

Self-Perception of Transformational Leadership Practices of American Dental Hygiene Program Administrators

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Problem Statement: Changes in oral healthcare delivery have resulted in the need of new workforce models leading to changes in the roles and responsibilities of the dental hygienist thus necessitating changes in the educational curriculum. Educational programs are shaped by the program administrators.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate self-perceived transformational leadership practices of American dental hygiene program administrators.

Methods: A quantitative, descriptive, survey research design was employed. Quantitative data were collected using the 30 statement Leadership Practice Inventory-Self developed by Kouzes and Posner (2003) and an eight question researcher designed survey for collecting demographic data. Descriptive statistics provided a profile of the dental hygiene program administrators and linear regressions were employed testing the hypotheses. Permission for use of the LPI-Self was obtained from Kouzes and Posner International and IRB approval from the UB IRB. The invited sample consisted of 304 dental hygiene program administrators. The responding sample was 177 (58.2%) and the data generating sample was 176 (57.8%).

Results: The demographic characteristics have shown that the American dental hygiene program administrator was typically a female between 45 and 64 years old who held a masters degree. They carried the title of program director and had been in their present position five years or fewer. The total number of years they had been in dental hygiene academia was 20 and they have held their professional license for 30 years.

Distribution of the self-reported scores for the Fives Practices of Exemplary Leadership were: Model the Way scores ranged from 28 to 60, exhibited a mean of 50.11 (SD 5.50), median of 51 and mode of 52; Inspire a Shared Vision scores ranged from 25-60, exhibited a mean of 46.07 (SD 7.63), a median of 47 and a mode of 46. Challenge the Process scores ranged from 21 to 60, exhibited a mean of 47.22 (SD 6.899), the median was 48 and the mode was 52. Enable Others to Act scores ranged from 36 to 60, exhibited a mean of 52.41 (SD 4.33), the median was 53 and the mode was 52. Encourage the Heart scores ranged from 31 to 60, exhibited a mean of 50.11 (SD 6.53), the median was 52 and the mode was 54.

A consistent factor for all Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership was the standard deviations for the dental hygiene program administrator means, were less, although still high, when compared to those of middle management, education, and medical/healthcare. Dental hygiene program administrators had the highest means in all Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership except "Inspire a Shared Vision" and middle management had the lowest means for all the leadership descriptors. The number of years in dental hygiene academia showed a significance level of .048 for Enable Others to Act making it statistically significant.

Conclusions: With healthcare organizations in a state of turmoil, needed changes have called for leadership styles that place a heavy demand on the organizations (Reinhardt, 2004). The area of oral healthcare has been rapidly changing and the readiness for dental hygiene to respond to the changes is a must. The U.S. Surgeon General's Report 2001, provided evidence that in the United States, access to oral health care has been an increasing concern for the nations structure for delivering and meeting the needs of oral healthcare for the disadvantaged ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic populations is insufficient (ADHA, 2005, 2006; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). The transformation of dental hygiene to meet the oral health needs of today must begin in its education system.. Dental hygiene educational programs are shaped by the leadership of the program administrator. The degree of leadership effectiveness of the program administrator is determined by their leadership skill set, quality and dedication of the faculty and staff, and student outcomes. The premise that dental hygiene education was built on was the delivery of oral healthcare in private practice. The continuously changing dental healthcare environment and increase in underserved populations has lead to the opportunity for dental hygienists to be educated to practice in alternative settings many times requiring the need for advanced degrees

The scores for the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership-Self indicate that dental hygiene program administrators perceive that they poses the transformational leadership characteristics needed to guide the development and implementation of such programs for new workforce models to meet these oral health needs

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2007). *The leadership challenge* (fourth ed.). San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.
 Posner, B. Z. (2009). *Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)* data analysis. (August 2009).

Research Question 1: Demographics

Research Question	Hypothesis	Statistics
What were the selected demographic characteristics of American dental hygiene program administrators with regards to gender, age, highest degree held, current position or title, number of years in present position, total years in dental hygiene academia, total number of years held their professional license?	No corresponding research hypothesis.	Mean Median Range Standard Deviation Histogram

Research Questions 2-6: Leadership Practices

Research Question	Hypothesis	Statistics
What were the selected demographic characteristics of American dental hygiene program administrators with regards to gender, age, highest degree held, current position or title, number of years in present position, total years in dental hygiene academia, total number of years held their professional license?	No corresponding research hypothesis.	Mean Median Range Standard Deviation Histogram

Research Questions 7-8: Statistical Significance Between Dependent and Independent Variables

Research Questions	Hypotheses	Statistics
Did gender, age, educational level, current position or title, number of years in current position, number of years in dental hygiene academia, total number of years held a professional license predict the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership as measured by the LPI-Self?	Gender, age, educational level, current position or title, number of years in current position, number of years in dental hygiene academia, and total number of years held a professional license did not predict the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership as measured by the LPI-Self.	Linear Regression
Did number of years in current position, number of years in dental hygiene academia, total number of years held a professional license predict the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership as measured by the LPI-Self?	Number of years in current position, number of years in dental hygiene academia, and total number of years held a professional license did not predict the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership as measured by the LPI-Self.	Linear Regression

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Dental Hygiene Program Administrators, Middle Management, Education, and Medical/Healthcare for the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

Leadership Practice	Dental Hygiene Mean Score	SD	Middle Management Mean Score	SD	Education Mean Score	SD	Medical/Healthcare Mean Score	SD
Model the Way	50.11	5.50	46.62	8.12	48.37	9.26	47.97	8.56
Inspire a Shared Vision	46.07	7.63	43.55	10.20	46.63	10.80	45.44	10.56
Challenge the Process	47.22	6.89	44.74	8.87	46.81	9.99	45.93	9.54
Enable Others to Act	52.41	4.33	49.36	7.40	50.74	8.55	50.27	7.90
Encourage the Heart	50.11	6.53	45.50	9.75	47.76	10.65	46.84	10.18