A 360 Degree View: The Ideal Qualities of Library Leaders and Employees

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Abstract

The rapidly changing demands of library customers across different fields of librarianship mirrors that of general society. Are the qualities deemed important for these jobs five or ten years ago still deemed important today? Are these administrators and employees satisfied working in a field that requires such constant change and growth? Our study seeks to address these questions by providing further insight into what qualities library leaders look for in today's library employees while also providing insight into what qualities library employees look for in today's library leaders for a 360 degree view. Using a research study crosswalk, interview and survey questions were developed to ensure internal and construct validity and close alignment. The study's total sample was 289 participants, which included interviews and an online survey completed by public, academic, school, and special libraries in North Carolina and a large public library system in Arizona. The authors found the following: 1) leaders are associated with creating vision, motivating staff, and driving an organization forward, 2) managers are associated with following operational procedures, being task-focused, and being approachable to staff, and 3) excellent library employees show initiative, are self-motivated, are passionate about the work, and demonstrate a willingness to learn new skills.

Introduction

What people need from libraries is changing fast, and will likely continue to change as society does. LIS educators are often looking for ways to negotiate how LIS leaders and librarians are educated, prepared, and how they respond to these rapid changes, especially when their needs are not being met. Tight budgets, shifting demands, lack of time, new goals and purposes, and increasingly changing paradigms of need and service from patrons creates a dizzying array of scenarios in the field that is almost impossible to prepare for. This research study reports the findings of our follow up study from the article *The Ideal Qualities and Tasks of Library Leaders*[1] by seeking to triangulate data on what the ideal qualities of library leaders are from the direct perspectives from leaders, their staff, and current literature.

Are library administrators and library employees keeping up with these institutional changes? Are the qualities deemed important for these jobs five or ten years ago still deemed important today? Are these administrators and employees satisfied working in a field that requires such constant change and growth? Our study seeks to address these questions by providing further insight into what qualities library leaders look for in today's library employees while also providing insight into what qualities library employees look for in today's library leaders. One of the authors has taught library leadership and management at the undergraduate and graduate university levels for the past 20 years and is always looking for ways to address the all-important question "is what is being taught in my core LIS management course of significance and relevance to students who will be future practitioners in the field?" With a field that evolves as much as librarianship, it is crucial to continuously seek out this information in order to ensure that the top qualities are being effectively communicated to future library employees and library leaders. By researching and communicating these qualities, we can better create a work environment that supports library workers' efforts to create an outstanding library experience for all patrons.

Our study was guided by three research questions: (RQ1) What are the ideal qualities of library administrators? (RQ2) What are the ideal qualities of library employees? (RQ3) How satisfied are library leaders and employees with one another? Due to the volume of data involved in examining the ideal qualities and skills of leaders, managers, and employees, our study's findings have been broken up into two manuscripts: an initial focus on ideal qualities followed by a separate paper focused on the ideal skills identified.

Literature Review

Excellent leaders must demonstrate both the general and specific qualities of successful leaders in their field. Finding this balance is not always easy, but research suggests that it is worth striving towards. Chow and Rich's 2013 research, of which this study is an extension of, found that leadership and management vary over the different types of libraries; however, there was a core set of qualities that remained constant which included empathy, vision, communication, and flexibility. Such findings suggest that "while its application varies across disciplines, the core, foundational concepts and attributes of quality leadership and management remain the same across different types of libraries." Further research also suggests that there is a core foundation of attributes that remain the same for all leaders and managers in general, regardless of the institution they work for. While the application of such overlapping attributes may differ, qualities such as empathy towards others and high emotional intelligence can benefit any type of work environment by increasing employee job satisfaction.

There are three characteristics that seem to overlap in the literature regarding general leadership qualities: agreeableness, task-oriented behaviors, and embracing peoples' strengths and individualneeds. A 2015 Gallup online article found that "employees whose managers are open and approachable are more engaged [agreeableness]; employees whose managers help them set performance goals are more engaged [task-oriented]; employees whose managers focus on their strengths are more engaged [individualized consideration]."[2] Leaders and managers who inspire high levels of employee engagement are ideal leaders and managers because "the salient benefits of improving employee engagement include commitment, intrinsic worth, effort, and shared vision."[3] Similar findings were found in a study by Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, and Humphrey who discovered that the most common predictor of job satisfaction was a leader who demonstrated extraversion and agreeableness and the most important behavior leading to overall leader effectiveness was task-oriented behavior.[4] Another study by Long, Yusof, Kowang, and Heng states that individualized consideration, a major characteristic of transformational leadership, had a "positive and significant relationship to job satisfaction."[5]

Emotional intelligence, and this quality's impact on leadership effectiveness, is a highly discussed topic in the field of leadership and management. A study conducted by Vidyarthi, Anand, and Liden sought to assess whether emotionally perceptive leaders motivated higher employee performance and how factors like task interdependence and power distance affected this research question. The authors found that "emotional intelligence is a significant, albeit less powerful than some of the initial claims, predictor of work behaviors."[6] Emotional intelligence in a leader was most important when the leadership role included high task interdependence and a low power distance. A more detailed statement regarding these findings is as follows:

"Based on our results, managers should be aware that superior emotional perceptual skills may be particularly important in jobs requiring higher levels of task interdependence, such as work in a project team and in industries requiring considerable interaction and coordination between team members, such as information technology and consulting. In addition, our findings suggest that managers' emotional perception competencies are especially beneficial in low power distance climates. Given that contemporary organizations are increasingly becoming flatter and supportive of low power distance climates, signified by fewer levels of management and a lack of hierarchical titles, it is increasingly important for managers to develop their emotional competence to obtain high performance from their subordinates."

A leader who demonstrates high emotional intelligence can increase employee performance and job satisfaction in any work environment; however, this research suggests that emotional intelligence is particularly important for leaders and managers who work closely with their employees in a collaborative environment.

The literature reviewed for excellent library leadership qualities spans all spheres of the library field; from public libraries to special libraries. One study by Le P. Binh found, through the administration of 38 surveys to leaders in large and medium-size academic libraries throughout America, that the top five qualities of library leaders included: 1) vision, 2) management skills, 3) integrity, 4) collaboration, and 5) communication skills.[7] Of these five qualities, vision and integrity were the two most commonly mentioned in the surveys. Another study by Henricks and Henricks-Lepp found through their own literature review that the top managerial skills for public library leaders included: 1) planning, 2) budgeting, 3) organizing, and 4) controlling for problems.[8] Top leadership skills for public library leaders included: 1) creation of vision and 2) motivate staff and stakeholders to accomplish the vision. Henricks and Henricks-Lepp analyzed over 1,000 job advertisements using content-analysis and found that between the years 2000 and 2011 public library directors' skills, qualifications, and attributes leaned more toward managerial than leadership style. Both studies by Le and Henricks and Henricks-Lepp show the importance of leadership qualities and management qualities in all library leaders. Le states "to be an effective academic library leader, one must possess both excellent leadership and management skills."

In an article by Boatright the observation is made that the best qualities a library employee can possess are leadership qualities.[9] This includes those employees who act as a leader and exert positive influence throughout their organization. Boatright blurs the lines between traditional follower roles and traditional leader roles by stating that "in a learning organization, followers must be willing to lead and leaders must be willing to follow." This is described as shared leadership and the author states that this type of collective leadership mentality "requires trust throughout the organization." This idea is in keeping with the Leadership/Followership Process Model created by Jason Martin which illustrates that leaders influence followers and followers influence leaders through their constant interactions.[10] Boatright claims that top employees in a learning organization, such as academic libraries, must: 1) cast vision, 2) plan strategically, 3) manage projects, 4) reject passivity, 5) build a "team" for support, and 6) implement accountability. By taking on these leadership behaviors an employee can become a leader of a library without actually being in charge since "anyone who exerts positive influence through his or her work and relationships can be considered a leader."

Two new skills emerged in the literature when the focus was shifted from desirable traits in library leaders to those in library employees. These skills included public service duties, such as advocacy and outreach, as well as technological expertise or computer skills. In 2016 *Library Journal* reached out to academic and public library directors across America to discover what skills they thought would be needed for librarians over the next two decades.[11] The first skill on this list was "advocacy/politics." According to this journal's research, directors believed that the field needs employees who feel comfortable in the public sphere since this key competency includes "raising awareness of value among stakeholders, with an eye to maintaining or increasing funding, and building community, organization, and outreach, with an eye to expanding those services and effectively serving the constituencies who need them." The eleventh skill on *Library Journal's* list was "technological expertise" which involved things like web development, technological literacy, and coding. One library director told the journal that "just as key as existing technical skills is the 'willingness to continually learn new ones.'"

Most studies seek to assess leadership from a single perspective: either the perspective of the leaders or the perspective of the employees. The bulk of the studies used for this literature review determined top qualities for leaders and managers based on employee sense of engagement with the work, or overall job satisfaction. Our study seeks to expand beyond this solitary viewpoint to gage what makes an excellent library leader from the opinions of both the leaders and the employees, presenting a 360 degree view. Based on our previous research and the extant literature, the three research questions guiding our study were:

RQ1: What are the ideal qualities of library administrators?
RQ2: What are the ideal qualities of library employees?
RQ3: How satisfied are library leaders and employees with one another?

Methodology

Using a research study crosswalk, a checklist that connects all data collection instruments with the study's research questions, interview and survey questions were developed for each research question to ensure internal and construct validity and close alignment (see Appendices A and B). The study took place from January to May 2019.

Sample

The study's total sample was 289 participants, which included interviews (n=5) with state, academic, public, and school library leaders and an online survey completed by public, academic,

school, and special library leaders, managers, and employees in North Carolina and a large public library system in Arizona (n=284). The interviews used purposeful convenience sampling to identify experienced leaders in diverse areas of librarianship including the State Librarian and current administrators in academic, public, and school libraries. The survey used a combination of self-selection where the link was sent through different library association emails and snowball sampling, where administrators sent a link to the survey to their staff. A total of 175 employees and 98 administrators (11 participants chose not to identify) completed the survey. Survey participants from different types of libraries included public (n=211), academic (n=49), school (n=5), state (n=5), and special (n=2).

Instrumentation

Interview Questions

Interview questions were specifically designed to answer the research questions in individual interviews with library administrators. Using the crosswalk and the results from previous research, nineteen questions were created and each interview lasted approximately 30-60 minutes (Appendix A). To add internal and construct validity to our survey instrument, we conducted interviews with recognized library leaders first to help identify key words and themes, which then led to the development of the instrument.

The questions focused initially on the soft and hard skills of leaders, managers, and employees. The next set of questions examined differences between the ideal qualities of managers and leaders. The questions then shifted to leaders sharing their perspectives on what they felt the ideal qualities of excellent employees should be. Multiple types of open ended questions were asked to obtain a diverse set of responses including words and thoughts questions (ie. when you think of excellent leadership what words come to mind?), story prompting questions (ie. tell me about some of your worst managers and/or leaders?), as well as close ended scale rating questions (ie. on a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your employees?). The interview ended with the interviewee's thoughts on what should be taught in a library management class for a Library and Information Studies degree.

The interview questions were first field tested and piloted, refined based on feedback including defining soft and hard skills for the interviewee as part of the protocol.

Survey Questions

The survey was created using Qualtrics and consisted of 57 questions and utilized survey logic based on the participants status to determine which questions were presented (Appendix B). Based on the survey analytics, the average completion time was 18 minutes. Using the crosswalk, the questions were developed to answer each of the research questions and then refined based on results from the interviews along with additional questions from the literature.

Based on a participant's response to their library role (leader or staff), there were three question "paths" that could be taken. Library administrators were asked questions about employees and library employees were asked questions about administrators. For those who worked in school libraries, given that they typically served both roles as leader and employee, they were asked both sets of questions. There were also several sets of questions that everyone was asked regardless of library or position. These questions included basic demographics and overall job satisfaction.

The question formatting was designed to be diverse including using traditional multiple choice, matrix ratings, sliding scale ratings, star ratings, and open-ended text responses.

Data Analysis

Detailed notes were taken during each interview, which also was recorded. The recording of each interview was then listened to and our notes were supplemented and refined accordingly. Our interview notes were then coded and common themes were placed into categories through thematic analysis. A total of forty-nine codes were assigned. Analysis of the survey results included use of descriptive statistics, sorting of mean for scale items, and thematic analysis of qualitative comments.

Protocol

This study took place over a four-month period. A detailed literature review was first conducted to understand the extent of research on this topic. While there was a strong body of previous studies, it was clear that there was scarce research on the perspectives of both leaders and employees in terms of what an ideal leader or employee was. Three research questions were developed which then informed first drafts of the interview and survey using a research design crosswalk. Institutional IRB approval was obtained and interview recruitment began via email. A list of six library leaders was created based on purposeful convenience sampling - they represented different types of leadership and had existing relationships with the researchers. These leaders included a Branch Manager of a Public Library, a Dean of University Libraries, a Media Specialist of a School Library, a Library Director and Assistant Library Director of a county

library system, and a State Librarian. Prior to conducting the interviews, the interview questions were field tested and refined. A total of five interviews were conducted in person, through video conference, and over the phone and each was audio recorded for transcription purposes.

Preliminary results of the interviews helped inform our survey questions, which went through three revisions. The survey questions were field tested with MLIS graduate students and then formally sent out via library association and LIS department listservs and individual emails. The survey remained open for one month.

Results

Given the amount of data collected, the authors have decided to split the results into two papers: a qualities paper and a skills paper. As this is the qualities paper, only results regarding qualities of leaders, managers, and employees will be laid out and discussed. Results for each of the quality-focused interview questions are below, with compatible survey data accompanying the interview results. The results will be presented by answering each of the study's interview/focus group questions.

Q1: What are your thoughts about leadership and management? Are there differences between the two?

Clear delineation between leadership and management emerged from the interviews conducted with five different library leaders. All five interviewees stated that leaders focus on establishing and communicating a vision for the organization. One interviewee noted, "vision is taking in the big picture and more planning and looking far in advance" and another remarked, "leading (means) you have to have vision and direct the organization towards improved results and better service to the clientele that the organization serves." Four out of five interviewees stated that managers are focused on getting things done by being task focused and by following procedures. Interviewees used phrases such as "getting things done," or "taking care of business," and "making sure things are happening well." It was noted that a lot of the qualities, talents, and tasks overlap between leaders and managers but one interviewee noted that, "managers need to be leaders (while) leaders are not necessarily managers."

To further increase the validity of and data triangulate our findings, we compared leader responses with our survey results of what makes excellent leaders and managers (n=181):

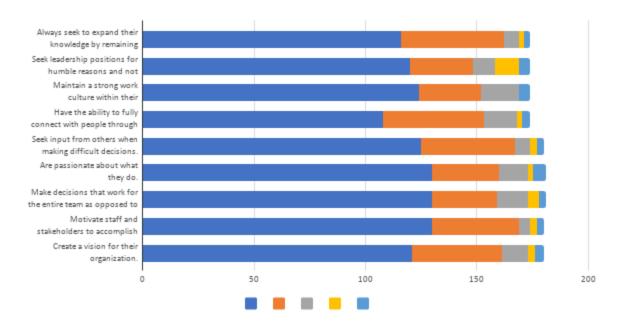To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Excellent leaders:

Figure 1. Likert Scale responses to the question "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about excellent leaders." Dark blue reflects "Strongly Agree" and light blue reflects "Strongly Disagree." See Appendix B for full statements.

Figure 1 suggests that excellent leaders are motivational, fair decision makers, and passionate. The three most highly rated statements about excellent leaders were they: 1) *Motivate staff and stakeholders to accomplish their organization's vision*, 2) *Make decisions that work for the entire team as opposed to a single person*, and 3) *Are passionate about what they do*. One survey participant noted that leaders have "a clear and strong vision and the ability to motivate staff to do and be better (with) an understanding and willingness to help professionals go further in their careers" (survey participant, 2019).

In terms of what makes excellent managers, Figure 2 shows that two quailities stand out:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Excellent managers:
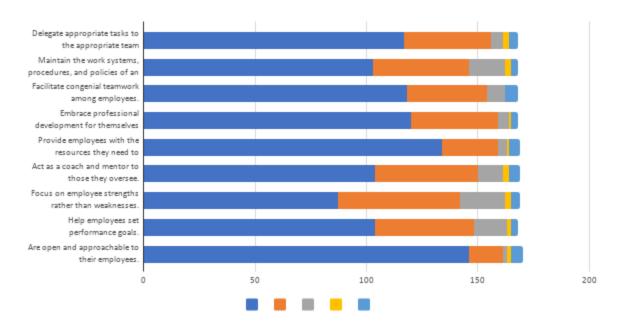
Figure 2. Likert Scale responses to the question "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about excellent managers." Dark blue reflects "Strongly Agree" and light blue reflects "Strongly Disagree." See Appendix B for full statements.

Figure 2 suggests that excellent managers are viewed as approachable by their employees. The two most highly rated statements for excellent managers were: *1) Open and approachable to their employees* and 2) *Provide employees with the resources they need to complete their tasks*. A library employee noted that strong managers are: "A delegator. One who knows the strengths and weaknesses of the staff. Manages the schedule, conflicts, time-off. The nuts-and-bolts stuff" (survey participant, 2019). These survey findings demonstrate a similar delineation between leadership and management that the interview responses demonstrated. Leaders deal more with vision, and motivating employees to follow such vision, while managers deal more with the day-to-day interactions and tasks that get things done.

Q2: When you think of excellent leadership what words come to mind? What about excellent management?

All five interview responses suggested that leaders inspire by being authentic and serve as drivers of an organization and managers follow clear operational procedures and processes and have excellent organizational skills. Words used to describe leaders included initiative,

integrity, respect, mission driven, big picture, visionary, passionate, motivational, and curious. Words used to describe managers included getting things done, operational excellence, setting priorities, organized, efficient, and effective.

While discussing excellent leaders, one library leader shared this story of how vision helps drive an organization:

"... a guy that comes across a farmer, just wandering around the country side sees a farmer pulling a mule and plow.... the guy (is)... amazed at how straight the furrow is with a plow and this mule. The guy goes up to (the farmer) and asks him 'how are you doing that so precisely, how are you keeping those rows so straight, if I was looking at the ground I'd be going all over the place' and the farmer says 'oh I'm not looking at the ground I'm aiming for that tree over there' - so he had a destination in mind as a way of guiding his efforts."

This tale suggests that leaders must always be looking forward in order to lead their organization in a straight and orderly direction. While discussing excellent managers, another interviewee stated that "good management is proactive and preventative, not reactive."

Survey participants stated similar ideas about leaders and managers, which further supports these interview findings. One survey participant wrote, "an excellent leader should have a clear goal in mind" (survey participant, 2019). This "clear goal" is reminiscent of the farmer aiming for the tree metaphor described in the previous quotation. When asked to elaborate on excellent managers a survey participant stated, "a strong manager contributes to the work systems, procedures, and policies of an organization but is not entirely responsible for maintaining them" (survey participant, 2019). These interview and survey findings maintain that leaders are more associated with identifying and leading towards a future vision while managers are more associated with day-to-day effectiveness and efficiency by solving problems and ensuring their team is strong and have the resources they need to get the job done.

Q3: When you think of excellent employees what words come to mind?

The five library leaders interviewed were clear about what qualities excellent library employees should possess: 1) initiative, 2) self-motivation, and 3) passion. Many interviewees described top employees as those who "are passionate about the work" and use this passion to generate self-motivation, self-direction, and engagement on the job. It was also made clear by all five interviewees that excellent employees demonstrate the same traits as excellent leaders, by

being authentic and a driver of the organization, and as excellent managers, by following clear operational procedures/processes and being organized. One interviewee stated the following about the qualities that excellent employees possess:

> "Strangely enough many of those same things (qualities of leaders and managers). But what's very important in our field especially, I think it goes across all disciplines....empathy, having emotional intelligence, self-awareness, enough to be able to work in a team and to ensure inclusion, diversity, and open-mindedness in our work. Big for me in terms of excellence in employees. I would say focus more about mutual empowerment and ensuring equity among not only our customers but each other. Showing initiative is big for us. We have a lot of work to do and we never have enough time and people to do it all...people having ownership and showing initiative about what we do and passionate about it, is big I would say."

To further increase the validity of our findings, below is our survey results from both library leaders and employees on what makes an excellent LIS professional (n=107):
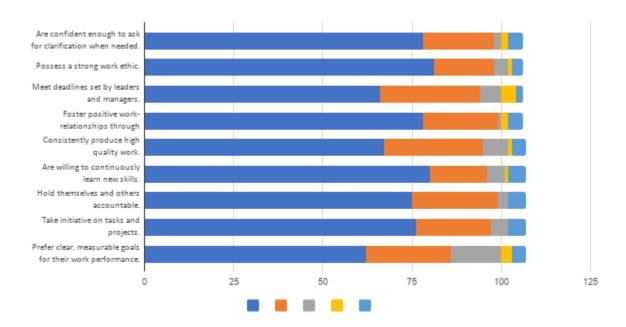

Figure 3. Responses to the question "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about excellent LIS professionals:" Dark blue reflects "Strongly Agree" and light blue reflects "Strongly Disagree." See Appendix B for full statements.

Figure 3 suggests that excellent LIS professionals show a strong work ethic and are committed to life-long learning. The two most highly rated statements for being an excellent LIS professional were: *1) Strong work ethic* and *2) Willingness to continuously learn new skills*. Survey participants supported these findings with their comments. One survey participant stated that "natural curiosity, willingness to be open and learn, optimism, and passion for the profession" (survey participant, 2019) were key for excellent library employees, which touched on all the major points mentioned in the interviews and in figure three.

Q4: Tell me about some of your worst managers and/or leaders. What traits do you wish they had? What about your best managers and/or leaders?

The three qualities most mentioned by interviewees for this question were: 1) poor communication, 2) micromanagement, and 3) being absent. Leaders and managers who micromanage "(do not) allow staff the freedom to make their own decisions." One interviewee commented on a manager who was never present stating, "how do they know that everything is running well in the building when they're never here?" The commitment of these absent managers was questioned along with whether they cared about the success of the organization and their employees at all. Poor communication was often described as being too vague in communications with employees or withholding information entirely from their employees. It was noted that "there's a time to be vague and there's a time when people need open, honest communication." Two interviewees also made clear that the best leaders and managers inspire employee growth. The best leaders "recognize (an employee's) strength and encourage ways to improve" as well as "overcome (an employee's) weaknesses by focusing on strengths."

Survey participants were also asked to elaborate on their worst leaders and managers which generated similar findings. Comments such as "they try to micro-manage individuals, they don't listen or communicate regularly with employees" (survey participant, 2019) and "disengagement from staff" (survey participant, 2019) all refer back to the three qualities mentioned by interviewees. The topic of micromanagement was the most heavily mentioned in these survey responses, highlighting this quality as the worst of the worst.

Q5: Tell me about some of your worst employees. What traits do you wish they had? What about your best employees?

Three out of five interviewees stated that the worst quality an employee can show is an inability to work well in a team. One library leader interviewed claimed that some of his best

employees were "committed to teamwork" and were "very supportive of each other." This hints that the opposite would be the actions of a "worst employee" scenario. Two interviewees claimed the best qualities an employee can show is accountability and honesty in their work. Another library leader interviewed said that she "does not enjoy working with those who stand around waiting to be told what to do, (I) would rather work with those who are accountable for their own tasks and do such tasks promptly."

The survey comments about poor employees and coworkers supported these findings providing validation to the findings of the interviews. Survey participants provided comments such as, "lazy, unreliable, complacent, resistant to change" (survey participant, 2019) and, "lack of team consideration and ability to think about others on the team" (survey participant, 2019). These comments refer back to the original ideas of excellent employees needing to work well in a team and needing to be accountable for their work.

Q6: Do you feel your employees understand, and are committed to, your organization's vision and strategic goals?

All five library leaders said yes to this question. Interviewees also made clear that employees' commitment is tied to the library's mission. If an employee is passionate about his or her library's mission, then he or she will likely feel highly committed to that library. As one interviewee stated:

> "Our organization's vision, we definitely all believe in that. That's why we're here. (Staff's) purpose of being here is to be in a library because they love libraries. We love libraries because we like to help people. This is the job, I've been doing it a long time and I still love it. I don't love certain aspects of it which is mostly the managerial nitpicky stuff, but I love what I do and I still come in here, I love talking to people, you have to be a people person in this place and you have to enjoy people."

To further increase the validity of our findings, below is our survey results concerning employee commitment (n=232):
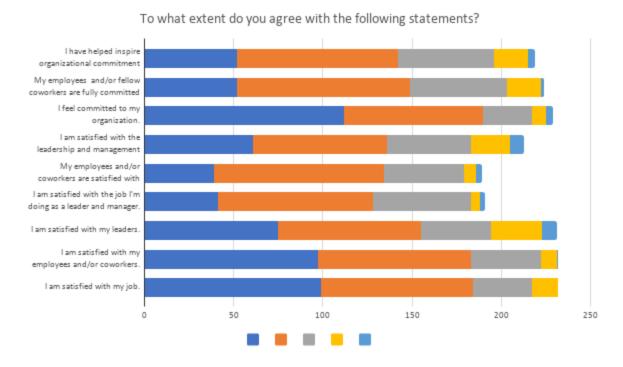
Figure 4. Responses to the question "To what extent do you agree with the following statements?" Dark blue reflects "Strongly Agree", orange reflects "Agree" and light blue reflects "Strongly Disagree." See Appendix B for full statements.

Figure 4 indicates that library employees feel very committed to their organizations, but perhaps they don't perceive others as being equally as committed. The most highly rated statement was: *I feel committed to my organization*. This indicates that individual employees feel highly committed to their place of work. The statement *my employees and/or fellow coworkers are fully committed to our organization* received significantly fewer "strongly agree" ratings. This indicates that others' commitment is perceived as slightly less than people's own commitment. The term slightly is used because the statement in question did receive the most "agree" ratings, indicating that employees' perception of others' commitment is still high.

One survey participant summarized these findings with the comment: "I am always looking for ways to show my employees and co-workers the mission of my organization. I am not sure, however, that all my coworkers do the same. I understand that everyone works for their paycheck, but I don't always feel like everyone is committed to the organization" (survey participant, 2019). Survey comments like this show that employee commitment is tied to the organization's mission, which supports the findings of the interviews.

Q7: Do you feel committed to your organization?

A leader's commitment is tied to his or her belief in the library's mission, as well as, the character of the overall institution. Each library leader interviewed gave a resounding yes to this question. "Absolutely, absolutely!" and "oh good grief yes, you better believe it!" are just some of the few declarations.

Survey results support these claims. As previously mentioned, the most highly rated statement in figure four was: *I feel committed to my organization*. Also, survey comments such as "I feel committed to the organization because I don't have admin breathing down my neck and am given a lot of freedom to engage the community I work with" (survey participant, 2019) also indicates high levels of commitment.

Overall, levels of commitment in libraries are high. These levels strongly depend on who is being asked, a leader or an employee, and on the library's mission and strategic goals. Leaders often display stronger commitment than employees and a strong belief in a library's mission induces higher commitment from both leaders and employees.

Q8: On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your previous leaders and managers? 5 being "extremely satisfied" and 1 being "extremely dissatisfied."

The mean rating was 4.1 regarding interviewees' overall satisfaction with previous leaders and managers. Three library leaders interviewed mentioned that their previous leaders and managers consisted of some great examples and some poor examples giving way to mostly average, or slightly above average, ratings.

Survey data supports this theme of having both great and poor conceptions of leadership and management. Figure 4 shows that the statements *I am satisfied with the leadership and management of those who are my leaders or supervisors* and *I am satisfied with my leaders* generated the widest range of ratings from survey participants. Both statements received the most "strongly disagree" ratings while still maintaining a relatively high number of "strongly agree" and "agree" ratings.

Overall, library leaders and library employees claimed above average levels of satisfaction with previous leaders and managers.

Q9: On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied do you believe your library employees are with leadership and management? 5 being "extremely satisfied" and 1 being "extremely dissatisfied."

The mean rating was 3.6 regarding interviewees' perceptions of employee satisfaction with leadership. Each rating was given only after words such as "hoping for," "I hope," "at the moment," and "probably." One interviewee also mentioned that he was not in his position long enough to answer this question with full confidence.

Survey results further validate this lower rating of perceived employee satisfaction of leadership and management. Figure four indicates that the lowest rated statement was: *my employees and/or coworkers are satisfied with my leadership and management.* This data mirrors the interviewees' hesitation to provide higher ratings for this question.

Overall, library leaders interviewed and surveyed signified average, or slightly below average, levels of perceived employee satisfaction with current leaders and managers.

Q10: On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your leadership and management of your employees? 5 being "extremely satisfied" and 1 being "extremely dissatisfied."

The mean rating was 2.6 regarding satisfaction with the interviewees' own leadership and management. Three interviewees mentioned that they were hesitant to rate too high, or give a perfect 5, since there could always be room for improvement and growth.

Survey comments about leadership and management performance further supports the idea of there always being room for improvement. One survey participant noted, "I believe I can always do more, learn more, and improve my job performance" (survey participant, 2019). Another stated, "I am my own worst critic and will always be tougher on myself than anyone else" (survey participant, 2019) which provides further insight into why ratings were lower for this question than others.

Overall, library leaders interviewed and surveyed provided lower than average ratings for their performances as leaders and managers. Further explanations, and elaborative comments, showed that such ratings were given with the mentality that there is always room to improve.

Q11: On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your employees. 5 being "extremely satisfied" and 1 being "extremely dissatisfied."

The mean rating was 4.1 regarding overall satisfaction with employees. One interviewee mentioned having a few outliers, another interviewee mentioned that he has not had enough time to really assess his team, but all said that the majority of their employees were great.

Survey data supports interviewees' high rating for this question. Figure four shows that the statement *I am satisfied with my employees and/or coworkers* was the third highest rated statement. One survey participant enthusiastically added, "Love my job! Coworkers are

awesome!" (survey participant, 2019). Another said, "I like working with just about everyone at my branch" (survey participant, 2019).

Overall, library leaders show an above average satisfaction with their employees and library employees show an above average satisfaction with their coworkers.

Q12: On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your leaders and managers? 5 being "extremely satisfied" and 1 being "extremely dissatisfied."

The mean rating was 4.0 regarding satisfaction with interviewees' current leaders and managers. These high ratings were supported by positive quotes with one interviewee noting, "our whole leadership is very progressive, focused, and committed."

Positive survey comments echo the interviewees' positive comments. One survey participant added the following comment concerning current leaders:

"I am fortunate to work in an environment where our leaders are generous, flexible and practical all while being risk takers and effective advocates. We are continuously working to make services better for customers and engagement more real with our staff. Mistakes are forgiven in the name of trying new things and our eyes are on the goal - to serve our communities - the best way we can" (survey participant, 2019).

Overall, library leaders and library employees claimed above average satisfaction with their current leaders and managers.

Discussion

Our study's methodology was to give current leaders, managers, and employees a direct voice in answering our three research questions. While the sample could be increased to ensure greater validity, overall, the study utilized a combination of interviews and surveys to collect perspectives from the field from both. Our discussion is framed within the study's three research questions.

RQ1: What are the ideal qualities of library administrators?

Library administrators can be further defined as leaders and managers. Leaders were more often associated with vision, and motivating employees to follow such vision. Excellent leaders were deemed motivational, fair decision makers, and passionate. Managers were more often associated with the day-to-day interactions and tasks that get things done. Excellent

managers were viewed as approachable by their employees. The results show that a clear delineation exists between leaders and managers in terms of the application of different qualities but at the same time both must possess similar qualities. This distinction between the two roles is in keeping with previous studies done on this topic. It was mentioned that managers must also be leaders and motivate staff, while leaders do not necessarily need to be managers and deal with daily operational tasks.

Inspiring employee growth was another top quality identified in interviews with library leaders for library administrators to possess. This includes the ability to overcome an employee's weaknesses by recognizing, and focusing on, an employee's strengths. This type of positive, individualized consideration is most beneficial to employees. Micromanaging employees was the worst quality for library administrators to possess. It was said that such behavior signifies an administrator's lack of trust that his or her employees can handle their tasks. Such lack of trust damages administrator and employee relationships, creating a toxic work environment.

The following table shows that there are seven top qualities of leaders and managers as defined by themselves and their employees.

Library Administrator Top Qualities
For Leaders and Managers
1) Establish and communicate a vision for the organization
2) Motivate staff and stakeholders to accomplish their organization's vision
3) Make decisions that work for the entire team as opposed to a single person
4) Are passionate about what they do
5) Seek input from others when making difficult decisions
6) Inspiring employee growth
7) Positivity and focus on individual strengths

In contrast, there are four "cardinal sins" committed by the worst administrators.

Worst Leader/Manager Qualities
1) Poor Communication
2) Micromanagement
3) Being Absent (not seen or heard)
4) Lack of trust

RQ2: What are the ideal qualities of library employees?

A strong work ethic was the top quality for library employees to possess. It was remarked that it is best when such work ethic comes from a real passion for the job and leads to an employee's commitment to continuous learning. An inability to work in a team was the worst quality for library employees to possess. Working in a library requires constant interpersonal interactions with coworkers, as well as, patrons. Being able to harmoniously interact with others is highly prized in this "people person" career. Results also showed that top library employees possess all the same qualities as top library leaders and managers. They can motivate their coworkers and can follow operational policies.

The table below shows the top three top qualities of employees with the fourth being all of the same qualities identified for administrators.

Top Qualities for Employees
1) Strong Work Ethic
2) Passion for the Job
3) Working Well with Others
4) Same Qualities for Library Administrators

Finally, there are six "worst qualities" for employees.

Worst Qualities for Employees
1) Inability to Work in a Team
2) Lazy
3) Unreliable
4) Complacent
5) Resistant to Change

6) Lack of Consideration for Others

RQ3: How satisfied are library leaders and employees with one another?

Results showed the following about the field's satisfaction levels:

- Employees are generally satisfied with their previous leaders/managers.
- Leaders/managers feel that employees may not be entirely satisfied with their current leaders.
- Leaders rate themselves below average in terms of their own leadership/management performance with an eye towards continuous improvement.
- Leaders are overall satisfied with their employees
- Employees are overall satisfied with their co-workers
- Employees are generally satisfied with their current leaders and managers

Given that most satisfaction polls generated average, or above average results, it is fair to say that library employees are generally satisfied with their employees and library employees are generally satisfied with their leaders and managers.

Results Support and Address Limitation of Author's Previous 2013 Leadership and Management Study

In the Chow and Rich 2013 study, thematic analysis of 114 interviews with library leaders and managers identified four main ideal qualities – empathy, vision, flexibility, and communication. Four secondary qualities also emerged – delegation, creativity, integrity, and passion. This study's findings supported these eight primary and secondary qualities and added greater clarity and richness in understanding them by addressing this issue through the perspectives of both administrators and employees. For example, empathy, the top rated quality mentioned in the original study, was not mentioned as much directly in the new study but was instead articulated and operationalized as "being positive and understanding the unique context of individuals so that the focus was on employee strengths and not weaknesses."

Limitations and Implications

The study has four main limitations and three primary implications. The study's main limitations include: 1) Small sample size both in terms of number of participants and also in terms of diversity of locality with only two states included; 2) Lack of linearity of the data in terms of leaders and employees rating one another. While it was set up this way, we are unsure of how often both leaders and employees in the same library actually rated one another so our data set

truly is aggregate, which could lead to confounding variables; 3) Self-selection bias. As all participants were self-selected, the leaders who felt things were not going well with their employees may have not chosen to participate and also therefore did not send to their employees either. This may be why overall ratings were relatively high for both leaders and employees; and 4) Lack of responses related to diversity of library type. Due to this lack of diversity our research is not generalizable to special, state, and school libraries.

Despite these limitations, our study still is a contribution to the literature and represents one of the first of its kind to attempt to get a 360 degree view of library leaders and employees from each of their perspectives. Primary implications of our study include: 1) Providing current leaders and employees with potential best practices, which hopefully may prove useful to them; 2) Despite the limitations identified, the study's internal validity was high as we used a research design crosswalk and aligned all questions and instruments to our study's research questions; furthermore, the results were data triangulated through both interviews and surveys; and 3) The preliminary results need to be expanded upon and the study provides a solid base for future replication by our team as well as other LIS researchers.

Conclusion

It is rare to find research about leadership and management from multiple perspectives within an institution. It is even rarer to find research about library-specific leadership and management from multiple perspectives within an information organization. Most research regarding this topic focuses on the leader's viewpoint or the employee's viewpoint. Our findings add to this body of research by moving beyond this single mindset, to identify the top qualities of library leaders and employees from the perspectives of both the leaders and their staff. Discussing ideal qualities for both administrators and employees, with both groups of people, gives way to a broader, 360-degree, view of the topic. This wide view allows us to obtain a more extensive picture of the state of our work. It would be beneficial to repeat such research every five years to keep up with the field's ever-changing growth and new emerging trends. Our next paper will focus on the ideal skillsets identified by library leaders, managers, and their employees.

Notes

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Appendix A: Interview Instrumentation

Job Title:

Years in Position:

Brief Description of Research: Dr. Chow and I are conducting research in order to write an article. I'm (Ashley Conte) the principal investigator and Dr. Chow is the faculty advisor. The goal of this research is threefold 1) to identify the main qualities of library administrators 2) to identify the ideal qualities of library employees and 3) to assess what the overall satisfaction with library leadership/management and employees is throughout libraries in North Carolina. I'm interviewing you today about these topics in order to add a voice to this data.

1. What are your thoughts about leadership and management? Are there differences between the two?

2. When you think of excellent leadership what words come to mind? What about excellent management?

3. When you think of excellent employees what words come to mind?

**Soft Skills: Personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people (communication skills and work ethic).
**Hard Skills: Specific, teachable abilities that can be defined and measured (technical skills).

4. What are the primary soft skills an excellent leader should have? What about excellent managers?

5. What are the primary soft skills an excellent employee should have?

6. What are the primary hard skills an excellent leader should have? What about excellent managers?

7. What are the primary hard skills an excellent employee should have?

8. What are five skills you use on a daily basis?

9. Tell me about some of your worst managers and/or leaders. What traits do you wish they had? What about your best managers and/or leaders?

10. Tell me about some of you worst employees. What traits do you wish they had? What about your best employees?

11. What are the ideal leadership skills you look for in employees?

12. Do you feel your employees understand, and are committed to, your organization's vision and strategic goals?

13. Do you feel committed to your organization?

14. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your previous leaders and managers?
    a. 5 being "extremely satisfied" and 1 being "extremely dissatisfied"

15. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied do you believe your library employees are with leadership and management?

    a. 5 being "extremely satisfied" and 1 being "extremely dissatisfied"

16. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your leadership and management of your employees?

    a. 5 being "extremely satisfied" and 1 being "extremely dissatisfied"

17. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your employees?

    a. 5 being "extremely satisfied" and 1 being "extremely dissatisfied"

18. On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied are you with your leaders and managers?

    a. 5 being "extremely satisfied" and 1 being "extremely dissatisfied"

19. What topics would you like to see added to a library management class for a LIS degree?

Appendix B: Survey Instrumentation

Question 1:

Project Description

Project Title: Qualities of Library Administrators and Employees
Principal Investigators: Dr. Anthony Chow and Ashley Conte

What is this all about?

I am asking you to participate in this research study because we are assessing what qualities excellent leaders and ideal employees possess. This research project will only take about 10 minutes and will involve you answering questions about the qualities of excellent leaders, managers, and employees as well as reflecting on your own experiences with leaders, managers, and employees. Your participation in this research project is voluntary.

Will this negatively affect me?

No, other than the time you spend on this project there are no known or foreseeable risks involved with this study.

What do I get out of this research project?

You will contribute to a more congenial and productive work environment by 1) providing further understanding of leaders and managers in the library field and 2) providing further understanding of employees in the library field.

Will I get paid for participating?

There will be no payments made for participating in this study.

What about my confidentiality?

We will do everything possible to make sure that your information is kept confidential. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. We will not ask for any identifying information and all data will be stored in a password safe computer. Internet Use Disclosure: Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing.

What if I do not want to be in this research study?

You do not have to be part of this project. This project is voluntary and it is up to you to decide to participate in this research project. If you agree to participate, at any time in this project you may stop participating without penalty.

What if I have questions?

You can ask the faculty advisor Dr. Anthony S. Chow (aschow@uncg.edu) anything about the study. If you have concerns about how you have been treated in this study call the Office of Research Integrity Director at 1-855-251-2351.

After reviewing the above information do you agree to participate in this study?

- € Yes
- € No

Question 2:

What type of library do you work in?

- € Academic Library

€   School Library

€   Public Library

€   Special Library

€   State Library

€   National Library

€   Other

Question 3:

Are you a library administrator or a library employee (if unsure please complete as both)?

€   Library leader or manager (e.g. branch manager, library director, assistant director, department supervisor, oversight of two or more employees, etc.)

€   Library employee

Question 4:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Excellent LIS professionals:

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)
Prefer clear, measurable goals for their work performance.					
Take initiative on tasks and projects.					
Hold themselves and others accountable.					
Are willing to continuously learn new skills.					
Consistently produce high quality work.					

Question 5:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Excellent LIS professionals:

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)
Foster positive work-relationships through effective communication.					
Meet deadlines set by leaders and managers.					
Possess a strong work ethic.					
Are confident enough to ask for clarification when needed.					
Other:					

Question 6:

Please elaborate on what you believe makes an excellent LIS professional.

Question 7:

Please rate the importance of the following soft skills for an excellent LIS professional:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Communication (Written)					
Communication (Oral)					
Creativity					
Flexibility					
Problem Solving Skills					

Question 8:

Please rate the importance of the following soft skills for an excellent LIS professional:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Collaboration					
Adaptability					
Independence					
Reliability					
Innovation					

Question 9:

Please rate the importance of the following soft skills for an excellent LIS professional:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Active Listening					
Positive Attitude					
Self-Motivated					
Teamwork					
Customer Service					
Other:					

Question 10:

Please elaborate on the soft skills you believe excellent LIS professionals should possess.

Question 11:

Please rate the importance of the following hard skills for an excellent LIS professional:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Data Analysis					
Advocacy					
Presentation Skills					

	Report Writing				
Conflict Resolution					

Question 12:

Please rate the importance of the following hard skills for an excellent LIS professional:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Marketing					
Data Visualization					
Project Management					
Information Literacy					
Willingness to learn new technologies					

Question 13:

Please rate the importance of the following hard skills for an excellent LIS professional:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Strategic Planning					
Qualitative Data Collection					
Quantitative Data Collection					
Digital Learning/Teaching					
Budgeting					
Other:					

Question 14:

Please elaborate on the hard skills you believe excellent LIS professionals should possess.

Question 15:

Please rate the importance of the following technological skills for an excellent LIS professional:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Microsoft Office					
Computer Support					
Website Design					
Online Networking					
Projector Expertise					

Question 16:

Please rate the importance of the following technological skills for an excellent LIS professional:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
eBooks/eAudio					
Smart Phone Technology (ex. apps)					
Database Knowledge					
Media Production					
Wireless/Wired Connectivity					

Question 17:

Please rate the importance of the following technological skills for an excellent LIS professional:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Metadata					
Scanning					

Printing/Wireless Printing					
SMART Board Knowledge					
Other:					

Question 18:

Please elaborate on the technological skills you believe excellent LIS professionals should possess:

Question 19:

Please describe the characteristics of some of your worst employees and/or coworkers.

Question 20:

What are the top soft or hard skills that you believe must be taught in a LIS management course?

Question 21:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Excellent leaders:

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)
Create a vision for their organization.					
Motivate staff and stakeholders to accomplish their organization's vision.					
Make decisions that work for the entire team as opposed to a single person.					
Are passionate about what they do.					

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)
Seek input from others when making difficult decisions.					

Question 22:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Excellent leaders:

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)
Have the ability to fully connect with people through emotional intelligence and empathy.					
Maintain a strong work culture within their organization.					
Seek leadership positions for humble reasons and not simply for "power."					
Always seek to expand their knowledge by remaining curious.					
Other:					

Question 23:

Please elaborate on what you believe makes an excellent leader.

Question 24:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Excellent managers:

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)
Are open and approachable to their employees.					
Help employees set performance goals.					
Focus on employee strengths rather than weaknesses.					
Act as a coach and mentor to those they oversee.					
Provide employees with the resources they need to complete their tasks.					

Question 25:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Excellent managers:

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)
Embrace professional development for themselves and for their employees.					
Facilitate congenial teamwork among employees.					
Maintain the work systems, procedures, and policies of an organization.					

Delegate appropriate tasks to the appropriate team members.					
Other:					

Question 26:

Please elaborate on what you believe makes an excellent manager.

Question 27:

Please rate the importance of the following soft skills for an excellent leader:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Trustworthiness					
Ambition					
Adaptability					
Integrity					
Initiative					

Question 28:

Please rate the importance of the following soft skills for an excellent leader:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Empathy					
Transparency					
Vision					
Creativity					
Humility					

Question 29:

Please rate the importance of the following soft skills for an excellent leader:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Intelligence					

Flexibility					
Communication					
Authenticity					
Equity/Fairness					
Other:					

Question 30:

Please elaborate on the soft skills you believe excellent leaders should possess.

Question 31:

Please rate the importance of the following soft skills for an excellent manager:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Accountability					
Agreeableness					
Conscientiousness					
Cooperativeness					
Staff Performance Tracking					

Question 32:

Please rate the importance of the following soft skills for an excellent manager:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Coaching/Mentorship					
Delegation					
Stewardship					
Organizational Skills					
Emotional Intelligence					

Question 33:

Please rate the importance of the following soft skills for an excellent manager:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Time Management					
Motivation					
Active Listening					
Problem Solving Skills					
Other:					

Question 34:

Please elaborate on the soft skills you believe excellent managers should possess.

Question 35:

Please rate the importance of the following hard skills for an excellent leader:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Financial Skills/Budgeting					
Information Literacy					
Marketing					
Advocacy					
Long-Term Planning					

Question 36:

Please rate the importance of the following hard skills for an excellent leader:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)

Data Analysis				
Strategic Planning				
Operational Excellence				
Technological Expertise				
Public Administration				

Question 37:

Please rate the importance of the following hard skills for an excellent leader:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Continuing Education					
Understanding of Library Practices					
Project Management					
Networking Skills					
Understanding and the Use of Data					
Other:					

Question 38:

Please elaborate on the hard skills you believe excellent leaders should possess.

Question 39:

Please rate the importance of the following hard skills for an excellent manager:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Budgeting					
Staff Management					
Facilitate Teamwork					
Negotiation Skills					

Political Knowledge					

Question 40:

Please rate the importance of the following hard skills for an excellent manager:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Personnel Knowledge					
Knowledge of HR Policies					
Hiring/Firing Skills					
Decision Making					
Short-Term Planning					

Question 41:

Please rate the importance of the following hard skills for an excellent manager:

	1 (Not at all Important)	2	3	4	5 (Extremely Important)
Basic Computer Skills					
Task Delegation					
Schedule Creation and Implementation					
Customer Service					
Placing people in positions of strength					
Other:					

Question 42:

Please elaborate on the hard skills you believe excellent managers should possess.

Question 43:

Please describe the characteristics of some of your worst leaders and/or managers.

Question 44:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your current job:

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)
I am satisfied with my job.					
I am satisfied with my employees and/or coworkers.					
I am satisfied with my leaders.					

Question 45:

Please elaborate if you can.

Question 46:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)

I am satisfied with the job I'm doing as a leader and manager.				
My employees and/or coworkers are satisfied with my leadership and management.				
I am satisfied with the leadership and management of those who are my leaders or supervisors.				

Question 47:

Please elaborate on opportunities for improvement if you can.

Question 48:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about organizational commitment:

	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2	3	4	5 (Strongly Agree)
I feel committed to my organization.					
My employees and/or fellow coworkers are fully committed to our organization.					
I have helped inspire organizational					

commitment from my employees and/or fellow coworkers.					

Question 49:

Please elaborate if you can.

Question 50:

Please specify your gender.

- € Male
- € Female
- € Transgender

Question 51:

Please specify your age.

- € 18-24
- € 25-34
- € 35-44
- € 45-54
- € 55-64
- € 65-74
- € 75+

Question 52:

Please specify your ethnicity. Please select all that apply.

- € White
- € Black or African American
- € Asian
- € American Indian and Alaska Native
- € Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- € Hispanic or Latino
- € Other

Question 53:

Do you work in the United States?

- € Yes

€   No

Question 54:

What state do you work in? (drop-down choice)

Question 55:

What continent do you work in? (drop-down choice)

Question 56:

What is the name of the country you work in?

Question 57:

How many years have you been in your current job?

- €   0 - 5 years
- €   5 - 10 years
- €   10 - 15 years
- €   15 - 20 years
- €   20 - 25 years
- €   25+ years

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