

Running Head: EFFECTS ON LEADERSHIP


The Effects of Family Background and Religion on Leadership

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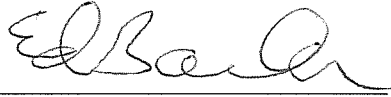
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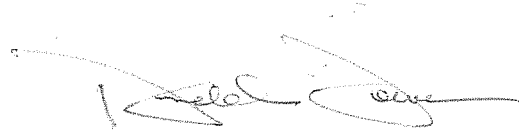
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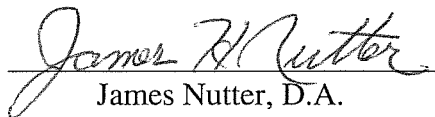
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Abstract

This study examined the role of family background and religion in predicting leadership skills. Research showed that the impact families and religion have on children and adolescents is significant, influencing children's attributes, habits, and beliefs for their entire lives. The experiment tested university student leaders for a significant effect of family background and religious upbringing on their leadership skills. The subjects were given an informed consent form, a demographics survey, the Santa Clara Religious Faith Questionnaire, and the Student Leadership Practices Inventory. Results are expected to show that a student from a non-divorced, stable family and a religious upbringing will result in higher leadership scores than a student from a divorced and non-religious family.

The Effect of Family Background and Religion on Leadership

Leadership has been studied for many years, and there are constantly new developments concerning contributors to leadership. This research will examine two possible contributors to leadership skills: family background (primarily divorced or intact families) and religious commitment level. This study will examine the impact of families and marital conflict on children and adolescents, as well as the impact of religion or spirituality on children and adolescents. This study will then analyze those findings in regard to leadership skills and/or traits. This study hypothesizes that children who come from intact, healthy families, share religious beliefs with their parents, and consistently practice those beliefs will have stronger leadership scores.

Over twenty years ago, roughly three-fourths of children grew up in two-parent homes. Recent studies are showing that one-half of children in America will experience time in a one-parent household by the time they reach the age of 18. Research has long shown that children who experienced divorce are much more likely to divorce once they become married, thus continuing the cycle (Webster, Orbuch, & House, 1995). Therefore, research studying the effect of divorce will be beneficial for current families as well as families in the future.

Conflict between the parents has been shown to affect children's trust in relationships and their attachment to parents. Studies have shown that marital conflicts and divorce contribute negatively to academic success, social relationships, and psychological health. In fact, one study found that if children grow up in a home with a high amount of fighting as well as parental divorce, the children's holistic welfare is negatively affected (Riggio, 2004). The parent-child relationship affects not only the

child's younger years, but the effect of that relationship spans across the child's entire life in every aspect. If the parents are continually fighting, then their relationship with their child will be negatively affected for life. For example, families that experience divorce or high levels of conflict are not as close or emotionally binding as intact, low-conflict families. In fact, even if the parents do not divorce, but still fight frequently, it has a negative result on the children's future relationships and psychological functioning (Riggio, 2004).

Studies have shown that divorce affects both genders of children but in different ways. For boys from families of early divorce, there is an obvious negative result in emotional stability immediately. However, girls from early divorce families seem to adjust well through the elementary years, but in the adolescent period the negative effects of divorce become apparent (Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin, & Kiernan, 1995): "Yet by adolescence, girls of early divorce are more likely than girls in non-divorced families to demonstrate more antisocial behavior, depression, and withdrawal, in addition to difficulties in sexual behavior and relationship with boys" (Chase-Lansdale, et al., 1995, p. 1616). Both sexes of children from early divorce families showed more signs of maladjustment than children from intact families (Chase-Lansdale et al., 1995). The fundamental observation is that divorce negatively affects children, regardless of gender.

When looking at academic success, parental affection has also shown a positive correlation with the amount of schooling a child accomplished (Bereckei & Csanaky, 2001). Men and women who grew up in a home with high tension reported ending their academic careers earlier than those who grew up in a low tension home: "Almost four times as many children from unfavorable family environments left school, for various

reasons, before completing the eighth grade, compared to those from favorable environments” (Bereckei & Csanaky, 2001, p. 503).

Family environment has been shown to be a predictor of adolescent use of illegal substances. If parents discuss the negative aspects of substance use with their children, then the adolescent is less likely to use illegal drugs. The more the adolescent feels his or her family will care if he or she used drugs, cigarettes, or alcohol, and the more affection the family shows toward the adolescent, the less probable the adolescent will partake of it (Scheer, Borden, & Donnermeyer, 2000). Parents often play a decisive role in their adolescents’ decision to use illegal substances.

The adolescent period is a time of change, and teenagers are trying to find their individual identities. During this time, adolescents are more likely to have low communication skills and high family conflict. Those factors also contribute to substance abuse among adolescents. In addition, if the adolescent becomes involved in illegal drug use, the adolescent is likely to do better in the prevention program if the family is willing to cooperate and be involved in the program as well (Scheer et al., 2000).

Children from divorced families find it more difficult than children of married parents to separate themselves from their families and maintain a healthy emotional relationship. A major factor of adulthood is when the child is able to form close and individual relationships with peers, and not just parents. This shows that the child is learning how to become his or her own person and form his or her own friendships while still continuing a relationship with his or her parents (Johnson & McNeil, 1998). When a child has an adult-to-adult relationship with the parent, then the relationship becomes stronger and the child has gained a sense of personal identity (Johnson & McNeil, 1998).

The quality of the post-divorce family interaction is the most dominant indicator of how well a child will develop as a young adult. If the family interaction is strong, then it is much more probable that as the child develops into a young adult, he or she will be able to gain an adult to adult relationship with his or her parents (Johnson & McNeil, 1998).

The emotional closeness of the family and the amount of family conflict impacts the intimacy between children and their parents. The more affection parents showed their children, the more likely it was for the child to be able to become independent of the parents while maintaining a healthy relationship. Children of intact families find it easier to separate from their families and establish their own identities (Johnson & McNeil, 1998).

When establishing their own relationships outside the family, Riggio's study showed that young adults from broken families have higher anxiety concerning personal relationships and a smaller support network than those from intact families (2004). Researchers have found that children from divorced families are more likely to be emotionally distant in friendships with peers than children from intact families. The chances are also higher for the children of divorced families to have greater levels of anger and conflict in their own marriages later in their lives (Johnson & McNeil, 1998). This could partly be due to the fact that children of one-parent households were not learning proper socialization skills according to a study conducted in 1995 (Webster et al.). Therefore, the children were having harder times forming healthy relationships.

Another negative impact of divorce and/or marital struggles is that children may develop the tendency to react to disagreements the same way their parents did, which was often dysfunctional. As the children grow into adults and conflicts arise, the offspring of

the divorced parents were much more likely to engage in unhealthy techniques to settle disagreements, especially in their marriages. This only stimulated the conflict instead of dissolving it (Riggio, 2004). The children also are at greater risk to form unhealthy relationships because they have not seen a healthy relationship modeled by their parents. Children also may develop the mindset that when relationships become hard to maintain or as relationships increase in conflict, then it is acceptable to simply terminate the relationship instead of working through difficulties and resolving them. This might carry over into other realms of the person's life, not just their marriage or marital relationship. This could lead to negative trends of quitting commitments or jobs because the situation became harder than the person expected (Riggio, 2004).

In addition, the perceptions that a person has of their own marriage is linked to their parents' marital stability when they were growing up (Webster et al., 1995). People who experienced the divorce of their parents are 70% more likely to believe that their own marriages are experiencing difficulty (Webster et al., 1995, p. 415). This will also cause conflict in their marriages because they may be creating unnecessary problems.

Webster et al. found that children whose parents had divorced were less likely to have time alone with their spouses and to calmly resolve arguments. Also, "Among those in less than very happy marriages, children of divorced families are more than twice as likely to argue frequently, shout when arguing, and hit when arguing" (Webster et al., 1995, p. 410).

Parental divorce affects children psychologically throughout life. A national survey reported that adults whose parents divorced when they were children are more likely to go to counseling, more likely to experience psychological distress and

dimension, and less likely to be content with life. Divorce was linked to a greater chance of the child in the future needing psychiatric help. However, the majority of people overcome the effects of divorce without needing that extreme form of help (Chase-Lansdal et al., 1995). Regnerus discovered that children who develop in families without strong affection or love are much more likely to be antisocial throughout their teenage years (2003). The opposite is true as well. Those children who experience loving and stable homes are more prone to be stable healthy adults.

Chase-Lansdale et al. found that divorce had a greater negative impact on seven-year old children who did not already have major emotional problems (1995). The children who were already experiencing behavior trouble experienced fewer of the negative impacts resulting from divorce. The study suggested that this might be because if children were already facing emotional difficulties, a divorce might actually lessen the emotional trauma on the child because the conflict between the parents was finally resolved. However, for children who had found stability in the relationship with their parents, they had much more to overcome and accept when finding out their parents were divorcing (Chase-Lansdale et al., 1995).

Some researchers have indicated that there could also be positive benefits of divorce for children. Riggio (2004) found that children of divorced families are more likely to gain independence than children from intact families. Thus, this disagrees with other studies and is still being researched. However, this study maintains that children are expected to be more self-sufficient if both parents are not there to be care-givers. Therefore, the children are forced to make more decisions and provide for themselves on a more regular and consistent basis (Riggio, 2004).

Another possible benefit of divorce is that often the children develop a close relationship with their mother. After a divorce, the custody of the children is generally given to the mother. The children gain a greater appreciation for all the work the mother does to raise the children as a single mother (Riggio, 2004).

Religious Commitment

There are more women than men that show religious convictions, but this could also be a reflection of the social impact of religion because women are more socially functioning (Eliassen, Taylor, & Lloyd, 2005). Religion in the late teenage years or early twenties is generally regarded as a continuation or reaction to the beliefs the parents held throughout the child's life. However, this is also the period of life that a person is most likely to change or abandon the religious beliefs he or she was brought up with as a child (Eliassen et al., 2005). After becoming married and/or parents, people are more likely to attend church. Even if they formerly attended religious services but stopped attending for a long period, one or both of these two events highly increases the chance of their attendance. This is a stronger correlation among men than women. Many times new parents will start attending church for their children's sake. A study in 1999 found that church attendance does make an impact on children, and in fact, children under the age of ten were most influenced by regular church attendance (Argue, Johnson, & White).

Religion was found to be inversely related to psychological distress and symptoms of depression. Eliassen, et al., (2005) found an even stronger correlation among females. It is assumed that the religious coping strategies highly religious people employ generally lead to them finding meaning throughout life and lower struggles with

depression. Smith found that religion usually counteracts attempted suicides and/or suicides (2003b).

Commitment to religious convictions has been shown to be advantageous to physical and mental health. Religion can cause a religious person to see a problem as a time of growth in his or her religious beliefs. Religion also gives the person hope through the crises because the person believes there is a greater meaning (Eliassen et al., 2005). This hope in a greater meaning helps to lower stress and anxiety levels in the religious person. Religion also appears to be a supporter of physical well-being; in that, religious teenagers were more likely to be healthier than non-religious teenagers (Smith, 2003b): “Studies furthermore show inverse associations between religiosity and youth having had sex, the number of sexual partners, recency of sexual intercourse, and teenage pregnancy” (Smith, 2003b, p. 18).

Religious environments increase positive peer pressure. One study proved that “born-again” adolescents in predominantly conservative religious areas are less likely to get into trouble than “born-again” youths in more liberal areas (Pearce & Haynie, 2004). If an adolescent is surrounded by his religion and other adolescents who share his beliefs, then he is more likely to act in conjunction with his religious beliefs than if he felt he was alone in his beliefs (Pearce & Haynie, 2004).

Just as abusive habits are passed down to the children, positive social behavior is also passed down. Parents often provide children, especially young children, with their sense of what is right and wrong. Religious parents generally shape the child’s self-confidence and identity as being based on a religious belief about the value of a person. Parents also have a role in teaching the child self-discipline, which is at times a religious

conviction as well (Regnerus, 2003). In effect, religion does not compete with the family's influence on the adolescents activities, but rather, religion complements the family's influence (Regnerus, 2003).

Religious involvement helps family relationships. If children have a close emotional bond with their parents, then there is a greater chance that the children will agree with their parents' religious beliefs. However, a key factor might also be that religion generally draws people together and so it may be the religious tie that increases family closeness instead of the other way around. Teenagers and their families who consistently go to church have exhibited a higher degree of contentment and more interaction with their families (Smith, 2003b). When either the teenager or the parent is involved in religious services, the parents are more aware of the social interaction that their teenager was engaging in. The parents are more likely to know their child's friends, parents, and teachers. There was more likely to be "network closure" among adolescents who had either the parents or teenagers who attended church services, and the results were even higher if both parties went to church (Smith, 2003a).

Generally, religion helps adolescents form positive standards and helps teach adolescents forms of self-control and discipline. The longer a person stays religious, the more motivation and reinforcement is felt by that religion, and the religious beliefs deepen (Smith, 2003b). Also the longer the person stays religious, the more discipline that person exhibits to uphold his or her religious beliefs and habits.

Religion gives older adults the opportunity to be examples to the youth. This is a positive thing for the adolescents' emotional, social, and personal growth. Church congregations are one of the few places that children and adolescents interact with people

of all ages. This is significant because in a church setting adolescents more often have many people encouraging and guiding them, more than just the parental influence. The adolescents are shown concern and love by more than just their parental figures (Smith, 2003a).

Also, through church settings, adolescents learn skills that will serve them throughout life as they become leaders in their church. Youth may speak in front of the congregation; serve on committees; or volunteer to lead a group. The attributes the adolescent learns from those experiences will help him regardless of the type of job or vocation he goes into later in life (Smith, 2003b).

Religious involvement also increases adolescent's participation in outreach to the community. Generally, churches are involved in community food drives or programs to feed the homeless. Consequently, the church-going adolescent is exposed to and encouraged to help with those programs (Smith, 2003b).

The study of the correlation of criminal acts with religious beliefs has been in existence for quite some time. Pearce and Haynie consistently found that the higher the level of religiosity in a person, the lower the level of delinquency (2004). They also found an inverse relationship between the mother's religiosity and the child's delinquency and also an inverse relationship between the adolescent's own religiosity and delinquent acts (2004).

Pearce and Haynie researched how religious beliefs interact with each other to cause either conflict or harmony (2004). They found that religion can also cause greater conflict between church members, and also parents and their children (Pearce & Haynie, 2004). When married couples agree on religious convictions, then they are more content

with their marriage and have a lesser chance of divorcing or experiencing abuse.

However, when married couples disagree, there are greater levels of abuse and conflict (Pearce & Haynie, 2004). If adolescents disagree with their parents' religion, then more conflict arises in the family, and there's a greater chance that the adolescent will act out this tension in erroneous ways. There are times when the parents' religious beliefs have a negative impact on children, and the children reject what their parents believe and model. Adolescent males are more likely to engage in delinquent activities when their parents are strongly religious than females (Regnerus, 2003). If adolescents agree with their parents' religion, then it is much more likely that the child will not get into trouble and will have a strong family relationship.

There are times when the child is religious, and the parent is not, and this is harder for the child to maintain a dedicated consistency with his or her religion. Also, if both parent and child are not religious, that will lower the conflict, and at times the risk of delinquent actions in the child's life because there is not a matter of disagreement in the family (Pearce & Haynie, 2004).

Leadership

A basis for a strong leader is a person who has high morals and values because after a person knows his own beliefs and values, those values will be his motivation and reference point for making decisions. Each leader must decide for himself his beliefs on moral convictions. A leader with integrity never has to worry about how to act in front of people because he simply has to be himself. A leader must prove himself or herself to be honest and consistent by his or her actions (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). A person with high values proves to be a better leader (Krause & Weekley, 2005). A person with poor

morals or bad judgment may cause despair among those following the leader's authority. A selfish leader will merely do what's best for his own interests, and often the people subject to his authority are the ones who suffer the repercussions of it (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

Leaders must have self-confidence to take the leadership and make decisions; they must be able to step out in faith with assertiveness. Leaders believe in their own ability to lead. They also must have enough self-confidence in their own leadership that they can delegate and assign others tasks and leadership roles and not feel threatened by others' leadership skills. Self-confidence comes after leaders realize their strengths and weaknesses, and accepts both of them. This self-confidence for leadership comes from an internal motivation and belief (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Before true and inspiring change can occur, a leader must also have self-discipline in the essentials of his or her life and job (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). After the leader and followers have self-discipline and are able to consistently and successfully accomplish the mandatory tasks, then they have the freedom to be explore other options and experiments because the basic tasks are still being maintained (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Having an inner meaning and purpose for life helps leaders to get through the rough times. In order for a leader to be able to take charge and also help others, the leader must be internally motivated (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Many are beginning to believe that a high level of spirituality in a leader is helpful because the person has an inward set of values and goals that infiltrate every aspect of his/her life. Therefore, the person has a greater drive, focus, and motivation than other people without a level of spiritual commitment (Klenke, 2003).

Leadership can be found anywhere (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Research has shown that a combination of personality traits and lessons learned from life circumstances are the strongest cause of leadership ability. A person may tend to naturally be a leader due to personality. However leadership also depends on situations and circumstances, and how the person reacts to those situations (Judge, Ilies, Bono, & Gerhardt, 2002). In addition, dedication and dependability contribute to the success of the leader. If a leader is not a natural-born leader, he or she can “teach” himself or herself the traits needed to improve in the area of leadership.

One learned trait is that leaders must know how to effectively cope with stress and help others to cope in high-tension situations as well. If a leader buckles under pressure, then the whole organization or team will more than likely fall (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Another trait needed to be an effective leader is humility (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). A leader must realize and admit that he needs help, and then, other people will be willing to step in and help. The leader also must show humility, admit when he is wrong, and change his erroneous decision (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). People do not follow a leader who never asks or needs help and who never admits to wrong doing or poor decisions. Also, leaders must be able to stay committed, passionate, and energetic about the task regardless of the situation and circumstances (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). A leader must be excited and willing to lead (Judge, Ilies, Bono, & Gerhardt, 2002).

Leadership is based on relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Leaders need to understand and meet the needs of others, showing that they care about people (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Leadership involves learning how to interact with people and bringing those people into the work effort. A leader must be able to establish warm relations with

other people and form relationships with people. The trait of leadership involves how one person exerts influence on another (Klenke, 2003). Leaders must earn their followers trust, and this is partly done through healthy communication and interaction with their followers. An important part of leadership is listening to others and understanding their needs and ideas (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

“Spiritual leadership” is becoming a popular movement (Klenke, 2003, p. 58) and is believed to involve the person leading and the ones following. This form of leadership encourages the followers to grow and develop as well as the leader. “Spiritual leaders” generally follow an ethical guideline that is stricter than the average person’s, but they also ask their followers to adhere to the stricter guidelines. Spiritual leaders are more likely to be sacrificial as they lead, in that, they are more likely to sacrifice their own wants and desires for the needs of others (Klenke, 2003). Spiritual leadership may be the best form of leadership because it not only leads people but also gives meaning and direction (Klenke, 2003).

Throughout the past ten years, the business world has started to see the importance of spirituality in business related fields. Business executives are beginning to see the need for addressing spiritual issues even while at work. In fact, in many places, business leaders are starting to view spirituality as an essential part of leadership skills. Some places of business are starting to turn spirituality into more of a strategic business move. Businesses attempting to turn vocational interests into spiritual pursuits believe it will lead to greater productivity because there is a higher goal behind what the employees are working for (Klenke, 2003).

Hypothesis

This study hypothesizes that children coming from intact, healthy families, who share religious beliefs with their parents, and consistently practice those beliefs will have stronger leadership scores than children coming from divorced, unhealthy families lacking religious practices.

Method

Subjects

Subjects are female undergraduate students at a private Christian university in the southeast. There are twenty-six students total. The students range from freshman to senior status and all are resident students. Eleven of the students are or have been involved in student leadership at Liberty University, either as a Prayer Leader, Spiritual Life Director, or Resident Assistant, and fifteen have not been in leadership positions. Some limitations of the study, specifically regarding the subjects are that all the students attended a Christian university. Also, only female subjects were surveyed, and skewing the results since the male's perspectives are not part of the research.

Instruments

The subjects filled out the informed consent form (see Appendix A), the Student Leadership Practices Inventory, the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (see Appendix C), as well as a demographics survey (see Appendix B). Each of these can be administered individually or in a group setting; the subjects in this experiment received the tests in a group setting. The Student Leadership Practices Inventory has an internal reliability of .63-.92, and the test-retest reliability has been shown to be greater than .91. It also has high predictive validity. It is a thirty question

survey, and the subjects answer on a five point likert scale. There are five internal measures: Challenging, Inspiring, Enabling, Modeling, and Encouraging. This survey requires the student as well as an “observer,” a close friend or family member, to complete a second survey about the student. The inventory takes five to ten minutes to complete for both the self and observer inventory (Kouzes, & Posner, 1998).

The Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire (see Appendix C) is a ten question survey measuring the level of faith of an individual and takes approximately five minutes to complete. A low total score means the person has a low level of faith, and a high score represents a high level of faith. The survey has a four point likert scale. It has an internal consistency of $\alpha=.94-.96$. The scale has been proven to have a split-half reliability correlation between .90 and .96 (Lewis, Shevlin, McGuckin, & Navratil, 2001). It also has shown both convergent and divergent validity in the samples groups it was tested on (Sherman, Plante, Simonton, Adams, Burris, & Harbison, 1999).

The demographics survey (see Appendix B) was created by the researcher to find out information regarding the subjects’ family background information. It has thirteen questions with a likert scale, and five questions that are fill in the blank demographic questions. Subjects should be able to complete the survey in about five to ten minutes.

Procedure

Students were recruited on residence halls throughout campus, and each student completed the surveys on the residence halls in a quiet area with her close friend or family member. There was no reward for participation in the study. During the survey, the researcher read directions to the participants. The first form the participants received was the informed consent form for them to read and sign. After completing that form, and

upon their continued cooperation, the students then received the leadership survey, followed by the religious questionnaire, and lastly the demographics survey. There was no time limit on the surveys, and after the individuals finished all three, they handed the surveys to the researcher, and then were allowed to leave.

Results

Results of this study were expected to show a significant correlation between family background, religious background, and leadership skills/capabilities. The data gathered was input into the computer program SPSS. The data was classified as interval data, and descriptive statistics were conducted on it as well as a linear regression correlation.

There was a significant correlation between all of the subscales on the Student Leadership Practices Inventory, which was expected. It was interesting to note that Encouraging the Heart had the highest mean score and Challenging the Process had the lowest. Evidently the girls surveyed found it easier to encourage others than they did to confront other people or the process. Table one shows the correlations between the leadership subscales.

Table 1

SPSS output showing significant correlations between leadership subscales.

Correlations

		Inspiring a		Enabling		Leadership	
		Challenging	Shared	Others to	Modeling	Encouraging	Leadership
		the Process	Vision	Act	the Way	the Heart	totals
Challenging the Process	Pearson	1	.501(**)	.653(**)	.699(**)	.549(**)	.825(**)
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009	.000	.000	.004	.000
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Inspiring a Shared Vision	Pearson	.501(**)	1	.448(*)	.564(**)	.607(**)	.790(**)
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009		.022	.003	.001	.000
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Enabling Others to Act	Pearson	.653(**)	.448(*)	1	.532(**)	.531(**)	.763(**)
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.022		.005	.005	.000
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Modeling the Way	Pearson	.699(**)	.564(**)	.532(**)	1	.693(**)	.848(**)
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.005		.000	.000
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Encouraging the Heart	Pearson	.549(**)	.607(**)	.531(**)	.693(**)	1	.838(**)
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.001	.005	.000		.000
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Leadership totals	Pearson	.825(**)	.790(**)	.763(**)	.848(**)	.838(**)	1
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table two is a table of the descriptive statistics conducted. The mean for the leadership totals was much higher than the religious questionnaire and the demographics survey, but that is not a proportionate relationship. The leadership totals, overall, had more scores to compute, thus the higher average score.

Table 2

SPSS output showing descriptive statistics between total leadership scores, total religious questionnaire scores, and total demographics scores.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership totals	26	75.00	141.00	115.7692	13.90053
RQtot	26	34.00	40.00	38.5385	1.50282
Total Demographics	26	33.00	55.00	47.1923	4.99615
Valid N (listwise)	26				

The histogram of the linear regression shows that the data was badly skewed. If the sample size was broadened, then the data would have been less skewed. When working with a sample size less than thirty, it will be difficult to have reliable and valid results. The researcher needs to expand the sample population in order to have more accurate data.

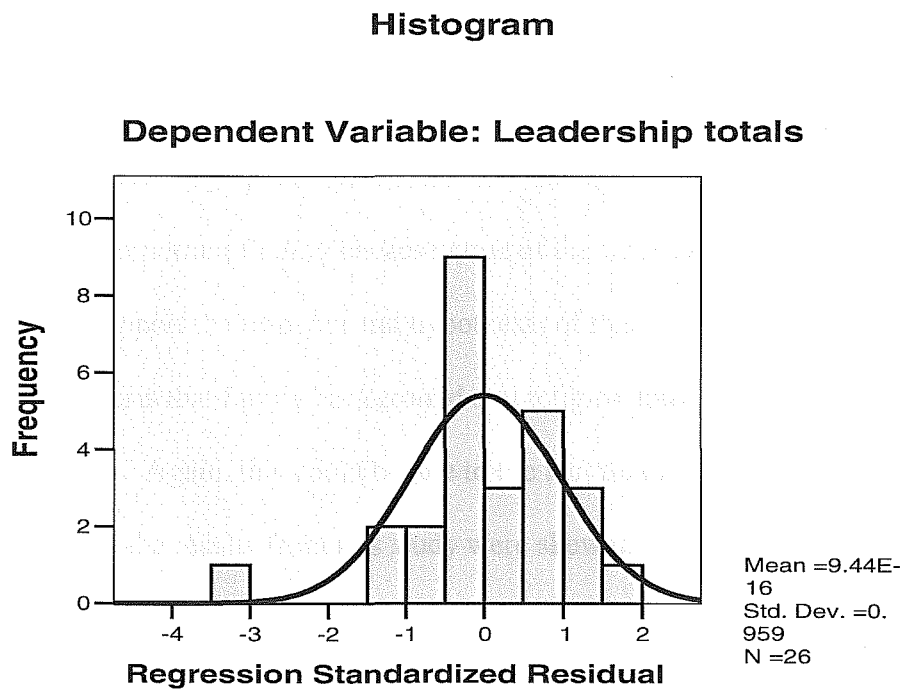


Figure 1. Histogram of linear regression.

Another possibility to increase the accuracy of the results is to expand the sample to male and female. Males and females have obvious differences, and therefore, their leadership strengths will more than likely be different as well. This can be seen in the fact that the females' highest average was the leadership subscale of encouragement. If males were surveyed as well, then the scores would have been more balanced.

A third possible reason for skewed data is that the sample group all considered themselves religious. Since the surveys were taken at a Christian university, then the students would be more likely to consider themselves religious than the average student.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine the effect of the strength of the family on leadership. There was no significant relationship found; $p=.541$

which was not even close to being a significant correlation. These results opposed all the research that is discussed in the literature review.

There is not a significant correlation between the religious survey, the family background demographics survey, and the leadership survey as seen in table three.

This is an important finding because none of the three correlations are significant. This does not support the research and hypothesis of this study. This study actually contradicts the hypothesis that family background and religion have an effect on leadership skills or capabilities. Again, this could be due to the fact that the sample population was possibly biased, and the results from this study were skewed.

Table 3

SPSS output showing significant correlations between the leadership totals, the religious questionnaire totals, and the demographic survey.

Correlations

		Leadership totals	RQtot	Total Demograph ics
Pearson Correlation	Leadership totals	1.000	.456	.114
	Rqtot	.456	1.000	-.052
	Total Demographics	.114	-.052	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Leadership totals	.	.010	.289
	Rqtot	.010	.	.401
	Total Demographics	.289	.401	.
N	Leadership totals	26	26	26
	Rqtot	26	26	26
	Total	26	26	26
	Demographics	26	26	26

The linear regression analysis showed that about twenty-three percent of the leadership scores were explained by the religious questionnaire scores and the demographic results. Religion had the greatest influence on leadership, with a value of .46, according to the Beta values in the linear regression analysis. The demographics Beta value was .14. Both were positive influences.

Discussion

Results did not support the previously stated hypothesis, which is a surprising contradiction. A possible reason for the outcome of the experiment is the small sample size made of all females. If researchers expanded this study to encompass more subjects, then some of the limitations (being at a Christian university and surveying female students) would be minimized. A bigger and more diverse sample group might change the results of this study.

As previously noted, Encouraging the Heart had the highest mean score and Challenging the Process had the lowest. This could be due to the fact that only females were surveyed, because it is more of a feminine quality to be nurturing and encouraging and more of a masculine quality to be confrontational or challenging. It would be interesting to see if those mean scores changed when males were surveyed as well.

It was interesting to note that the leadership group had a higher mean score in all three surveys than the non-leadership group. However, the differences in scores were not large enough to be considered significant. Again, however, a larger sample might change the results because all of the scores were relatively close. If the sample was less skewed, then the results would probably be different as well.

Table 4

SPSS output showing the descriptive statistics comparing the leadership and non-leadership groups.

Group Statistics

	leadership	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Leadership totals	Leader	11	120.6364	11.46536	3.45694
	non-leader	15	112.2000	14.79479	3.82000
RQtot	Leader	11	39.0909	1.13618	.34257
	non-leader	15	38.1333	1.64172	.42389
Total Demographics	Leader	11	49.0909	4.20606	1.26817
	non-leader	15	45.8000	5.19890	1.34235

Further research on this subject could also study if students from divorced and/or non-religious families, who proved to be leaders, are stronger or weaker leaders than students from intact, religious families. Further research could also study to find if the type of religion a person is involved in impacts the leadership capabilities.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:

Holly Hastings, hrhastings@liberty.edu

DESCRIPTION: You will be participating in an undergraduate research study examining leadership, religion, and family background. You will be asked to complete three surveys, as honestly as possible.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study. I cannot and do not guarantee that you will receive any profit from this study.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: This experiment will take approximately thirty to forty minutes.

PAYMENTS: You will not receive payment for your involvement.

SUBJECT'S RIGHTS: You are a volunteer participant, and therefore, you have the right to terminate your participation at any time without consequence. You also have the right to decline to answer specific questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all the information gathered and/or published through this study.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information given above, that you willingly consent to participate, that you may remove your approval at any time and cease participation without penalty, that you will be given a copy of this consent form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims.

SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____

Appendix B

Demographics Survey

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this demographic survey. All information will be kept confidential. Please neatly circle the correct answer.

Growing up, were your parents:

Married

Separated

Divorced

Divorced and re-married

1 parent house-hold

Never married

Growing up, how often did your parents fight?

Daily

Weekly

Bi-weekly

Monthly

Rarely

Growing up, how often did your parents talk to each other?

Daily

Several times a week

Once a week

Several times a month

Rarely

Growing up, how often did you have casual conversation with at least one of your parents?

Daily

Several times a week

Once a week

Several times a month

Rarely

Growing up, how often did you have serious discussions with at least one of your parents?

Daily

Several times a week

Once a week

Several times a month

Rarely

How often do you *currently* have casual conversation with at least one of your parents?

Daily *Several times a week*
Once a week *Several times a month*
Rarely

In relation to how often you talk with at least one parent, how often do you have serious discussions with at least one parent?

Every time *Most times* *Half of the times* *Occasionally* *Never*

Do you discuss serious issues/decisions with one parent instead of both parents?

Yes-just Mom *Yes-just Dad* *Neither parent* *Equal-both parents*

How often did your family go on vacations together?

More than once a year *Once a year* *Every other year* *Rarely*

Growing up, did you feel that your parents showed you affection?

Absolutely *Somewhat* *Neutral* *Occasionally* *Never*

Do you feel as though your parents enjoy spending time together?

Absolutely *Somewhat* *Neutral* *Occasionally* *Never*

Do you feel as though your parents were satisfied with how they divided household responsibilities in their marriage (such as cooking, yard work, cleaning, childcare, etc.)?

Absolutely *Somewhat* *Neutral* *Occasionally* *Never*

Growing up, did you feel that your parents resolved their conflicts?

Absolutely *Somewhat* *Neutral* *Occasionally* *Never*

Please check the appropriate line

Male _____

Female _____

Please neatly write your answer in the blanks

Status (in school) _____

Age _____

How many siblings do you have? _____

Appendix C

The Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions about religious faith using the scale below. Indicate the level of agreement (or disagreement) for each statement.

(1 - strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 - agree, 4 - strongly agree)

- ___ 1. My religious faith is extremely important to me.
- ___ 2. I pray daily.
- ___ 3. I look to my faith as a source of inspiration.
- ___ 4. I look to my faith as providing meaning and purpose in my life.
- ___ 5. I consider myself active in my faith or church.
- ___ 6. My faith is an important part of who I am as a person.
- ___ 7. My relationship with God is extremely important to me.
- ___ 8. I enjoy being around others who share my faith.
- ___ 9. I look to my faith as a source of comfort.
- ___ 10. My faith impacts many of my decisions.

Reference: Plante, T.G., & Boccaccini, M. (1997). The Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire. *Pastoral Psychology*, 45, 375-387.