

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE **research**

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

- TITLE** The Relationships Among Leadership Practices, Organizational Climate, and Organizational Commitment Within Church Ministry Settings
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- OBJECTIVE** The purpose of this study was to exam relationships among perceptions of leadership behavior, church congregational climate, and organizational commitment within the context of supervisor–subordinate dyads serving within church ministry settings.
- METHODOLOGY** This study involved a research sample of 97 supervisor–subordinate dyads (41% response rate) serving within 212 church ministry settings in Minnesota. Respondents completed the appropriate form of the Leadership Practices Inventory, the Congregation Climate Scales (CCS; Pargament, Silverman, et al., 1983), the Shortened Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (SOCQ; Mowday et al., 1982), the researcher modified observer format form of the SOCQ (SOCQ-RM; Mowday et al., 1982), and provided demographic information.
- The typical supervisor (81 male and 16 female) was 48 years old, with an average of 21 years of ministry experience, an average of nine years with their current ministry site. The typical subordinate (46 male and 51 female) was 44 years old, with an average of 14 years of ministry experience and about six years at the site. The dyad had worked together an average of just under five years together.

KEY FINDINGS

Supervisor self-reported total leadership practices (combining scores from all five leadership practices) were found to be significantly greater than subordinate perceptions of supervisor total leadership practices. Subordinate perceptions of their supervisor's total leadership practices were significantly correlated with subordinate self-reported organizational commitment, subordinate perceptions of supervisor organizational commitment and subordinate perceptions of total church congregational climate. In addition, significant correlations were found between supervisor age and subordinate perceptions of supervisor total leadership practices, supervisor years of experience and subordinate perceptions of supervisor total leadership practices, subordinate years of experience and subordinate perceptions of supervisor total leadership practices, and the number of years the dyad worked together and supervisor self-reported total leadership practices.

“...one thing revealed in the analysis of the first hypothesis of the study that was of interest,” reports the authors, was, that “the correlation between subordinate perceptions of supervisor total leadership practices and subordinate self-reported organizational commitment was stronger than both of the other correlations that included subordinate perceptions of total church congregational climate. This implied the possibility that subordinate perceptions of total supervisor leadership practices had a more direct relationship with subordinate self-reported organizational commitment than subordinate perceptions of church congregational climate” (pp. 52-3). In addition, the author suggests, that the application of this research “is that pastors and church leaders can increase organizational commitment within their ministry settings by engaging in specific leadership behaviors and intentionally seeking to develop positive congregational climates within their churches. According to the findings of this study, the effects of these actions will not only benefit church congregations but also the leaders of those congregations by increasing their level of organizational commitment to their church ministry settings” (p. 58).