

**TITLE:** Study of Gay and Lesbian Leaders

**RESEARCHER:** David Wain Coon  
Graduate School of Education  
Seattle University  
Doctoral Dissertation: May 2001

**OBJECTIVE:** The purpose of this study was to identify the leadership characteristics and values common to openly gay men and lesbians in high profile positions of leadership.

**METHODOLOGY:** One hundred gay men and 85 lesbians in high profile positions of leadership were invited to participate in this cross-sectional study; with 43 percent agreeing to participate (N = 80), with eventually completed surveys from 29 males and 21 females. The participant's average age was 44 years of age, most were from Western Washington (88%), all had college degrees (40% doctorates), most Caucasian (90%). In addition to completing a lengthy open-ended questionnaire, participants completed the Leadership Practices Inventory.

**KEY FINDINGS:** Enabling and Modeling were the two most frequently engaged in leadership practices, and Inspiring the least frequently, for both males and females. Males had Encouraging slightly ahead of Challenging, and females the opposite. However, there were no statistically significant differences between the LPI scores of males versus females. Collectively, respondents in this study scored "moderately" in each of the normative database leadership practices. Participants used transformational descriptors of their leadership behaviors 80 percent, versus 20 percent for transactional leadership descriptors.