



TITLE Intergenerational Discipleship for Leadership Development:
A Mixed-Methods Study

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the associate pastor's self-perceived leadership development and the lead pastor's perceived leadership development of the associate pastor.

METHODOLOGY

From the population of all Southern Baptist Convention churches, a sample was obtained through two avenues: the contact of every association in the SBC requesting the association to forward the invitation to qualifying churches per the delimitations, and the direct contact of churches by the researcher from a pool of churches provided by LifeWay Christian Resources. From these two avenues of contact, a sample of 99 churches (99 lead pastors and 99 associate pastors), across 25 states, was obtained. Participants completed the Student Leadership Practices Inventory (associate pastor completed the self-version and the lead pastor completed the observer version), Pastoral Management Competencies Questionnaire (Boersma, 1988) and a qualitative research interview. The average age of associate pastors was 27.7 and 50.4 years for lead pastors. The average church size was 775 members. The current church tenure was 2.89 years for associate pastors and 9.7 years for lead pastors; the overall ministry tenure for lead pastors was 24.5 years and 5.4 years for associate pastors. Most associate pastors position description was "youth/family ministry" (47.5%).

KEY FINDINGS

The associate pastors viewed themselves as engaging most frequently in the leadership practice of Enable, followed by Inspire, and then Challenge, Model, and Encourage. From the perspective of the lead pastors the most frequently engaged in leadership practices by the associate pastors was Enable and Encourage, followed by Model and Inspire, and then Challenge. The correlations

between the two groups for each leadership practice were not statistically significant. No significant correlation was found between any of the five leadership practices and associate pastor's answer to the question, "Do you aspire to one day become a lead pastor?"

When considering the generational categories of lead pastors, Baby Boomers rated their associate pastor's leadership development slightly lower (statistically significant) than their Generation-X counterparts. There was no significant relationship between the Millennial associate pastor and the Baby Boomer. The author indicates:

When looking at the sub-categories in the SLPI, there were some significant findings. In the Modeling the Way category, the relationship was significant at the 0.001 level, with significant findings for Baby Boomer lead pastors. The older generation seems to be on the same page as the associate pastors as it relates to these objectives, as they set goals and establish standards. In the Inspiring a Shared Vision, a significant finding at the < 0.01 level was found for the relationship between Millennial associate pastors and Generation-X lead pastors. Again, it seems that these two generations seem to be along the same perspective as to visionary leadership rather than a results-based approach. In Challenging the Process, again Millennial associate pastors yielded significant relationships between their perception and the Generation-X lead pastors..... For Enable Others to Act, a significant relationship was found between Millennial associate pastors and both Generation-X and Baby Boomer lead pastors. For Encourage the Heart, a significant relationship was found between Millennial associate pastors and Generation-X lead pastors at the 0.05 level. Overall, these sub-categories demonstrate that Generation-X lead pastors tend to be on similar perspective with their associate's leadership development. This also shows that, in some ways, there are more generational similarities with Millennials and Baby Boomers than would be anecdotally assumed. It also seems that Millennials do have more in common with Generation-X in terms of leadership development perception. These intergenerational partnerships show that it is possible for different age-groups to come together behind a common goal, and the SLPI instrument with its five categories of exemplary leadership practices provide a tangible and practical way for leaders to be developed on a church staff (p. 95).