AN EXPLANATION OF SELF-TRUST AMONG GRADUATE FACULTY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

By

Tyler Saiz

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As members of the Master's Committee, we certify that we have read the thesis prepared by Tyler Saiz, titled *An Explanation of Self-Trust Among Graduate Faculty at The University of Arizona*, and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Master's Degree.

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Final approval and acceptance of this thesis is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the thesis to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this thesis prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the Master's requirement.

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Date: May 11, 2023

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify factors that influence the level of trust between graduate faculty advisors and graduate students. A literature review was conducted to define leadership and its theories concerning the needs of followers, with trust being identified as the most important need. The significance of trust was discussed, and Stephen Covey's Speed of Trust framework was used as the theoretical framework. This framework breaks trust into four attributes: Integrity, Intent, Capabilities, and Results. The study used a non-experimental, descriptive correlational research design, with a census conducted among graduate faculty advisors in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Arizona. Data were collected using an electronic questionnaire based on Covey's The Speed of Trust assessment, with four sections measuring self-perception of Integrity, Intent, Capabilities, and Results. The findings showed that the participants had a relatively high level of self-trust in the trust factors of Character and Competence and their attributes. The study also found that years of experience as a graduate advisor had negligible influence on the level of self-trust possessed by graduate advisors.
Introduction

Background and Setting

Winston and Patterson (2006) state the importance of leadership as a leader are individuals who choose, provide for, develop, and influence followers with various talents, skills, and abilities. The leader also focuses the followers on the organization's mission and goals, inspiring them to give their willing and enthusiastic efforts to accomplish those goals through their spiritual, emotional, and physical resources. There are many theories within the concept of leadership, including transformational leadership, transactional leadership, participative leadership, and servant leadership.

Leadership Theories

Bass and Riggio (2006) state that James MacGregor Burns introduced the transformational and transactional leadership theories in 1978. Burns (1978) discussed transactional leadership as "a bargain to aid the individual interests of persons or groups going their separate ways." The monitors of transactional leadership are described later as "modal values, that is, values of means—honesty, responsibility, fairness, the honoring of commitments" (Burns, 1978).

Burns (1978) later stated that the underlying assumption of transformational leadership is that, despite any individual interests they may have, people are currently or potentially united in the pursuit of "higher" goals, the realization of which is measured by the accomplishment of significant change that represents the combined or pooled interests of leaders and followers. According to Bryman et al. (2011), transformational leadership can also be defined as the method by which a leader encourages group or organizational performance above what is
expected by the close emotional bonds they have developed with their followers and their shared
dedication to a higher moral cause.

Participative leadership theory was introduced in the 1930s at Hawthorne Works in
Illinois (WGU, 2021). Participative leadership is defined as decision-making between superiors
and subordinates done in concert or under a shared sphere of influence (Sagnak, 2016). Sagnak
(2016) also stated, "Participative leaders encourage teachers to find new opportunities, generate
new information, and perform."

Servant leadership was conceptualized in 1977 by Robert Greenleaf in an organizational
context. Greenleaf (1977) states that a servant leader always puts others first. It starts with the
instinctive desire to serve first and foremost. Conscious decision-making causes one to aspire to
be a leader. Within servant leadership, two extreme categories are those who put leadership or
service first. Greenleaf (1977) stated that shades and blends that are a part of the limitless variety
of human nature exist between these extremes.

**Needs of the Followers**

The four leadership theories highlighted are all unique, but what they have in common to
be successful is focusing on the needs of followers (Brim, 2021). Those four needs are
Compassion, Stability, Hope, and Trust. The first need of the follower is compassion, defined by
Brim (2021) as treating people with respect as the people they are. On the job and off the job,
people want to matter. The follower's second need is stability, which is defined as the foundation
of engagement. "People need to know what is expected of them… they need to know that their
talents fit what they are being asked to do and that they will be appreciated for doing their work
well. As a leader, it is up to you to help impart this through focused, frequent conversations"
(Brim, 2021). The third need of the follower is hope, and according to Brim (2021), hope is
essential for an organization to have sustainable success. The follower's final need is trust, which can be established by building credibility, reliability, and intimacy (Brim, 2021). For this study, trust as a core leadership attribute is a focus.

Defining Trust

Trust is essential to any relationship, whether that be between coworkers, supervisors, and employees or in one's personal life. Generally, trust can be defined as the relationship between one agent (the trustor) and another actor or object (the trustee). The trustor's perceptions of the trustee's qualifications and the relationship's setting are expected to serve as the foundation for the relationship (Gambetta, 1988). Gambetta (1988) further explains trust by stating that the degree to which one agent believes that another agent or set of agents will take a specific action is known as trust (or, conversely, distrust).

Trust in Leadership Organizations

It is agreed upon by Mineo (2013), Sharkie (2009), and Burke, Sims, Lazzara, and Salas (2007) that the ability for organizational and leadership success is provided by trust, which serves as the glue that holds the leader to her/his followers. Within an organization, Tan and Lim (2009) contend that trust in coworkers affects trust in other types of trust foci, notably trust in organizations, which affects outcomes at the organizational level. According to the definition offered by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), trust in people is the readiness of a person to be vulnerable to the acts of others whose conduct and actions cannot control.

Trust in higher education between advisors and graduate students is essential as graduate advisers frequently serve as the most critical academic role models for aspiring scholars (Bloom et al., 2007). According to Bloom et al. (2007), students pursuing graduate studies place high trust in graduate advisors. Graduate advisors serve a critical role in mentoring and monitoring
student growth. They are concerned about their students, being approachable and aware of their power as role models, providing personalized counsel, and purposefully incorporating students into a profession (Bloom et al., 2007).

Central to graduate education are graduate faculty. Graduate faculty facilitate student learning and the mentoring process while they pursue degree completion. Unlike undergraduate faculty, who focus primarily on undergraduate curriculum and instruction, graduate faculty is a designation for faculty involved in graduate education for teaching, research, and/or creative activity. Graduate faculty provide intellectual guidance and support for graduate students' scholarly and pedagogical efforts. They are also responsible for the ongoing evaluation of graduate students' performance in academic, research, and scholarly activities.

Having a central role in student success, graduate faculty must be very trustworthy, as they are considered one of the most influential agents in a graduate student's academic life (Bloom et al., 2007). Hence, this study seeks to determine graduate faculty's perception of self-trust and the factors that explain it.

**Literature Review**

Within many theories of leadership and all successful relationships, trust is seen as very important at every level. Trust is also at the foundation of successful organizations and institutions.

**Trust**

Watson (2005), Harrison McKnight & Chervany (2001), Höhmann & Malieva (2005), Schoorman, Mayer & Davis (1996), and Castelfranchi & Falcone (2010) have all discussed the importance of trust and what the definition of trust is. They generally define trust as essential to building relationships, a social structure, and a behavioral intention.
When one has faith in a company or a group, you have faith in the performance of its members. More specifically, in an organizational context, Schoorman, Mayer, and Davis (1996) say that trust is the belief that a member (or members) of a group or organization will make the necessary efforts to live up to expectations. The likelihood of meeting expectations will vary based on which particular members of the organization or group are held accountable for performance. Trust levels may need to change if the accountable people are replaced.

Mayer, Davis & Schoorman (1995) have also stated in a more general context that the definition of trust is that it is the willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will carry out a specific action that is significant to the trustor, regardless of the capability of the other party to be watched over or controlled. This definition of trust applies to a connection with another identified party thought to act and respond to the trust or with free will. Of all the contexts in which trust can be defined, it is generally the trait of doing what one promises to accomplish. If they fail, it will be due to circumstances outside their control (O'Hara, 2012).

**Theoretical Framework**

Trust is broken down into four cores in the book, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* by Stephen Covey. Character comprises two cores: integrity and intent. Competence includes the other two cores: Capabilities and Results (Covey, 2006). Furthermore, self-trust is made up of these four cores and serves as the foundation for all forms of trust.

**Self-trust**

Self-trust is defined by Covey (2006) as a matter of credibility. To be credible to oneself and others, one must acquire integrity, intent, capabilities, and results. It all comes down to two
straightforward questions: "do I trust myself?" and "am I someone others can trust" (Covey, 2006, p. 87).

**Integrity: Attribute of Character**

Covey defines integrity as "what most people think about when they think of trust. To many, "Integrity" basically means "honesty." While integrity includes honesty, it's much more. It's integratedness. It's walking your talk. It's being congruent, inside and out. It's having the courage to act in accordance with your values and beliefs. Interestingly, most massive violations of trust are violations of Integrity" (Covey, 2006, p. 100). It's a case of "the ends justify the means" (Covey, 2006, p. 108). Three qualities are crucial to integrity, according to Covey (2006). These three qualities are congruence, humility, and courage.

Covey (2006) states that congruence is shown by people acting according to their core values and beliefs. They live up to their words. They take action when they feel compelled to. They are not influenced by external factors like other people's perceptions or current circumstances (Covey, 2006). Humility is the next quality of integrity. This is described by Covey (2006) as the ability to put one's principles above oneself. People who are humble are skilled negotiators. They can negotiate tough terms. The last quality of integrity stated by Covey is courage. Courage is defined as doing the right thing, even if difficult (Covey 2006).

**Intent: Attribute of Character**

Intent, the second core of credibility, is described by Covey (2006) by stating that intent counts and that it comes from your character. People tend to assess others by their conduct, while they tend to judge themselves by their intentions. People also frequently evaluate other people's intentions in light of their perspectives and experiences (Covey, 2006). Covey (2006) also states that trust is significantly influenced by how we interpret purpose. Because of the assumptions
they make about what others do, people frequently mistrust others. By "declaring our Intent," people must actively shape the conclusions that others reach (Covey, 2006, p. 126).

Capabilities: Attribute of Competence

Stephen Covey (2006, p. 144) defines capabilities as "the talents, skills, knowledge, capacities, and abilities we have that enable us to perform with excellence." When describing integrity, the metaphor is used again for capabilities: "Capabilities are the branches that produce the fruits or results" (Covey 2006, p. 144). In addition to that previous point, credible individuals are capable. The other three components are also possible to possess, including honesty, sincerity, and the ability to achieve positive outcomes in the past. But in the end, you won't have credibility (Covey, 2006). TASKS is an acronym used by Covey to analyze the dimensions of capability.

T is Talent, and talents are inherent aptitudes and capacities. A is Attitudes, representing both our ways of seeing and being or our paradigms. S is skills; our proficiencies, or what we are good at, are our skills. K is knowledge, and knowledge represents what we have learned, understood, and been aware of. The last S is style, which embodies our distinct perspective and individuality (Covey, 2006).

Results: Attribute of Competence

This attribute is discussed in its definition by Covey (2006), who states that "results" must sometimes be defined differently than anticipated since some things are beyond control. Covey (2006) further states that by identifying, defining, and judging oneself on beneficial outcomes that may be even more significant in the long run, one can make significant progress in boosting one's self-trust and self-confidence.
Waves of Trust

In his book, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*, Covey (2006) discusses a model he created that illustrates how trust functions in everyone's daily life; he calls it the "5 Waves of Trust". It starts with everyone individually, moves on to relationships, broadens into organizations, deepens into business dealings, and embraces the entire global society (Covey, 2006). The first wave of this model is self-trust, which serves as the foundation from which all levels of trust stem. Covey (2006) states that self-trust establishes and sustains trust at each level. Then, Covey (2006) says people can increase their credibility by developing the "4 cores of credibility", two categorized within character and the other two within competence.

Once self-trust is established, the second wave can be fully embraced. The second wave of the five is relationship trust. It is described by Covey (2006) as being solely based on one's behavior and, more specifically, one demonstrating dependable behavior. There are thirteen specific behaviors listed by Covey that form this wave that will further influence the level of trust that can be established in the following waves. According to Covey (2006), these behaviors are talking honestly, showing respect, being transparent, making amends, being loyal, providing Results, improving, facing reality, spelling out expectations, being accountable, putting others' needs before your own, maintaining your word, and extending trust.

After recognizing the second wave, one can build the third wave of organizational trust. First, Covey breaks down this wave by analyzing character elements: integrity, intent, competence, capabilities, and results. To influence organizational change and promote Integrity and Intent, Covey (2006) says one can ensure that one's mission and objectives reflect the goals and values that foster trust. The organizational Capability factor can be improved by putting
measures in place to make sure that your organization's structures and systems—including your hiring, compensation, and recruiting processes—are created to attract and hold onto the Talent you need to compete in today's market (Covey, 2006). Lastly, for results, Covey (2006) makes it clear that establishing a system that incorporates cascading goals and putting everyone on the same page to create a shared vision for the intended Results is an effective strategy to improve this organizational trust factor.

**Related Research: Trust and Advisors**

Trust has been shown to play a significant role in developing good relationships between students and college instructors and/or staff. This is a key factor in success and retention in college (Nutt, 2003). Graduate students must have trust in their advisor, which also requires advisors to have high self-trust. The advisor mostly creates a healthy, effective learning environment, and in many disciplines, learning is done in the manner of an apprenticeship.

Students gain knowledge by watching their adviser handle a variety of circumstances, issues, and frustrations (Bloom et al., 2007). "Graduate advisors are in a special position of influence and trust" (Council of Graduate Schools, 1990). "The nature of the resulting relationship is as different from most undergraduate advisement relationships as a graduate study is from undergraduate. Although still appropriately developmental, the relationship must respect the adult status of the advisee and be choice-directed, reflecting the professional and personal needs common to adult development" (Selke & Wong, 1993).

**Statement of the Problem**

Graduate education leads to degrees that help people advance in their careers and earn more over a lifetime. Students pursue graduate studies in various disciplines at four-year institutions nationwide and globally each year. While there are many defined and undefined
experiences, graduate education generally encompasses research, curriculum, and instruction beyond the bachelor's degree with the purpose of advanced study in a discipline.

**Purpose and Research Objectives**

This study sought to explain specific factors and how they influence the level of trust between advisors and graduate students at the University of Arizona. To complete this study, the following research objectives guided the study:

1. Describe the demographic characteristics (Age, Gender, & Experience advising) of graduate advisors in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Arizona.
2. Describe graduate advisors' perceived level of self-trust in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Arizona.
3. Describe the trust factor, character, and its attributes (integrity & intent).
4. Describe the trust factor, competence, and its attributes (Capabilities & Results).
5. Compare the trust factors (Character & Competence) and their attributes by gender,
6. Describe the relationship between years of experience as a graduate advisor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Arizona and the perceived level of self-trust.

**Methods and Procedures**

The research design for this study is non-experimental descriptive correlational research. With this kind of research, the researcher's goal is to ascertain the strength and direction of the connection between two or more variables without manipulating the variables in the study (Ary et al., 2020).
Participants

The target population of this study is graduate faculty that can advise in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at the University of Arizona. This population includes both graduate faculty currently advising and graduate faculty not currently advising but having the ability to. Because there is a small number of graduate faculty with the ability to advise in CALS at the University of Arizona, no sample was taken. Instead, a census was used to assess the population.

Instrumentation

The data collection instrument used in this study was an electronic questionnaire. This instrument was composed exclusively of Likert-type questions. The researcher will create the electronic questionnaire, but it will be based on questions from Covey's *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything* (2006) assessment. The electronic questionnaire was divided into four parts. The first part measured participants' self-perception of integrity. The second part measured participants' self-perception of intent. The third part measured participants' self-perception of Capabilities, and the fourth part measured participants' self-perception of Results.

Measurement Error

Consulta Research has established the validity of this instrument in an independent study. Consulta Research is a research and consulting firm with advanced analytics and data-gathering expertise. To assess the validity of the instrument, a structural equation model was utilized to test how well the instrument fits the model, which allowed Consulta Research to realize the underlying drivers of the construct (FranklinCovey, 2017). By doing this, they determined the factors that makeup trust. Through this process, Consulta Research concluded that the instrument met all the requirements. The instrument achieved a Bentler Comparative Fit Index score of 0.87
(FranklinCovey, 2017). The Bentler Comparative Fit Index compares the instrument's fit with a Structural Equation model by measuring the difference between two layered models' noncentrality parameters, which tests validity (Bentler, 1990). In addition to establishing the validity of the instrument, Consulta Research determined the instrument's reliability through an independent research study. They reported a reliability estimate (Cronbach's alpha) of .91 for the dimension of self-trust (FranklinCovey, 2017).

**Data Collection Procedures**

To distribute the questionnaire to the participants, Dillman's *Internet, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (2014) was utilized to create a standard format to create the emails from. A pre-notice email was distributed to inform the potential participants about the study and notify them of the questionnaire they would receive. This pre-notice email was created and sent to participants through the distribution feature on Qualtrics. Within the first section of the pre-notice email, the researcher introduced themselves and stated that they were a graduate student in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at the University of Arizona. Then, it is stated when the invitation to participate in the research study will be sent. After this, the title of the study is given along with the purpose of the research and the target population: graduate faculty in CALS. The IRB approval number is also provided in this email. The following portion of the email describes the questionnaire. This is followed by the estimated time required to complete the questionnaire: 7-10 minutes. The last part of this pre-notice email details the incentivization of the study, explaining that the first 50 participants to complete the questionnaire will receive a $10 gift card to express appreciation for their participation.

Afterward, the invitation to participate in the research study was sent to the participants from the contact list. The researcher first explains what this research study aims to do: explain
the level of self-trust among graduate faculty within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Arizona. The participants are then informed that their graduate faculty title, which suggests that they interact with graduate students in informal and/or formal ways, is why they were selected to participate in the research study. In the following section, the researcher discusses how trust is essential to graduate advising because it is the foundation for a productive and supportive advisor-student relationship. It is stated that the study begins with an assessment of graduate faculty's self-trust and that the participants' participation is critical as it will add to the body of literature regarding the importance of trust in the acts of advising and mentoring graduate students. They are made aware that their responses will remain anonymous, that their participation is strictly voluntary, and that they will not be penalized should they choose not to participate. They are reminded of the incentive described in the prior email. Lastly, the questionnaire link and an opt-out link are provided.

Two days after the invitation was sent out, individuals who hadn't participated received the 1st follow-up email. This email starts by stating that the recipient has received an email requesting their participation in the research study. The researcher then makes the participant aware that they recognize that they have a busy schedule. Their participation is also important as their insight will be very helpful concerning self-trust among the University of Arizona graduate faculty within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Directly after this, the researcher states that they have provided the questionnaire link again to make participating in the research study more convenient. Individuals were then reminded of the incentive. Again, participant's participation is greatly appreciated and very important to the research study, and the participant's response within the next few days would be appreciated. The opt-out link and questionnaire links are then provided.
The final email that was received by the recipients who have yet to participate in the research study is the 2\textsuperscript{nd} follow-up email. To begin this email, the researcher states that the participant has recently received an invitation to participate in the research study and that this will be the final attempt to engage them. The researcher then reminds the individuals of the time required to complete the questionnaire and that there is still time to participate in the study. Then the link for the survey is provided, and the researcher expresses gratitude for their potential participation.

As mentioned earlier, the researcher incentivized the research study. The first step in this process was determining how these gift cards would be distributed. Once the company Rybbon was identified as a legitimate distributor of such gift cards, the researcher selected 50 gift cards from the catalog provided and distributed $10 to each gift card. A thank you email was created for the first 50 participants who would receive the gift cards, including the unique link to use the card. The services provided by Rybbon were then used to distribute the gift cards. Non-response error was not addressed as a census was taken. The data only applies to those who respond to the questionnaire. After the data collection process had concluded, there was an overall response rate of 46%.

**Data Analysis**

Data were summarized using a measure of central tendency (\textit{mean}), a measure of variability (\textit{standard deviation}), and frequencies, along with percentage values. A measure of central tendency was used to gather an overall average view of the data that were collected. A measure of variability was used to display how much the data varied above or below the mean on average. Pearson-Product Moment correlations ($r$) were used to determine the association between selected variables. Davis' (1971) guidelines for interpreting correlation effect size were used. The trust quotient (tQ score) (FranklinCovey, 2014) was utilized to provide context to the
participants' scores from the instrument. According to FranklinCovey (2014, p. 2) a tQ score can be viewed as a Trust Meter. The Trust Meter is like a car speedometer; your tQ score is your current "speed" of trust. If your speed is 0–55, you need to work urgently to increase your score. A speed of 56–80 means you have trust issues with some respondents. A speed of over 80 indicates respondents trust you—but unless your speed is consistently 100, you can always improve your Speed of Trust”.

**Findings**

The first research objective can be addressed upon analyzing the data for the questions regarding the participants' demographics in the research study. Again, the first research objective was to describe the demographics of graduate advisors at the University of Arizona. To do this, the age, gender, and years of experience as a graduate advisor were all assessed. Regarding the age of graduate advisors at the University of Arizona, the average among all those who participated in the research study was approximately 50 ($SD = 2.62$). Male participants' age average tended to be above the total average, with their average age being 52.02 ($SD = 10.78$). As for female participants, the average age was 46.30 ($SD = 9.01$), which was a much lower average regarding age than males. Lastly, for the participants who preferred not to specify their gender, they had an average age of 51.67 ($SD = 11.61$), which also was in the upper range of the average.

The next factor assessed to address the first objective of this research study was the experience level or years of experience associated with the participants. The average number of years of experience among all participants was about 15 years. Yet again, male participants had the highest average for this demographic factor; their average years of experience value was 17.53. Those who elected not to specify their gender in the research study had a value of 14.67
for their years of experience. Female participants gave responses to create a relatively low average when compared to male and unspecified gender participants. The average years of experience as a graduate advisor at the University of Arizona for female participants was 12.89 years.

The final factor evaluated was the gender of the graduate advisors participating in this research study. The gender that comprised most of the population for this research study was males, with a composite population percentage of 56.52% (f = 39). Female participants accounted for 39.13% (f = 27) of the population in this research study. The participants who preferred not to say their gender comprised the smallest portion of the population, with a percentage of 4.35% (f = 3).

### Four Cores of Credibility

Once the data collection process was concluded, the rest of the research objectives can be defined and explained in relation to this research study from the responses given by the participants. In addition, the purpose of the research study can be addressed in its entirety after the participants completed the questionnaire that was created.

**Table 1**

Demographic Characteristics of Participants Who Advise Graduate Students (n = 69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years Experience Advising</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52.02</td>
<td>10.78</td>
<td>17.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46.30</td>
<td>9.01</td>
<td>12.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>51.67</td>
<td>11.61</td>
<td>14.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49.99</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>15.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Age min.: 29, age max.: 77, years of experience min.: 1, years of experience max.: 50.
Table 2 provides data regarding the cores of credibility results for graduate faculty who advise students. Overall, the graduate faculty within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Arizona had a relatively high average ($M = 87.10, SD = 7.01$) out of 100 for their scores on the questionnaire regarding their perceptions of self-trust. Those who selected the "other" option for gender had the highest average overall score ($M = 88.67, SD = 4.08$). Female participants had the second-highest average overall ($M = 87.04, SD = 6.64$) self-trust score. Lastly, male participants have the lowest overall average self-trust score ($M = 85.46, SD = 7.09$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cores of Credibility</th>
<th>Male ($n = 39$)</th>
<th>Female ($n = 27$)</th>
<th>Other ($n = 3$)</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean' SD</td>
<td>Mean' SD</td>
<td>Mean' SD</td>
<td>Mean' SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>21.92 2.22</td>
<td>22.09 2.50</td>
<td>23.67 1.49</td>
<td>22.10 2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>21.77 2.14</td>
<td>21.41 2.71</td>
<td>24.33 0.94</td>
<td>21.74 2.42</td>
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<td>Intent</td>
<td>22.10 2.31</td>
<td>22.78 2.04</td>
<td>23.00 1.63</td>
<td>22.39 2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>20.80 2.68</td>
<td>21.43 2.85</td>
<td>22.33 1.60</td>
<td>21.12 2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capabilities</td>
<td>20.87 3.01</td>
<td>20.85 3.39</td>
<td>22.33 1.25</td>
<td>20.93 3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>20.74 2.29</td>
<td>22.00 2.04</td>
<td>22.33 1.89</td>
<td>21.30 2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>85.46 7.09</td>
<td>87.04 6.64</td>
<td>88.67 4.08</td>
<td>87.10 7.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.¹ Scores based on a scale of 5-25
Note.² Scores based on a scale of 20-100 (min.: 71, max.: 100)

The second research objective was to describe the trust factor, character, and its attributes (integrity & intent). For the overall character factor, the participants gathered the highest average with this factor as opposed to the competence factor ($M = 22.10, SD = 2.33$). Female participants gathered the second-highest average among participants ($M = 22.09, SD = 2.50$). Male participants had the lowest average for the factor of character ($M = 21.92, SD = 2.22$). Lastly, the
participants who selected 'other' for their gender had the highest average among all participants

\((M = 26.67, SD = 1.49)\).

The overall score from all participants for the character attribute of integrity was the
second highest influencing factor of trust value for CALS graduate advisors \((M = 21.74, SD =
2.42)\). Male participants achieved an average \((M = 21.77, SD = 2.14)\) score for this questionnaire
section. Female participants scored slightly lower than male participants \((M = 21.41, SD = 2.71)\).
Lastly, those selected 'other' for gender gathered the highest score for integrity \((M = 24.33, SD =
0.94)\).

Next was to describe the character attribute of intent as a factor of trust in the context of
graduate advisors at the University of Arizona. For intent, the average collected from all
participants was the highest influencing factor of trust value for CALS graduate advisors
\((M = 22.39, SD = 2.20)\). Female participants had the second-highest average for this attribute
\((M = 22.78, SD = 2.04)\). Male participants who completed the questionnaire had the lowest average for
their self-perceived Intent score \((M = 22.10, SD = 2.31)\). Those who selected 'other' for their
gender had the highest average \((M = 23.00, SD = 1.63)\).

For the third research objective, which was to describe the trust factor, competence, and
its attributes (Capabilities & Results), the overall average of competence for participants was
high as well, yet not as high as the trust factor of character \((M = 21.12, SD = 2.74)\). The highest
average among participants \((M = 22.33, SD = 1.60)\) was from those who selected 'other' for their
gender. Female participants' average was the second highest \((M = 21.43, SD = 2.85)\). Male
participants accumulated the lowest average for the trust factor of competence \((M = 20.80, SD =
2.68)\).
When comparing all demographics for the competence attribute of capabilities, the average score was the lowest of all attributes \( M = 20.93, SD = 3.13 \). Male participants’ average score for this was the second highest \( M = 20.87, SD = 3.01 \). Female participants had an average capability score of \( M = 20.85, SD = 3.39 \). The average for those who preferred not to state their gender was \( M = 22.33, SD = 1.25 \). Although this average was higher, it does not appear to be a significant figure.

For the competence attribute of results, the cumulative average among all participants was the third highest \( M = 21.30, SD = 2.27 \). Female participants had the second highest average score \( M = 22.00, SD = 2.04 \) among participants for this section. The average for male participants was the lowest among demographic groups for the competence attribute of results \( M = 20.74, SD = 2.29 \). Those who elected not to disclose their gender in the questionnaire had the highest average \( M = 22.33, SD = 1.89 \). These values are not significantly distant from one another between demographic groups.

**Influence of Advising on the Four Cores of Credibility**

Finally, the correlation between self-trust with the four cores of credibility and the years of experience as a graduate advisor was assessed. There was a negligible correlation between advising and self-trust \( r = -.01 \). Similarly, For the trust factor of character, there was a negligible correlation between advising and trust factor of character \( r = -.01 \). Next, for the Competence trust factor, the correlation was also negligible \( r = .04 \).
Discussion

Summary of Findings

There were no significant differences in the questionnaire scores between the differing demographics of graduate advisors in CALS at the University of Arizona. As for what factors most heavily affect self-perceived trust, different factors are more favored than others among the participants who did identify their gender for this research study. Male participants perceive themselves to be more trustworthy than females regarding the Character attributes of trust. For integrity, the average score was 21.77; for intent, the average score for males was 22.10. These findings could reflect that one's character is more of an important factor that makes up being a trustworthy graduate advisor than the attribute of competence. Alternatively, female participants had the highest scores in Intent and Results, which could suggest that having pure intentions and assisting graduate students produce greater results makes for a more trustworthy advisor.

Table 3

*The Level of Influence Advising Has on the Self-perceived Four Cores of Credibility (n = 69)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cores of Credibility</th>
<th>Advising Experience$^1$</th>
<th>Effect Size$^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capabilities</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $^1$ Years of experience range from 1-50 years.

Note. $^2$ Davis' (1971) Guidelines for the Interpretation of Effect Size for Correlations
Overall, for the total average among participants, both character attributes of trust, integrity, and intent had the highest mean values of 22.5 and 22.62, respectively. These averages do not show a substantial preference for the importance of specific trust factors over others. Still, it could suggest that one's character plays more of a factor in being trustworthy as a graduate advisor than their competence attributes. The Competence attributes may not be as important for this leadership role as they serve as a guiding leadership role for graduate students. Graduate advisors need to help graduate students produce results, not produce results themselves. Being honest with graduate students, helping them achieve their academic goals, having pure intent with the students' best interests in mind, and many other similar qualities aid in making a highly trustworthy graduate advisor. These qualities are all under the trust factor of character, so perhaps, this may be why the data returned as it did.

Regarding the correlation of the scores of the four cores of credibility with the years of experience as a graduate advisor, there was a -.01 correlation ($r$) overall. For both the trust factor of character and its respective attributes and the trust factor of competence and its respective attribute, the correlation ($r$) value never gets above .13 for either a negative or positive correlation.

**Conclusion and Implications**

Conclusions about the study were derived from the findings. The first conclusion drawn was that the perceived self-trust level was relatively high among graduate faculty within CALS at the University of Arizona. This suggests that the graduate faculty can effectively and efficiently create a trusting relationship with their respective graduate students through the waves of trust (Covey, 2006). Among the population for this research study, male participants have more room for improvement regarding overall perceived self-trust than female participants.
In addition, it was concluded that the trust factor of Character level was relatively high among participants. This implies that the graduate faculty have a strong foundation for which they build trust upon. Although female participants had a higher level of character as a whole, the difference was not viewed to be substantial. Contributing to character were the attributes of Integrity and Intent. For integrity, the self-perceived levels were relatively moderate. Female participants did not have as high of a level as males for this attribute of character. The attribute of intent was of a relatively high level for both male and female participants when compared to integrity. Unlike the attribute of integrity, female participants had a higher level for this attribute than males.

Next, it was concluded that the trust factor of Competence level was relatively high among all participants, yet not as high as character. This may imply that the graduate faculty can foster innovation and creativity with their graduate students. When comparing female and male participants in the research study, females again displayed a higher level of the trust factor of competence. Contributing to competence were the attributes of Capabilities and Results. For capabilities, the collective level was relatively low and the lowest of all the attributes comprising the four credibility cores. There was room for improvement for both male and female participants, and both participant groups had nearly identical levels of self-perceived Capabilities. Lastly, participants had a relatively high level for the attribute of Results. Female participants scored much higher than males for this attribute than the others.

The data showed that the character attributes of Integrity and Intent were more commonly found when evaluating the self-trust perception of graduate faculty in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Arizona. This does not suggest that the Competence attributes are neglected. One could interpret the results as this: while competent and capable of
producing results in their own right, graduate advisors may hold more value in character attributes for trust when perceiving themselves as graduate advisors to graduate students.

Research objective number five sought to determine the relationship. It was concluded that years of experience as a graduate advisor have negligible influence on the level of self-trust that one possesses.

**Recommendations**

To improve the overall perceived self-trust levels among graduate faculty within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Arizona, it is recommended that they increase their self-awareness and seek growth opportunities. It is recommended that classes are scheduled and implemented by the universities to which graduate faculty are employed, focusing on developing and improving self-trust. These organizations can utilize the accelerators in Covey's book (2006) to ensure that graduate faculty's self-trust levels increase. For the self-trust factor of character, it is recommended to utilize and practice the accelerators for character from Covey's book, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (2006). For example, one can increase their character through the accelerator of "stand for something" (Covey, 2006, p. 117). One can practice this accelerator by having identified values, creating a mission statement or credo, and ensuring that they live by those identified values and the expressions in the mission statement (Covey, 2006). Another way to increase the trust factor of character is to practice the accelerator of "declare your Intent" (Covey, 2006, p. 139). To practice this accelerator, one should be certain that their motivations are not purely self-serving and that their intent will be improved by considering how to state it (Covey, 2006). Next, to improve the trust factor of competence, practice the accelerators for Competence in Covey's book (2006). One accelerator for competence is "run with your strengths (and with your purpose)" (Covey, 2006).
This accelerator can be practiced by determining your advantages and concentrating on utilizing, developing, and maximizing what makes you unique (Covey, 2006). Another accelerator to increase one's level of competence is "expect to win" (Covey, 2006, p. 178). To practice this accelerator, a fundamental approach is for one to anticipate success for their team and themselves. Honorably, not at any cost, and in collaboration with others, not at their expense (Covey, 2006). Lastly, it is recommended that students should not factor in the years of experience that the graduate faculty advisor possesses.
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