# Business School Leadership:
# An Examination of Personality and Preparation Effects on Dean Turnover

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*High turnover and short tenures of business school deans disrupt employees, students, performance, and institutional stability. However, we know little about the processes involved in attracting, recruiting, and retaining these influential academic leaders. Previous studies have explored deans' demographics, their leadership behaviors, and roles as hybrid upper middle managers, but personality traits and job preparation have been largely overlooked. To address the research gap, this quantitative correlational study explored the personality temperament types and years of administrative preparation of 54 deans in accredited US business schools. Our findings showed that 72% of respondents were categorized into two Keirsey temperament groups: GuardiansTM (SJ) and RationalsTM (NT). This research contributes to our understanding of factors impacting the selection and retention of business school deans, with practical implications for hiring, appraisals, leadership and career development.*

*Keywords: business schools, deans, academic leadership, leadership development, turnover, personality*

## INTRODUCTION

Deans hold significant authority over the faculty, students, and staff of a school and can include undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs (Bray, 2008; De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009; Del Favero, 2006; Thomas & Fragueiro, 2011; Wall, 2015). Responsibilities cover a wide range of areas such as strategic planning, marketing and admissions, academic programming, fundraising activities, and financial management (Thomas & Fragueiro, 2011; Wall, 2015). The median length of tenure for a business school dean in the United States is just over three years (Dulek, 2014; Thomas, Thomas, & Wilson, 2013). Higher education in the United States faces serious academic leadership challenges primarily due to significant changes in academic leadership and administrative roles in colleges and universities (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Strathe & Wilson, 2006). High turnover rates and short tenures pose a problem to organizational continuity and success. The average combined time to search, select and hire a dean is 18 months. This means that many business schools are either in the process of conducting a new dean search or will be in about a year. The leadership of the average business school transitions every three to four years in a seemingly endless search for new deans (Bradshaw, 2013; Davies, 2016; Dulek, 2014). High turnovers, short tenures, and sudden exits suggest the role of business school dean warrants serious attention (Bradshaw, 2015; Davies, 2016), and further research is needed to provide

insight into these issues concerning business school deans. Relationships between individual leader personality temperament, professional preparation, and the tenure of business school deans should be considered and investigated.

Organizational talent management incorporates competency models that specifically identify knowledge, skills, attitudes, and attributes, which in turn results in a high level of performance (Riccio, 2010; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). Characteristics, attributes, and preparation are thus factors acknowledged, identifiable, and measurable for academic leaders.

Academic leaders possess certain characteristics and attributes that are often mentioned, listed, and cited in search listings, articles and journals (Davies, 2016; Davies & Thomas, 2009; Strathe & Wilson, 2006; Williams & Popa, 2013; Zaccaro, 2007). Such traits are often leadership traits and characteristics that are developed through experience and education. Additionally, research has focused on academic preparation, prior experience in academic leadership roles, and specialized training programs as subjects of interest related to the professional preparation of academic leaders and deans.

The importance of the dean as a strategic leader for a business school suggests that the high turnover rate has a negative impact on the college staff, students, and faculty as well as on the financial performance of the school (Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2001; Del Favero, 2006; Morris & Laipple, 2015). It is important, therefore, to investigate why turnover of deans is so frequent.

An extensive amount of research has been conducted on personality, temperament, and traits in relation to a wide variety of individuals, including leaders, managers, employees, faculty, students, administrators, bureaucrats, and clergy members (Hogan & Judge, 2013). From the literature, relationships have been determined to exist between personality and leadership, with personality having an impact on leader effectiveness (Hogan & Judge, 2013).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Leadership Theories on Characteristics and Personality

Trait leadership theories focus on the specific traits or personal qualities of individuals, such as leaders, that do not require any specialized leadership training. Trait approaches emphasize attributes and/or personality factors, such as introversion and extroversion, which set leaders apart (Hassan, 2013). This study builds upon research on temperament, personality traits and leadership from Adams (2009), Judge, Ilies, Bono, and Gerhardt (2002), Kornør and Nordvik (2004); Mann Gagliardo (2006), and Derue et al. (2011), Zaccaro (2007).

Zaccaro, Kemp, and Bader's (2004) model of leader attributes and leader performance presents personality as a distal attribute and expertise and tacit knowledge as influencing leader processes and ultimately leader effectiveness. In this model, distal predictors and proximal predictors represent the premise in which each set of predictors operates cooperatively with other predictors to influence particular outcomes. Skills and expertise are derived from the joint influence of cognitive abilities, personality, and motives. This model provides a theoretical basis for examining personality, as a distal attribute, and professional preparation, as a proximal attribute, and the relationship with leadership criteria and effectiveness. The model proposes personality, along with expertise and tacit knowledge, have an impact on a leader's behavior, processes, and ultimately on outcomes, performance, and success (Zaccaro et al., 2004).

Montez, Wolverton, and Gmelch (2003), Bisbee and Miller (2006), Del Favero (2006), Greicar (2009), and Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) studied preparation, experience, and leadership effectiveness in higher education. In this collective research, the researchers found that academic administrative experience was positively correlated with the leadership effectiveness of college deans. Bisbee and Miller (2006) noted that experience in certain job positions, such as department chair, associate dean, and dean, served as the most valuable type of training for leadership development practices in higher education. Moreover, Del Favero's (2006) research findings indicated that previous experience in administrative positions such as department chair, assistant/associate dean, and prior deanship was the most reliable approach to prepare for dean leadership. Further, Greicar's (2009) research revealed that 90.3% of all
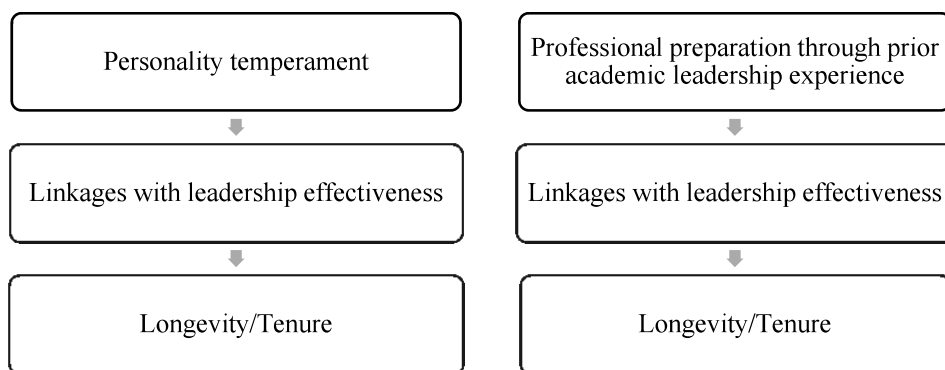
higher education academic deans viewed on-the-job training as the principal preparation method experienced prior to academic deanship, as well as after taking the position.

This conceptual and theoretical framework provided a basis for determining the nature of each factor, and a connection to the dean's tenure, or longevity, in the role was based on the factors used to identify and select individuals. Job descriptions for business school deans emphasize the importance of personality, temperament, and preparation for the role of dean (Meinhardt, 2011). In practice, anyone appointed as a dean is evaluated on personality, temperament and preparation for the role (McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Meinhardt, 2011; Kocay, 2014; Schienvar, 2016; Bruner, 2017). Candidates for dean typically progress through a sometimes lengthy and elaborate series of interviews, meetings, and presentations involving a search committee and various stakeholders in the institution who evaluate them (Gibney & Shang, 2007). As the best candidate for the position, the individual selected would have an opportunity to be successful in the role, and the success would in turn lead to a long tenure at the school, barring any personal or health reasons that result in a premature leaving of the position (Jacon-Duffy, 2014; Kocay, 2014; Schienvar, 2016).

Personality temperament has been correlated to leadership styles, resilience, job satisfaction, and organizational performance (Peterson et al., 2003; Coco, 2011; Maulding et al., 2012). While trait theory was evaluated in the early 19$^{th}$ century and mostly rejected, recent research seems to indicate that there is a relationship between leadership ability and traits ( de Vries, 2012). Certain personality temperament types may be more suited to careers or roles (Witt, Kacmar, Dawn, & Suzanne, 2002; Judge & Zapata, 2015).

Professional preparation, represented by knowledge, skills, and experience, has been positively linked to leadership effectiveness (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). Supporting research has shown that prior administrative experiences and on-the-job training are the most common types of preparation for academic deans (Montez, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 2003). The importance that search committees and institutions place on personality temperament and professional preparation when determining which candidate to select for the leadership position for a business school supports an examination of the relevance of these factors. Figure 1 illustrates the relationships between longevity, temperament and preparation assumed by committees during dean search processes.

**FIGURE 1**
**PERSONALITY TEMPERAMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION**
**LINKED TO TENURE**

| Personality temperament | Professional preparation through prior academic leadership experience |
| :---: | :---: |
| ⬇ | ⬇ |
| Linkages with leadership effectiveness | Linkages with leadership effectiveness |
| ⬇ | ⬇ |
| Longevity/Tenure | Longevity/Tenure |

**The Professional Lifecycle of Deans**

Deanships have evolved over several decades and the role has transitioned from a scholar-teacher administrator, to an academic disguised as a manager, into a greatly expanded function serving multiple constituents and stakeholders (Montez et al., 2003; Del Favero, 2006; Cassady, 2014). Some in academia have described the role as the duty of a senior faculty member, historically with a narrow academic focus in areas such as finance or economics, carried out before retirement. The role has evolved, in many

instances, into a position similar to a professional sports team coach tasked with turning around and improving performance at a school, or risk being fired at will for not doing so (Kring & Kaplan, 2011; Davies, 2016). The role expanded from being primarily student-centered and focused on program and curriculum development to one which holds deans accountable for an array of duties, responsibilities, and key performance indicators including financial management, marketing and corporate branding, fundraising, and stakeholder relations (Montez et al., 2003; De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009; Harvey, Shaw, McPhail, & Erickson, 2013; Davies, 2015; Balmer & Wang, 2016.

The specific role and associated expectations for a business school dean have transformed over time. In 2019, the dean's leadership profile resembles that of a chief executive officer (CEO)—a type of strategic leader with a wide range of responsibilities—which is significantly different from his or her predecessors. The current profile requires strategic skills, enterprise management, innovation, and interpersonal effectiveness (Kring & Kaplan, 2011; Niederjohn & Cosgrove, 2010; Thomas & Fragueiro, 2011). The complex and demanding job of B-school dean requires handling multiple functions and confronting a multitude of challenges such as increasing online competition, globalization, flat enrollments, shifting demographics, and unprecedented economic, social and competitive pressures (Fogarty & Hogan, 2014, Harvey et al., 2013; Kring & Kaplan, 2011; Montez et al., 2003; Thomas et al., 2013). Dean's perceptions of being all things to all people can lead to tensions and stress while endeavoring to address needs, demands, and disputes across the organization (Montez et al., 2003). Soft, or people skills, are considered necessary tools to augment management and leadership expertise of deans. Deans should be consensus-builders with the ability to develop cooperative relationships with faculty and various stakeholders of the institution (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002; McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Cassady, 2014). Business deans, as with most college deans, are expected to have high emotional and social intelligence for developing and nurturing relationships with students, faculty, and business leaders (McTiernan & Flynn, 2011).

As Davies (2015) pointed out, even though business schools frequently assert the production of future leaders, research has only minimally explored the role of business school deans. High turnover, short tenures, and sudden exits of deans demonstrate that the role warrants serious attention (Bradshaw, 2013; Davies, 2016). A review of the literature offers context related to deans and explores the complex professional role within higher educational leadership. The expectations, challenges, and motivations of deans as academic leaders provide a basis for understanding how personality and preparation could be relevant factors. Gould and Lecci (2011) defined academic leadership as "the ability to build and maintain a highly productive department, college, or university while sustaining morale" (p. 16). As academic leaders, deans hold a unique position within an academic institution, typically between the faculty and the provost or president (White-Hurst, 2011). In North America, the average annual operating budget of business schools is $18.8 million (AACSB, 2016). Deans are required to be accomplished leaders and managers of large-sized businesses, which are typically a part of a multi-divisional academic enterprise. In most universities, the business school is considered a "cash cow" division (Davies, 2016), and the dean is expected to produce revenue surpluses for the institution.

In their research on functions and behaviors based on role theory, Montez, Wolverton, and Gmelch (2003) identified six dimensions of the role of academic deans: 1) resource management, 2) academic personnel management, 3) internal productivity, 4) personal scholarship, 5) leadership, and 6) external and political relations. Similarly, Davies (2016) categorized business school deans into several groupings or clusters when researching behaviors and activities. This categorization process was based on a middle management strategic role typology which included synthesizing information; facilitating adaptability; championing alternatives; and implementing a deliberate strategy (Davies, 2016). The resulting six categories developed were facilitator, synthesizer, champion, implementer, stop-gap (for interim or caretaker deans), and non-strategist. These groupings indicate that a dean's role is actually based on behaviors rather than on role expectations or the expectations of other stakeholders and are summarized in Table 1.

**Dean Selection**

Understanding the process through which deans are identified, recruited, and selected provides perspective into the factors and characteristics of the subject as well as deans' preparedness and suitability for the role. Given the turnover of business school deans, many institutions have conducted a new dean search once or more over the past few years (Dulek, 2014; Bradshaw, 2013). Institutions conduct dean searches in unique ways and for many different reasons, but most reflect the traditions and norms of the institution (Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2001; Bruner, 2017). Institutions can opt to utilize executive search firms to aid in the process of identifying and recruiting potential dean candidates. Some executive search firms offer personality and temperament testing for potential candidates for positions in higher education and business. Search committees may choose to consider information on personality temperament to help determine if a potential candidate is similar to others who have been successful in comparable roles (Sapp & Crabtree, 2018). Deans are invariably appointed by the university president, who also possesses the power to fire them, with or without consultation with the college faculty (Bradshaw, 2013).

**TABLE 1**
**SIX CLUSTERS OF BUSINESS SCHOOL DEANS BASED ON BEHAVIOR**

| | |
|---|---|
| Synthesizer | Assimilates diverse sources of intelligence to formulate strategy. Focuses on ideas and cognitive activities, reflecting on a mandate, and developing mental models and maps to make sense of context and to develop a strategic vision and plan. |
| Facilitator | Demonstrates socially interactive behaviors to support and nurture ideas, individuals, and teams. Concerned with cajoling others rather than criticizing them in public. Works with the grain of the academic context while at the same time making changes without being a micromanager. Networking, mediating and experimenting are key activities to stimulate change. |
| Champion | Verbal behaviors in selling, debating, persuading, story-telling, and promoting the school and the case for change. Actively engages in dialogue, public speaking, interpersonal communications, and developing effective internal and external relationships to enhance the business school's brand. |
| Implementer | Tends to be task-focused and results-driven and controlling and ensures performance management and compliance to achieve the targets of key performance indicators. |
| Stop-gap | Interim or caretaker dean who maintains a 'steady ship' until a more energetic and ambitious and less risk-averse successor arrives. |
| Non-strategist | Fails to consult or listen to formulate a shared vision. Unable to articulate a strategic direction aligned to the parent university. Demonstrates an inability to build coalitions and/or to persuade communities to support diverse stakeholders. Such behavior leads to frustration and disappointing outcomes. There are unexpected and sudden exits from the deanship. |

*Note.* Adapted from "Are business school deans doomed? The global financial crisis, Brexit and all that," by Davies, J., 2016, *Journal of Management Development*, 35, p. 911.

On average, a new dean search takes 18 months to complete, with multiple search cycles, in order to find a viable candidate (Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2001; Boyle, Chesnut, Hogue, &

Zgarrick, 2016; Dulek, 2014; Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007) Paths to becoming a dean vary, but most include some faculty or academic work typically combined with some professional or administrative experience (McTiernan & Flynn, 2011). A number of institutions provide a formal set of performance criteria, competencies, and expectations during the interview and hiring process. Wolverton, Gmelch, and Wolverton (2000) underscored the need for a good fit between institutions and deans and noted that deans seek balance between the institution's expectations and their own personalities.

Davies (2016) depicted the recruitment process for deans as varying between insiders and outsiders: those elected by peers within the faculty and those appointed after an extensive executive search campaign of education and business leaders from outside the institution. In some cases, the school type and profile impact the type of dean that is selected, regardless of whether the school is research-focused, teaching-focused, or mission-driven (Davies, 2016; Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007). The process typically includes a selection committee composed of internal and external stakeholders that is charged with culling the applicant pool and defining the essential characteristics of a dean for selection purposes (Gibney & Shang, 2007). Candidates selected for campus visits typically participate in a variety of settings, including interviews, presentations, meals, and meetings with varying numbers of participants from 1 to many. These interactions serve as a way for selection committee members and staff to better understand candidates and gauge their interpersonal skills.

Some stakeholders who have participated in dean searches believe the processes used in selecting deans are flawed (Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2001) and, in certain cases, dysfunctional (Harvey et al., 2013). Other stakeholders involved in the selection process concluded that the most important criterion for obtaining a deanship is merely being in the right place at the right time, irrespective of any specific preparation for the role (Greicar, 2009). Moreover, Harvey et al. (2013) examined the selection of deans from a theoretical perspective using reference point theory (RPT) to understand the difficulties of selecting business school deans, while Gibney and Shang (2007) suggested the use of the analytic hierarchy process (AHP) to compare candidates' qualifications against a set of evaluation criteria as a way of improving the selection process.

**Dean Turnover**

The median length of tenure for a dean at an AACSB-accredited business school is slightly over three years (Bradshaw, 2015; Dulek, 2014; Thomas et al, 2013) as compared to a 2002 average tenure of approximately five years (Gallos, 2002). Shorter tenures of business school deans imply that not much is accomplished at the schools, as some deans simply muddle through and make only incremental and minor changes (Bradshaw, 2015; Davies, 2016; Dulek, 2014; Thomas et al, 2013). This turnover, as well as the placement of acting or interim deans, can disrupt a school's momentum, diminish productivity, compromise operations, delay initiatives and strategic plans, and unsettle organizational culture (Boyle et al., 2016). The departure of academic leaders has a negative effect on an institution and upsets the morale of everyone within the institution (Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2001; Del Favero, 2006; Morris & Laipple, 2015).

Contributing to the stress of the dean's job are the widely publicized business school rankings, which can factor into key decisions on resource allocation and can influence the job tenure of the dean (Bradshaw, 2013; McTiernan & Flynn, 2011). Notably, Fee, Hadlock, and Pierce (2005) found an association between the turnover of deans and declines in rankings-based metrics, especially when there is a strong emphasis on rankings as part of an established evaluation scheme for a dean. Institutions develop a variety of evaluation processes for deans, from minimal and informal to systematic and formalized.

**Personality Temperament**

Personality characteristics and traits of leaders lay the groundwork for using personality temperament as a factor that impacts effectiveness, success, and tenure. Personality is defined as the distinct set of traits individuals display that defines them given active interaction with the environment (American Psychological Association, 2017). Personality traits are psychological qualities influencing an individual's

persistent patterns of feeling, thinking and behaving (Saxena, 2014; American Psychological Association, 2017).

Using traits to study leaders is common and trait approaches in leadership theory focus on attributes and personality factors, such as introversion or extroversion, to categorize leaders into various subsets (Hassan, 2013). Temperament and personality traits have been a widespread topic among researchers within the industry and the education sectors. Instrument models, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Keirsey Temperament Sorter®-II, among others, have been widely utilized within the personality and temperament research literature (Turner, 2015).

## Keirsey-Bates Temperament Type

David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates published a book entitled Please Understand Me, which provided a theory and assessment of temperaments and explained how these temperaments guide the capacity for leadership (Mann Gagliardo, 2006). Building upon the work of Jung and Briggs-Myers, Keirsey and Bates clustered the 16 types identified and, applying the MBTI, divided them into four type groupings called temperaments (McKeen & McSwain, 1990). According to Keirsey, temperament is defined as "a configuration of observable personality traits, such as habits of communication, patterns of action, and sets of characteristic attitudes, values, and talents. It also encompasses personal needs, the kinds of contributions that individuals make in the workplace, and the roles they play in society" (Keirsey, 2017, p. 1).

Temperament affects how individuals perceive the world (Keirsey, 2017). Accordingly, temperament type theories have been developed in an attempt to identify the character and nature of people (Mann Gagliardo, 2006). Keirsey developed and organized a model using four dichotomous pairs of preferences as the basis of the four dominant temperament types arranged in groups (Neal & Neal, 2009). Each of the four character temperaments is anchored by two of the dichotomous traits to form combinations of the six preferences yielding four types—i.e., Intuitive-Feeler (NF), Intuitive-Thinker (NT), Sensing-Judger (SJ), and Sensing-Perceiver (SP)—which comprise an individual's temperament. According to Keirsey, the four temperament groups are artisan (SP), guardian (SJ), rational (NT), and idealist (NF).

Keirsey developed descriptions of the four temperaments. An overview of the four temperament types is presented in Table 3. The core characteristics of each of the Keirsey temperament types are shared by the character types within each temperament. Keirsey's 16 character types are assigned labels based on vocations to establish a motive base for each. Keirsey provided a detailed portrait of each individual character type, including career suggestions for best job fit. Table 3 provides a summary of the 16 character types and the best job fit for each.

**TABLE 2**
**CORE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KEIRSEY TEMPERAMENT TYPES**

Guardians: (SJ – Sensing-Judgers)
- pride themselves on being dependable, helpful, and hard-working.
- make loyal mates, responsible parents, and stabilizing leaders.
- tend to be dutiful, cautious, humble, and focused on credentials and traditions.
- are concerned citizens who trust authority, join groups, seek security, prize gratitude, and dream of meting out justice.

Idealists: (NF – Intuitive-Feelers)
- enthusiastic, trust intuition, yearn for romance, seek their true selves, prize meaningful relationships, and dream of attaining wisdom.
- pride themselves on being loving, kindhearted, and authentic.
- tend to be giving, trusting, spiritual, and focused on personal journeys and human potential.
- make intense mates, nurturing parents, and inspirational leaders.

Artisans: (SP – Sensing-Perceivers)
- tend to be fun-loving, optimistic, realistic, and focused on the here and now.
- pride themselves on being unconventional, bold, and spontaneous.
- make playful mates, creative parents, and troubleshooting leaders.
- are excitable, trust impulses, want to make a splash, seek stimulation, prize freedom, and dream of mastering action skills.

Rationals: (NT – Intuitive-Thinkers)
- tend to be pragmatic, skeptical, self-contained, and focused on problem-solving and systems analysis.
- pride themselves on being ingenious, independent, and strong willed.
- make reasonable mates, individualizing parents, and strategic leaders.
- even-tempered, trust logic, yearn for achievement, seek knowledge, prize technology, and dream of understanding how the world works.

*Note.* Adapted from Keirsey temperament theory, *Please Understand Me II*, by Dr. David Keirsey. Copyright 2017 by Keirsey.com

**TABLE 3**
**KEIRSEY CHARACTER TYPES AND BEST JOB FIT**

Guardians
Supervisor (ESTJ). Business owner, government employee, military police officer.
Inspector (ISTJ). Accountant, insurance underwriter, office manager, bank examiner, detective.
Provider (ESFJ) Physician, nurse, respiratory therapist, education, social services, religion.
Protector (ISFJ). Medicine, education or social service, electrician, photographer.

Artisans
Promoter (ESTP). Paramedic, military personnel, police officer, pilot, financial advisor, stockbroker, news reporter, sportscaster, auctioneer, fitness instructor, skilled tradesperson.
Performer (ESFP). Sales, sports, entertainment, performer, promoter, musician, public relations specialist, fundraiser, labor relations mediator.
Crafter (ISTP). Chiropractor, optometrist, computer programmer or technician, pilot, race car driver, marshal, intelligence agent, banker, purchasing agent, or securities analyst.
Composer (ISFP). Medical or veterinary occupations, social services or education, painter, potter, jeweler, fashion designer, carpenter, chef, surveyor, botanist, chemist.

Idealists
Teacher (ENFJ). College professor, high school teacher, social worker, non-profit director, trainer, sales manager, recruiter, executive, fundraiser, health advisor, clergy, facilitator, counselor.
Counselor (INFJ). Professor, teacher, counselor, educational consultant, clergy, nun, director of religious education. Social service jobs, such as social worker, social scientist, and mediator. Human services, marketing, job analyst.
Champion (ENFP). Mediator, counselor, teacher, consultant, reporter, columnist, journalist, publicist, copywriter, advertising account executive, character actor.
Healer (INFP). Music, art, entertainment, dance, professor or teacher, counselor, social worker, organizational development, human resources.

Rationals
Fieldmarshal (ENTJ). Top executive, senior manager, head of sales and marketing, project manager, investment broker, financial planner, labor relations leader, business consulting, stockbroker, economic analyst.
Mastermind (INTJ). Scientific researcher, design engineer, environmental planner, college and university level in education, lawyer, a business analyst, strategic planner.
Inventor (ENTP). Politics, real estate development, advertising, marketing, public relations, venture capitalist, management consult, sports agent.
Architect (INTP). Optometrist, plastic surgeon, neurologist, scientist, lawyers, architects, financial analysts. Academic fields as archeology, chemistry, philosophy, and mathematics.

*Note.* Adapted from Keirsey temperament theory, *Please Understand Me II*, by Dr. David Keirsey. Copyright 2017 by Keirsey.com

The KTS-II assessment was validated based on concurrent validity, where concurrent or predictive validity is a measure of how closely a test correlates with results from other dissimilar tests (Creswell, 2009). Kelly and Jugovic's (2001) study results indicated that the KTS-II has satisfactory concurrent validity between the KTS-II and MBTI instruments, thus providing strong positive correlations (Turner, 2015). Moreover, Dodd and Bayne (2007) found the KTS-II has reasonable reliability with a level appropriate for research and achieved Cronbach's alpha results for E-I (.78), S-N (.79), T-F (.70), and J-P (.73) scales. Further, Waskel and Coleman (1991) determined that the KTS indices achieved the

Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0.74 (EI), 0.89 (SN), 0.87 (TF), and 0.88 (JP), while Fearn, Francis, and Wilcox (2001) discovered that the KTS indices achieved the Cronbach alpha coefficients of 0.74 (EI), 0.89 (SN), 0.87 (TF), and 0.88 (JP) (Francis, Craig, & Robbins, 2008).

**Personality and Leadership**

Literature on personality and temperament of educational leaders, specifically deans, has been limited. However, existing studies on academic leaders, including deans, in areas associated to personality and temperament have provided some insight. In a study on community college leadership, Holliday, Martin, and Martin (2010) utilized the KTS-II instrument to investigate the relationship between supervisors' and subordinates' personality temperaments and leader-member exchange (LMX). The results expanded the understanding of the frontlines of community college leadership and provided empirical support for a relationship between the personality temperament of supervisors and subordinates and LMX.

A variety of psychological test assessments, including the MBTI and KTS-II, have been utilized extensively in organizational and individual settings, such as team building, management development, decision-making, leadership, and managerial effectiveness (Michael, 2003; Atay,2012, Brandt et al., 2013). Shen (2003) investigated the personality types and leadership styles of selected female deans in American and Taiwanese institutions of higher education using the MBTI and reported only five of the 16 personality types but was limited by the sampling size of the study. Additionally, Davies and Thomas (2009) explored the experiences, profiles, and challenges of a sample of business school deans, associate deans, and department heads in the United Kingdom. As part of the study, the researchers utilized the MBTI to understand psychometric insights into occupational dimensions of business school deans (Davies & Thomas, 2009). Their findings suggested the majority of deans in the sample were extroverts and future looking strategic thinkers. However, based on the sample size, they were not able to draw any causality between MBTI and tenures (Davies & Thomas, 2009).

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Questions**

*Research Question 1: To what degree, if any, does personality temperament type impact the tenure of business school deans?*

*Research Question 2: To what degree, if any, does professional preparation, as measured by years of prior academic experience, impact the tenure of business school deans?*

This study of the temperament types, professional preparation, and tenure of business school deans from AACSB- and ACBSP-accredited institutions in the United States was descriptive and inferential. Data were collected from an electronic survey, the Keirsey's Temperament Sorter II, and a questionnaire. Statistical methods were used to analyze the data to determine whether to reject or fail to reject the null hypotheses.

**Instrumentation**

The KTS-II is a personality instrument based on the Keirsey temperament theory™ and consists of 70 questions designed to sort individuals into one of four temperament types: 1) Sensing-Judgers (SJ), 2) Sensing-Perceivers (SP), 3) Intuitive-Thinkers (NT), and 4) Intuitive-Feelers (NF). The Keirsey website (2017) claims the KTS-II is the most widely used personality inventory in the world. The KTS-II instrument is open to the general public and can be utilized by researchers, not certified clinicians, unlike the MBTI (Mann Gagliardo, 2006). Additional questions concerning demographic information provided data regarding research participants and were included in the third section of the survey

**Respondent Recruitment**

The names and institutions of business school deans were gathered from comprehensive lists from two accrediting organizations, the AACSB and ACBSP, in the United States. The sample included deans whose tenures exceed the 3.5-year average. If the mean (average) and median of length of tenure were the same, then potentially half of the deans on the list would not have been eligible to participate in the study because the tenures would be fewer than 3.5 years. An email invitation was be sent to the 1,391 business school deans with a URL link to SurveyMonkey to the survey.

**RESULTS**

**Demographic Profile**

Of the 54 respondents, 32 (59%) were male and 22 (41%) were female. Their age ranges were 40-49 years (3%), 50-59 years (54%), and 60 and older (43%). Their average number of years serving as dean was 8.28 years. Most respondents held a doctorate degree (48 or 89%), with six respondents (11%) holding a masters degree. The mean number of years (in total) that participants served in roles such as associate/assistant dean, department chair, and academic program director prior to becoming a dean was 8.84, with a range from 0 to 31 years. Six deans (11%) reported 0 years serving in any of these roles. Respondents' mean total number of years working in higher education was 27.2 years, with a range of 11 years to 42 years. Table 4 provides an overview the demographic profile of the participants, and Table 5 summarizes participants experience in higher education. Data were collected to determine the respondents' preferred temperament type as measured by the KTS-II. Table 6 illustrates the average years at the dean level and preparatory levels of leadership for respondents.

**TABLE 4**
**DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS**

|  |  | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age (years) | | | |
| | 40-49 | 2 | 3 |
| | 50-59 | 29 | 54 |
| | 60 + | 23 | 43 |
| Gender | | | |
| | Female | 22 | 41 |
| | Male | 32 | 59 |
| Highest degree | | | |
| | Masters | 6 | 11 |
| | Doctorate | 48 | 89 |
| Temperament type | | | |
| | Artisan (SP) | 5 | 9 |
| | Guardian (SJ) | 26 | 48 |
| | Idealist (NF) | 10 | 19 |
| | Rational (NT) | 13 | 24 |

**TABLE 5**
**RESPONDENT EXPERIENCE AT DEAN LEVEL**

|  | Average | Range |
|---|---|---|
| Years as dean | 8.28 | 4-21 |
| Years as associate/assistant dean, department chair, or academic program director | 8.84 | 0-31 |
| Years working in higher education | 27.2 | 11-42 |

Figure 2 shows the distribution of each of the temperament types for the entire population of respondents. In this study, specific Keirsey character types, such as Promoter (ESTP) and Inspector (ISTJ), were not recorded in the survey; only the respondent's temperament type was recorded. Of the four temperament types, Guardian (SJ) accounted for nearly half of the sample collected.

**FIGURE 2**
**TEMPERAMENT OF RESPONDENTS AS MEASURE BY KTS-II**
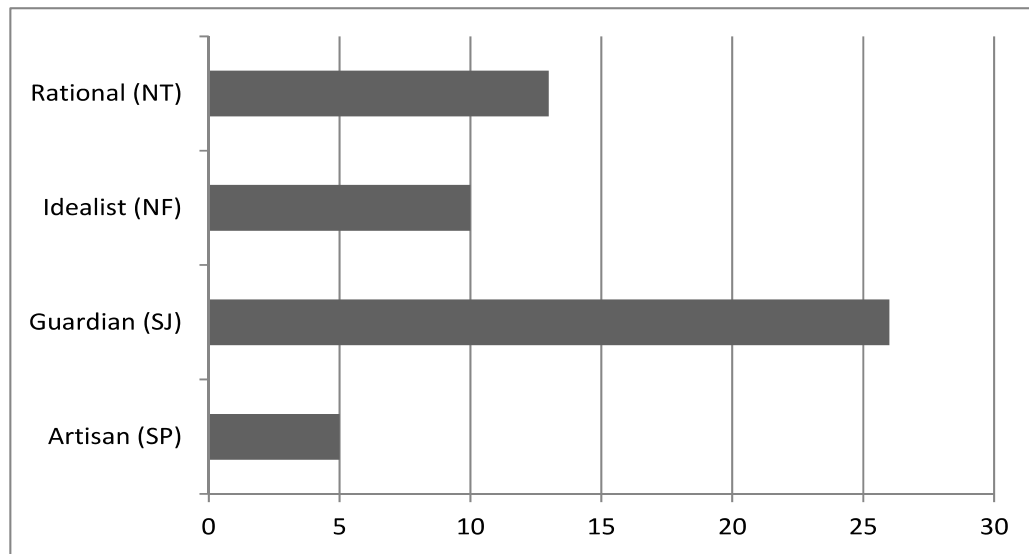


**Analysis of Results**

The mean tenure length of the 54 deans surveyed was 8.28 years (SD=4.51 years). The mean professional preparation (as measured by years of prior academic experience) was 8.84 years (SD=6.09 years). Descriptive statistics and an ANOVA summary are presented in Tables 7 and 8, respectively. The 54 deans who completed the survey were classified into one of four temperament types in the KTS-II: Artisan (n=5), Guardian (n=26), Idealist (n=10), and Rational (n=13). The mean tenure length in years for deans with Artisan temperament (M=7.65, SD=2.41), Guardian temperament (M=8.71, SD=5.12), Idealist temperament (M=8.25, SD=4.80), and Rational temperament (M=7.69, SD=3.89) were not significantly different using an ANOVA: F(3, 50)=0.177, p=0.912. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

The Pearson product-moment correlation, which is a measure of the strength of a linear association between two variables, and the linear regression analysis, with professional preparation as an explanatory variable and tenure length as a response variable, did not find a significant linear relationship:

F(1,52)=0.160, p=0.690. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. Table 8 presents the ANOVA analysis for the regression model. The correlation coefficient of 0.055 between professional preparation and tenure was not statistically significant: t(52)=0.397, p=0.693. Table 8 also depicts a scatter plot of the two variables: professional preparation and tenure length. The diagram did not provide any visual evidence of a relationship between professional preparation and tenure length. The data represented were nonlinear, with no slope and a weak relationship.

**TABLE 6**
**MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE TENURE LENGTH OF DEANS BY TEMPERAMENT**

| Temperament Type | Mean (years) | Standard Deviation (years) | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Artisan (SP) | 7.65 | 2.408 | 5 |
| Guardian (SJ) | 8.71 | 5.117 | 26 |
| Idealist (NF) | 8.25 | 4.803 | 10 |
| Rational (NT) | 7.69 | 3.887 | 13 |
| Total | 8.28 | 4.510 | 54 |

**TABLE 7**
**ONE-WAY ANOVA SUMMARY TABLE**

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Temperament | 11.325 | 3 | 3.775 | 0.177 | 0.912 |
| Error | 1066.681 | 50 | 21.334 | | |
| Total | 1078.006 | 53 | | | |

**TABLE 8**
**ANOVA REGRESSION AND SCATTERPLOT OF TENURE CORRELATED TO**
**PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION IN YEARS**

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Regression | 3.316 | 1 | 3.316 | 0.160 | 0.690 |
| Residual | 1074.690 | 52 | 20.667 | | |
| Total | 1078.006 | 53 | | | |



**Professional Preparation (years)**
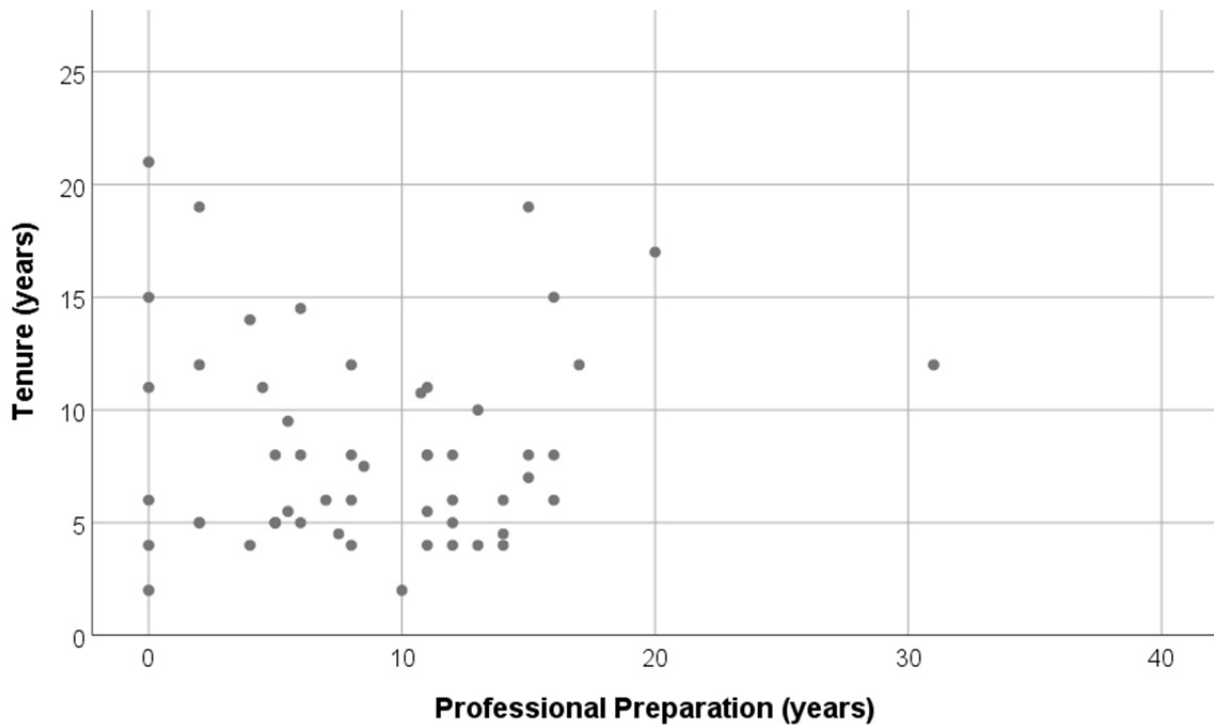
## Chi Square Test for Independence

The data were organized into two groups; < 5 years and > 5 years and analyzed using Chi Square but no independence between the two groups was found. Visually reviewing the data organized this way does seem to indicate a trend away from the Artisan type temperament toward the Guardian type temperament. This could indicate that the Artisan which tends more toward public relations and marketing is becoming less preferred. The process manager such as the Guardian may becoming more preferred for newer positions. Figure 3 illustrates this trend.

**FIGURE 3**
**COMPARISON OF KIERSEY TEMPERMENT TYPES BY TENURE**
**FINDINGS, INTERPRETATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS**
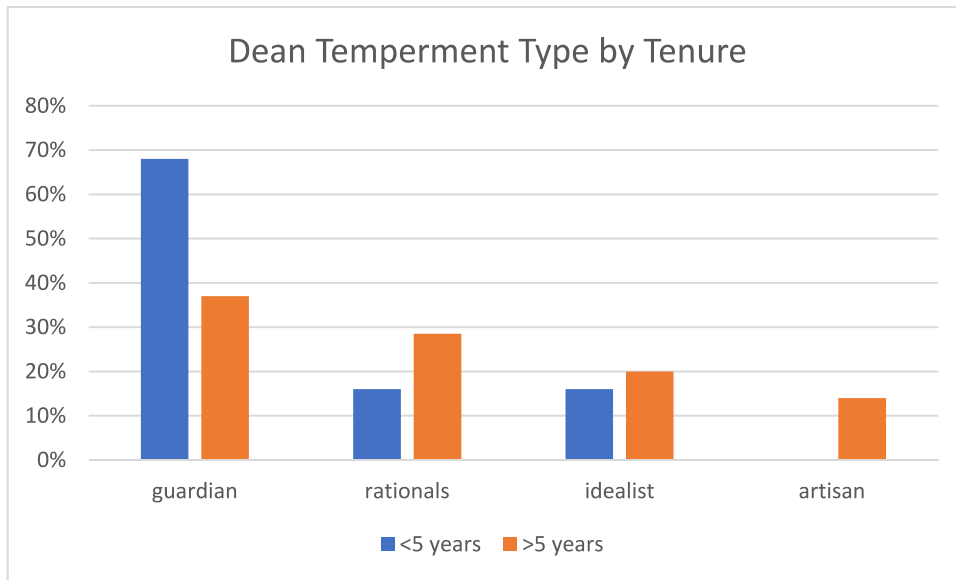


Based on the analysis and findings of this research, there was no significant mean difference in the tenure length of deans with different personalities as measured by the Keirsey Temperament Sorter-II, and there was no significant relationship between the professional preparation of deans, as measured by years of prior academic experience, and tenure length.

Several interpretations and conclusions may be made based on the findings of this study. This study builds upon the literature and expands the understanding of how personality temperament and professional preparation factors may be related to the short tenures and high turnover of leaders at United States business schools. Based on the survey data of 54 deans, no statistical significance was found to support any impact of either the personality temperament or the professional preparation on the length of tenure of deans. Although there were no statistically significant data yielded from the research, there were several areas of interest from the descriptive statistics. As previously mentioned, only deans with tenures of 3.5 or more years who indicated they met or exceeded the average length of tenure for business school deans in the United States were included in the data. The results show most respondents were 50 years or older (97%), held a doctoral degree (89%), and had a mean number of 8.28 years serving as dean. The mean number of years respondents served in roles as associate/assistant dean, department chair, or academic program director, prior to becoming dean was 8.84, with six deans (11%) reporting 0 years serving in any of these roles.

So, do personality and preparation matter when selecting business school deans? In short, no. These findings suggest no particular personality temperament type or professional preparation in an academic leadership role has a bearing on how long a dean remains in the position. If the length of a dean's tenure implies success in the role, then neither personality temperament nor professional preparation would seem to predict success as a business school dean. Given the time and resources expended in dean searches, and the emphasis placed on the personality temperament and experience of candidates in the selection process, selection committees may be using criteria that lead to the selection of deans who are not successful in the role. With that being said, it would be impossible for institutions and search committees not to consider personality and professional preparation when selecting deans. But considering new search criteria, modifying role expectations, and developing training, mentoring, and professional development programs for deans may be options that may be worthy investments.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Future researchers may wish to explore instruments other than the KTS-II to measure personality and temperament, such as the NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEOFFI), the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Hexaco Personality Inventory, or the process communication model. In this study, professional preparation was measured through the experience participants accumulated by serving in roles such as associate/assistant dean, department chair, and academic program director prior to becoming a dean. Other instruments could be utilized to assess professional preparation as a variable in future research and could include information on academic discipline, professional development, specialized training programs, and experience outside of the academic community.

Future researchers may also wish to explore and develop another means to measure the success of business school deans. In this study, the tenure length of deans was used to measure success, and only deans who had met or exceeded the average tenure. This measurement assumed deans with average to above average tenures were successful. Developing an assessment and measurement of success of deans may be a complex process given the variability of institutions, expectations, and the school environment. It may also be useful to understand the personality temperament types and professional preparation of deans who do not meet the average tenure length of 3.5 years to see if any relationships exist. Understanding why a dean was not successful may be as enlightening as why a dean was successful.

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