

**TITLE:** Differences in Leadership Practices and Selected Demographic Characteristics of Women Executives in the Top Three Positions of Higher Education and Banking

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**OBJECTIVE:** To describe and compare the leadership practices of female executives in higher education and banking.

**METHODOLOGY:** A random sample of 300 women in higher education administration, stratified by the top three line positions were selected using the *hep 90 Higher Education Directory*. Using *Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives* (1989) and *Polk's Bank Director: North American Edition* (1989) a similar stratified random sample of 300 women in banking were selected. Packets were mailed to these executives which included the LPI-Self and the modified Background and Personal Information sections of the Fisher/Tack Effective Leadership Inventory (Fisher, Tack & Wheeler, 1988). The response rate from higher education was 74% (N=221) and from banking was 57% (N=136). Substantial demographic data was collected. Internal reliabilities for the LPI were good: Challenging (.71), Inspiring (.80), Enabling (.77), Modeling (.76), and Encouraging (.82).

**KEY FINDINGS:** The leadership practices of women executives by career specialization (higher education versus banking) were significantly different (MANOVA); with higher education executives engaging more frequently in Challenging, Inspiring, Enabling, and Encouraging. Based on their line positions (or hierarchical level) the only differences in leadership practices were for Inspiring (with the first/highest level engaged more frequently in this practice than their second and third level colleagues). No significant differences were found for the interaction of career specialization and level of employment overall, or within higher education, and on only one leadership practice (Inspiring) for banking executives.

LPI scores did not significantly vary as a function of marital status, length of work experience either within or outside the area of career specialization, or by number of children. Three leadership practices varied by respondent age: Inspiring, Enabling and Encouraging. Two-way interactions (area of career specialization and demographic characteristic) were not statistically significant.