faith and personal values shape and influence their leadership philosophy.

KEY FINDINGS

The most frequently used leadership practices were Model, Inspire and Encourage, followed by Challenge, and then Enable Others to Act. No

statistically significant differences were found between any of the five leadership practices based upon gender. While the older age group (50+ years of age) reported higher mean ratings for themselves than did the under 50 years of age respondents in all five of the leadership practices, none of them reached the level of statistical significance. Similarly, while the mean scores for all five leadership practices were higher for the fewer than 10 years employed respondents (versus 10+ years), none of these were statistically significant. No significant differences in leadership practices were found between those who had come up through an academic career path compared with those from a nonacademic track. Furthermore, while religious affiliated respondents rated themselves higher on all five leadership practices than secular respondents, none of these differences were statistically significant. However, comparisons between those with less than or more than 10 years in their current position, showed that all of the latter group's leadership practice were significantly higher.

Correlational analysis revealed that the more that respondents engaged in each of the five leadership practices the more favorable (positive) were their job satisfaction ratings, feelings of job efficacy, commitment to mission and values, and sense of personal faith and values. The author offers these observations:

> This finding suggests that leaders who possess a stronger clarity of values and who are willing to set an example for others [MTW] may experience greater job satisfaction (p. 93).

> This finding suggests that leaders who are able to convey a clarity and sense of excitement about the future [ISV] may be better equipped to demonstrate a commitment to their institution's mission and values (p. 95).

> This finding suggests that leaders who seek out opportunities to effect positive change [CTP] may be more effective in their roles (p. 95).

Multiple regression analysis revealed that 27 percent of the variance around job satisfaction could be accounted for by the five leadership practices, 35 percent of the variance around job efficacy, and 28 percent of the variance around commitment to mission and values.