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Qualities of Effective Transition Leadership in a Changing School Landscape

Abstract

This paper seeks to uncover which key personality traits are thought to be the most important for effective leadership during a period of transition by exploring and researching a variety of popular leadership models. An effort was made to distill as many traits as possible in order to determine which traits were most agreed upon to be necessary for an individual to possess to be an effective leader. A survey based in this research was then created and given to the staff of educational facility in Upstate New York, asking administrators, teachers of record, and para-educators to rank the top five of these traits according to their belief regarding how important they felt each was for a leader to possess in order to be effective. The overarching goal was to determine which traits employees of different positions within an educational facility deemed most important for effective leadership, and also to obtain data to help craft new, more guided interview questions intended to accurately identify effective leaders during an interview process, and to determine possible organizational values regarding effective leadership itself.

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Qualities of Effective Transition Leadership in a Changing School Landscape

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Abstract

This paper seeks to uncover which key personality traits are thought to be the most important for effective leadership during a period of transition by exploring and researching a variety of popular leadership models. An effort was made to distill as many traits as possible in order to determine which traits were most agreed upon to be necessary for an individual to possess to be an effective leader. A survey based in this research was then created and given to the staff of educational facility in Upstate New York, asking administrators, teachers of record, and para-educators to rank the top five of these traits according to their belief regarding how important they felt each was for a leader to possess in order to be effective. The overarching goal was to determine which traits employees of different positions within an educational facility deemed most important for effective leadership, and also to obtain data to help craft new, more guided interview questions intended to accurately identify effective leaders during an interview process, and to determine possible organizational values regarding effective leadership itself.

Qualities of Effective Transition Leadership in a Changing School Landscape

The field of education is continually changing as new standards, curriculum, and laws are implemented. Additionally, para-educators, teachers, and administrators alike may pursue new or better opportunities as they arise. Therefore, as with many other field, education is one of human transition. This particular aspect of education – as one of frequent organizational and personal change - provided a unique opportunity to pursue a surprisingly under-analyzed concept. However, very little research specifically addressed how administrators, when confronted with change, are expected to handle the new ideology and practices being pushed in their direction. What traits and qualities would an effective leader be expected to present during times of transition, and could the presence or absence of these qualities be used to better select effective leaders even prior to transitions occurring?

Before exploring leadership and transition, it was imperative to address the concepts of prejudice and presumption in regards to leadership and leadership selection. It is imperative, especially within schools, to not only teach but practice and promote unbiased and accepting environments. This environmental shaping can begin at an administrative level, and includes the process of hiring new staff, the implementation of new policies, but most importantly, it can begin with the selection of the leadership that subsequently oversees staffing and policy direction within the school itself. This is why it seemed thought provoking to consider distilling measurable qualities of leadership that might be able to indicate or correlate to effective leadership, with an ultimate goal of obtaining a leadership selection metric that would aid in an unbiased selection process of effective transitional leaders and be unhindered by the inclusion of superficial and irrelevant qualities such as race and gender.

By drawing upon a combination of theories and academic research surrounding technical, adaptable, and distributive leadership, an attempt was made to identify certain key traits that school leaders can either possess or build upon to become more effective in as many aspects of leadership practice as possible. When processing the research on leadership, it was evident that not only do many models exist, but there were many varieties and interpretations of each model as well. In the interest of determining the most likely list of qualities and traits that make up effective leadership, two of the most common models and practices were examined. The qualities found within research of these models and practice were sought out and combined as having the highest likelihood of being both applicable and relevant within today's schools. This research, the models chosen, and the subsequent distilled and applicable qualities follow.

Leadership as a construct is widely debated among scholars of numerous disciplines. Schools today are faced with an ever changing landscape, constantly making internal changes to adjust to the needs of the school community, as well as adapting to changes from outside sources. It is important for a district to select and hire individuals that can display leadership in both internal and external realms of change, while also selecting leaders who can effectively implement change. There are very few metrics that specifically address what constitutes the qualities of a leader, and, despite a plethora of research on leadership itself, few have taken the time to expressly distill research into a set of common human traits or impactful qualities that constitute what an effective leader is in today's global and multicultural world.

Theoretical Framework

Education is an ever changing field of study, whether through federal and state legislation, local district initiatives, or through community, faculty, and student created

programs. In this light, it is also important to avoid the pitfalls of pre-judgment of leadership ability upon superficial qualities such as race or gender, and instead base assessment of leadership on base leadership characteristics instead. It is essential for school leadership to be effective, particularly at a time when school performance and school reform are taking the forefront (Fullan, 1999).

For a school to be effective, the organization must also be able to deliver effective leadership to and from its staff as well as quality education to its population. School leadership, specifically during periods of transition, is an often overlooked aspect in school administration and is readily acknowledged as a lacking topic amongst researchers: Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon, Yashkina (2007) write “One of the most important missions for leadership research is to uncover those leadership behaviors or practices that have predictable and desirable influences on followers, especially influences that can be predicted across a significant range of contexts and situations” (p. 43). Without effective leadership, legislation initiatives and programs cannot and will not be implemented in ways that are efficient or effective for the school and those it serves. However, Reeves (2009) mentions that “...there are steps that leaders can take to maximize their probabilities for success” (p. 7). This implies that leadership emerges largely from the individual.

Leaders are challenged in a variety of ways. Litz (2011) cites knowledgeable application of globalization as one of many sources of pressure for educational leaders, stating that:

It is imperative [...] that school leaders are able to correctly identify global forces and pressures, adapt to and cope with the large scale changes that will inevitably

be thrust upon them, and ultimately recognize that globalization is both a complex and multifaceted process. (p 49)

For example, the implementation of New York State Education Law § 3012-c requires schools to institute new teacher and administrator assessments. While this example is based in New York State and not specifically global in nature, it brings into focus the dichotomy between national versus global pressures that can face administrators today. The leadership of a transitional educational environment is one of ever-growing importance in the field of education, and ensuring that effective leadership is in place to address legislative pressures seems more critical than ever.

Superficial Judgments and the Selection of Leadership

Yasso (2005) indicates that building "...community cultural wealth involves a commitment to conduct research, teach and develop schools that serve a larger purpose of struggling toward social and racial justice" (p. 14). Without first addressing these basic injustices, it can be impossible to truly select the most effective leader.

School leaders have a significant impact on their schools. They influence staff practices as well as the overall school environment. Lambert (2003) states that "learning and leading are deeply intertwined, and we need to regard each other as worthy of attention, caring and involvement" (p 2). McDermott and Varenne (1995) reference culture as disability, where a single group is presumed incompetent based upon superficial qualities, as prejudice leads to opportunity disadvantage. This is why defining a guiding set of specific human characteristics that can help to illuminate those individuals who are inherently quality leaders, and ensure that

skin color, background culture and gender have as little negative impact as possible on the selection process seems necessary.

Transitioning Leadership

To begin any serious discussion of transitional leadership within the educational system, it is crucial to obtain a working definition of what a transition is. A simple dictionary definition provides us a helpful starting point: “*Transition*: Movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another; change; *the transition from adolescence to adulthood*” (dictionary.com, 2012). A transition clearly implies the concept of change, as well as the idea of growth from a former state to a new and fresh position. Goldring, E., Crowson, R., Laird, D., Berk, R. (2003) reinforces this from an educational theorist’s perspective, and writes:

Transition is the exploration of the very early stages of change, the stage of going from a known to an unknown... The notion of transition as a type of change is more developed than a theory of leadership to fit the circumstances of transition. (p. 474).

It follows, then, that what it means to lead during a transition is both under-defined and amorphous. The concept of what can be defined as quality leadership to oversee change within a school setting is one that is both incredibly valuable, and yet also yields surprisingly little academic study beyond how to provide leadership during periods of *transitioning leadership*, rather than leadership *during* transition. When considering which leaders are most capable of displaying quality leadership during times of transition within our school systems, it is prudent to

consider the most obvious, directly involved, and visible examples: assistant principals, principals and to a certain extent district administrators. These individuals are expected by both the public and school communities to be the face of “...*transition* from one modus operandi to another” (Goldring et al, 2003, pp. 473-474). Reeves (2009) reveals that “...change leads to loss – not just any loss, but a devastating and personal loss [...] opposition to change is embedded deep in the human psyche” (p. 9). Oftentimes, this opposition is directed at school leaders who are expected to both implement change, and handle opposition simultaneously with little to no guidance as to what a ‘smooth’ transition will look like. This only further highlights the need for effective leaders to be in place during periods of change in schools.

Defining Leadership and Effectiveness

Leadership is difficult to define. Gardner elaborates in Jossey-Bass (2000) that “Leadership is a process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers” (Jossey-Bass Reader, 2000, p 3). In this sense, a leader does not perform actions autocratically, but rather convinces individuals to pursue a common vision for the betterment of an organization. Northouse (2004) agrees that “leadership is defined as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p 11). Leadership, then, can be characterized by specific models or methods, but it can also be taken to mean that it is defined by the *individual* who practices it. Therefore, if we assume that leadership during transition is defined by both methods used and individual traits displayed during the application of these models during transition, what would a comprehensive list of leadership traits for effective transition look like?

Models of Effective Leadership

Adaptive and Technical Model

Heifetz (1994) proposes that there are two different types of leadership situations – adaptive and technical. Technical problems are more specific in nature, and require some sort of technical expertise. These situations are so well defined that most people will realize how to go about solving them. For example, a sick individual will recognize that his/her illness requires technical knowledge, and will seek guidance from a doctor who possesses that technical expertise. These types of situations can often be handled by the individual with technical knowledge alone. In education this might mean a principal signing a budget for a school year and then presenting it to The Board of Education. However, adaptive challenges are far more nebulous and undefined, and generally emerge as a result of technical knowledge coming forward. To maintain the same example, the school principal may present his budget, and the adaptive challenge is that there is a budget shortfall that must be accounted. The principal has realized that his own expertise is not sufficient to solve the problem, and he has presented it as an adaptive situation that must be addressed by the organization as whole, despite the budget being the principal's responsibility.

The technical and adaptive theory of leadership has become a generally accepted model, and many researchers have further defined it beyond Heifetz (1994) primary work. Daly and Chrispeels (2008) argue that technical leadership defines changes that do not currently challenge the existing structure within an organization, while adaptive leadership challenges the basic fabric of the organization to define a new solution that has not been seen, needed, or previously prepared for before. In order for this to occur, the leader must inspire trust within his or her followers. In contrast, Batagiannis (2007) claims that the true measure of leadership can be

discovered within the desire for instantaneous gratification felt by many school administrators. This pressure leads many school leaders to adopt a more technical leadership style over an adaptive one because of the value that society places on immediate results. Batagiannis (2007) further argues that only certain traits, courage specifically, can define what effective adaptive leadership appears as. By implication, decisions are rushed to the point where adaptive leadership situations are instead addressed as technical ones. When this situation occurs, a single technical expert has a greater likelihood of making ineffective leadership decisions during a time of important transition. Garrity (2010) similarly describes adaptive leadership as a specific set of traits, and states that “the role of the leader as a knowledgeable, supportive, and adaptive facilitator of innovation initiatives, rational decision-making, work group collaboration, and organizational change management...” (p 266) is extremely important to effective administration. Taken together, a clearer image of the qualities of an effective transitional leader begins to emerge from the concepts presented within the realm of adaptive and technical leadership.

Distributive Leadership Model

Emerging from the adaptive and technical model proposed by Heifetz (1994), distributed leadership presumes that leadership responsibilities will be spread amongst school staff in addition to the school administrators. Leithwood et al. (2007) describe the major belief therein being that “when role overlap occurs in a coordinated fashion there can be mutual reinforcement of influence and less likelihood of making errors in decisions” (p 40). This democratic approach can distribute the load of leadership responsibility in a manner similar to Heifetz's (1994) adaptive leadership model, and can indeed be recognized as a leader's ability to delegate tasks effectively. Spillane (2005) agrees in part with Batagiannis (2007) in regards to the concept that

instant gratification is a farce, stating that school leaders should not be framed as heroes intended to fix the problems of a school through administration. Instead, Spillane (2005) posits that leadership, specifically distributed leadership, is a manufacture of leadership practice – or the process of leadership and the communication that accompanies it (pp. 143-145). Competent interaction then becomes a key aspect of leadership within the organization, and it is a key trait sought in effective leaders who distribute any sort of power amongst their staff. Harris (2007) reminds us of how widespread the concept of shared leadership has become and how that can impact school systems. Moreover, implementing distributed leadership does not guarantee an improvement in staff and student outcomes. Although there are a wide variety of definitions for distributed leadership and what exactly it entails, it is often described as a polar opposite of leadership practice to more autocratic methods.

Leadership Traits

Having delved into a number of theorists opinions on two of the most widely accepted models of effective leadership, it is possible to begin constructing a list of those qualities that seem to be of inherent importance in defining a quality leader. Daly and Chrispeels (2008) cite the need for a trustworthy leader to establish a rapport with colleagues that allows them to adapt to a changing educational environment. Garrity (2010) presented a list of adaptive leadership traits including rationality, knowledgability, and the ability to be a faculty facilitator. Batagiannis (2007) suggests that effective leaders must be courageous, to look past the negative reactions of those around them and make unpopular choices for the betterment of the organization. Spillane (2005) delivers the concept that a school leader must be an effective communicator, as distributed power wells within school must be able to convey meaning, setbacks, progress, as well as receive and deliver instructions to and from the leadership position. Finally, Leithwood et

al. (2007) posit that the leader must show trust in others, so as to allow the school faculty the ability to perform their own jobs without the school leader over or under addressing issues, and becoming an autocratic hinder. These traits have been highlighted by some of the most knowledgeable academic minds in the field of leadership, and can, potentially, be regarded as qualities most commonly agreed upon to be those found in an effective leader.

Methodology

Context

My study took place in a suburban alternative educational facility in upstate New York. This location was chosen both for familiarity with staff to ensure a greater response rate to the data collection metric, as well as for ease of access to a large body of the target group for the data collection metric. School administrators, teachers of record, and para-educators were included in the data sample.

Participants

In total, eleven administrators, twenty-one teachers of record, which, for the purposes of this survey included assistant teachers, and thirty one para-educators took part in the survey. All participants work at the same suburban alternative/special education facility in upstate New York.

Research Stance

My role in gathering data was providing hand delivered surveys to individual classrooms, explaining the survey's purpose, and being available to answer any questions that arose while participants filled out the survey. I am currently employed as a para-educator at the facility where the survey was distributed. I am certified to teach social studies 7-12 in New York State. I

have a Bachelor's Degree in History and I am working towards earning a Master's of Science in Special Education from St. John Fisher College, New York.

Method/Confidentiality

The ultimate goal of this study is to determine which leadership traits are perceived by those within education at multiple levels of employment as being most important in order to be an effective leader. While 'leader' is most likely to be applied to administrative positions within schools, the concept of leadership was left intentionally vague to ensure that participants were allowed the freedom to regard leadership in any capacity they desired, and to ensure that participant perceptions of leadership were not affected by this researchers own perceptions of leadership within a school context.

All surveys were distributed during a single school day at the facility described. At the start of the school day, the surveyor visited and requested that each classroom teacher and staff participate in completing a voluntary five minute survey during the course of his/her day. No teacher or para-professional showed or voiced unwillingness to participate in the survey process. Additionally, consent was gained through the use of a letter of implied consent on the front page of the survey, where all participants were informed of their rights to confidentiality, as well as the purpose of the survey. Thereon, surveys were distributed one classroom at a time throughout the course of the school day, with the surveyor available for, and providing clarification on questions when asked. Besides any specific questions asked by the individuals, no guidance other than an initial request that the instructions provided within the survey be read carefully was given. The surveyor remained in the room while surveys were in the process of being completed by any staff present in the room at the time of distribution, but stayed physically distant from all participants while they completed the survey. All surveys completed in each individual

classroom were gathered immediately upon completion and placed into an unmarked, unlabeled sealable folder to ensure confidentiality. School administrators were given copies of the survey individually with the surveyor present and available to answer any questions. Administrative surveys were collected immediately upon completion and were placed into a similarly unmarked, unlabeled sealable folder, where they stayed in the possession of the survey distributor at all times in order to ensure confidentiality. Names were not required on the survey, therefore, pseudonyms were unnecessary.

Data Collection

A one page survey (Appendix A) was used to collect data, with two additional pages attached prior to the survey itself: the first was a letter of implied consent (Appendix B), followed by a definitions page (Appendix C), where participants could refer if there was any confusion regarding wording or the definitions of words utilized in the survey itself. The survey consisted of four heading sections, two of which participants were required to complete fully, as stated on the survey directions. The first section asked participants to circle one of three positions that most closely applied to their currently held position. The three positions listed were ‘administrator,’ teacher of record,’ and ‘para-educator.’ If there was any confusion on the part of assistant teachers as to which selection they should choose, upon asking they were informed that, for the purposes of the provided survey, they should indicate themselves as a teacher of record. The second section asked participants to select and rank five of eight qualities that they felt were most important for an individual to possess in order to be an effective leader. The qualities/traits that were listed in the survey were ones that were identified in previously cited research to be associated with leadership.

Although the first two survey sections were required to be answered, the third section of the survey was optional. The third section included questions regarding basic demographics such as the participant's age and gender, as well as a question asking them to indicate their current level of personal education. There was also a question that asked the participants if they have held a position outside of the field of education. The final section was a comments section. In this section, participants were asked to include any other qualities/traits that they believe that leaders should possess. Also, in this last section, participants were asked to provide feedback regarding the survey (i.e. recommendations to improve the survey).

Data Analysis

Sixty eight surveys were collected. Each survey was analyzed individually with all responses being organized and sorted first by section. Secondly, all surveys were then critiqued by whether they had been filled out correctly. A survey was deemed to have been filled out incorrectly if the questions in either the first or second heading were incomplete, or if the answers in these sections were not correctly filled out. For example, if a participant had circled more than one currently held position, then the data collected from that particular survey was set aside and not included in the data set. If a participant had included more than five personality traits or qualities on the five provided lines, if more than one trait was provided on a single line, or if less than five traits were provided (i.e. one or more lines left blank), then the survey was deemed incomplete, and the survey data for that particular participant was set aside and not included in the data set. A total of five surveys were deemed incomplete or improperly completed, and thus not included within the data analyzed.

In total, 63 surveys were determined to be useable within the data set, and they were further organized by separating responses by the participant's currently held position within the

school. A total of eleven administrators, twenty-one teachers of record, and thirty one para-educators participated in the survey data collection. Every survey response was then placed into an excel spreadsheet. Every possible personality trait selection was charted according to the five possible valuation answers. For example, if a particular respondent gave ‘trustworthy’ as his/her third most valued response, then a single tally was recorded in the ‘trustworthy 3’ data point. This charting was recorded wholesale for all survey respondents, as well as for each individual respondent group. (please see Appendices D and E). Responses for each personality trait as parts of the total survey response rate were totaled for each separate survey group. Each separate group’s responses were then enumerated and categorized in an excel spreadsheet, where a mean total response percentage was calculated for both the individual groups, and as a whole for all survey results. The results were also analyzed regarding the percentage of responses for each individual valuation possibility for each individual surveyed group. All percentages were rounded to the nearest percent point for ease of charting and data analysis. The responses of each surveyed group were then compared against each other to analyze approximated beliefs of the surveyed educational staff’s similarities and differences in the valuation of different personality qualities/traits in regards to their indication of leadership effectiveness.

By splitting the data into two separate sections, overall survey data and sectioned survey groups data, it allowed the research to be engaged from two distinct, but valuable directions. By comparing individual groups against each other, the data are able to detail where valuation of leadership traits per individual positions within the educational environment are alike and different, enabling a clearer picture of which leadership traits are valued most often or least often across all possible positions within the school. For example, Appendix D indicates that trustworthiness pierced through all levels of employment as the top rated quality as an indicator

of effective leadership. Administrators equally valued communication, as well as trustworthiness, as the keystone qualities of effective leadership. The “Rating #2” graph within Appendix D presents the first truly divergent response for the surveyed groups. Administrators and teachers of record valued knowledgability as their second most highly ranked trait, whereas para-educators broke from the modal response, and instead presented a more equally distributed set of data that indicated communication as their second most valued characteristic.

These first two pieces of analytic data may represent the humanist value placed on honesty and truthfulness rather simply communication itself – read the trustworthiness of the communication being provided - across multiple levels of the organizational entity as a whole. These results perhaps indicate a core value throughout the organization that truthful communication is essential to the functioning of the facility. Administrators may understand their roles to mean intermediary communicators for the entirety of the school staff, and the sole intermediary for expressing change and improvement through the facility, thus their equal valuing of communication and trustworthiness as primary characteristics of effective leadership. This theory is only reaffirmed by other members of the faculty within the organization indicating a desire and need for this communication by valuing it highly as a secondary and tertiary characteristic of effective leadership (Appendices D and E). This may also indicate that communication from leadership is a primary candidate for organizational success and morale, though further study would need to be done to confirm.

Appendices F and G illustrate the total responses of all groups and the average responses of all groups by percent. They show that trustworthiness was, by clear consensus, the most important trait believed to be associated with effective leadership, followed closely by knowledgability and communicativeness. There is a sharp drop in consensus following this point,

where collegiality, rationality, and facilitativeness all appear to hold some degree of statistical weight amongst respondents, though clearly less-so than the top three responses. The two outliers of trustful and courageous are interesting, as both were listed as items six and eight on the survey itself (Appendix A), and may have affected their low polling numbers. However, since communicativeness was item seven on the list, it becomes less likely that location of the traits within the survey itself affected the polling results. Therefore, it helps to verify the accuracy of the low polling results. If this is true, and a flaw within the survey itself can be ruled out, then both courageousness and trustfulness can safely be assumed to be the least valuable traits of a leader sought after by faculty within a school setting. Trustworthiness, knowledgability and communicativeness can safely be stated as the most valued and sought after traits of a leader within a school setting.

Conclusions

A close analysis of the surveys demonstrated that trustworthiness, knowledgability, and communicativeness are the three highly valued traits that leaders need to possess. With such a clear consensus of the top three traits of leadership in an educational setting, a few conclusions can be drawn. First, trustworthiness holds a clear value to both leaders themselves, as well as their followers. Leaders are expected to lead through morality and honesty. Furthermore, with knowledgability ranking second after trustworthiness, educators indicate that they desire their leaders to be aware of contemporary issues, models, solutions, and to be well credentialed. Finally, educators value the ability of a leader to communicate with staff effectively. However, given that all three top valued traits were selected at above a ninety percent rate by all participants regardless of overall ranking of the trait itself, it is clear that all three are inherently connected, and perhaps present a clear baseline for what is represented in an effective

educational leader. A leader may not be deemed trustworthy without being able to prove to his/her staff that he/she is knowledgeable and able to present or distribute that knowledge through communication. A leader may not be able to effectively communicate without being trustworthy enough to desire to communicate, or have the requisite knowledge of how to effectively communicate. Lastly, a leader may not be completely knowledgeable without first being trustworthy enough to acquire necessary knowledge from his staff or outside sources through effective communication, whether that knowledge is intended for personal, staff, or organizational benefit.

The current study has implications because the two least valued traits can perhaps, through inversion, open a window into the needs of an educational organization seeking a leader. By valuing courageousness and trustfulness the least, educational staff seems to present two messages. First, that educational staff seeks consistency and conservative administration through its devaluation of courageousness. A courageous leader would take chances, stand alone, and perhaps make decisions that are not consistent with majority consensus. Furthermore, a trustful leader may be considered too reliant and dependent on others to achieve the same goals as a self-sufficient one. By devaluing trustfulness educators may also be indicating that they seek or desire to have a firm authority figure, rather than an empathetic figurehead as their leader. As such, based on the research obtained, if the study were to be performed again, the traits ‘courageous’ and ‘trustful’ may best be replaced by the terms consistent, authoritative, empathetic, and self-sufficient in order to further clarify which traits are truly sought after in an educational leader.

Another implication of the study is that the data obtained from this research could be used to craft new and better interview questions that seek to discover which traits candidates

present most strongly possessing. If such an undertaking were to occur, the interview process should seek to emphasize and value candidates who display trustworthiness, knowledgability, and communicativeness, while devaluing and avoiding candidates who present overly-trustful and overly-courageous personality traits. It should be noted that a limitation of this research is that the list of valued traits discovered and analyzed within this study are hardly comprehensive, and present only a fraction of all human characteristics. It cannot take into account individual application of these traits, or personal talents and abilities. Further studies into the trends of personality traits, the valuation of personality traits in regards to leadership, as well as educational organizations needs in regards to effective leadership is necessary before any sound correlation between specific personality traits and successful and effective leadership can be established. All data presented and analyzed represents the opinions and valuations of the members of a singular educational organization, and the study must be performed across a much wider base in order to draw statistically significant conclusions about the true value of certain personality traits for effective leadership in a school environment.

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(Appendix A)

Current Position (YOU MUST ANSWER THIS QUESTION) - Please circle the one which MOST CLOSELY APPLIES to your currently held position:

Administrator

Teacher of Record

Para-educator

Survey of Leadership Qualities: (YOU MUST ANSWER THIS QUESTION)

The following is a list of eight personality qualities/traits that have been found to be associated with leadership.

Trustworthy

Collegial

Rational

Knowledgeable

Facilitative

Courageous

Communicative

Trustful



Please select the **FIVE** qualities from the list above that you feel are *most important* for an individual to possess in order to be an effective leader. Rank these five qualities from most important to least important, where **1** is most important, and **5** is least important. Write them below in your selected order. Any quality not selected from above may be crossed off and not written down.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Demographics: (These questions are optional, and all data collected will be kept confidential)

Current level of personal education (i.e. 'Doctorate'): _____

Gender: M / F

Age: _____

Have you ever held a position outside of the field of education?: Yes / No

Comments: If you feel that an important personality quality / trait was left off of the above list, or have any other comments regarding this survey, please elaborate below:

(Appendix B)

Date: 2/25/2013

Dear Administrators, Teachers of Record, and Para-educators,

I am writing to request your assistance with my Capstone research study investigating traits and qualities associated with leadership. Please help me collect data for my research by completing the attached survey.

The survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete, but please take your time and be thoughtful in your response(s). By completing this confidential survey, you are providing your consent to participate in my research.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me
at [REDACTED] or my supervising teacher at
[REDACTED]

To ensure my graduation in May, it is important that you complete this survey by 3/8/2013.
Please allow me to thank you in advance for your participation.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

(Appendix C)

If you need assistance with terms used in the survey, the following are the same list of leadership qualities and their associated definitions. All terms should be applied to an individual possessing each trait or quality.

Trustworthy - Worthy of being trusted; honest, reliable, or dependable.

Collegial - Characterized by or having power and authority vested equally among colleagues.

Rational - Consistent with or based on reason; logical.

Knowledgeable - Possessing or showing knowledge or intelligence; perceptive and well-informed.

Facilitative - Freeing from difficulty or impediment.

Courageous - Having or characterized by courage; valiant.

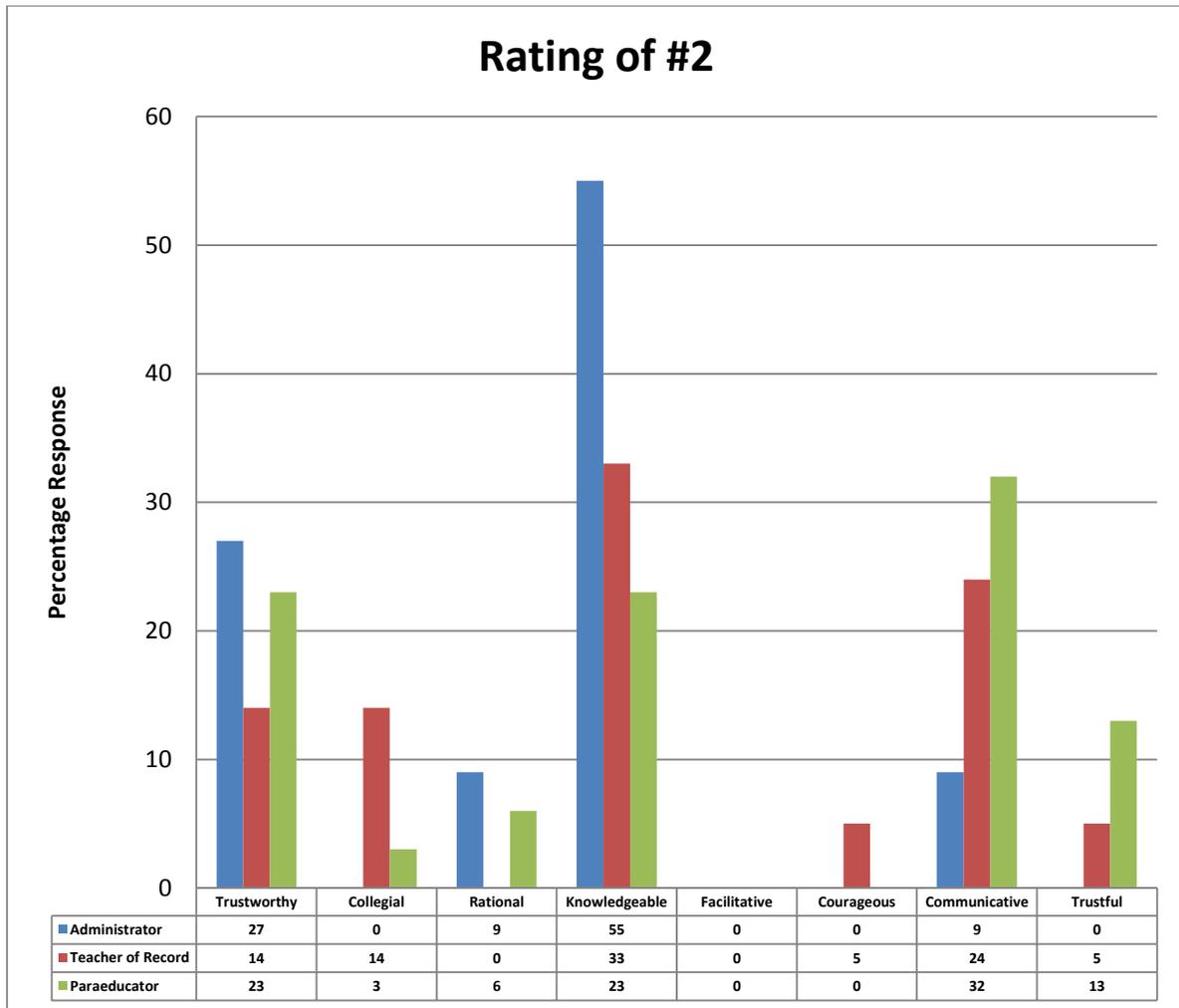
Communicative - Inclined to communicate readily; talkative.

Trustful - Inclined to believe or confide readily; full of trust.

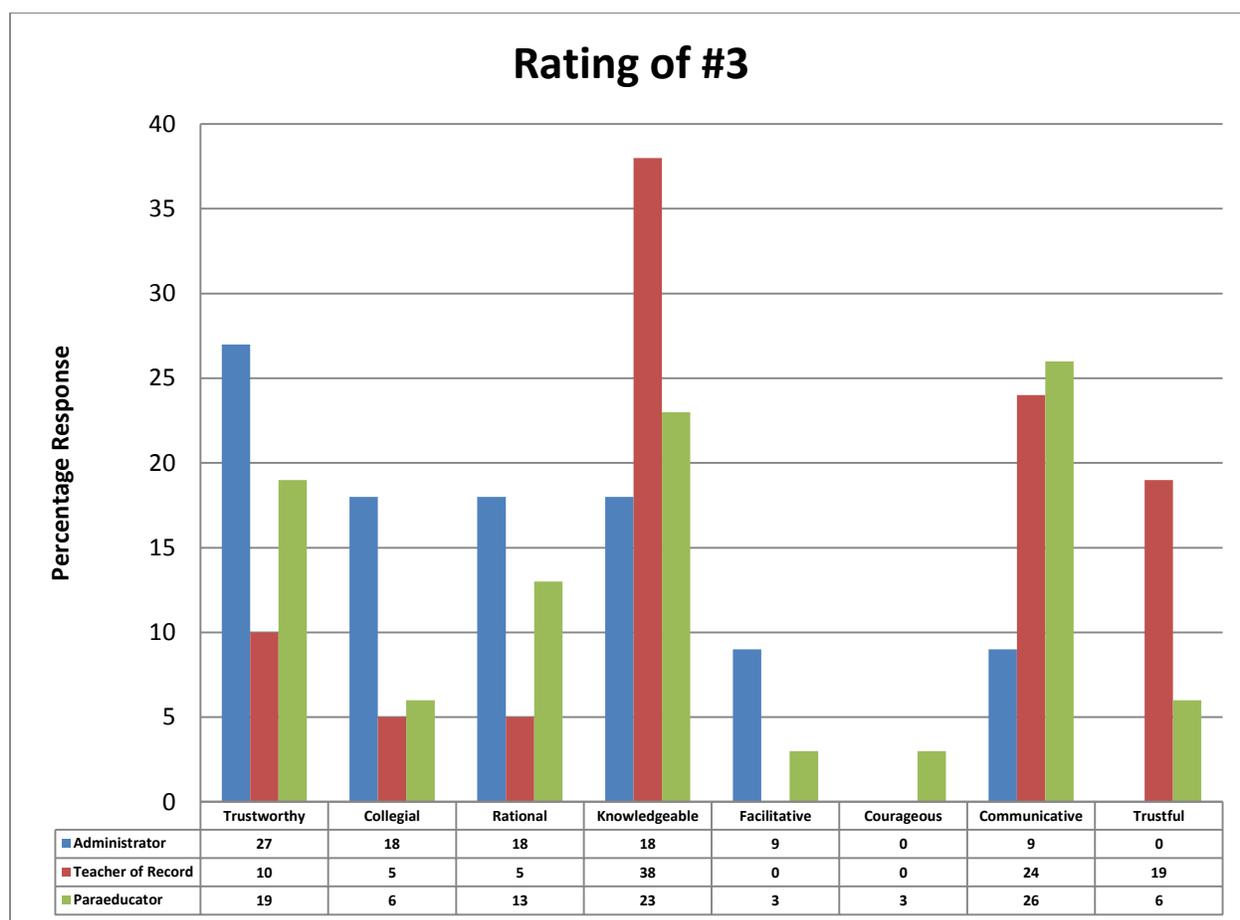
(Appendix D)



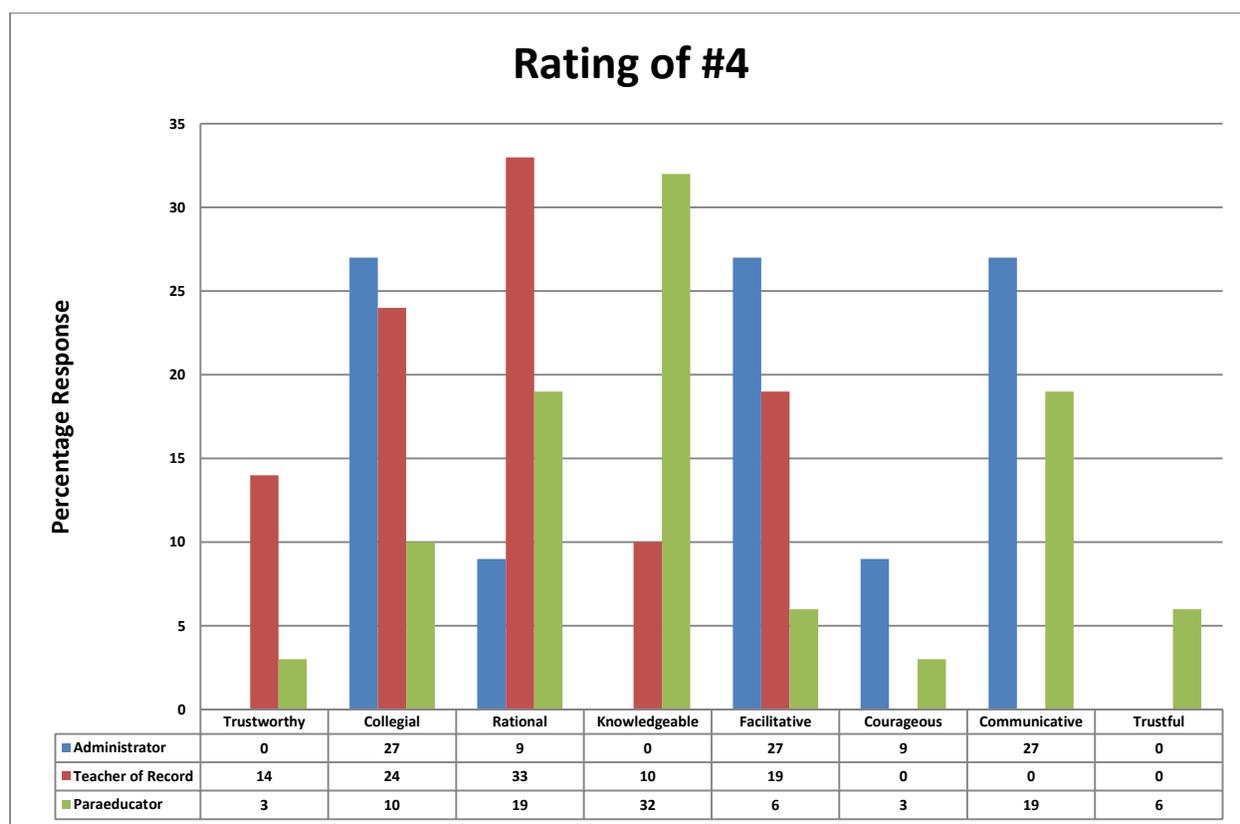
(Appendix D cont.)



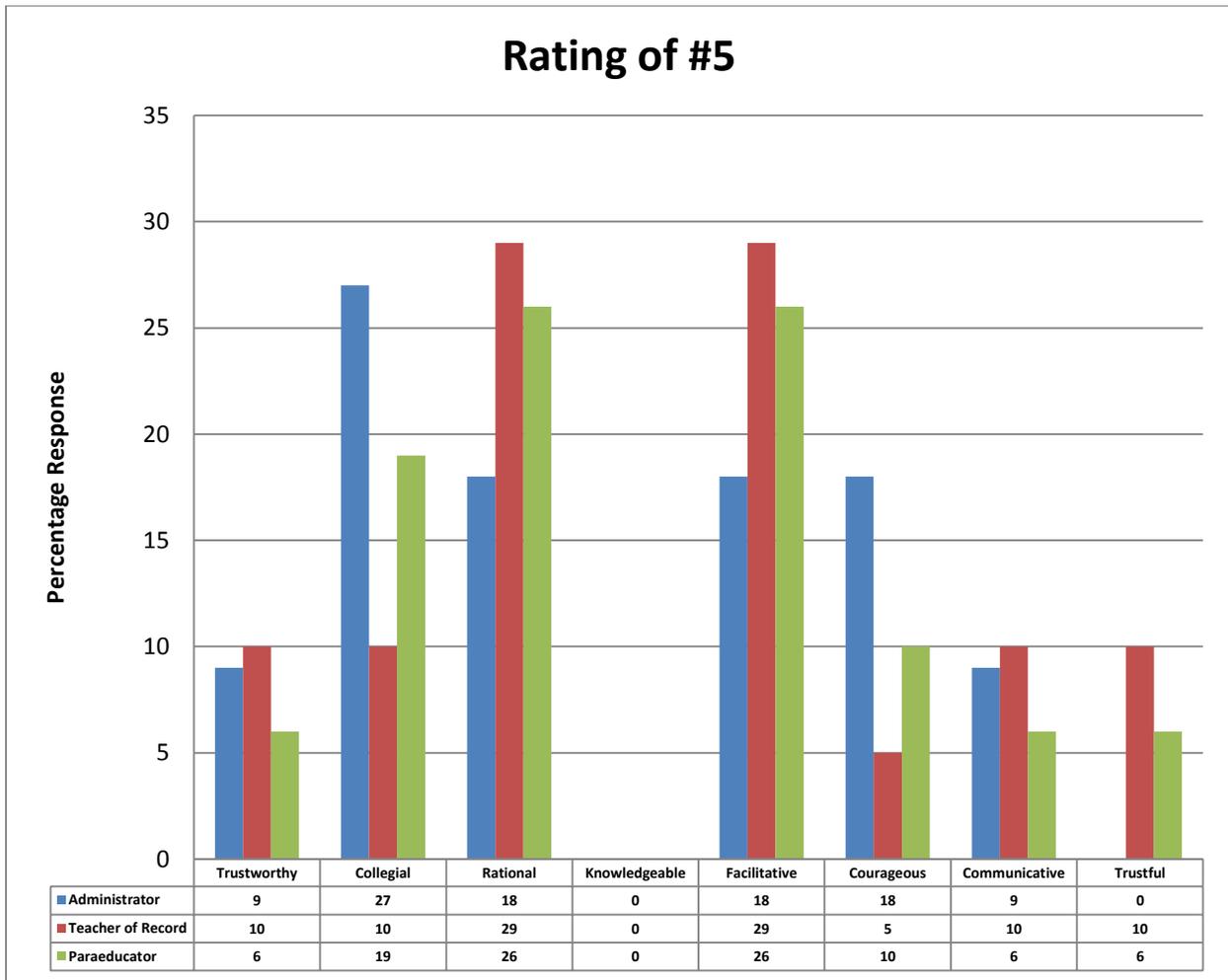
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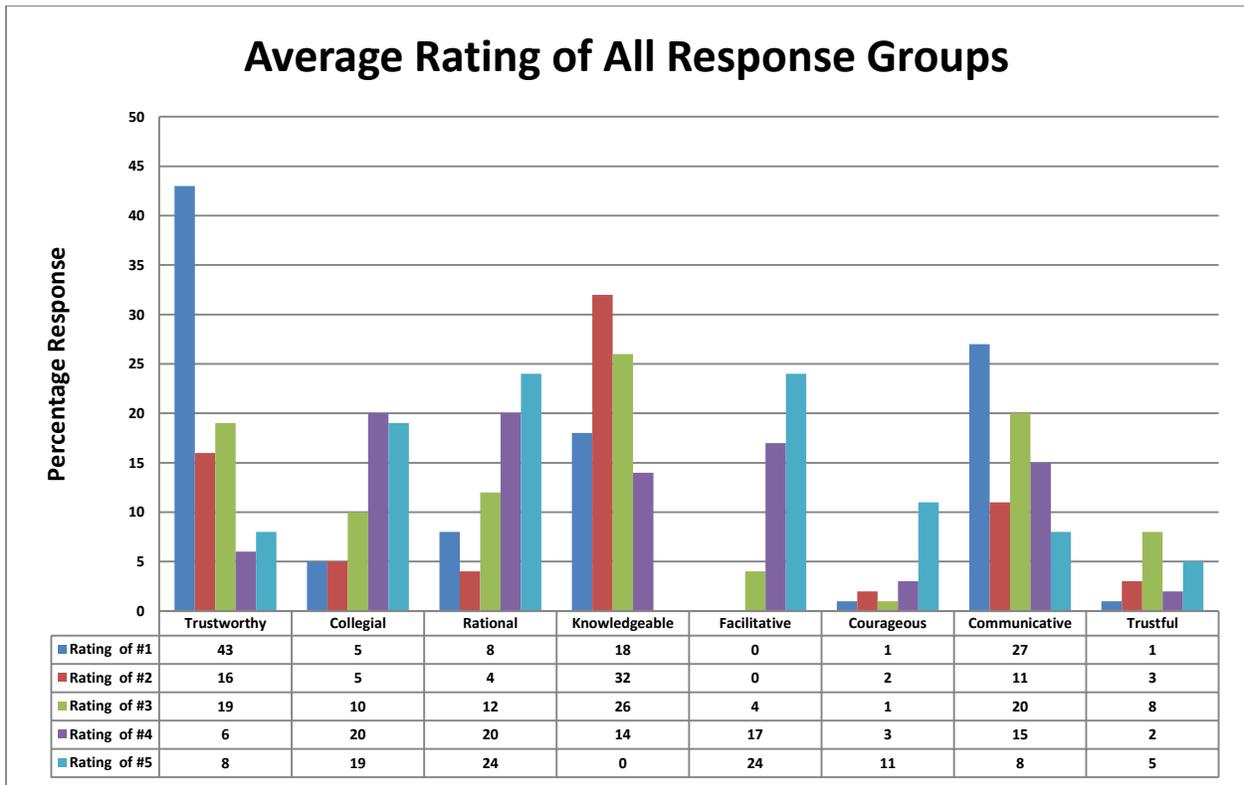
(Appendix D cont.)



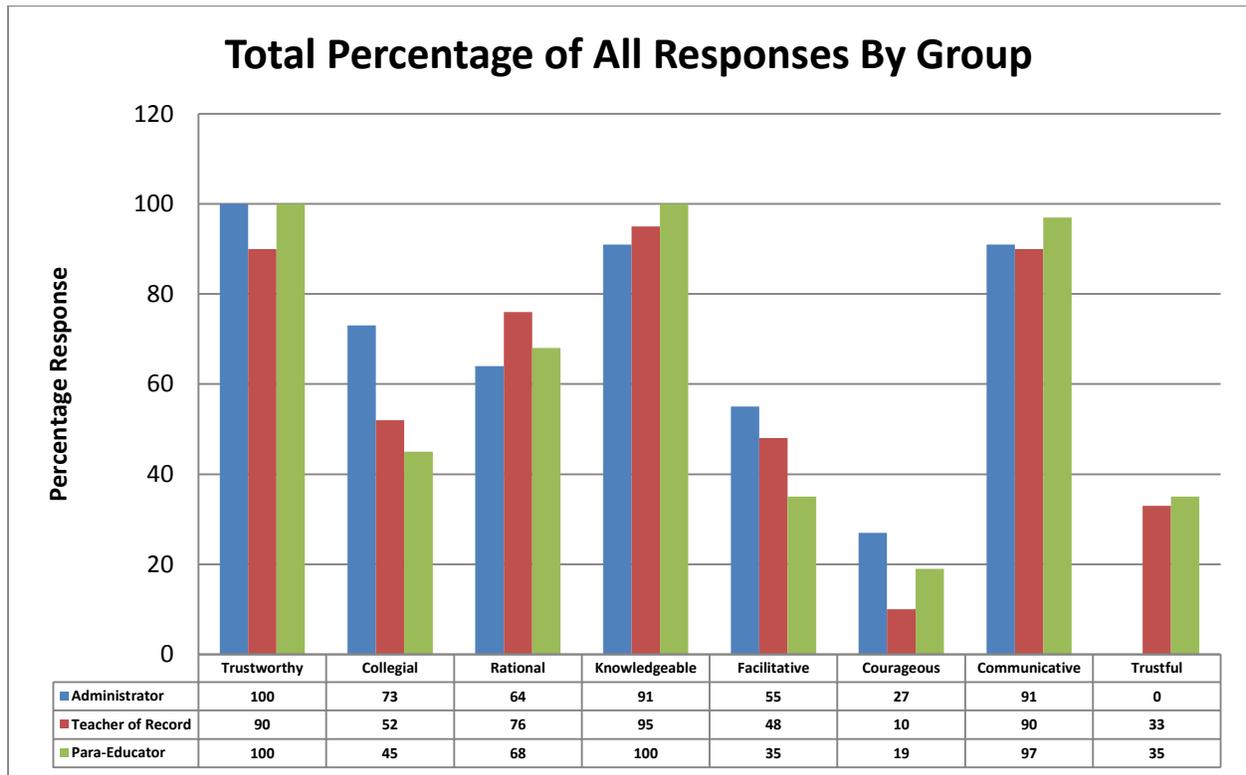
(Appendix D cont.)



(Appendix E)



(Appendix F)



(Appendix G)

