

**TITLE** Leadership Perceptions: A Comparison of Pastors and Their Parishioners

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**OBJECTIVE** The purpose of this dissertation was to build on the theory of transformational leadership and the research of Kouzes and Posner (2002) by exploring the differences in the self and observer perceptions of pastoral leadership in order to increase individual self-awareness among the pastors and provide a foundation for future pastoral leadership development.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Sixteen pastors participated in this research by completing the LPI, which was a population sample of the pastors of the Protestant association of churches in the southeast region of the United States. They provided access to congregants (N=444) who completed the LPI-Observer. Internal reliability (Cronbach alpha) coefficients in this study for pastors was .45 for Model, .85 for Inspire, .70 for Challenge, .60 for Enable, and .80 for Encourage, while for congregants the reliabilities were all above .83.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

The average leadership practice frequency scores for pastors were all lower than those reported in the Kouzes-Posner normative database, and reached statistical significance for Model and Enable. Congregants rated their pastors significantly higher than did the pastors themselves on all five leadership practices.

The number of years the congregants had been under their pastor's leadership accounted for some differences in perceptions of leadership practices. For example, the Model, Enable, and Encourage scores were higher for congregants with 1-5 years with their pastor than those with less than one year of experience, but neither different from those with 6+ years. No differences on this dimension were found for Inspire and Challenge. Based on the employment status of the pastor (did he have a second job?), none of the leadership practices showed significant differences from the perspective of congregants. Comparing pastors with less or more than 20 years of experience revealed no statistically significant differences from congregant's perspective.

The author concludes:

Pastoral leadership is a distinct application of leadership. The practices of

effective leadership found in the research of Kouzes and Posner (2007) are helpful for leaders, even pastoral leaders, in gaining a reliable and effective perspective on their leadership. It is from this accurate perspective that leaders can focus upon and further develop their leadership skills (p. 109).