8-2009

Ethical Perspectives and Leadership Practices in the Two-Year Colleges in South Carolina

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ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES AND LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGES OF SOUTH CAROLINA

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Educational Leadership

by
Shirley L. Butler
August 2009

Accepted by:
Dr. Frankie K. Williams, Committee Chair
Dr. Tony W. Cawthon
Dr. Jackson L. Flanigan
Dr. James D. Hudgins
ABSTRACT

This study examined the ethical perspectives and leadership practices of leaders in community colleges. The participants consisted of 68 presidents and chief institutional officers from the two-year colleges in South Carolina. All participants completed the Ethics Position Questionnaire and the Leadership Practices Inventory. Demographic data were also gathered on the participants. The survey responses were collected electronically, and analyzed to determine what relationships existed between the leaders’ ethical ideologies and perspectives and their leadership practices. Descriptive statistics, Pearson’s Product-moment Correlation tests, and ANOVA tests were computed to examine the data. The findings from the study indicated several associations between leadership practices and ethical perspectives. Overall, the data suggested a positive relationship between the ethical ideology of idealism and effective leadership practices, and a negative relationship between the ethical ideology of relativism and effective leadership practices. In general, the results support the argument that academic leaders and policy makers should give high priority to developing, modeling, and upholding an ethical framework and aligning the institution to that framework. These findings provide insight for those interested in the scholarly debate of leadership ethics as well as for those who lead and teach leadership development programs, especially for two-year colleges. Future studies of community colleges are needed to increase understanding of the interrelationships between leadership characteristics and the core values of the institution, the organizational culture, and the effectiveness of the institution.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who have always been there for me, and even now in their golden years, continue to be a source of love, guidance and support. My dad, as a member of the “Greatest Generation,” has always valued hard work and especially education. He is, in many ways, responsible for my persistence in achieving this milestone. My mother is the definition of unconditional love, and together my parents have been a source of comfort and strength for my entire life. Their continuous pride in whatever my accomplishments might be has always been an incentive for me to excel, and now we will share in this achievement.
"Successful leadership is not about being tough or soft, sensitive or assertive, but about a set of attributes. First and foremost is character."

(Bennis, 2004, p. 143)

My appreciation and thanks go out to the many people who encouraged me, assisted me, and prodded me through the process of completing this dissertation. I am indebted to my friends and colleagues at Horry-Georgetown Technical College who have supported me throughout the process. I must also acknowledge the support of my husband of twenty-eight years who has never complained about the time or money that this endeavor involved, but rather has always encouraged me to continue. His love and support are a constant in my life, and they provide me with a firm foundation for the many directions life offers.

I also want to thank the faculty and staff at Clemson University who have guided me through this process, and I wish to extend a special thanks to the members of my dissertation committee who have supported and directed this process: Dr. Frankie Keels Williams, chair of the committee, Dr. Tony Cawthon, Dr. Jackson Flanigan, and Dr. James D. Hudgins. Their ongoing feedback and advice are a testament to their commitment, not only to the field of education, but to the individual learner.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

From the beginning, higher education has held the special responsibility to promote the advancement of knowledge and uphold the highest scholarly and ethical standards as students are prepared for private and civic leadership responsibilities (de Russy & L., 2005; Fong, 2002; Poff, 2004). Higher learning by its very nature entails the crucial need for an ethical foundation to academic life, but if effective academic leadership requires a high standard of ethics, then collegiate practices should reflect the moral compass of its leadership (Poff, 2004; Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992). Many scholars have asserted that Americans are eager for moral leaders with passion, vision, and integrity and that the call for strong, ethical leadership is greater than ever before (Bennis, 1998; Ciulla, 2003; Gina, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Sankar, 2003; Sheehy, 1990).

Notwithstanding a focus on strong, ethical leadership, society has witnessed a litany of leadership breakdowns in the last decade that included scenarios where top executives were involved in fraud, greed, and corruption (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Samuelson, 2008; Thoms, 2008). These lapses have occurred across all landscapes, including not only the entertainment and sports world, but also the corporate, political, health, and education realms. Enron, WorldCom, Tyco, and the Food for Oil scandals represented some of the most publicized leadership breakdowns occurring at the turn of the century (Bennis, 2003; de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Thoms, 2008). Further, while rumors of political corruption have run rampant for many years, the recent “Fannie Mae” and “Freddie Mac” banking failures caused devastating economic ripples not only across
the United States, but on a global level as well. Economists generally attributed these failures to a broad abandonment of ethical practices, which represented the spoils of corruption and greed (Hagerty & Perez, 2009; Samuelson, 2008).

Higher education has not escaped this broad deterioration in moral and social responsibility (de Russy & Langbert; 2005; Fong, 2002; Vencat, 2006; Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992). Scholars have pointed out that colleges are not always ethically run, and that ethics no longer occupies a central place in campus life (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Johnson, 2008; Kelley & Chang, 2007). Educators are concerned that the ideals of higher education have become overshadowed by administrative objectives related to enrollment numbers, political agendas, budget shortfalls, and fundraising (Fong, 2002; Johnson, 2008; Kelley & Chang, 2007). Ample evidence showed that leaders in education are frequently accused of self-serving or unethical behavior, resulting in charges of inappropriate conduct and corruption among those who shape future leaders of the nation (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Johnson, 2008; Poff, 2004). The need to address these problems has been voiced by scholars like Kelley and Chang (2007), who claimed, “Researchers believe that improving ethical behavior in higher education is essential to the health of our university and community college system” (p. 424). While the media is replete with reports of public and corporate corruption, unethical behaviors have also created a substantial number of leadership failures in the educational realm (Fisher, 2006; Gow, 2002; Magner, 1989; Walters, 2006).
Statement of the Problem

College and university leaders have serious challenges and responsibilities to provide effective, ethical leadership for their constituencies. Yet, not all leaders have overcome the challenges or accepted the responsibilities of their roles (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Johnson, 2008; Kelley & Chang, 2007; Poff, 2004). Numerous cases of unethical leadership are regularly documented. In the *Santa Clara Law Review*, Johnson (2008) recorded over 300 documented cases of unethical, corrupt or criminal behavior among college leaders. A large number of complaints focused on student loan kickbacks, where college financial processes benefitted the schools, financial aid officers, and the lenders, at the expense of students. Nationally, the number of cases involving student loan irregularities has been so great that it was called a “systemic scandal” and led to a congressional report from Senator Edward Kennedy, underscoring the need for “transparency and clarity” in the federal student loan program (Redden, 2007, p. 1).

Examples of documented cases of ethical violations involving community colleges across the country included the following.

1. At Compton Community College in California, the leadership practices of the board and top administration were so corrupt that the college lost its regional accreditation, and its leaders were arrested for various forms of corruption. Ultimately, this ended with the imprisonment of a trustee for misappropriating over $1 million (Fisher, 2006). Previously, three Riverside Community College officials were arrested in California for receiving over $800,000 through illegal financial practices (Fisher, 2004).

2. An ethics probe in Washington resulted in the former president of Shoreline Community College paying a fine because he steered a $350,000 bookstore contract to a close friend (Foster, 2003).

3. A community college president in Kansas was forced to resign amid allegations of sexual abuse (Walters, 2006).
4. The Community College of Southern Nevada fired a president amid accusations of nepotism and cronyism (Evelyn, 2005).

5. In Texas, the Alamo Community College District suffered a public corruption scandal which resulted in the indictment of three board members and the conviction of a district executive for misappropriating over $1 million (Padilla, 2007).

In spite of the expressed concerns by many over the last twenty years (Bennett, 1993; Carroll, 1997; Covey, 1989; Lickona, 1991; Sanoff, 1984; Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992), there remains apprehension that higher education has drifted away from its original mission of instilling knowledge and character (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Fong, 2002; Huit, 2000; Johnson, 2008). Moreover, scholars and educators are concerned that a critical leadership void exists, which leaves higher educational institutions (and others) devoid of strong leaders who are equipped to successfully meet the difficult challenges and responsibilities of providing effective, ethical leadership for America’s college campuses (Boggs, 2004; de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Huit, 2000; Vaughan, 1992). Therefore, there is a need for an increased understanding of the factors involved in developing strong, ethical leadership within the higher education community.

Boggs (2004), Vaughan (1992), and Wallin (2007) pointed out that the leadership in community colleges and universities remains under intense pressure to respond to ethical issues which are exacerbated by budget reductions, enrollment demands, demographic trends, and socioeconomic forces that bring both opportunity and ethical challenge. Amid the surge of 21st century technological advances, community colleges, in particular, are often struggling to stay on the cutting edge of innovation and trying to remain responsive to the ever-changing needs of business and industry (Boggs, 2004).
Further, the colleges are simultaneously dealing with economic uncertainties and looming budget cuts (Boggs, 2004; Vaughan, 1992). Consequently, in spite of their close connections with the surrounding communities, leaders of community colleges also face ethical challenges that sometimes lead to serious ethical failures (Evelyn, 2005; Fisher, 2006; Jones, 2007; Vaughan, 1992).

A number of scholars (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Johnson, 2008; Kelley & Chang, 2007; Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992) have voiced serious concerns that the impact of ethical lapses within higher education leadership is potentially much more significant than the negative effect within the institution alone. Citing a decline in faculty with commitments to traditional values, scholars have noted that universities often do not provide young people with strong role models (Carroll, 1997; de Russy & Langbert, 2003; Sanoff, 1984). Gerdes (2006) has even asked, “Are today’s business schools breeding tomorrow’s corporate crooks?” (p. 4). Furthermore, as reports continued to expose more academic misdeeds and as tuition continues to rise, many scholars have expressed concern that the public, perhaps rightfully, is becoming distrustful of colleges and universities (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Johnson, 2008; Kelley & Chang, 2007; Magner, 1989; Poff, 2004). Educational leaders and academics have called for an examination of the unethical practices in higher education, and they have further stated that this examination is incumbent on academia itself (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Johnson, 2008; Magner, 1989; Poff, 2004; Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992).
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the ethical perspectives and leadership practices of those in leadership positions in community colleges. The study examined the relationships among the ethical perspectives and leadership practices of presidents and chief institutional officers at the two-year colleges in South Carolina. Additionally, demographic information was collected and tabulated for descriptive analysis of the sample. The aim of the research was to provide further insight into the complexities of leadership ethics and practices within the community colleges in South Carolina.

Definition of Terms

The focus of the study was drawn narrowly on the definitions used herein as set forth by the scholars of the related models and instruments used in the study. The following terms were used throughout the study.

*Chief Institutional Officers (CIOs)* were identified as individuals who held executive or cabinet leadership positions at their respective colleges, as listed by the South Carolina State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education. These officers represent the major divisions of the college including academic affairs, student affairs, financial and business affairs, continuing education and workforce development, and in some cases, institutional effectiveness or technology and research.

*Ethical perspectives* were defined according to Forsyth’s (1980) Ethics Position Model, which draws on two ideological scales.

1. *Idealism* represents the philosophy that harming others is always avoidable, and that harm is almost never necessary to produce good
2. Relativism represents a moral philosophy based on skepticism. That is, relativistic individuals feel that moral actions depend upon the nature of the circumstance more than ethical principles, norms, or laws (Forsyth, 1980).

Based on his Taxonomy of Personal Moral Philosophies, Forsyth (1980) further typed or categorized individuals according to their ethical ideologies into one of four ethical perspectives. These perspectives include the following.

1. **Absolutists** are typed as low relativism and high idealism. These individuals assume that the best possible outcome can always be achieved by following universal moral rules.

2. **Exceptionists** are typed as low relativism and low idealism. Individual judgments are guided by moral absolutes but are pragmatically open to exceptions to standards.

3. **Situationists** are typed as high relativism and high idealism. These individuals reject moral rules and advocate individualistic analysis in each situation.

4. **Subjectivists** are typed as high relativism and low idealism. These individuals appraise based on personal values and perspectives rather than universal moral principles.

Exemplary Leadership Practices are defined and measured in terms of Kouzes and Posner’s (2002) Five Exemplary Practices. These five practices are defined below.

1. **Model the Way** refers to individuals who have clear personal values and who set the example.

2. **Inspire a Shared Vision** refers to individuals who visualize the future by depicting exciting and ennobling possibilities, and enlist others by appealing to shared aspirations.

3. **Challenge the Process** refers to individuals who take risks and search for innovative opportunities to change, grow, and improve.

4. **Enable Others to Act** refers to individuals who foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals, building trust, and sharing power.
5. *Encourage the Heart* refers to individuals who recognize employee contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence and celebrating core values and victories, thereby creating a spirit of community.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the ethical philosophies of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the two-year colleges in South Carolina in terms of the two ideologies of *idealism* and *relativism* as measured by the *Ethics Position Questionnaire* (EPQ)?

2. What are the ethical perspectives of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges in terms of the perspectives of *absolutism, exceptionism, situationism,* and *subjectivism* as measured by the *Ethics Position Questionnaire* (EPQ)?

3. What are the leadership practices of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges in terms of the five exemplary practices of *Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling,* and *Encouraging* as measured by the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI)?

4. Do relationships exist between each of the five leadership practices the LPI (*Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling,* and *Encouraging*) and each of the two ideologies of *idealism* and *relativism* from the *Ethics Position Questionnaire* (EPQ)?

5. Are there significant differences among the presidents’ and chief institutional officers’ ethical perspectives (*absolutism, exceptionism, situationism,* and *subjectivism*) in terms of their leadership practices?

**Conceptual Framework**

This study assessed the ethical perspectives and the leadership practices of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the two-year colleges in South Carolina in order to determine what relationships, if any, existed between the variables used in the study. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the conceptual framework of the study.
Figure 1

*Conceptual Framework of the Study*

Figure 1 shows the independent (predictor) variables (ethical perspectives of absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism), and the dependent (criterion) variables (leadership practices of Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling, and Encouraging). Demographic variables in the study included, gender, race/ethnicity, age, current professional position, years in position (experience), and academic background.
Theoretical Framework for the Study

An examination of leadership practices and ethical perspectives provided the foundation for the study to help explain leadership behavior. Kouzes and Posner’s model of exemplary leadership practices (2002) provided the rationale and research for the identification of five exemplary behaviors that maximize leadership effectiveness. Forsyth’s Ethics Position Theory (1980) provided the theoretical framework for identification of ethical ideologies and the four ethical perspectives that type individuals into categories of moral philosophy.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) cited their cumulative years of work of identifying and refining thousands of pieces of information. The researchers consolidated the information into what they called the Five Practices of Exemplary Leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Further, the researchers developed an instrument to measure these practices called the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). A primary premise in Kouzes and Posner’s model is that leaders must possess integrity. Kouzes and Posner (2002) delineated and divided these practices into the Five Practices and Ten Commitments of Leadership, which are listed below.

Model the Way
1. Find your voice by clarifying your personal values.
2. Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.

Inspire a Shared Vision
1. Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.
2. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspiration.
Challenge the Process
1. Search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow, and improve.
2. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes.

Enable Others to Act
1. Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust.
2. Strengthen others by sharing power and discretion.

Encourage the Heart
1. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence.
2. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community. (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 22)

The works of Forsyth (1980, 1992, 2008) served as the theoretical foundation and bases for analyzing individual ethical perspectives. Forsyth (1980) theorized that one’s reaction to behaviors depends on two sets of values - idealism and relativism. Forsyth contended that most personal moral philosophies can be contrasted in terms of these two value sets or ideologies as explained below.

1. **Idealism** describes the individual’s personal moral philosophy which is based on concern for others, and is either rated (a) high idealism, meaning that harm to others is always wrong or avoidable or (b) low idealism, meaning that harm is sometimes necessary to produce good.

2. **Relativism** describes the individual’s personal moral philosophy based on skepticism. High relativism mean that moral actions depend on the situation, and that circumstance is given more weight than the ethical principle violated. Low relativism means that morality requires one to act in ways that are consistent with universal principles, norms, and laws (Forsyth, 1980).
Additionally, Forsyth (1980) used this Ethics Position Model of idealism and relativism to develop four categories of ethical perspectives. Accordingly, individuals can be typed into one of these four perspectives based on their positions on the idealism and relativism ideologies. Table 1 displays the classification of Forsyth’s ideologies and ethical perspectives.

Table 1

**Taxonomy of Ethical Ideologies**

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<th>Relativism</th>
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<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Situationist</td>
<td>Absolutist</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Situation ethics. Morality should focus on a contextual appropriateness, not on the good or the right, but the “fit.” Perspective is that people should strive for the best results possible, but that moral rules cannot be applied in all situations.</td>
<td>Duty-based thinking (deontological). Ethical perspective says actions are moral provided they yield positive results through conformity to universal moral principles, which are of utmost importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Subjectivist</td>
<td>Exceptionist</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethical egoists. No moral standards are valid except in reference to one’s own behavior; ethical perspective is that moral evaluations must ultimately depend on personal view.</td>
<td>Consequence-based thinking (teleological) Perspective is that conformity to moral rules is desirable, but believes exceptions should be frequent and permissible.</td>
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(Adapted from Forsyth, 1980)
The Research Design

The research design selected for this study was survey research. Moreover, the study was of a quantitative nature and used a non-experimental design with a multi-variant analysis approach. Utilizing two reputable instruments, the LPI and the EPQ, and a demographical questionnaire, survey data were collected from institutional leaders at all sixteen, two-year (community) colleges in South Carolina. The president and approximately five other institutional officers, representing the Executive Council or Cabinet, at each college were asked to participate in the study. The LPI (Self) instrument and the EPQ instrument yielded scores on a number of variables associated with leadership and ethics. These instruments provided descriptive characterizations of the leadership practices and the ethical perspectives of those who participated in the study. The five leadership practices on the LPI (model, inspire, challenge, enable, and encourage) and the four ethical perspectives on the EPQ (absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism) were analyzed for statistically significant correlations among the variables.

Delimitations

This study was delimited by a number of factors. First of all, the study focused only on the top executive leadership of the two-year colleges in South Carolina, thus limiting it categorically and geographically. Additionally, the research was inherently bound simply due to the self-reported nature of much of the data. Ethics surveys are by design quite personal; and consequently, there is sometimes a degree of reluctance to
participate fully in a study of this sort. Finally, the study was to some extent imperfect due to the nebulous nature of the concepts of “values,” “ethics,” and “leadership.” There are inherent difficulties in empirically studying these variables, partially due to the difficulty in defining them.

Significance of the Study

The number of ethical concerns that exist in the higher education community has created a critical need for more research related to character development, moral reasoning, and leadership integrity (Harkins, 1998; Johnson, 2008; Sankar, 2003; Sanoff, 1984). This study provides insight from a community college perspective about the nature of leaders’ personal values and ethical perspectives and their relationship to effective leadership practices. The findings add to the body of knowledge about educational leadership, especially as it applies to the two-year college. Similarly, this study will be of interest to those who are involved in the scholarly debate of leadership ethics, as well as those professionally involved in leading and developing educational programs and institutions. In addition, these results are of interest to those who recruit and hire leaders for institutions. The findings from the study may be useful to employers who are concerned about the practices and perspectives of effective leaders, and they are helpful to those who develop and teach leadership programs for higher education.
Organization of the Study

Chapter Two (Review of the Literature) presents a thorough review of the relevant studies and research. A discussion of ethical failures in the corporate and public sectors and their relationships to the academic world is briefly highlighted. Actual cases of unethical, immoral, and corrupt practices that have occurred in academic leadership are detailed. Although these leadership breakdowns have occurred in both the university and community college environment, the discussion narrows to concentrate on the two-year college, which is the focus of this study. Finally, this chapter presents and summarizes scholarly works and theories associated with the nature of ethical leadership practices that relate to the research questions in this study.

In Chapter Three (Research Design and Methodology), the research design that was employed to conduct the study is described in detail. A review of the research questions, the sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and the data analysis methods are described and discussed.

Chapter Four (Analysis of the Data) presents the findings of the collected data. This chapter includes a description of the sample, predictor variables, and criterion variables. The results are presented as related to the research questions and the outcomes of the statistical analyses.

Chapter Five (Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations), presents a discussion of the results and implications. The chapter includes an overview of the significant findings, a comparison of this study with other related research, a review of the limitations, general recommendations, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature related to leadership and ethics in higher education. The chapter begins with a brief account of historical and current trends related to the need for strong ethical leadership in universities and community colleges across the country. Against a backdrop of leadership breakdowns in private, political, and public spheres, this chapter examines the growing number of ethical lapses in academia and the broad impact of such lapses. Next, major theories and research related to ethical and leadership behaviors, especially as they are linked to collegiate education, are presented. Lastly, the chapter includes a summary of the literature on ethics and leadership effectiveness in community colleges.

Historical and Current Trends

Although a considerable amount of scholarly writing on the general topic of leadership and ethics exists, scholars have debated these topics since the time of Plato and Aristotle (Benner, 2007; Burns, 1978; Sheehy, 1990). Burns (1978) called leadership “…the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 2). The relationship between effective leadership and ethical perspective remains complex. This complexity often leads to gaps in the research as to just how these variables are related (Dikeman, 2007; Northouse, 2004). Within the socio-political environment of moral erosion and leadership failure, there exist a disquieting number of documented ethical lapses in
universities and community colleges across the country (Kelley & Chang, 2007). The broad impact of such ethical lapses has been pondered by many scholars. For example, de Russy (2003) noted that “. . . too many accountants, lawyers, bankers, security analysts, and corporate officers allowed self-interest and greed to trump longstanding principles of integrity” (p. B20).

For more than thirty years, growing public concerns were expressed about the integrity of the leadership across America (Burns, 1978; Carroll, 1997; Covey, 1989; Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Sankar, 2003). Calls for schools and colleges to place more emphasis on character development and civic leadership began more than 20 years ago (Bennett, 1993; Fong, 2002; Greenleaf, 1979; Sanoff, 1984; Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992). Some scholars viewed the highly publicized “ethical lapses” of the Enron era as the result of a crisis in higher education, noting that many MBAs from prestigious institutions were involved in a host of corrupt business practices (Bennis, 2003; de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Gerdes, 2006; Kelley & Chang, 2007).

A renewed emphasis on academic integrity began with the realization that cheating among students was becoming much more widespread than previously believed (Keenan & Sullivan, 2007). According to a 2006 Duke University survey, more than 70% of students on high school and college campuses admitted to some form of cheating (Vencat, 2006). A Rutgers University survey of 21,500 undergraduates revealed that 74% of the students pursuing business degrees admitted cheating and that overall 68% of the students admitted some degree of cheating (Keenan & Sullivan, 2007).
Although many business schools added an ethics component to their curriculum following the scandals at Enron, WorldCom, and Tyco, Keenan and Sullivan (2007) cited the Executive Director for the Center for Academic Integrity at Duke University, Timothy Dodd, as conceding that these steps may not be enough. In a news report, Dodd stated, “It may be that we are promoting academic integrity, but maybe in some way we are promoting the message that some students picked up that the bottom line is king, or that doing this in the quickest way is the payoff” (p. 2). McCabe (2005) concluded that it was apparent that academic dishonesty was on the rise and that students perceived that their institutions and faculty had failed to institute a strong culture of integrity. Hanson, (2003) asserted there exists a real concern that the ideals of higher education have become secondary to competitiveness for grades and materialism (Hanson, 2003). Likewise, studies have shown that faculty often find that the time and effort needed to pursue suspected incidents of cheating is too burdensome to implement (Coalter, Lim & Wanorie, 2007).

Current literature shows that scholars suggested the focus of academic integrity should not only be placed on student behavior, but that attention should also be placed on and come from those in collegiate leadership positions (Kelley & Chang, 2007). In fact, some professors called this suggestion an imperative for academia (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Johnson, 2007; Poff, 2004). After a conference on ethics in education, Magner (1989) wrote,
. . . college presidents and professors help examine contemporary moral
conflicts in almost every influential segment of society except one--higher
education . . . . Attempts by colleges and universities to examine their own
ethics have generally been weak and sporadic. Nonetheless, observers see
signs that higher education is now focusing on the moral responsibilities
of administrators, professors, and institutions. (p. A11)

In the twenty years since this was written, these “signs” have not brought forth the focus
that these observers likely envisioned. Fundamentally, there remains concern that many
colleges have not developed a campus climate and culture that embraces and promotes an
emphasis on ethics and integrity. Without a commitment by the collegiate leadership and
the professoriate to adopt and model a high standard of ethical conduct, students may fail
to embrace the necessary values and behaviors needed to make positive contributions to
the society in which they live (Carroll, 1997; de Russy, 2003; Fong, 2002; Kelley &
Chang, 2007; Poff, 2004; Vaughan, 1992). Two decades later, the recognition of ethical
violations in higher education and their far reaching effects continued to be seen as a
topic of serious concern for many inside and outside of the field of education (de Russy

Concerns Regarding Ethics and Academic Leadership

The concern regarding academic integrity extends from the student to the
collegiate leadership for a number of reasons. Pressures about enrollment, political
agendas, budget shortfalls, and fundraising can overshadow the real mission of higher
education (Boggs, 2003; de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Vaughan, 1992). Additionally, there is more than ample evidence that educational leaders are frequently accused of self-serving or unethical behavior, leading to charges of inappropriate conduct or even corruption (Johnson, 2008; Kelley & Chang, 2007). For example, in the *Santa Clara Law Review*, Johnson (2008) cited approximately 340 documented cases of corrupt practices in higher education. The cases included serious criminal conduct, tortuous conduct in the nature of fraud or intentional breach of fiduciary duty, or conduct that betrays the values that form the moral basis for the educational process.

A number of recent court cases involving misconduct by educators in higher education were cited by de Russy and Langbert (2005). In *Demas v. Levitsky* at Cornell University, a doctoral student filed a legal complaint against her adviser for failure to acknowledge her contribution to a grant proposal. Professor C. William Kauffman filed a complaint against the University of Michigan for submitting a grant proposal without acknowledging his authorship. There were also pending charges of plagiarism against Louis W. Roberts, retired chair at the State University of New York at Albany, Eugene M. Tobin, former president of Hamilton College, and Richard L. Judd, ex-president of Central Connecticut State University (de Russy & Langbert, 2005).

Jaschik (2007) described the case of Professor Ward Churchill, whose writings about 9/11 set off a furor because the public felt that a man of his questionable character should not have the authority that comes with a professorship to influence students at a state funded university. Subsequently, an investigation into his background led a faculty panel at the University of Colorado to find him guilty of repeated and intentional
academic misconduct, including plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification (Jaschik, 2007). Notably, the panel also faulted the university for ignoring allegations about Churchill which were well-known in the scholarly world, but apparently were not acknowledged by the university until the public demanded it (Jaschik, 2007).

During this same time period, concerns and complaints about the student loan program were so severe that a congressional investigation was conducted which led to a 2007 U. S. Senate Report (Kennedy, 2007). The key points from the Kennedy report included the following.

1. Some FFEL lenders provided compensation to schools with the expectation, and in some cases an explicit agreement, that the school will give the lenders preferential treatment, including placement on the school’s preferred lender list.

2. Other FFEL lenders spent large sums on travel and accommodation expenses for meetings of Advisory Boards comprised of school officials, and often expected these benefits to yield increased loan volume, or other preferential treatment, at Board members’ schools.

3. School officials held financial interests, including stock and options to purchase stock, in FFEL lenders which are on the preferred lender list or are otherwise recommended to students.

4. School officials received payments for consulting and other services from FFEL lenders which are on the preferred lender list or are otherwise recommended to students. (2007, p. 3)

Congress concluded that a large number of cases involved conflicts of interest and self-serving interests throughout the higher education system, thus violating the letter and the spirit of the Higher Education Act. The problem was considered to be systemic, and not the result of only a few problem schools and lenders (Kennedy, 2007).
Although sometimes with less media attention than their university colleagues, many community college leaders were also guilty of ethical lapses, as they were described by Kelley and Chang (2007) in “A Typology of University Ethical Lapses…” News articles and journals abound with evidence of accusations, complaints, warrants and arrests coming as the result of unethical conduct and corruption on community college campuses (Johnson, 2007; Kelley & Chang, 2007). These misdeeds occurred across the country and consisted of a variety of accusations and charges, including cronyism, nepotism, and a large number of cases involving illegal use of funds (Evelyn, 2005; Fisher, 2006; Foster, 2003; Simmons, 2005). Presidents were fired at Quincy College in Massachusetts (Varsolona, 2005) and at Mercer College in New Jersey (Evelyn, 2005) due to allegations of misuse of funds. The president of Halifax Community College in North Carolina was fired for financial violations (Simmons, 2005). In Georgia, the president of Morris Brown College pled guilty to embezzling student aid money and was sentenced to five years probation (Jones, 2007). In Mississippi, the former president of Hinds Community College was charged with nepotism and abuse of power (Healy, 1999). Lastly, the president of a Florida Community College and a Florida state legislator were indicted for their roles in the misuse of funds regarding a $6 million facility, which was allegedly funded in return for a political donation (Lederman, 2009).

Most notably, the entire Alabama Community College System has been under investigation for several years due to continued accusations of unethical and corrupt practices, which led to criminal charges against the chancellor of the state’s system,
several presidents, and a number of legislative officials (Ashburn, 2007; Hermes, 2008). The Chronicle of Higher Education reported multiple cases at the Alabama State Community College System involving cronyism, nepotism, and fraud (Ashburn, 2007). Investigations showed that between 2002 and 2006, approximately 43 legislators in Alabama, all of whom were linked to the two-year college system, received pay for doing little or no work. This ultimately resulted in the state board banning legislators from working in the community college system (Hermes, 2008).

Although the cases highlighted may be exceptional, researchers pointed out that the full range of ethical failings was not known and that ethical behavior on college campuses was understudied and likely underreported (Kelley & Chang, 2007). Kelley & Chang (2007) hypothesized a number of causes for this void, including issues of collegiality, fear of ostracism and concern for the institution’s reputation. Kelley and Chang stated, “This research dearth limits our knowledge regarding ethical lapses in universities and exists despite the broad impact of such ethical lapses” (2007, p. 4). When discussing ethical dilemmas, Vaughan (1992) wrote:

Can leaders in higher education, then, be unconcerned with ethical issues?
Are the cases that make the headlines the only ones requiring attention?
No, for higher education today does not exist in an ivory tower, if it ever did-- certainly community colleges never did. Academics are not immune to the temptations that afflict the rest of society. (p. 8)
Theories Related to Leadership and Ethics

In the last decade, interest in the nature of leadership ethics has grown because of the many public scandals that exposed leadership corruption in the government, corporate, health, and sports worlds, as well as many less publicized cases of unethical and corrupt behavior within the academy. Although the business sector has shown the most initiative in providing research and development in the area of ethics, educators have begun to show a growing interest in understanding the nature and development of ethical leadership (Ciulla, 2003; Johnson, 2001; Wilcox & Ebbs, 1992). According to Northouse (2004), ethical theories related to leadership can be divided into two domains: (a) theories about the leader’s conduct and (b) theories about the leader’s character. Theories that center on the leader’s conduct are generally either teleological in nature (focused on consequences) or deontological in nature (focused on morality). Other theories, called character or virtue-based theories, focused on the leader’s character--who the leader is as a person (Lickona, 1991; Northouse, 2004). These theories contended that the leaders’ ethical viewpoints are derived from their character, which is at the heart of the leaders’ disposition (Northouse, 2004).

While most researchers have agreed that leaders can have a significant influence on the behavior of others, it has not always been clear what factors are involved in effecting change in followers and systems. Nonetheless, the power and influence dimension of leadership carries with it an enormous ethical burden and responsibility, according to many scholars (Badaracco, 1997; Hellmich, 2007; Wallin, 2007). Hellmich (2007) asserted that the responsibility to ethically use power and influence was
particularly critical for leaders in higher education, because of their potential to impact their communities and the leaders of tomorrow.

Leadership and Ethics

A literature review of ethical leadership offered many viewpoints from scholars who have studied a variety of factors involved in leadership and ethics (Northouse, 2004). In 1978, Burns introduced the theory of transformational leadership, describing it as a process whereby “one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). The origins of Burn’s theory stemmed from the works of Maslow, Rokeach, and Kolberg (Ciulla, 2003). Studies followed indicating similar ideas, especially those by Bass (1985), who believed that when followers trust, respect, and admire their leaders, they are consequently more motivated to perform at higher levels than expected. Conversely, some pointed out that leaders can have transforming traits which do not elevate followers to a higher moral level but, instead, lead followers in negative, unethical, and immoral directions (Sankar, 2003; Yukl, 2006). Conger (1990) suggested that this “dark side” of leadership has dangerous ramifications for its followers and is believed to take place most frequently when a leader’s self-interests undermine and erosion the ethical base of the organization.

Bass and Steidmeier (1999) suggested that an important difference exists between “authentic” and “pseudo” transformational leadership, defining authentic leadership as ethical, and pseudo leadership as generally self-serving and unethical. Bass and
Steidmeier (1999) postulated that if transformational leadership was not inherently moral, as originally suggested by Burns, then the question must be raised as to how to identify, assess, and develop “authentic” ethical leadership. The need to develop a better understanding of the nature of ethical, exemplary leadership has continued to spur researchers to study the complexity of these issues. (Ciulla, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Northouse, 2004).

A scholarly review of leadership ethics included note of Robert Greenleaf (1977) and his focus on servant leadership. Greenleaf (1977) put forth the argument that the nature of leadership was one of service and that the exemplary leader serves his followers by concentrating on their needs and ultimately fostering servant leadership qualities in them, thereby enriching others. Additionally, Greenleaf held that leaders had a great social responsibility to the “have-nots” in society and should concern themselves with involvement in the community (1977). The essence of Greenleaf’s theories and writings were seen in many current service leadership and service learning models (Covey, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Northouse, 2004).

Leadership and Ethics in Higher Education

Northouse (2004) pointed out that leadership ethics is in its early stages of development. Other researchers (Dikeman, 2007; Yukl, 2006) noted the lack of a strong body of traditional research to substantiate many of the theoretical writings about the foundations of ethical leadership. Studies related to leadership ethics were often descriptive or anecdotal in nature and lacked the empirical support needed to increase
understanding and acceptance, especially in regard to higher education (Dikeman, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Northouse; 2004).

Researchers in the business sector, however, published some quantitative studies related to leadership and ethics. For example, Parry and Proctor-Thomson (2002) conducted a quantitative study on the relationship between perceived leader integrity and transformational leadership as assessed through the use of the Perceived Leader Integrity Scale (PLIS) and the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The results of the study indicated positive relationships between perceived leader integrity, transformational leadership characteristics, and organizational effectiveness (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002). Hood (2003) studied the relationships of ethical practices, leadership style, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) values, using Rokeach’s Typology of Values and the MLQ. The findings from Hood’s study indicated that the ethical orientation of the CEO is critical to understanding the ethical practices in organizations. Specifically, social and morality based values were found to be significantly related to ethical practices, and a significant relationship between personal values and formal organization statements of ethics was also reported (Hood, 2003).

While the data related to ethical leadership factors in educational settings were found to be somewhat limited, the body of evidence is growing. There were studies showing that the chief executive officer in an educational institution created a central shaping influence on the institutional culture by establishing values that an organization could be expected to adapt (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Sankar, 2003; Sit, 1998). Other evidence suggested that administrative or technical competence was not the crucial factor
leading to the success of higher education’s leaders. Rather, personal character values, such as integrity, ethical conduct, competence (Harkins, 1998), and trustworthiness, dependability, fairness, and modeling values (Sit, 1998), were identified as the qualities most needed to be effective.

In a research study involving over 224 deans and chairs from the Association of American Universities (AAU), Harkins (1998) found that the most frequently cited qualities of critical importance to the success of deans and department chairs focused on character values as opposed to administrative or technical skills. These studies suggested that the concept of ethical competence was important, and they invited further inquiry into whether or not a leader’s personal values and ethical perspectives affected professional behavior, the culture and the overall effectiveness of the institution.

Noting the lack of a systematic approach to studying leadership ethics higher education leadership ethics in, Bryman (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of skills needed for effective leadership. Reviewing all relevant literature from the last 20 years, Bryman interviewed 24 researchers about their experiences and perceptions in carrying out studies. Among the factors found to be significant at both the departmental and institutional levels, Bryman (2007) listed the following behaviors:

1. Providing direction with structure to support it
2. Creating and fostering a supportive, collaborative environment
3. Establishing trustworthiness as a leader
4. Having personal integrity
5. Having credibility to act as a role model

6. Facilitating participation in decision-making

Of particular relevance to the current study, Bryman (2007) noted the similarity of his findings to that of Kouzes and Posner’s (2002) wide-ranging study of leadership effectiveness. Bryman suggested that Kouzes and Posner’s factors of modeling, inspiring, challenging, enabling, and encouraging showed a close symmetry with those found in his comprehensive research. He suggested that these are fairly universal leadership factors that are effective regardless of environment. However, Bryman (2007) maintained that there are likely some distinctive features of higher education expectations in the context of departmental leadership effectiveness, such as fostering collegiality, the maintenance of autonomy, and protecting the department.

Another study of interest was conducted by Brown and Moshavi (2002), who examined faculty perceptions of department chairs in terms of transformational and contingent reward leadership practices. This study involved over 440 university faculty members, and the findings suggested that department chairs who exhibited transformational characteristics, such as individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, and providing meaning were perceived as trustworthy. The chairs with these idealized influence factors of transformational leadership were also perceived as significantly more effective than those leaders with traditional transactional leadership behaviors of allocating reward in exchange for performance (Brown & Moshavi, 2002, p.79). According to Brown and Moshavi (2002), these findings suggested that in academia as
well as other environments effective leadership is related to inspirational or transformational traits more than to reward oriented behavior.

Leadership and Ethics in the Community College

In *Dilemmas of Leadership*, Vaughan (1992) dedicated an entire work to community college leadership and the ethical dilemmas inherent in these positions. Vaughan contended that community college presidents have an increased ethical responsibility to their institutions, not only because of their position of influence on growing numbers of adult students, but also because of their high visibility in the community. Vaughan (1991) stated:

> All leaders in higher education are subject to temptations. Community college leaders, positioned in that middle ground on the academic continuum where the community intersects with the college in ways not found in much of the rest of higher education and committed to serving all segments of society, are certainly no exception. Indeed, community college leaders are constantly subjected to the song of Lorelei, ever luring them to cross the line of ethical misconduct only to be broken apart on rocks masquerading as easy solutions to ever-present funding and image problems. (p.12)

In a later publication, Boggs (2004) said, “It is both the best of times and the worst of times for America’s community colleges” (p. 7). Boggs explained that the growth of the nation’s community colleges has resulted in the enrollment of over 6.5
million credit students, almost half of the total number of undergraduates in the United States. The unprecedented challenges of meeting these demands in the face of steep state budget cuts, limited facilities, rising technology costs, and increasing numbers of students who need remediation has signaled what Boggs called a “perfect storm” (p. 8).

According to researchers, these socio-economic factors accompany what is considered a crisis in leadership: large numbers of leaders in the community college system reaching or approaching retirement age (Boggs, 2003). This transition in leadership will require skilled future leaders capable of handling the complexities of the modern environment. Boggs (2003) stated, “Future community college leaders must be models of integrity, honesty, and high ethical standards . . . . They must realize that retaining their popularity is not as important as doing what is right” (p.20).

Researchers consequently pointed out the need for leadership development and the need to develop research directly related to leadership in the community college (Boggs, 2003; Jones, 1999). This need for research is especially true when ethical leadership is added to the equation. According to Sit (1999), “There is extensive research on the decision-making process [in the business world], but only a paucity of literature about the influence of personal values on decision making, especially in the area of higher education” (p. viii). Additionally, Cohen (1992) pointed out that few community college staff members seem concerned about what he too calls a “paucity” of reliable data in their literature (p. 39).

During 2009, there were 64 completed dissertations on community college topics, of which approximately 15% dealt with some area of leadership (Recently Completed
Dissertations on Community and Junior Colleges, 2009). Only two articles were slightly related to this study. Ehrlinger (2007) found a positive correlation between trust components and high levels of shared governance at community colleges in Maryland. Hoopes (2008) developed a profile of presidents serving community colleges accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The results of Hoopes’ study concentrated primarily on demographic factors and did not focus on ethical factors. Both authors cited the need for more research related to leadership in the community college (Ehrlinger, 2007; Hoopes, 2008).

The literature contained two other relevant studies which focused on the presidential leadership of community colleges in North and South Carolina. Brown’s (2005) research, “A Study of Leadership Failure: Perceptions of Leaders within a Community College System,” was a qualitative, exploratory study, in which she surveyed and interviewed community college personnel in South Carolina (2005). Twenty-seven educational leaders from diverse backgrounds were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. These interviews yielded several themes inherent in leaders who fail. Brown’s findings identified themes that indicated a lack of integrity, selfishness, and a lack of fairness among the factors contributing to leadership failure (Brown, 2005).

Dikeman (2007) conducted an empirical study of leadership practices and ethical perspectives of community college presidents in North Carolina. Based on Forsyth’s taxonomy of ethical ideologies (1980), Dikeman’s study utilized the EPQ to determine the ethical perspectives of the North Carolina presidents. The leadership practices of the North Carolina presidents were characterized using the LPI, developed by Kouzes and
Posner. Although somewhat inconclusive, the findings indicated exemplary leadership practices higher than the norm for these presidents and also indicated an absolutist philosophy in their ethical perspectives. Dikeman (2007) concluded that the presidents were likely to be conservative on moral issues and judge others by a high set of moral standards. However, Dikeman’s analyses did not show a statistical relationship between leadership practices and ethical perspectives (2007). Dikeman (2007) also suggested the need for further study in other settings to provide comparisons and expand data about the nature of ethical leadership in the educational environment. Overall, many scholars and researchers (Benner, 2007; Bennis, 1998; Brown, 2005; de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Dikeman, 2007; Greenleaf, 1970; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; and Sankar, 2003) have agreed that integrity is key to sustained, successful leadership, not only in terms of social and personal responsibility, but also in terms of organizational effectiveness.

While much of the research conducted on leadership in the community college was focused on presidents, there were a few studies that examined the leadership variables in positions such as chief academic officers, chief financial officers, and deans. Teague (2000) studied chief academic officers (CAOs) in public community colleges across the country. In response to the survey question requesting advice for aspiring chief academic officers, current CAOs listed the value of honesty and the demonstration of integrity among the most important factors (Teague, 2000). In another study that included community college presidents and academic affairs vice presidents, a strong moral code and personal integrity were determined to be important attributes possessed by mid-level leaders in the college (Jones, 1999). Harrop’s (2001) study of chief financial officers
(CFOs) in community colleges, found that both the CFOs and the presidents agreed that the traits of integrity, honesty, ethical, knowledge, and credibility were important attributes for the success of the CFO. In another study of community college deans, Isbell (2006) found a divergence between self perception and faculty perception of college deans. Over half of the faculty at the three community colleges in Texas who participated in the study felt some mistrust of the leadership, stating that ethical standards had been compromised by monetary concerns (Isbell, 2006).

In general, research studies showed that community college leaders possessed influence that can be very powerful inside and outside their institutions, and that there are simultaneous demands and pressures inherent in these leadership roles that can lead to a variety of ethical dilemmas (Vaughan, 1992; Wallin, 2007). For example, Boggs (2004) pointed out that the continuing decline in state funding caused many institutions, especially two-year colleges, to weigh difficult decisions regarding the need to raise tuition fees against the subsequent possibility of compromising access for some students. Researchers and scholars contended that these pressures coupled with a broad deterioration of ethical standards inside academia have made it incumbent upon academia to address the ethics of their leadership practices (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Hellmich, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Kelley & Chang, 2007).

Chapter Summary

Although the literature contains many studies and writings on leadership theory, the post-Enron era stimulated a renewed interest in what could be termed value-based or
character driven leadership (Bass, 1985; Bennis, 2004; de Russey & Langbert, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Many scholars have offered strong arguments for the theoretical and practical import of these models of leadership rooted in moral and ethical foundations (Bennis, 2004; Burns, 1978; Covey, 1989; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Tichy & McGill, 2003). The work of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) was particularly prevalent in the exploration of transformational leadership. In general, these theories described a relationship between a leader and followers that is based on shared, internalized values with a strong emphasis on the moral and ethical integrity of the leader.

Generally, the review of relevant literature showed that in spite of a call for strong ethical leadership for over twenty years, ethical problems plagued the country. An alarming number of leadership breakdowns resulting from ethical violations and corrupt behaviors in both the private and public sectors were found. Some of these cases were delineated in this chapter to emphasize the significance of the problem, not only in the corporate world, but particularly in the academic realm. Some academics have suggested that the corruption witnessed in government offices and corporate America were the result of unethical executives who were actually the products of America’s colleges and universities (de Russy & Langbert, 2005; Sanoff, 1984).

Scholars also asserted that leaders in higher education were frequently confronted by societal, environmental, political and financial demands, and that leaders were particularly pressured due to severe cuts in state funding across the country (Boggs, 2003; Vaughan, 1992). Studies indicated that this burden, which systematically creates ethical dilemmas for the administrator must be addressed by leaders who display strong moral
behavior and integrity (Vaughan, 1992; Wallin, 2007). Boggs (2004) noted that this challenge was particularly salient for community college leaders given the increased enrollments and technological demands together with decreased availability of resources. Others pointed out that even though academia continued to call for more research on leadership and ethics in the higher educational setting, the scholarly literature was still relatively scant, especially for studies focused on the community college (Boggs, 2004; Kelley & Chang, 2007; Northouse, 2004). The literature review frequently reiterated the need for further study and empirical inquiry to develop a greater understanding of the interaction of variables involved in producing effective, ethical leadership and organizational health (Brown, 2005; Dikeman, 2007; Northouse, 2004; Thoms, 2008).
CHAPTER THREE
THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The aim of the research was to examine specific variables involved in leadership ethics and practices at the two-year colleges in South Carolina. This chapter provides a description of the research design, the methodological steps utilized to answer the research questions, the sampling procedures, the instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

The Research Design

This study was of a quantitative nature and used a non-experimental research design. The research design selected for this study was survey research, which is commonly used in social sciences and education, and may be used to study attitudes, values, beliefs, and past behaviors (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). Survey research often leads to correlational data that guides further studies (Sproull, 2002). Some advantages of survey research include (a) efficiency in collecting a large amount of information from a large number of respondents; (b) statistical techniques that can be used to determine validity, reliability, and statistical significance; and (c) accuracy (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). Also, there is an economy in data collection due to the focus provided by standardized questions. In survey research, only questions of interest to the researcher are asked, recorded, codified, and analyzed (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). Thus, time and money are not spent on peripheral questions of little impact. In general, survey research is
relatively easy to use because of self-administration (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). While the self-administered nature of survey research can sometimes cause critics to question its validity, generally, the overall advantages and ease in administration of survey research make it a very popular and useful research tool (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006).

This study was of a quantitative nature and used a non-experimental design with a multi-variant analysis approach. Using two reputable instruments, the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) and the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ), along with a demographical questionnaire, survey data were collected from executive-level administrators at all 16 two-year (community) colleges in South Carolina. The LPI (Self) instrument and the EPQ instrument yielded scores on a number of variables associated with leadership ethics. These instruments (described in detail in the Instrumentation Section) provided descriptive characterizations of the ethical perspectives and leadership practices of those who participated in the study. The five leadership practices (dependent or criterion variables) of the LPI (model, inspire, challenge, enable, and encourage) and the four ethical perspectives (independent or predictor variables) of the EPQ (absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism) were analyzed for any statistically significant correlations between variables.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study.

1. What are the ethical philosophies of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the two-year colleges in South Carolina in terms of the two ideologies of *idealism* and *relativism* as measured by the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)?
2. What are the ethical perspectives of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges, in terms of the perspectives of absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism as measured by the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)?

3. What are the leadership practices of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges in terms of the five exemplary practices of Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling, and Encouraging as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)?

4. Do relationships exist between each of the five leadership practices the LPI (Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling, and Encouraging) and each of the two ideologies of idealism and relativism from the EPQ?

5. Are there significant differences among the presidents’ and chief institutional officers’ ethical perspectives (absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism) in terms of their leadership practices?

Participants in the Study

The population consisted of all of the presidents and their chief institutional officers (executive leadership) from the 16 technical colleges across South Carolina. Given the size of this population, the sample included the entire population. The chief institutional officers for each college typically consist of officers from academics affairs, student affairs, business affairs, and sometimes other departments such as human resources. The names and titles of the chief institutional officers were obtained from the State Board for Comprehensive and Technical Education to assure accuracy and consistency. The instruments were completed anonymously, through use of the Survey Monkey server and were maintained and confidentially stored with the researcher. There were 72 participants in the study.
Instrumentation

To explore the relationships between leadership practices and the leader’s personal values and ethical perspectives, several existing instruments were reviewed. Two instruments were chosen due to their use in previous studies, their reputation for being valid and reliable instruments, and their ease in administration. The selected instruments were the LPI, developed by Kouzes and Posner (2002), and the EPQ, developed by D. R. Forsyth (1980).

*Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)*

The five practices of exemplary leadership measured by the LPI include (a) Model the Way, (b) Inspire a Shared Vision, (c) Challenge the Process, (d) Enable Others to Act, and (e) Encourage the Heart. The LPI consists of 30 items with 6 items per subscale and can be scored manually or electronically. The completion time for administration is about 10 minutes (See sample instrument and letters of permission in Appendices A, B, and C). The LPI was originally developed with data gathered from over 1200 leaders across the United States. After being refined, the LPI was administered to more than 2100 leaders, executives, and their subordinates. Finally, 2876 participants were tested, and reliability and validity estimates for the LPI were calculated. Internal reliability estimates range from .70 to .85. Test-re-test reliability estimates ranged from .93 to .95. According to the reviewers in Buro’s *Mental Measurements Yearbook*, the LPI is one of the most utilized and popular instruments of its kind (Pearson, 2004). Reliability
statistics from the two-year college participants’ data were also measured using Cronbach’s Alpha. Table 2 shows the coefficients for each of the five sections of the LPI.

Table 2

Reliability of Leadership Practices Inventory for Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practices</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LPI Model</td>
<td>.965</td>
<td>.980</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Inspire</td>
<td>.987</td>
<td>.992</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Challenge</td>
<td>.986</td>
<td>.992</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Enable</td>
<td>.974</td>
<td>.977</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Encourage</td>
<td>.865</td>
<td>.877</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items 9, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.991</td>
<td>.994</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results showed the reliability scores on the participant data was .865 - .987. The reliability of the participants’ data were slightly higher than the Cronbach Alpha’s shown by Kouzes and Posner’s (2000) psychometric report, where all scales were reported at .75 or above.
In order to categorize the ethical viewpoints of individuals, Forsyth (1980, 1993) developed a Taxonomy of Personal Moral Philosophies, and then, based on this taxonomy, Forsyth created the EPQ to determine where individuals fall on the two scales of idealism and relativism. Based on their perspectives, the subjects were then typed into one of four categories, showing parallels among the four types within an ethical framework. Items on the EPQ were originally published by Forsyth in 1980 in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (See sample instrument and letter of permission in Appendices D and E). Based on a five-point Likert scale, scores were derived by calculating the mean for items 1-10, which yield “idealism” scores, and a mean for items 11-20, which yield “relativism” scores. Subjects were then categorized, or “typed,” according to their mean scores on each ideology into one of the following four ethical perspectives: (a) situationism (high idealism/high relativity), (b) absolutism (high idealism/low relativity), (c) subjectivism (low idealism/high relativity, or (d) exceptionism (low idealism/low relativity) (Forsyth, 1980).

The EPQ has been used in a number of studies and displayed adequate levels of validity and reliability (Dikeman, 2007; Forsyth, 1980; Forsyth, O’Boyle & McDaniel, 2008). Forsyth (1980) reported Cronbach’s alpha scores of .80 and .73 and test-retest reliability scores of .67 and .66 in his initial publication. Additionally, Forsyth, et al., (2008) completed a meta-analysis on a global basis to summarize statistically the results of prior studies that examined these dimensions using the EPQ. These results further confirmed the validity and reliability of these studies as well as their usefulness in diverse
populations. The reliability scores for the survey data of the two-year college participants were similar, as shown by Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Reliability of Ethics Position Questionnaire for Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealism items 1-10</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td>.814</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relativism items 11-20</td>
<td>.839</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total EPQ</td>
<td>.785</td>
<td>.810</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 3, the reliability coefficients for the survey data ranged from .772 to .839, which was consistent with that reported by Forsyth (1980).

**Data Collection**

The preparation and data collection process referenced Sproull’s (2002) data collection principles and steps. These steps included (a) assigning a unique identification to each subject, (b) establishing coding procedures, (c) establishing electronic retrieval and scoring processes, (d) conducting a pilot study, (e) editing inconsistent or incomplete data, and (f) data reduction (Sproull, 2002). Before data collection began, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Clemson University approved the Application for Exemption Certification (See Appendix F). A pilot study provided preliminary analysis and feedback.
and tested the electronic distribution method through Survey Monkey. Pilot study participants consisted of five individuals in education leadership positions who were not part of the study population. The pilot study provided a preliminary test of the functionality of the electronic processing, expert review, and confirmation of time administration. Pilot study results indicated a highly reliable method of distribution (electronic), allowed for the correction of two typographical errors, and helped verify content validity.

An introductory letter which was sent to the president of each college approximately two weeks prior to the electronic distribution of the surveys, introduced the forthcoming survey and encouraged cooperation. Next, each administrator received an email a few days prior to the distribution of the survey to introduce the survey and to request cooperation. The survey was distributed and the data were collected electronically through use of Survey Monkey. Once completed, the survey responses were electronically collected through the Survey Monkey server.

The Letter of Informed Consent approved by the Institutional Review Board at Clemson University was included electronically as a cover letter with each survey, and all surveys were sent by e-mail on February 24, 2009 (See Appendix G). All participants received an email that contained a link to access the survey (See Appendix H). The non-responders received another email message approximately three weeks after the initial distribution. This correspondence requested survey completion and gave administrators a deadline of March 31, 2009. Participants could opt out, and three participants chose to do so. Although offered, no participants requested hard copies of the survey. Overall, 94
surveys were distributed, and 72 were collected for a response rate of 76.6%. Four
surveys were discarded due to incomplete data, which resulted in a final response rate of
72.3%.

Data were collected and organized for each variable on the two instruments and
for the demographic questions. All participants were assigned a numeric identification
number in order to check and sort the responses. The data were then entered on Excel
worksheets to prepare for descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and analysis of
variance tests, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 16.0.

Data Handling and Reduction

Once collected, the research data were coded, edited, examined, entered in the
computer, and summarized, as per the guidelines in Sproull, (2002). The survey item
responses were entered to prepare the data for statistical analysis, as shown in Table 4.
The LPI consisted of 30 items, six of which made up each variable representing an exemplary leadership practice. For example, the mean score for Modeling was derived from the responses given on questions 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26. Accordingly, each of the four remaining leadership practices (variables) was composed of six questions, which yielded the mean score for that particular leadership practice. Questions on the LPI asked participants to rate how often they engaged in a particular leadership behavior, from “almost never” to “almost always.” (See Appendix A for a sample copy of the LPI).

Table 5 shows the survey items used for the EPQ, which consists of 20 questions. Participants were asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert scale, whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement. (See Appendix D for a sample copy of the EPQ).
Table 5

Ethics Position Questionnaire Survey Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPQ Items 1-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relativism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean score for questions 1-10 composed the basis for the idealism categorization; the mean scores for questions 11-20 composed the basis for the relativism categorization. Thus, the EPQ yielded two separate scores for categorization information on ideology – one for idealism and one for relativism.

The nominal data for the demographic questions (as shown in Table 6) provided the information for descriptive analyses. A numerical code between 1 and 5 represents each participant’s answer. For example, if a participant responded that his or her position was president, his or her response was coded “1.”
Table 6

Coding of Demographic Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>25-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Current Position</td>
<td>1 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Background</td>
<td>Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Preparation</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likewise, other demographic variables were codes to provide for statistical computations. These data provided a description of the participants in the study. (See Appendix I for Demographic Questions). The final data collection yielded a total of 68 useable surveys.

Data Analysis

Mean scores for each of the five factors of exemplary leadership practices examined by the LPI included:

1. Modeling the Way
2. Inspiring a Shared Vision
3. Challenging the Process
4. Enabling Others to Act

5. Encouraging the Heart

Based on the prevailing view that these exemplary leadership practices are inherently linked to a leader’s ethical and moral values, this study examined that relationship, using the EPQ to measure the participants’ ethical ideologies and ethical perspectives. The participants’ ideologies were measured in terms of two sets of values assessed on the EPQ, idealism and relativism. Then the participants’ ethical perspectives were derived from their idealism and scores, thereby placing them into one of the following categories:

1. Absolutist (high idealism/low relativism)
2. Exceptionist (low idealism/low relativism)
3. Situationist (high idealism/high relativism)
4. Subjectivist (low idealism/high relativism)

Demographic data were also analyzed for its possible value in establishing relationships among the variables in this study.

This research selected appropriate statistical tests and completed data handling, processing, and analysis with reference to Sproull (2002) and Kerlinger and Lee’s (2000) principles. The scores were collected and assigned variable names, as outlined by the instruments. The analysis of the data included the following methodologies.

1. Q-Q plots were generated and showed a goodness of fit with a standard normal distribution.
2. Descriptive Statistics (frequency distributions and percentages) were tabulated to present the demographic data.

3. Descriptive statistics (mean scores) were computed and used to describe the data from EPQ perspectives and LPI profiles. The mean and standard deviations were computed for each variable.

4. Correlation analyses were used to examine the relationships between predictor and criterion specific variables. Correlations coefficients were determined for the EPQ variables of idealism and relativism and each of the five LPI variables of modeling, inspiring, challenging, enabling, and encouraging. The Pearson Product-moment CorrelationCoefficient test was used as the measure to determine relationships or associations between the variables. Pearson $r$ measures the linear relation between two variables, which range from -1.00 to +1.00. An $r$ value of 0.00 means there is no correlation, while $r$ values above zero show a positive relationship, and $r$ values below zero show a negative relationship.

5. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there were significant differences among the scores of the ethical perspectives (absolutist, exceptionist, situationist, and subjectivist) for specific leadership practices. Post hoc tests were also conducted.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the research design and methodology used in the study. The research design was survey research, and a survey was administered electronically to the chief institutional officers and presidents of the 16 South Carolina Technical Colleges. The survey consisted of three parts, the Ethics Position Questionnaire, the Leadership Practices Inventory, and a demographic questionnaire. Sixty-eight responses were collected for a return rate of 72.3%. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-moment CorrelationCoefficient tests, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and post hoc tests.
CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of the findings from the study. The chapter includes the results of the survey data from the presidents and chief institutional officers at the 16 two-year colleges in South Carolina. The primary purpose of the research study was to examine the ethical perspectives and leadership practices of the presidents and chief institutional officers from these 16 colleges. More specifically, the researcher sought to answer these research questions which guided the study.

Research Questions

1. What are the ethical philosophies of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the two-year colleges in South Carolina in terms of the two ideologies of idealism and relativism as measured by the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)?

2. What are the ethical perspectives of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges, in terms of the perspectives of absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism as measured by the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)?

3. What are the leadership practices of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges in terms of the five exemplary practices of Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling, and Encouraging as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)?

4. Do relationships exist between each of the five leadership practices the LPI (Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling, and Encouraging) and each of the two ideologies of idealism and relativism from the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)?
5. Are there significant differences among the presidents’ and chief institutional officers’ ethical perspectives (absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism) in terms of their leadership practices?

Demographics

Data were collected from the participants regarding their gender, race/ethnicity, age, current position, experience, and academic background. (See Appendix J) The demographic data are displayed in the frequency tables.

*Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Age of Participants*

The participants indicated their gender on the survey. The survey data responses for gender are shown in Table 7.

*Table 7*

*Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 7, out of a total of 68 participants, 38 of the participants (55.9%) were male, and 30 participants (44.1%) were female.

Table 8 shows the data responses for race/ethnicity. All respondents were either White or African American. There were no other ethnic groups represented.
Table 8

Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 8, 62 of the participants (91.2%) were White, and 6 participants (8.8%) were African-American.

Table 9 shows the survey data responses for age. Participants indicated their age group by selecting one of the categories provided on the survey.

Table 9

Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 55</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Almost half of the participants (33 or 48.5%) were over 55 years of age. The lowest number of participants (2 or 2.9%) came from the youngest category, 25-35 years of age. Ten participants (14.7%) were age 36-45, and 23 (33.8%) were 46-55 years of age. Overall, the majority of the participants were 46 years old or older.

*Position Title of the Participants*

All positions were represented by the participants. Eleven of the 16 presidents responded for a 69% response rate from those holding the title of president. The response from presidents made up 16.2% of all respondents, as shown in Table 10.

*Table 10*

*Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Position*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Business Affairs Officer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Academic Officer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Continuing Education Officer</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Student Affairs Officer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Institutional Effectiveness Officer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Twelve business affairs officers also responded, making up 17.7% of the respondents. Thirteen chief academic officers and 13 continuing education officers composed 19.1% each of the total participants. Nine chief student affairs officers made up 13.2% of the participants, and 9 chief institutional effectiveness officers made up 13.2% of the responders. One participant (1.5%) identified himself or herself as “other” in terms of position.

*Years of Experience of Participants*

Participants were also asked about their years of experience in their current positions. In Table 11, the participants’ years of experience in their current positions are shown.

*Table 11*

*Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in Position</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year or less</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years or less</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years or less</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approximately one-third of the participants \( n = 30, 44.1\% \) had served in their position for five years or less. Twenty-one of the participants \( 30.9\% \) had served in their positions for less than 10 years, and 10 \( 14.7\% \) had served in their positions for more than 20 years. On the whole, \( n = 51, 75\% \) of the presidents and institutional officers from the two-year colleges who participated in this survey had served in their positions 10 years or less, and 44.1\% \( n = 30 \) had served in their positions 5 years or less.

**Academic Background of Participants**

Participants were asked to provide information related to their academic background in terms of degrees held. The majority of the participants held Master’s degrees \( n = 33, 48.5\% \). Table 12 shows the survey data responses for the academic background of the participants.

**Table 12**

*Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Academic Background*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Background</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters’ Degree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed.D. Degree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. Degree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 12, 32.4% \((n = 22)\) of the participants held Ph.D. degrees, 11.8% \((n = 8)\) held Ed. D. degrees, and 48.5% \((n = 33)\) held masters’ degrees. Five participants \((7.4\%)\) held “other” types of credentials.

**Preparedness for Ethical Decision-Making in Terms of Academic Background**

As a final part of the demographic questionnaire, the participants were also asked to rate their preparedness for the ethical decision-making required in their current leadership positions on a scale of 1 to 5, as shown in the tables 13 and 14. In terms of their academic backgrounds, the majority of participants \((n = 37, 54.4\%)\) felt their academic preparation had been excellent or had prepared them to a large extent for the ethical decisions required in their present positions (See Table 13).

**Table 13**

Participants’ Preparedness for Ethical Decision-Making in Terms of Academic Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Response</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat but inadequate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent preparation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approximately 28% ($n = 19$) of the respondents felt that their academic backgrounds had been inadequate or not prepared them at all, and 17.5% ($n = 12$) were satisfied with their academic preparation for making ethical decisions in their current positions.

**Preparedness for Ethical Decision-Making in Terms of Career Experience**

Participants rated their preparedness for ethical decision-making in terms of their career experiences. The majority ($n = 57$, 81.5%) of the participants rated their preparation as excellent, or they felt that their career experiences had prepared them to a large extent. These data are shown in Table 14.

**Table 14**

*Participants’ Preparedness for Ethical Decision-Making in Terms of Career Experiences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Response</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat but inadequate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a large extent</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Preparation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three participants (4.3%) felt their career experiences were inadequate. None responded that their career experiences had not prepared them at all, and 13.2% ($n = 9$)
were satisfied with their preparation to make ethical decisions based on their career experiences.

**Summary of Demographic Variables**

Overall, the findings from the study indicated that of the 68 participants, the majority were White, male, and less than 55 years of age. Most participants had been in their positions for 10 years or less. African Americans made up 8.8% of the survey sample. Although the majority of participants were male, a significant number of participants were female (44.1%). Also, 44.2% of the participants held advanced degrees of either Ed.D. or Ph.D. degrees, and 48.5% had master’s degrees. Also, all positions were well represented within the sample, ranging from 13.2% (Chief Student Affairs Officers and Chief Institutional Effectiveness Officers) to 19.1% (Chief Academic Affairs Officers and Chief Continuing Education Officers) of the total respondents. Presidents made up 16.2% of the sample, and business officers made up 17.7% of the sample. In regard to the question about academic preparedness for ethical decision-making, the majority of the participants indicated that they had been adequately (or more than adequately) prepared, although 28% indicated they had not. Additionally, 9% of the participants indicated they had received excellent academic preparation, as compared with 28% who felt their career experiences had given them excellent preparation for the ethical decision-making required in their current positions.
Findings Related to Research Questions

This section includes the data analysis of the findings for each research question. The analyses of the findings are organized according to the research questions.

Research Question 1

What are the ethical philosophies of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the two-year colleges in South Carolina in terms of the two ideologies of idealism and relativism as measured by the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)?

The participants completed the 20 items on the survey for the EPQ. Participants agreed or disagreed (5-point Likert scale) to given statements on a variety of issues. Participants were instructed that there were no “right or wrong” answers. (See Appendix D for a sample copy of the EPQ). The descriptive statistics for the EPQ (participants’ minimum scores, maximum scores, mean and standard deviations) are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Participants’ Mean Score, Standard Deviations, Minimum Scores, and Maximum Scores for Ethics Position Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPQ Idealism</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPQ Relativism</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.698</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 68 participants’ mean score for idealism was 3.54, and the mean score for relativism was 2.52. The standard deviation (SD) for idealism was .633. The minimum score for idealism was 2.0 and the maximum score was 4.7. The minimum score for relativism was 1.0, and the maximum score was 4.2. The SD for relativism was .698. The higher mean score of 3.54 on idealism indicated that, on average, participants embraced an ideology that holds the welfare of others at the heart of their moral code. Conversely, a high relativism score reflected an ideology that espouses that moral actions depend upon the nature of the circumstance more than ethical principles, norms or laws, and that harm to others is sometimes necessary. In summary, the results indicated that the participants of the survey scored higher in idealism and lower in relativism.

Research Question 2

What are the ethical perspectives of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges in terms of the perspectives of absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism as measured by the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)?

A more in depth way to view the EPQ scores, as shown previously in Table 1, is to summarize the paired idealism and relativism scores into the Taxonomy of Ethical Perspectives developed by Forsyth (1980). This taxonomy is used to type subjects into one of four ethical perspectives based upon their ethical ideologies. Participants were categorized according to ethical perspective type using SPSS for the data analysis. Table
16 shows the distribution of the ethical perspectives for the participants of the study. All typologies were represented by the participants.

Table 16

Frequency and Percentage of Participants by Ethical Perspective Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Perspective</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absolutist</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptionist</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjectivist</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situationist</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority (73.4%) of the participants reflected ethical perspectives that can be described as either absolutists or exceptionists (36.7% in each category). Additionally, 14.8% of the participants were typed as subjectivists, and 11.8% were typed as situationists. Participants identified as absolutists are generally considered as duty-based (deontological) in their thinking. Those identified as exceptionists are consequence-based (teleological) in their thinking. The participants typed as subjectivists are considered to be ethical egoists, meaning that they believe moral standards to be valid only in terms of their own beliefs and behavior. Participants identified as situationists hold the context of the behavior as the focus of their ethical perspective (Forsyth, 1980).
Research Question 3

What are the leadership practices of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges in terms of the five exemplary practices of Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling, and Encouraging as measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)?

The data for the third research question were derived from the 30 items on the LPI survey. Participants were asked to rate their typical leadership behaviors on a 10-point scale in terms of the frequency they engaged in the listed behaviors. The descriptive statistics consisting of means, standard deviations, minimum scores, and maximum scores resulting from the LPI completed by the participants are shown in Table 17.

Table 17
Participants’ Means, Standard Deviations, Minimum Scores, and Maximum Scores on Leadership Practices Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practice</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LPI Model</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>49.90</td>
<td>4.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Inspire</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47.99</td>
<td>7.462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Challenge</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48.59</td>
<td>5.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Enable</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52.50</td>
<td>3.663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Encourage</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>48.93</td>
<td>6.734</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The highest mean scores on the LPI for the participants were for Enabling Others to Act \((M = 52.50)\) and Modeling the Way \((M = 49.90)\). In general, the participants of the study indicated that their leadership practice of Enabling Others to Act was their most frequent leadership behavior. The lowest mean score was for the LPI practice of Inspiring a Shared Vision \((M = 47.99)\). Mean scores for Encourage the Heart \((M = 48.93)\) and Challenge the Process \((M = 48.59)\) were slightly lower. The most variance occurred in the scores for Inspire \((SD = 7.462)\) and Encourage \((SD = 6.734)\). In general, the participants of the study indicated the behaviors of Enabling, Modeling, and Encouraging as their most frequent practices of the five effective leadership practices measured by the LPI.

**Research Question 4**

Do relationships exist between each of the five leadership practices the LPI \((Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling, and Encouraging)\) and each of the two ideologies of idealism and relativism from the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)?

The findings indicated several significant relationships among the two ideologies of the EPQ and the five leadership practices of the LPI, as shown in Tables 18 and 19. Table 18 presents the statistical data from the *Pearson Product-moment Correlation* test, which was conducted to determine what relationships, if any, existed between each measure of ethical ideology and each measure of leadership practices.
Table 18

Pearson Correlations of Ethics Position Questionnaire Idealism and Leadership Practices Inventory Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practice</th>
<th>Pearson $r$</th>
<th>Sig ($p$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LPI Model</td>
<td>.281*</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Inspire</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Challenge</td>
<td>.243*</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Enable</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Encourage</td>
<td>.273*</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at ($p < .05$) level (2-tailed).

Pearson $r$ measures the linear relation between two variables ranging from -1.00 to +1.00. An $r$ value of 0.00 means there is no correlation, while $r$ values above zero show a positive relationship, and $r$ values below zero show a negative relationship. Table 15 shows that idealism is positively correlated with all of the five leadership practices on the LPI. Of the five practices, three showed significant relationships with idealism. The ideology of idealism was positively related to the leadership practices of Modeling ($r = .281, p = .020$), Challenging ($r = .243, p = .046$), and Encouraging ($r = .273, p = .024$). This direct, linear relationship suggests that participants with higher idealism scores on the EPQ tended to have significantly higher scores on the LPI for the practices of Modeling, Challenging, and Encouraging. The strength of these relations was weak, but it was reliable based on the level of significance. Data from the other two leadership
practices, Enabling \((r = .228, p = .062)\) and Inspiring \((r = .165, p = .179)\), showed weak, positive relationships, but were not significant statistically.

Table 19 presents statistical data from the *Pearson Product-moment Correlation* tests, for the ethical ideology of relativism. These data showed that relativism is negatively correlated with all five leadership practices on the LPI.

*Table 19*

*Pearson Correlations of Ethics Position Questionnaire Relativism and Leadership Practices Inventory Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practices</th>
<th>Pearson (r)</th>
<th>Sig ((p))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LPI Model</td>
<td>-.296*</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Inspire</td>
<td>-.202</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Challenge</td>
<td>-.330**</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Enable</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>.778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPI Encourage</td>
<td>-.078</td>
<td>.529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at \((p < .05)\) level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at \((p < .01)\) level (2-tailed).

In this case, significant negative (inverse) relationships between the ethical ideology of relativism and two leadership practices on the LPI were found. This indirect, linear relationship suggested that participants with higher relativism scores on the EPQ tended to have significantly lower scores on the LPI for the practices of Modeling \((r = -.296, p = .014)\) and Challenging \((r = -.330, p = .006)\). Again, the strength of these relationships was
weak to moderate, but it was reliable based on the level of significance. Data from the other two leadership practices, Enabling ($r = -0.035, p = .778$) and Inspiring ($r = -0.202, p = .099$), showed weak, negative relationships, but were not significant.

Overall, all relationships among the effective leadership practices were consistently positive in one ideology (idealism) and consistently negative in the other ideology (relativism.) The analysis showed relationships between ethical ideologies and leadership practices that were predictive in nature; however, correlation tests do not indicate cause and effect relationships, and therefore that conclusion cannot be drawn.

Research Question 5

Are there significant differences among the presidents’ and chief institutional officers’ ethical perspectives (absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism) in terms of their leadership practices?

In order to determine if the data on ethical perspectives and leadership practices also revealed differences among the mean scores for ethical perspectives based on type, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Differences were analyzed among the groups with the four ethical perspectives for each of the five leadership practice variables. Table 19 provides a display of the data from the ANOVA. The one-way ANOVA indicated statistically significant differences in the ethical perspectives the for LPI variable Challenge ($p < .01$), as shown in Table 20.
Table 20

Analysis of Variance for Ethical Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LPI Model</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>169.579</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>56.526</td>
<td>2.572</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1406.700</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21.980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1576.279</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LPI Inspire</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>343.130</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>114.377</td>
<td>2.161</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>3387.855</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>52.935</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3730.985</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LPI Challenge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>361.796</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>120.599</td>
<td>3.869</td>
<td>.013*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1994.675</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>31.167</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2356.471</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LPI Enable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>44.820</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.940</td>
<td>1.119</td>
<td>.348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>854.180</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>13.347</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>899.000</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LPI Encourage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>248.232</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>82.744</td>
<td>1.898</td>
<td>.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2790.400</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>43.600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3038.632</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at (p < .05) level
The ANOVA test results above showed a statistical difference between the ethical perspectives for the leadership practice of Challenge the Process \( (F = 3.869, p = .013) \). Also of note, though not statistically significant, Model the Way tests indicated an \( F = 2.572, p = .062 \) result. Inspire, Encourage and Enable results were not statistically significant. These results suggested that there was a difference in the ethical perspectives for some of the leadership practices, and therefore, further analyses of the data included post hoc statistical procedures.

Post Hoc Data Analysis

While statistical significance was found only for the leadership practice of Challenge, the Fisher’s Least Significant Difference (LSD) post hoc tests were subsequently run for all of the leadership practices, and the process revealed a number of significant findings. Significant differences were found between the leadership practices of the participants based on their ethical perspectives, as shown in Tables 21 and 22. Table 21 below illustrates the results for the leadership practice of Model the Way, showing a significant difference \( (p < .05) \) between subjectivism and absolutism.
The data in Table 21 suggested that the higher scores in this leadership category (Model the Way) for the absolutists as opposed to the subjectivists were not the result of chance but were probably affected by the participants’ ethical perspectives. Or, put another way, the mean scores for absolutists were significantly different (higher) than the mean scores for subjectivists within the leadership practice of Model the Way ($p < .05$).
For the leadership practice of Inspire a Shared Vision, the LSD post hoc tests showed significant differences ($p < .05$) between absolutists and subjectivists ($p = .019$) and between situationists and subjectivists ($p = .047$). Table 22 shows the results of the LSD test for Inspire a Shared Vision.

*Table 22*

**Inspire a Shared Vision-- Fisher’s Least Significant Difference Analysis for Ethical Perspectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Perspective</th>
<th>(I) EPQ Type</th>
<th>(J) EPQ Type</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LPI Inspire</td>
<td>1-Situationism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.975*</td>
<td>3.451</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>13.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.955</td>
<td>2.955</td>
<td>.511</td>
<td>-3.95</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.395</td>
<td>2.955</td>
<td>.894</td>
<td>-5.51</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Subjectivism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-6.975*</td>
<td>3.451</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>-13.87</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-5.020</td>
<td>2.722</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>-10.46</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-6.580*</td>
<td>2.722</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>-12.02</td>
<td>-1.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Exceptionism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1.955</td>
<td>2.955</td>
<td>.511</td>
<td>-7.86</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.020</td>
<td>2.722</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>10.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-1.560</td>
<td>2.058</td>
<td>.451</td>
<td>-5.67</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Absolutism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.395</td>
<td>2.955</td>
<td>.894</td>
<td>-6.30</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.580*</td>
<td>2.722</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>12.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.560</td>
<td>2.058</td>
<td>.451</td>
<td>-2.55</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The mean difference is significant at $p < .05$ level

EPQ Type: 1=Situationism, 2=Subjectivism, 3=Exceptionism, 4=Absolutism
This analysis again suggested that the difference in the mean scores for absolutists and subjectivists, and situationists and subjectivists, in this leadership practices category (Inspire a Shared Vision) were not the result of chance but were affected by the participants’ ethical perspectives. That is, mean scores for absolutists and situationists were significantly different (higher) than the mean scores for subjectivists, within the leadership practice of Inspire a Shared Vision (p < .05).

The LSD post hoc test conducted on the leadership practice of Challenge the Process resulted in significant findings. As illustrated by Table 23, significant differences (p< .01) existed between absolutism and subjectivism (p = .002), situationism and subjectivism (p = .009), exceptionism and subjectivism (p = .009).
**Table 23**

*Challenge the Process-- Fisher’s Least Significant Difference Analysis for Ethical Perspectives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practice</th>
<th>(I) EPQ Type</th>
<th>(J) EPQ Type</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LPI Challenge</td>
<td>1-Situationism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.175*</td>
<td>2.648</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>12.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.535</td>
<td>2.268</td>
<td>.501</td>
<td>-3.00</td>
<td>6.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>2.268</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>-4.08</td>
<td>4.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Subjectivism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-7.175*</td>
<td>2.648</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-12.47</td>
<td>-1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-5.640*</td>
<td>2.089</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-9.81</td>
<td>-1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-6.720*</td>
<td>2.089</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>-10.89</td>
<td>-2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Exceptionism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1.535</td>
<td>2.268</td>
<td>.501</td>
<td>-6.07</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.640*</td>
<td>2.089</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>9.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1.080</td>
<td>1.579</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td>-4.23</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Absolutism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-.455</td>
<td>2.268</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>-4.99</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.720*</td>
<td>2.089</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>10.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.080</td>
<td>1.579</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td>-2.07</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The mean difference is significant at p < .05 level

EPQ Type: 1=Situationism, 2=Subjectivism, 3=Exceptionism, 4=Absolutism

These results suggested that for the leadership practice of Challenge the Process, the differences in the mean scores among the situationists, exceptionists, and absolutists, as opposed to the subjectivist were not the result of chance (p < .05). In other words, the mean scores for absolutists, exceptionists, and situationists were significantly different.
(higher) than the mean scores for subjectivists within the leadership practice of Challenge the Process.

There were no significant differences among the ethical perspectives for the leadership practice of Enable Others to Act. Table 24 below shows the results of this LSD analysis.
Table 24

*Enable Others to Act - Fisher’s Least Significant Difference Analysis for Ethical Perspectives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practices</th>
<th>(I) EPQ Type</th>
<th>(J) EPQ Type</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LPI Enable 1-Situationism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- .600</td>
<td>1.733</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>-4.06</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.020</td>
<td>1.484</td>
<td>.494</td>
<td>-1.94</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- .780</td>
<td>1.484</td>
<td>.601</td>
<td>-3.74</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Subjectivism 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>1.733</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>-2.86</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.620</td>
<td>1.367</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- .180</td>
<td>1.367</td>
<td>.896</td>
<td>-2.91</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Exceptionism 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1.020</td>
<td>1.484</td>
<td>.494</td>
<td>-3.98</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.620</td>
<td>1.367</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>-4.35</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.800</td>
<td>1.033</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>-3.86</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Absolutism 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.780</td>
<td>1.484</td>
<td>.601</td>
<td>-2.18</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>1.367</td>
<td>.898</td>
<td>-2.55</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.800</td>
<td>1.033</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EPQ Type: 1=Situationism, 2=Subjectivism, 3=Exceptionism, 4=Absolutism

Lastly, the post hoc analysis for the leadership practice of Encourage the Heart showed a significant difference between absolutists and exceptionists ($p = .03$). Table 25 illustrates these results.
Table 25

Encourage the Heart – Fisher’s Least Significant Difference Analysis for Ethical Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Practices</th>
<th>(I) EPQ Type</th>
<th>(J) EPQ Type</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LPI Encourage</td>
<td>1-Situationism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- .750</td>
<td>3.132</td>
<td>.812</td>
<td>- 7.01</td>
<td>5.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.310</td>
<td>2.682</td>
<td>.222</td>
<td>- 2.05</td>
<td>8.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>- .770</td>
<td>2.682</td>
<td>.775</td>
<td>- 6.13</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Subjectivism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>3.132</td>
<td>.812</td>
<td>- 5.51</td>
<td>7.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.060</td>
<td>2.471</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>- .88</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>- .020</td>
<td>2.471</td>
<td>.994</td>
<td>- 4.96</td>
<td>4.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Exceptionism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3.310</td>
<td>2.682</td>
<td>.222</td>
<td>- 8.67</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>-4.060</td>
<td>2.471</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>- 9.00</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>-4.080*</td>
<td>1.868</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>- 7.81</td>
<td>- .35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Absolutism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>2.682</td>
<td>.775</td>
<td>- 4.59</td>
<td>6.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>2.471</td>
<td>.994</td>
<td>- 4.92</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.080*</td>
<td>1.868</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>7.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The mean difference is significant at the p < .05 level.
EPQ Type: 1=Situationism, 2=Subjectivism, 3=Exceptionism, 4=Absolutism

These data indicated that the mean scores between absolutists were significantly different (higher) than the mean scores for exceptionists for the leadership practice of Encourage the Heart (p = .033).
Summary of Findings

The findings of this study indicated that there were several noteworthy associations between leadership practices and ethical positions. First of all, the data indicated that there were positive relationships between each of the five exemplary leadership practices and the ethical ideology of idealism. Relationships were found to be statistically significant for the practices of Model \((r = .281, p = .020)\), Challenge \((r = .243, p = .046)\), and Encourage \((r = .273, p = .024)\). Conversely, there were inverse relationships between each of the five exemplary leadership practices and the ethical ideology of relativism. These inverse relationships were significant for the practices of Model \((r = -.296, p = .014)\) and Challenge \((r = -.330, p = .006)\). ANOVA and post hoc results indicated that mean scores among ethical perspectives as typed in Forsyth’s (1980) taxonomy were significantly different within four of the five leadership practices—Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, and Encouraging.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter Five provides a summary of the research study, briefly reviewing the purpose, relevant literature and research, and the research design. The researcher discusses the conclusions derived from the findings of the study. Limitations of the study are noted, and general recommendations and recommendations for future research are presented at the end of the chapter.

Summary of the Research Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the ethical perspectives and leadership practices of those in institutional leadership positions in the two-year community colleges in South Carolina. The overall aim of the research was to provide further insight into the complex variables involved in studying the nature of a leader’s personal values and ethical perspectives and their relationships to effective leadership practices.

Related Literature

In general, the review of relevant literature showed that in spite of a call for strong ethical leadership for over two decades, a litany of ethical problems plague the political and socio-economic fabric of the nation. Leadership breakdowns resulting from ethical violations and corrupt behaviors across private and public sectors were depicted in this study to point out the seriousness of the issue. Scholars in academia have called for more
research to study the nature of ethics and leadership and their effects on organizational health and effectiveness. Particularly, there is a call for colleges and universities to place an emphasis on integrity and to be the gatekeepers for ethical leadership development practice (de Russy & Langbert, 2005).

**Research Design**

For the purposes of this study, Kouzes and Posner’s (2002) model of the Five Practices of Leadership served as the theoretical foundation, along with Forsyth’s (1982) Ethics Position Model, to develop the survey research design. The leadership practices of those in executive leadership positions in the two-year colleges in South Carolina were measured using Kouzes and Posner’s (2002) *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI). The ethical perspectives were assessed using Forsyth’s (1982) *Ethics Position Questionnaire* (EPQ). These data and demographical information were collected through electronic surveys and analyzed to determine if relationships existed between each of the ethical perspectives and each of the leadership practices involved. A total of 72 surveys were returned, and 68 had usable data, for a response rate of 72.3%. The high response rate of return allowed the data to be used as a reasonable representation of the South Carolina two-year college leadership population.

**Discussion of Findings and Conclusions**

Analyses of the findings from the research study were presented in Chapter Four. The findings for the study were organized beginning with the demographic data and
followed with analyses of findings for each of the research questions. This section of Chapter Five includes a discussion of the findings and conclusions for the study.

Demographic Data

The findings from the study indicated that of the 68 participants, the majority were White (91.2%), male (55.9%), and less than 55 (51.5%) years of age. Most (75%) participants had been in their positions for 10 years or less. Interestingly, 44.1% had been in their positions 5 years or less, which is indicative of the turnover in leadership projected by Boggs (2003) due to the large number of leaders reaching retirement age. Also, 44.2% of the participants held advanced degrees of either an Ed.D. degree or Ph.D. degree, and 48.5% had graduate degrees at the master’s level. This statistic supported Teague’s (2000) finding that advanced graduate work was an important factor for career advancement for employees in community colleges. Overall, these data were not dissimilar to the data presented in Dikeman’s study (2007) on North Carolina’s community college presidents, where the majority were White males with advanced degrees.

In regard to the question on the demographic questionnaire about academic preparedness for ethical decision-making, the majority of the research participants indicated that they had been adequately (or more than adequately) prepared, but 28% indicated they had not. Additionally, only 9% of the participants indicated they had received excellent academic preparation, as compared to 28% who felt their career experiences had given them excellent preparation for the ethical decision-making
required in their current positions. This information suggested that more needs to be done to increase the readiness of new leaders preparing for senior leadership roles, as was suggested by Boggs (2003), Harkins (1998) and Vaughan (1992).

**Research Question 1**

What are the ethical philosophies of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the two-year colleges in South Carolina in terms of the two ideologies of idealism and relativism as measured by the *Ethics Position Questionnaire* (EPQ)?

**Conclusion 1: Presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina Technical College System tend to hold idealistic ethical ideologies, as measured by the Ethics Position Questionnaire.** The findings indicated that the majority of the leaders who participated in this research have ethical ideologies that lean toward idealism. On a scale of 1 to 5, the mean score for idealism was 3.5 and the median score was 3.6. The mean score for relativism was 2.52, and the median score was 2.55. As shown in Figure 2 below, the overall median scores of the research participants were comparable with Forsyth’s normative data on the EPQ (2008).

![Comparison of Norm and Participant Scores on the Ethics Position Questionnaire](image)

**Figure 2**

*Comparison of Norm and Participant Scores on the Ethics Position Questionnaire*
However, the median relativism score of the participants was lower \((Mdn = 2.55)\) compared to 2.90 as the norm score), indicative of the participants’ tendency toward a more idealistic ethical ideology. Generally, idealists tend to be concerned with the welfare of others and make decisions based on universal moral principles, while relativists tend to judge more by context and personal beliefs, and that harm to others is sometimes necessary. Thus, the findings suggested that most leaders in the South Carolina Technical College System leaned toward a true concern for the welfare of others and usually relied on universal principles of right and wrong when making decisions. These data are comparable with normative data provided by Forsyth (2008). Dikeman’s (2007) study of community college presidents in North Carolina yielded high idealism results as well.

**Research Question 2**

What are the ethical perspectives of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges in terms of the perspectives of *absolutism*, *exceptionism*, *situationism*, and *subjectivism* as measured by the *Ethics Position Questionnaire* (EPQ)?

**Conclusion 2:** Presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges generally hold absolutist or exceptionist ethical perspectives, as measured by the *Ethics Position Questionnaire*. Using Forsyth’s (2008) median scores as the benchmark for rating participants high or low in their idealism and relativism, the data analysis for the study showed that the majority \((n = 50, 73.4\%)\) of the research
participants fell into the absolutism (n = 25, n = 36.7%) and exceptionism (n = 25, 36.2%) perspectives, both of which value conformity to moral principles. Absolutists (who have high idealism and low relativism scores) are more duty-based in their thinking and believe that actions should almost always conform to universal moral principles. Exceptionists (who have low idealism and low relativism scores) are more consequence-based in their thinking, believing that conformity to moral rules is desirable, but exceptions can be made. Situationists (who have high scores in both ideologies) composed 11.8% (n = 8) of the respondents and are concerned about the welfare of others, but believe that the situation or context is the most important guide for moral judgments composed. The other 14.8% (n = 10) of the participants scored high on relativism and low on idealism, “typing” them as subjectivists. Subjectivists are sometimes called “ethical egoists” because of their belief that moral standards are only valid in terms of their own personal views.

According to Forsyth’s (2008) most recent meta-analysis study, most of the general population in the western world leaned toward exceptionist philosophies. However, in the current study of presidents and chief institutional officers, there were equal numbers of absolutists and exceptionists, each making up 36.7% of the respondents. This number also differed somewhat from the findings of Dikeman (2007). In his study of North Carolina community college presidents, he found the clear majority (83%) were absolutist in their ethical perspective as measured by the EPQ. Because Dikeman (2007) found so few numbers in other perspectives, his statistical evaluation of any differences among the groups was limited.
**Research Question 3**

What are the leadership practices of the presidents and chief institutional officers of the South Carolina two-year colleges in terms of the five exemplary practices of *Modeling*, *Inspiring*, *Challenging*, *Enabling*, and *Encouraging* as measured by the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI)?

**Conclusion 3: The presidents and institutional officers of the South Carolina Technical College System displayed levels of leadership behavior above the norm on each of the five exemplary practices, as rated by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI).**

**Conclusion 4: The presidents and institutional officers of the South Carolina Technical College System displayed the highest levels of exemplary leadership behaviors in the practice of Enable Others to Act, as rated by the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI).**

LPI scores can range from 6 to 60, and the mean scores of the participants on the five leadership practices were Modeling the Way (*M* = 49.9), Inspiring a Shared Vision (*M* = 47.99), Challenging the Process (*M* = 48.59), Enabling Others to Act (*M* = 52.5), and Encouraging the Heart (*M* = 48.93). These scores placed the participants above the 50th percentile for all leadership practices according to Kouzes and Posner’s comparison data (2003). As displayed in Figure 3, the results from this present study showed that the research participants displayed higher levels of leadership behaviors on all five leadership practices the LPI than those reported as norm scores by Kouzes and Posner (2003).
Figure 3

Comparison in Leadership Practices Inventory Norms and Leadership Practices Inventory Data Norms

The highest mean score in the normative data was for Enable ($M = 49.4$), which was also the highest mean score for the participants ($M = 52.5\%$). Likewise, the lowest mean score for the normative data was for Inspire at 44.34 %, as was the participants’ ($M = 47.99$). The largest difference between the participants’ scores and the norm scores occurred in the Inspire a Shared Vision category, where the research participants’ mean score was 3.65 points higher than the norm ($M = 44.34$). These findings were similar to the Dikeman (2007) study results, even though all of his subjects were presidents and might have been expected to have higher overall LPI scores. The trends from the participants’ scores on the LPI were similar to those seen in other studies (Dikeman, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2002) of leaders from educational institutions and businesses.
**Research Question 4**

Do relationships exist between each of the five leadership practices on the LPI (Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, Enabling, and Encouraging) and each of the two ideologies of *idealism* and *relativism* from the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)?

**Conclusion 5:** There was a consistent positive relationship between idealism and the five effective leadership practices measured by the LPI.

**Conclusion 6:** The practices of Modeling, Challenging, and Encouraging showed statistically significant positive relationships with the ideology of idealism.

**Conclusion 7:** There was a consistent negative (inverse) relationship between relativism and each of the five effective leadership practices measured by the LPI.

**Conclusion 8:** The practices of Modeling and Challenging showed statistically significant negative relationships with the ideology of relativism.

The results of the *Pearson Product-moment Correlation* tests showed that there were notable correlations between the predictive variables on the EPQ and the criterion variables on the LPI. Idealism was positively correlated with the five effective leadership practices measured by the LPI—Modeling \( (r = .281) \), Inspiring \( (r = .165) \), Challenging \( (r = .243) \), Enabling \( (r = .228) \), and Encouraging \( (r = .273) \). Three of these positive correlations were statistically significant—Modeling \( (p = .020) \), Challenging \( (p = .046) \), and Encouraging \( (p = .024) \). Relativism was negatively (inversely) correlated with the five effective leadership practices measured by the LPI, Modeling \( (r = -.296) \), Inspiring \( (r = -.202) \), Challenging \( (r = -.330) \), Enabling \( (r = -.035) \), and Encouraging \( (r = -.078) \). Two of these negative correlations were statistically significant—Modeling \( (p = .014) \).
and Challenging \( (p = .006) \). While the strength of these relationships was low to moderate, the direction of these relationships was consistent for each ideology (in opposing directions). Further, five of the associations were statistically significant—Modeling, Challenging, and Encouraging directly with idealism, and Modeling and Challenging indirectly with relativism—indicating the relationships were statistically reliable.

Overall, the five effective leadership practices as measured by the LPI were positively associated with the ethical ideology of idealism, and conversely, they were negatively associated with the ideology of relativism. This consistency was not found in the Dikeman (2007) study. The current research study, therefore, provided some empirical support for those who claimed that effective leaders must be of high moral character, possess integrity, and have a sincere concern for the welfare of others. Based on the analysis of the current study, idealism was positively correlated with all of the effective leadership practices, and thus may be a factor that could have predictive value in projecting effective leadership behaviors. The inverse relationship found with relativism could also have predictive value in projecting less effective leadership behaviors, but it would be premature to generalize beyond this population, especially given the lack of strong relationships found.
Research Question 5

Are there significant differences among the presidents’ and chief institutional officers’ ethical perspectives (absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism) in terms of their leadership practices?

Conclusion 9: Presidents’ and chief institutional officers’ displayed significant differences among ethical perspectives (absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism) in four of the five scales of the LPI—Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, and Encouraging.

Conclusion 10: Presidents and chief institutional officers who were typed as absolutists by the EPQ displayed higher scores those from the other perspectives in four of the five scales of the LPI---Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, and Encouraging.

Conclusion 11: Presidents and chief institutional officers who were typed as subjectivists by the EPQ displayed consistently lower scores than those from other perspectives in four of the five scales of the LPI---Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, and Encouraging.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted to determine if there were differences in the leadership practices among the four groups characterized as absolutists, exceptionists, situationists, and subjectivists. A significant difference ($p = .013$) was found among the ethical perspectives group for the leadership practice of Challenge the Process. Also, while not statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level, noteworthy differences were found for the leadership practice of Model the Way ($p = .062$). These results suggested that there may be important relationships not only in the general
ideologies previously discussed, but also important differences in the typed ethical perspectives of the participants in terms of their leadership practices. Therefore post hoc analyses (Fisher’s LSD) were run from ANOVA results to further evaluate the differences. A number of the LSD tests showed significant differences among the perspective variables for groups, but there were two perspectives that consistently and significantly stood out as different from the others ---absolutism and subjectivism. Results from the LSD tests revealed that absolutists showed significant differences in four of the five scales of the LPI, whereby their scores were significantly higher ($p < .05$) than at least one of the other ethical perspectives. Conversely, subjectivists showed significant differences in three of the five scales of the LPI, whereby their scores were significantly lower ($p < .01$) than at least one of the other ethical perspectives. In the case of Challenge the Way, subjectivists scores were significantly lower than all of the other perspectives. Subjectivists, as previously mentioned, are sometimes called ethical egoists because they tend to believe that their own moral code outweighs universal principles of right and wrong. These findings also provided support to the scholars and researchers (Bennis, 2004; Burns, 1978; Covey, 1989; Kouzes & Posner, 2002) who put forth the idea that leadership characteristics representing high standards of moral conduct and ethical behavior and concern for others are key to effectiveness in leadership.

General Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine the concerns of practitioners in the field, as well as scholars and researchers, regarding the ethical behavior of leaders in higher
education. Additionally, there has been concern expressed regarding the lack of priority given to the study of ethics in some leadership programs (de Russy & Langbert, 2003; Dikeman, 2007; Hamilton, 2006). The need to model appropriate behavior, expect appropriate behavior, and uphold the highest ethical standards for the leaders of tomorrow—the students—cannot be overstated. Based on the findings and conclusions presented in this study, the following general recommendations are provided to foster the development of ethical leadership practices. These recommendations may be of interest to practitioners, leaders, policy makers, and other stakeholders who play a key role in the leadership development in higher education.

1. Academic leaders and policy makers should give high priority to developing, modeling, and upholding, an ethical framework and aligning the institution to that framework. They should be made aware of, and make others aware of, the many pitfalls that have plagued educational leaders across the nation.

2. Educational program developers should assure that curricula include adequate instruction regarding the importance of integrity in leadership, not only for the health of the organization, but for the common good as well.

3. Leaders and practitioners who work with programs that purport to prepare students and employees for leadership positions in education and other fields must not overlook the span of influence inherent in their own positions of authority. The broad impact of the educators’ ethical perspectives and leadership practices has potential affects far beyond the college campus.

4. The importance of character and integrity should be regarded as important criteria for effective leadership and should be considered as such in recruitment and hiring practices.

5. Governing boards should not be left out of the ethics and leadership equation. Their influence and authority should first and foremost reflect the value system of the college. It should be recognized that this value system will affect the success of the institution and determine the ethical framework from which the college will draw its moral culture.
Limitations of the Study

While there were many interesting avenues this research could have taken, it was beyond the scope of this study to generalize to a larger population especially given that some findings were not statistically strong. Still, it is important to note that overall the results of this study generally supported the theories of leadership that claimed a moral, value based leader is the most effective in leading organizations.

This study was limited by a number of factors inherent in survey research. Because this study was a non-experimental design, the researcher lacked control over many variables that could influence the results of the study. Therefore, cause and effect assumptions were not made, and inferences to other populations, as well as conclusions were made with caution (Sproull, 2002). Sometimes lacking in depth, survey research may give only a superficial look at the data. Also, data can be affected by the subjects’ motivation, honesty, memory, and ability to respond, and errors due to non-response may exist (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Sproull, 2002). That is, people who choose to respond to the survey may be different from those who do not respond, thus biasing the findings. Additionally, the self-reported nature of the data limits the level of inference that can be applied. However, it should be noted that Kouzes and Posner (2003) pointed out that self reported LPI scores and those from the leaders’ subordinates have not been significantly different. Finally, the participants in this study were all from two-year colleges in South Carolina, so the findings cannot be generalized to other populations without due consideration.
Recommendations for Future Research

Many researchers have recommended the need for more research to further investigate the complex issues involved in leadership effectiveness. Others have noted the importance of ethics in the leadership role, citing the need for more study to determine how ethical beliefs, leadership integrity, codes of conduct affect organizational health and effectiveness. The findings of this study suggested that relationships do exist between leader effectiveness and ethical ideology, but further research is needed to more closely examine the complexities of these relationships. For example, the relationship of organizational culture and effectiveness to leadership practices and ethical ideology is still not well understood. This gap in knowledge is especially true in higher education where leadership authority and autonomy is sometimes ambiguous (Birnbaum, 1988). Additionally, scholars have suggested that the increase in cheating by students reflects the lack of strong role models in higher education and a lack of standards espoused by the professorate, but research is lacking to prove or disprove this (McCabe, 2005). Many believe that ethical violations by collegiate leaders are much worse than documented, and that the situation is even more serious than reported (Kelley & Chang, 2007). Also, it is not clear if and how individuals act on their ethical perspectives. Some studies have suggested that an organization’s developing a code of ethics is ineffectual in setting standards and affecting behavior (Benner, 2007). All of these topics are valid extensions of this study and are important for the future development of leadership programs and evaluation.
The amount of literature related to leadership ethics in the community college is particularly limited and begs a more thorough examination in the areas of leadership development, ethical decision-making and academic integrity. Additionally, most related studies are qualitative in nature, and while quite beneficial, there remains a need for quantitative inquiry to add to the body of evidence (Brown, 2005; Dikeman, 2007; Northouse, 2004; Sit, 1999). The demand for an emphasis on ethical leadership and for institutions to demonstrate and develop the required characteristics for ethical leadership, is stronger than ever, especially given the current trends witnessed in both private and public sectors. In view of these issues, the following specific recommendations are offered for future research related to ethical leadership and effective leadership practices.

1. Research is needed to better understand where in the college environment specific ethical violations occur, and why. More data should be collected describing the environment and culture in which these behaviors occur.

2. Research is needed to more carefully examine the nature of the effect of ethical violations. Who are the stakeholders and what is the effect?

3. Studies in leadership practice, especially in the community college, are needed to better understand the relationships between the core values of the institution, the organizational culture, and the effectiveness of the institution.

4. Comparative studies are also needed to examine the influence of ethical ideologies and leadership practices at other community colleges in different geographic locations, at two-year versus four-year institutions, or at public versus private institutions.

5. Further study is needed to examine the origins and moral agents associated with the increased numbers of students who cheat, and to develop strategies for overcoming the problem.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)

INSTRUCTIONS

Write your name in the space provided at the top of the next page. Below your name, you will find thirty statements describing various leadership behaviors. Please read each statement carefully, and using the RATING SCALE on the right, ask yourself:

“How frequently do I engage in the behavior described?”

- Be realistic about the extent to which you actually engage in the behavior.
- Be as honest and accurate as you can be.
- DO NOT answer in terms of how you would like to behave or in terms of how you think you should behave.
- DO answer in terms of how you typically behave on most days, on most projects, and with most people.
- Be thoughtful about your responses. For example, giving yourself 10s on all items is most likely not an accurate description of your behavior. Similarly, giving yourself all 1s or all 5s is most likely not an accurate description either. Most people will do some things more or less often than they do other things.
- If you feel that a statement does not apply to you, it’s probably because you don’t frequently engage in the behavior. In that case, assign a rating of 5 or lower.

For each statement, decide on a response and then record the corresponding number in the box to the right of the statement. After you have responded to all thirty statements, go back through the LPI one more time to make sure you have responded to each statement. Every statement must have a rating.

The RATING SCALE runs from 1 to 10. Choose the number that best applies to each statement.

1 = Almost Never
2 = Rarely
3 = Seldom
4 = Once in a While
5 = Occasionally
6 = Sometimes
7 = Fairly Often
8 = Usually
9 = Very Frequently
10 = Almost Always

When you have completed the LPI-Self, please return it to:

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

Thank you.

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Leadership Practices Inventory

Your Name: __________________________

To what extent do you typically engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement.

1. I set a personal example of what I expect of others.  
2. I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.  
3. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.  
4. I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.  
5. I praise people for a job well done.  
6. I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on.  
7. I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.  
8. I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.  
9. I actively listen to diverse points of view.  
10. I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.  
11. I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make.  
12. I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.  
13. I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.  
14. I treat others with dignity and respect.  
15. I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.  
16. I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people’s performance.  
17. I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.  
18. I ask “What can we learn?” when things don’t go as expected.  
19. I support the decisions that people make on their own.  
20. I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.  
21. I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.  
22. I paint the “big picture” of what we aspire to accomplish.  
23. I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.  
24. I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.  
25. I find ways to celebrate accomplishments.  
26. I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.  
27. I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.  
28. I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.  
29. I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.  
30. I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.

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Appendix B

LPI Permission Letter

KOUZES POSNER INTERNATIONAL
15419 Banyan Lane
Monte Sereno, California 95030 USA
FAX: (408) 354-9170

December 12, 2008

Ms. Shirley Butler
709 Dove Haven Lane
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 29579

Dear Shirley:

Thank you for your request to use the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) in your dissertation. We are willing to allow you to reproduce the instrument in written form as outlined in your request, at no charge, with the following understandings:

(1) That the LPI is used only for research purposes and is not sold or used in conjunction with any compensated management development activities;
(2) That copyright of the LPI, or any derivation of the instrument, is retained by the authors, and that the following copyright statement is included on all copies of the instrument: "Copyright © 2003 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. All rights reserved. Used with permission."
(3) That one (1) electronic copy of your dissertation and one (1) copy of all papers, reports, articles, and the like which make use of the LPI data be sent promptly to our attention; and,
(4) That you agree to allow us to include an abstract of your study and any other published papers utilizing the LPI on our various websites.

If the terms outlined above are acceptable, would you indicate so by signing one (1) copy of this letter and returning it to us. Best wishes for every success with your research project.

Cordially,

Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D.
Managing Partner

I understand and agree to abide by these conditions:

(Signed) Shirley L. Butler Date: 12/12/08
Appendix C

Posner Permission Letter

From: Barry Posner [mailto:bposner@scu.edu]
Sent: Fri 6/26/2009 10:13 AM
To: Butler, Shirley
Cc: Ellen Peterson
Subject: RE: LPI permission

ok to include so long as copyright notification is also included.
congratulations on getting to this place!

Barry

>>> "Butler, Shirley" <Shirley.Butler@htgc.edu> 6/26/2009 5:34 AM >>>

Dr. Posner,

Thank you again for allowing me to use the LPI in my dissertation research. I am completing my manuscript this weekend to be reviewed by the dissertation committee, and had planned to include a scanned, reduced copy of the LPI in my appendix. However, this may not be appropriate, so I wanted to clarify with you --- Please tell me if that is part of the approval for use, or if I should remove it. If I need to remove it, I will do so immediately.

Thanks again,
Shirley
Appendix D

Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ)

EPQ

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following items. Each represents a commonly held opinion and there are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your reaction to such matters of opinion.

Rate your reaction to each statement by writing a number to the left of each statement where:

1 = Disagree Strongly
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Agree Strongly

1. People should make certain that their actions never intentionally harm another even to a small degree.

2. Risks to another should never be tolerated, irrespective of how small the risks might be.

3. The existence of potential harm to others is always wrong, irrespective of the benefits to be gained.

4. One should never psychologically or physically harm another person.

5. One should not perform an action which might in any way threaten the dignity and welfare of another individual.

6. If an action could harm an innocent other, then it should not be done.

7. Deciding whether or not to perform an act by balancing the positive consequences of the act against the negative consequences of the act is immoral.
8. The dignity and welfare of the people should be the most important concern in any society.

9. It is never necessary to sacrifice the welfare of others.

10. Moral behaviors are actions that closely match ideals of the most "perfect" action.

11. There are no ethical principles that are so important that they should be a part of any code of ethics.

12. What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another.

13. Moral standards should be seen as being individualistic; what one person considers to be moral may be judged to be immoral by another person.

14. Different types of morality cannot be compared as to "rightness."

15. Questions of what is ethical for everyone can never be resolved since what is moral or immoral is up to the individual.

16. Moral standards are simply personal rules that indicate how a person should behave, and are not to be applied in making judgments of others.

17. Ethical considerations in interpersonal relations are so complex that individuals should be allowed to formulate their own individual codes.

18. Rigidly codifying an ethical position that prevents certain types of actions could stand in the way of better human relations and adjustment.

19. No rule concerning lying can be formulated; whether a lie is permissible or not permissible totally depends upon the situation.

20. Whether a lie is judged to be moral or immoral depends upon the circumstances surrounding the action.
Hi Shirley (I'm gonna go informal, hope that is okay),

Thanks for writing, even though your email made me feel guilty. For about 3 years I have promising myself (and a fair number of other people) that I would sit down and develop at slightly comprehensive list/clearhouse for measures of moral thought, positions, orientations, etc., but that work remains undone. There have emerged, in the last few years, quite a few measures of morality, but as you mention each one seems to be targeted for a particular kind of person: mostly CEO types. Then, there are the general measures, that remain so vague that in studies like the one you propose the seem to broad to really get at the heart of the matter.

But, at least I can say by all means feel free to use my ethics position questionnaire, which is described in a fair amount of detail at http://www.richmond.edu/~dforsyth/ethics/ethics.htm. I'm not sure how the EPQ scores will relate to the dimensions of the LPI. It may be that the most challenging, inspiring, enabiling, and encouraging leaders are more relativistic and more idealistic. But I'm not sure that there are strong theoretical reasons for suggesting that. Good luck with the project.

Don F.
Appendix F

IRB Approval Letter – Clemson University

From: Rebecca Alley [mailto:RALLEY@exchange.clemson.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, January 07, 2009 2:54 PM
To: Frankie Keels Williams
Subject: Validation of IRB protocol # IRB2008-391, entitled "Ethical Perspectives and Leadership Practices in the Two-Year Colleges of South Carolina"

Dear Frankie,

The Chair of the Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) validated the protocol identified above using Exempt review procedures and a determination was made on January 7, 2009, that the proposed activities involving human participants qualify as Exempt from continuing review under Category B2, based on the Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46). You may begin this study.

Please remember that no change in this research protocol can be initiated without prior review by the IRB. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, complications, and/or any adverse events must be reported to the Office of Research Compliance (ORC) immediately. You are requested to notify the ORC when your study is completed or terminated.

Attached are documents developed by Clemson University regarding the responsibilities of Principal Investigators and Research Team Members. Please be sure these are distributed to all appropriate parties.

Good luck with your study and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Please use the IRB number and title in all communications regarding this study.

Sincerely,

Becca

Rebecca L. Alley, J.D.
IRB Coordinator
Office of Research Compliance
Clemson University
223 Brackett Hall
Clemson, SC 29634-5704
ralley@clemson.edu
Office Phone: 864-656-0636
Fax: 864-656-4475
Appendix G

Cover Letter for Electronic Survey

Message Summary

Message Delivery Schedule
Delivery completed on February 26, 2009 8:00 AM.

Message Recipients
The message mailed to 94 recipient(s).

Message Preview
Below is a preview of your message based on the first recipient in your list ((Email))

To: [Email]
From: Shirley.Butler@hgtc.edu
Subject: Research Survey
Body: Please find below a link that will take you directly to a short survey on ethical perspectives and leadership practices in two-year colleges. As referenced in my previous e-mail, your participation in this survey will provide data needed to complete the research for my dissertation in the Ph.D. program in Educational Leadership from Clemson University. You will be able to complete it in approximately 10 minutes.

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

Here is a link to the survey:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx
Appendix H

Informed Consent Letter

Leadership Practices & Ethical Perspectives

1. ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES AND LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN SOUTH...

Information Concerning Participation in a Research Study
Clemson University

Description of the research and your participation:

You are cordially invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Frankie Williams and Shirley L. Butler of Clemson University’s Graduate Program in Educational Leadership. The purpose of this research is to examine and analyze the leadership practices and ethical perspectives of those in leadership positions in the two-year colleges of South Carolina. Your participation will involve the completion of two survey instruments: The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) and the Ethical Perspectives Questionnaire (EPQ). Both surveys are available online, are self-administered, and will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Risks and discomforts:

There are no known risks associated with this research. The survey questions ask the participants about their leadership practices and ethical perspectives. The questions are not deemed threatening nor stressful, but simply measure your routine practices in an educational setting, and your perspectives in regard to ethical ideologies.

Potential benefits:

Given the number of ethical failures that exist in the business and political spheres of our society, there is a critical need for more research related to character development, moral reasoning, and leadership integrity in our schools and universities. Higher education institutions have a far-reaching influence not only in society today, but in the shaping of our leaders of tomorrow. This study may help us understand more about the nature of a leader’s ethical perspectives and ideologies, and their relationship to effective leadership practices. The findings will add to the body of knowledge about educational leadership, especially as it applies to the two-year college; and, it will be of interest to those who are involved in the scholarly debate of leadership ethics, as well as those in the business of leading and developing educational programs and institutions.

Protection of confidentiality:

The surveys will be submitted anonymously. The confidentiality of the information obtained will be protected during the research process. Only the principal investigator and the co-investigator will have access to the data, and the data will be maintained in a secure location, and destroyed after the completion of the study.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. While every participant’s participation is deemed as valuable and important, you may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

Contact information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Frankie Williams at Clemson University at 864.656.1491. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance at 864.656.6460.
## Appendix I

### Demographic Questions

#### Leadership Practices & Ethical Perspectives

### 4. Demographics

1. **Position**
   - President
   - Chief Institutional Officer-Business Affairs
   - Chief Institutional Officer-Academic Affairs
   - Chief Institutional Officer - Continuing Education/Workforce Development
   - Chief Institutional Officer-Student Affairs
   - Chief Institutional Officer - Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, Development
   - Chief Institutional Officer-Other (please specify in comment field below.)

   Other (please specify)

2. **Number of years in current position**
   - 1 year or less
   - 5 years or less
   - 10 years or less
   - More than 10 years
   - More than 20 years

3. **Gender**
   - Male
   - Female

4. **Age**
   - 25-35
   - 36-45
   - 46-55
   - Over 55

5. **Race**
   - White
   - African-American
   - Other
### Leadership Practices & Ethical Perspectives

#### 6. Academic Background
- Master's
- PhD
- Other

#### 7. Do you feel that your academic background adequately prepared you for the ethical decisions and situations you face in your present leadership position?
- Not at all
- Somewhat, but inadequate
- Satisfactory
- To a large extent
- Excellent preparation

#### 8. Have your career experiences prepared you for the ethical decisions you must make in your current leadership position?
- Not at all
- Somewhat, but inadequate
- Satisfactory
- To a large extent
- Excellent Preparation

#### 9. Comments

[Blank space]
REFERENCES


Gerdes, L. (2006, October 2). MBA students are no.1—At cheating. *BusinessWeek, 4004*, 4-14.


