

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE **research**

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TITLE Academic Dental Administrators: A Descriptive Analysis of Leadership Among Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Directors

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to identify what leadership skills are held by women who become leaders in the field of dental academics.

METHODOLOGY

All females at dental schools in positions of deans, department chairs, and program director's positions, listed in the 2003-04 ADEA Directory of Institutional Members and Association Officers and ADA 2002/03 Survey of Advanced Dental Education, were invited to participate (N = 184) along with a random sample of an equal number of male dental school leaders. A total of 92 surveys were returned by females (50% response rate) and 143 by men (75% response rate). Respondents completed the LPI and provided demographic information. The typical female respondent was between 50 and 54 years of age, while male respondents were typically between 55 and 59 years. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents were Caucasian. The number of educational degrees held did not vary statistically by gender.

KEY FINDINGS

The author reports about a qualitative study (Brundo, 2000) in the ADEA Journal on preparing to be a dean that asked "What qualities should a dean have and utilize in the performance of his or her responsibilities to be successful?" She finds that "list of five deanly characteristics is strongly reminiscent of Kouzes' and Posner's five core leadership behaviors.....the strong parallels between responses to Brundo's open-ended question regarding skills essential to dental-school deans and Kouzes and Posner's (more general) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership suggest that LPI survey tool was an opportune choice for a study targeted at determining essential leadership practices for administrators in dental academe" (pp 93-94).