



TITLE His Rod and Staff: An Investigation into the Links Between the Power Distances, Paternal and Encouraging Styles of Leadership, Church Growth and Vitality

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between the rates of the self-reported church growth found especially in the larger and mega churches of North America and a defining attribute of the senior leadership known as power distance.

METHODOLOGY

The sample included 248 senior pastors serving in approximately equal size distribution of churches with congregations ranging from small to medium (up to about 500 in weekly attendance), large (500-2000 in weekly attendance), and mega (more than 2,000 attending weekly); representing Protestant, Evangelical and Mainline, and Catholic denominations. Participants completed the Encourage the Heart scale (from the Leadership Practices Inventory; with a Cronbach alpha of .922), four items were taken from Hofstede's Value Survey Module to assess Power Distance Orientation, and the abbreviated ten item version of Aycan's Paternalistic Leadership Scale.

KEY FINDINGS

No significant relationship was found between PDO and church growth rates: nor was the correlation between Paternalistic Leadership Scale and church growth rate either mediated or moderated by church size. The leadership practice of Encourage the Heart did not significantly influence church growth rate, and this was not influenced by either church size or the PLS of the senior pastor.