2018

Understanding the Potential of University Teachers to Become Unit Coordinators

Karim.Salhani Rafic Salhani
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Karim Salhani

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Steven Tippins, Committee Chairperson, Management Faculty
Dr. David Banner, Committee Member, Management Faculty
Dr. Kathleen Barclay, University Reviewer, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2018

Abstract

Understanding the Potential of University Teachers to Become Unit Coordinators

by

Karim R. Salhani

MA, University of Surrey, 2011

BS, American University of Beirut, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

May 2018

Abstract

Current reports estimate that 1 in 5 unit coordinators at universities resign each year. When it comes to management of talent, universities lag behind other industries. The problem is university leaders lack empirical ways of identifying future leaders to ensure the survival and growth of the institution. The purpose of this study was to understand how university teachers demonstrate formal leadership potential by uncovering the main behavioral patterns, personal characteristics, tasks, and relationship-building activities of teachers that enable them to become excellent candidates for leading a department. With the Leadership Potential BluePrint as a conceptual framework, a multiple-case study design fostered the collection of data through in-depth interviews with 20 unit coordinators at universities in Lebanon. The results of a multiple-case and cross-case analysis suggest that successful unit coordinators are interpersonally skilled, collegial, emotionally mature, resilient, multitasking, driven, open, assertive, and cognitively intelligent. In terms of behaviors, they ensure an abundance of interactions, encourage teamwork, build consensus, delegate tasks and responsibilities, hold an open-door policy, motivate, inspire and develop others, ensure their physical presence in the department, foster an environment of honesty and transparency, and build trust in the workplace. This study is likely to produce a positive impact on university teachers' professional opportunities and students' postgraduate lives because of a better access to and development of unit coordinators.

Understanding the Potential of University Teachers to Become Unit Coordinators

by

Karim R. Salhani

MA, University of Surrey, 2011

BS, American University of Beirut, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

December 2017

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Simon Khoury whose dying wish was for me to pursue my Ph.D. May this completed dissertation serve as a testimony of your deserved place in Heaven.

Acknowledgements

Above all, I thank God for giving me hope where I thought there was none. I thank my parents, Rafic and Nadia Salhani, for their love and support. I thank my committee members, Dr. Steven Tippins and Dr. David Banner, for their knowledge and guidance throughout the dissertation process.

I would also like to thank each and every one of my participants for gracefully taking the time to participate in my study. You are the true leaders that this country needs.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The rapidly proliferating effects of globalization and technology, along with the constant shift in the workforce demographic, have led to an increased awareness regarding the importance of effectively managing leadership talent in organizations (Church & Silzer, 2014). Corporations can no longer afford the staggering costs of failed senior external hires (Bauer, 2011) and the future of businesses seems to heavily depend on having enough candidates with high leadership potential (Church, 2014). As a result, human resource (HR) practitioners are urgently calling for more empirical studies on leadership potential identification (Dries & Pepermans, 2015), hoping to better equip their organizations to survive this constantly changing environment.

Although researchers are providing more studies on leadership potential, few scholars and practitioners seem to acknowledge significant differences when it comes to predicting leadership in different sectors or contexts (Allen et al., 2014; Lambright, 2015). As a result, some industries have many irrelevant or outdated processes (Lambright, 2015). Case studies in universities (Whitney, 2013) revealed that scholars need to conduct further research on how leadership potential develops in teachers, which according to Davies and Davies (2011), may provide the educational field with the necessary tools to stop lagging behind other industries when it comes to overall talent management.

Finally, improving the quality of leadership development in teachers at universities may have a profound impact on social change. Bond and Sterrett (2014)

pointed out a positive correlation between having strong educational leaders and optimizing the learning experience for students. Investing in the identification and development of unit coordinators seems to create significant learning opportunities for the upcoming generation of students (Holecek, Beckham, & McKethan, 2016) who would become better equipped to deal with many common psychological stresses and challenges related to transitioning to a postgraduate life. University leaders can facilitate this transition by providing students with culturally relevant teaching and a *sociopolitical consciousness* (Glover & Harris, 2016) of which unit coordinators seem to be particularly aware when teaching in the classroom (Durden, Escalante, & Blitch, 2014).

The following sections of this chapter include a summary of the research literature on leadership potential, particularly focusing on the educational context of leadership at universities. The lack of understanding regarding how university teachers display formal leadership potential (Cosenza, 2015; Whitney, 2013) led to formulating a problem statement about the profound impact of this literature gap on the lives of both practitioners (university managers, teachers, and unit coordinators) and students. I then describe the qualitative multiple-case study (Yin, 2013) used to answer the related research problems, particularly aiming at better understanding the behavioral patterns, personal characteristics, as well as the tasks and relationship-building activities (Pepper & Roberts, 2016) that make a university teacher have the potential to becoming a unit coordinator.

Background of the Study

Leaders in the education sector are expected to perform in increasingly volatile, complex, and uncertain environments (Ahmed, Reaburn, Samad, & Davis, 2015). However, the education sector seems to hold additional challenges created by the internal complexity of universities. The diversity of activities, ranging from research-intensive tasks to the professorial duties of teaching, has given rise to different leadership styles that do not always conform to that of the university (Holt et al., 2013). As a result, transactional, transformational, and distributed leadership styles are deployed in a composite fashion at universities (Ahmed et al., 2015) despite the highly touted shift towards transformational leadership recommended by scholars in this field (Holt et al., 2013; Mattar, 2015). The new leadership styles that emerged from the diversity of activities at universities further added to the ambiguity of leadership in this context.

This ambiguity regarding how to manage leadership effectively at universities has led to attention being taken away from research-intensive tasks and reallocated towards the teaching role of universities (Scott & Scott, 2016). The acknowledgement of the importance of teaching seems to have been instigated by the increasing awareness of the positive impact unit coordinators have, not only on educational change (Lowery-Moore, Latimer, & Villate, 2016), but also on the overall well-being of the organization (Whitney, 2013). Indeed, unit coordinators seem to play a major role in improving the quality of teaching and learning at universities (Khan & Malik, 2013) and the socially responsible nature of their leadership (Lieberman, 2015) has created the impetus for more

scholarly work in order to understand how leadership can be recognized, developed, and nurtured in university teachers.

Further research is still called for in the literature (Cosenza, 2015; Whitney, 2013) when it comes to understanding leadership potential in university teachers. Cosenza (2015) reviewed the existing leadership model standards of unit coordinators in the literature and implied that such model standards could not be put to best practice without additional qualitative research on how such leadership is developed and the characteristics of individuals who demonstrate leadership potential. Similarly, Whitney (2013) had previously pointed out the same literature gap by stating that understanding leadership potential in university teachers remains an important missing link in the existing body of work on leadership at universities.

The importance of filling this research gap rises from both the current needs of practitioners in the field of education, namely managers and leaders at universities, and its profound implications for social change, particularly making a positive difference in the lives of university students. In terms of helping practitioners in the field of education, this study would provide HR, managers, and leaders at universities with clearer guidelines on how to promote teachers to a unit coordinator position. The study may also generate the knowledge for identifying desirable attributes in candidates. For instance, Evans (2015) recommends examining specific attributes in candidates such as their degree of experience, quality of achievement, level of proficiency, as well as specific personal behaviors and characteristics.

Addressing this gap would help develop better leadership training programs for future unit coordinators at universities since Morris and Laipple (2015) reported that most managers and leaders at universities who rose from a teaching position complained about having had no prior training in leadership. The study may help universities to build more systematic approaches to the development and training of unit coordinators.

The improved understanding of leadership potential in university teachers has implications for student quality of life. Holecek et al. (2016) explained how unit coordinators often have a natural tendency to focus on the improvement of the lives of their students by providing guidance and inspiration for pathways that go beyond the classroom, specifically career pathways for the future. Durden et al. (2014) introduced the concept of *cultural relevance* when it comes to teaching at universities and found that unit coordinators can significantly contribute to the academic success of their students by providing them with culturally relevant teachings.

Problem Statement

The process and criteria used to assess leadership potential in organizations remain little understood (Dries & Pepermans, 2012). Davis and Davis (2011) noted that educational institutions lag behind other sectors in talent management. Current reports estimate that one in five university coordinators will resign each year (Morris & Laipple, 2015). A proportion of those who abandon the administrative path return to the sole faculty task of teaching, attributing their departure to low job satisfaction and lack of proper training. As a result, university students may be unable to receive culturally and

socio-politically relevant education, something that unit coordinators naturally excelled at providing (Glover & Harris, 2016). The literature gap remains in such a way that it is unclear how university teachers demonstrate the potential to becoming unit coordinators (Cosenza, 2015; Whitney, 2013).

The general problem is that there is no adequate understanding regarding the process and criteria used to identify leadership potential in organizations (Dries & Pepermans, 2012). The specific problem is that, in universities, there is no adequate understanding of how university teachers demonstrate the potential to becoming successful unit coordinators. As a result, HR practitioners and university managers lack the necessary tools to identify and develop potential unit coordinators, while university students are missing out on the positive social change of receiving culturally and socio-politically relevant teaching.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this multiple-case study is to examine how university teachers demonstrate the potential to becoming unit coordinators, by seeking to uncover the main behavioral patterns, personal characteristics, tasks, and relationship-building activities that make a university teacher an excellent candidate for a unit coordinator position (Evans, 2015; Pepper & Roberts, 2016; Yin, 2013). Such formal leadership potential was examined from the perspective of already established unit coordinators at American universities in Lebanon who described their leadership experience and their perceptions of what it takes to be a successful unit coordinator in today's university environment.

Research Questions

One central question and two main subquestions aimed at understanding how university teachers demonstrate the potential to becoming unit coordinators will guide this study.

Central Question: How do university teachers demonstrate the potential to becoming unit coordinators?

Subquestion 1: What relationship-building capabilities make university teachers excellent candidates for becoming unit coordinators?

Subquestion 2: What task-completion capabilities do university teachers with the potential to becoming unit coordinators display at the workplace?

The above research questions were further expanded into nine specific interview questions (refer to Appendix B) of which the following conceptual framework guided the development.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study consists of five well-known theories aligned with Church and Silzer's (2014) *Leadership Potential BluePrint* (see Table 1 in Chapter 2) and the most recent and relevant work of Bennis and Thomas (2013) on leadership. Fiedler's contingency model (Ellyson et al., 2012; Fiedler & Bons, 1976), the Blake Mouton Managerial Grid (Blake & Mouton, 1980; Burke, 2014), and the Hersey-Blanchard situational leadership theory (Bess & Dee, 2012; Gates, Blanchard, & Hersey, 1976) share in common the strategic aspect of leadership in terms of focusing on either

task-related issues or relationship-building activities. This dichotomy resonates with Pepper and Robert's (2016) description of unit coordinators' teaching activities and may best be examined using the previously listed theories as a framework. A more detailed explanation of the rationale behind selecting these theories, as well as more thorough description of each component, is provided in Chapter 2.

Having addressed the strategic aspect of leadership, the conceptual framework still needed a component to address the behaviors and personal characteristics of university unit coordinators which are included in my research questions. Church and Silzer (2014) conducted an extensive review of all the dimensions as well as the main building blocks of leadership potential in the recent literature and came up with the *Leadership Potential BluePrint*. The model is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 and includes foundational dimensions which I incorporated in the conceptual framework to address the behavioral theme and personal characteristics of unit coordinators. Similarly, Bennis' six leadership qualities (Bennis & Thomas, 2013) were added to the framework as the author not only explicitly lists the qualities that make a leader successful, but also provided descriptions that are particularly relevant to leaders in the 21st century (Williams, 2012). Further, Bennis' work was a beneficial addition to Church and Silzer's (2014) *BluePrint* during the analysis stage of this study when comparing the answers of respondents regarding how they perceive potential unit coordinators' qualities and those predicted by Bennis (Bennis & Thomas, 2013).

Nature of the Study

Cosenza's (2015) call for more qualitative research on the identification and development of leaders at universities did influence the selection of the design for this research. However, a qualitative design was the best choice because I sought to uncover specific behaviors and patterns (Maxwell, 2013) in university unit coordinators as well as exploring their perceptions on what it takes to be a successful leader. A multiple-case strategy (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2013) is selected particularly for the advantages of demonstrating consistent patterns and behaviors (Zach, 2006) across the different interviewed unit coordinators, but also for achieving a deeper understanding (Patton, 2012) of leadership potential among university teachers.

The insight on how university teachers demonstrate leadership potential was gained by interviewing 20 unit coordinators; five from each of the following four American universities in Lebanon: the American University of Beirut (AUB), the Lebanese American University (LAU), the American University of Science & Technology (AUST), and the American University of Culture & Education (AUCE). The focus on the American-style universities is justified by the worldwide increase of American universities (Salatian, Zivkovic, Ademoh, & Shanan, 2012), therefore increasing the potential relevance of the findings to a more global audience. As for the participants, a purposeful sampling was selected for its usefulness in focusing on specific characteristics of the population at hand (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016), something that is particularly relevant to my research questions. A typical case sampling (Patton,

2012) is used in such a way that the normal unit would be a university teacher occupying a unit coordinator position (Pepper & Roberts, 2016) at the university and having held that position for more than 6 years. Morris and Laipple (2015) reported that this is the typical length of time for unsuccessful university leaders and administrators to resign. As a result, I selected this type of sampling to increase the likelihood that my participants have developed the necessary knowledge and skills required to succeed at and retain their leadership position.

Finally, a cross-case analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) was used for identifying common themes across the multiple cases. I also compared the resulting themes with the predictions of the theoretical sources in the conceptual framework. The audio files from the recorded interviews were transcribed and translated (when necessary) and then saved in a Microsoft Word document. The resulting data was ready for coding, at which point I proceeded to identify common the themes to answer the research questions of the study.

Definitions

Cultural competence: Culturally competent university students are those who are fluent in and comprehend at least one different culture, while being able to maintain their appreciation for their own culture (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Nepotism: Mattar (2015) explained that nepotism in organizations occurs when someone in power favors family and friends over others even if the latter ones were more

qualified for the task. This includes the context of giving promotions as well as distributing roles and responsibilities in an organization.

Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT): This abbreviation refers to newly qualified teachers (Mujis, Chapman, & Armstrong, 2013) and is often used in the literature to describe teachers who are on the path of becoming unit coordinators.

Research-intensive institutions: Also referred to as Ivy League, sandstone, or elite universities (Scott & Scott, 2016), these universities operate with the main priority of conducting research activities, earning them a high reputation.

Rotation system: An agreement among two or more university professors in a department, which states that they would switch leadership of the department among each other every 3 years (Boud et al., 2014).

Sociopolitical consciousness: In an educational setting, this term signifies the integration of academic learning with the challenges that students face in the real world (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Unit coordinator: Commonly known as an academic administrator, department head, or program director, a unit coordinator is defined as a university teacher who is also responsible of creating liaisons, networking, and collaborating with university faculty while maintaining unit material and updating resources (Pepper & Roberts, 2016). A unit coordinator is considered a university teacher who holds a managerial position and administrative duties at the university.

VUCA: This acronym refers to the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of environments in the 21st century (Hempsall, 2014). All organizations, including educational institutions, are subject to the laws of such environments.

Assumptions

I had two main assumptions when conducting the study; one related to teaching at universities, and the other related to leadership at university faculty levels. First, it was assumed that teaching is very important at universities. This may not necessarily hold true with the existing tension between teaching and research (Scott & Scott, 2015), particularly in research-intensive universities. Moreover, Scott and Scott (2015) reported that the changing university demographic has resulted in almost 80 % of students attending classes not for knowledge's own sake, but rather to gather enough course credits that enable them to graduate and earn a living as soon as possible. This means that investing in updating academic material and improving teaching quality may not be what university students truly need, despite it being theoretically (Glover & Harris, 2016) the right strategy to deploy.

Second, it was assumed that leadership is a necessity at faculty levels in a university. This may not necessarily be true since a unit coordinator can have poor leadership skills and yet still be able to successfully manage a department by focusing more on task completion than on relationship building. However, Morris and Laipple (2015) strongly believe that such administrators in a university setting are very likely to

fail and resign in the long term. In order to settle the confusion, it was assumed that leadership at faculty levels is essential to the overall wellbeing of a university.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, I focused on the behavioral patterns, personal characteristics, as well as the tasks and relationship-building activities (Pepper & Roberts, 2016) unit coordinators usually display at a university. This focus was selected because there are currently no reliable measurable or empirical ways of determining leadership potential (Dries & Pepermans, 2012). In a further attempt to answer the central research question, I focused on the interviewed unit coordinators' personal experience and perception of what it takes to succeed at and retain their position at the university. This focus aims mainly towards generating themes and patterns beyond the ones predicted in the existing literature.

The study is delimited to unit coordinators at American universities in Lebanon. Even though American universities are growing around the world (Salatian et al., 2012), the population studied is still subject to the Lebanese culture and its respective environment. As a result, the generalization of the findings may be limited to that specific cultural context despite my sampling efforts in terms of site selection. Further, the exclusion of leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, from the conceptual framework was justified by the research questions in this study.

The selected theoretical sources were useful when focusing on the behaviors as well as characteristics of unit coordinators. Despite recurrence across the recent literature

on leadership potential (Mattar, 2015), transformational leadership was not included in the educational context of this study, since Ahmed et al. (2015) explained that the internal complexity of universities often dictates the use of different types of leadership in a simultaneous fashion.

Limitations

A limitation to this study was the relatively small sample size (20 unit coordinators), which is typical in qualitative studies (Yin, 2013). I addressed this limitation by using a specific sampling strategy; the 20 participants were selected as five different unit coordinators from each of four different universities. This combination of a multiple case and multiple site approach allowed for diverse answers and perceptions.

Further, the multiple case study design in this study was a limitation because the findings generated from those cases may not be geographically transferable outside Lebanon. To best address this issue, I selected the sites in such a way that these are four American universities which not only follow the globally recognized American style of education (Salatian, Zivkovic, Ademoh, & Shanan, 2012), but are also frequented by students and employees from different regions and nationalities (Mattar, 2015).

Finally, the perceptions analyzed in this study are all subjective since participants were asked to share individual beliefs about how university teachers demonstrate leadership potential. As a result, the answers might not necessarily be valid, and the findings may not be generalizable until further quantitative studies are carried out on this subject.

Significance of the Study

This study is important on many levels. First, the findings may fill the current gap in the literature regarding how university teachers demonstrate leadership potential by identifying the behavioral patterns, personal characteristics, as well as the tasks and relationship-building activities (Pepper & Roberts, 2016) displayed by university teachers who are suitable to rising to a unit coordinator position. Second, the study has professional implications for HR practitioners, managers, and leaders at universities since findings may provide them with the much-needed knowledge (Morris & Laipple, 2015) about managing leadership at both the central and faculty levels (Scott & Scott, 2016). Third, this study may instigate positive social change among university students, by encouraging practitioners to invest more in the development of unit coordinators, thus enriching the learning experience of students (Holecek et al., 2016) and ensuring a more culturally and sociopolitically relevant (Glover & Harris, 2016) curriculum.

Significance to Practice

Morris and Laipple (2015) reported a lack of prior training in leadership skills among department chairs at universities and attributed this ill-preparedness to a high rate of job dissatisfaction. This study may provide HR practitioners at universities with the required knowledge they have been calling for (Dries & Peppermans, 2012; Morris & Laipple, 2015) in order to develop new leadership strategies. Such leadership strategies related to unit coordinators include workshops and seminars optional or mandated by the

institutions, consultation services, and coaching systems by senior colleagues (Morris & Laipple, 2015).

Further, Pepper and Roberts (2016) described the relevance of "just in time-just for me" (p.118) models of leadership training in which unit coordinators would visit a specially designed website at the university and access resources and materials for training as well as discussions to address problems related to leading a department at the university. The study goes hand in hand with the development of such innovative electronic training models as it may provide researchers and developers with a better understanding on what is currently most relevant in the world of leadership at universities.

Significance to Theory

This study may contribute to the knowledge regarding unit coordinators in two ways. First, the lack of clear definitions around what makes a successful unit coordinator (Cosenza, 2015; Lowery-Moore et al., 2016) may be remedied by identifying the main characteristics and behaviors common to university unit coordinators. The usual inclusion of formal and informal roles when defining unit coordinators (Lowery-Moore et al., 2016) is encompassed throughout this study by focusing on both relationship-building roles (Pepper & Roberts, 2016) and work-related roles. Relationship-building roles range from liaising with coworkers to inspiring students in the classroom while work-related roles include updating and maintaining learning resources, teaching, and conducting research (Glover & Harris, 2016).

Second, the findings of this study may be successfully linked with the existing body of research on professional communities that contribute to the development of the teaching aspect of unit coordinators (Whitney, 2013). The existing research on leadership potential in university teachers (Cosenza, 2015; Whitney, 2013) has reported a missing link in the knowledge when it comes to understanding how leadership is perceived in university teachers. As a result, they have been unable to develop adequate leadership development strategies and provide these to professional communities.

Significance to Social Change

By aiming to improve the understanding of leadership potential in university teachers, this study may have profound implications for university student quality of life. Holecek et al. (2016) described unit coordinators as individuals who often have a natural propensity to be interested in the lives of the students they teach and have been described in many cases as guides and sources of inspiration to students (Holecek et al., 2016; Scott & Scott, 2015). As a result, investing in unit coordinators has been recognized as a valuable strategy in terms of overall talent management at universities (Holecek et al., 2016).

Similarly, Durden et al. (2014) explained the importance of investing in unit coordinators since they ensure cultural relevance as well as socio-political consciousness in terms of better equipping university students with the right knowledge that allows them to deal with contemporary and culturally relevant challenges. This study may thus contribute to alleviating the common psychological stresses associated with the transition

to a postgraduate life, which range from finding the right job to maintaining healthy and productive relationships in the workplace (Garrin, 2014).

Summary and Transition

The increased awareness of how much unit coordinators can instigate educational change (Lowery-Moore et al., 2016) and contribute to the well-being of a university (Whitney, 2013) has led to requests by HR practitioners and managers at universities for further research on how to correctly identify excellent candidates among existing university teachers. A gap currently exists in the literature about understanding how university teachers display leadership potential (Cosenza, 2015; Whitney, 2013). If left unaddressed, this gap will keep creating a problem for both university practitioners and students in such a way that the former are unable to deploy the right strategies to identify and develop unit coordinators (Morris & Laipple, 2015) and the latter are missing out on the cultural relevance of an adequately updated curriculum (Glover & Harris, 2016).

In this qualitative multiple-case study (Yin, 2013), I sought to better understand the behavioral patterns, personal characteristics, as well as the tasks and relationship-building activities (Pepper & Roberts, 2016) that make a university teacher have the necessary leadership potential for a unit coordinator position. The research took place at American universities in Lebanon and was delimited to unit coordinators in that particular region, although findings may be generalized to a more global audience if later quantitative research follows. In Chapter 2, a more in-depth view on leadership at universities will be provided to support this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, the literature on leadership potential among university teachers is reviewed. The identified problem is that there is a lack of adequate understanding on how university teachers demonstrate leadership potential. In this study, I attempted to uncover the main behavioral patterns, personal characteristics, tasks, and relationship-building activities (Pepper & Roberts, 2016; Evans, 2015) that indicate potential leadership in university teachers.

In management of leadership, the educational sector has been behind other industries (Davis & Davis, 2011). With more academic attention being drawn away from research-intensive activities and allocated towards teaching activities (Scott & Scott, 2016), effective department leadership has been identified as a significant contributor to the overall wellbeing of a university (Cosenza, 2015; Holecek et al., 2016; Lowery-Moore et al., 2016). The problem is that there is no adequate understanding on how university teachers demonstrate the potential to become unit coordinators (Cosenza, 2015; Whitney, 2013). As a result, HR practitioners and managers at universities are unable to develop the right strategies to address the current problems ranging from job dissatisfaction to ill-preparedness of university leaders (Morris & Laipple, 2015). Further, university students are missing out on sociopolitically and culturally-relevant teachings provided by competent university unit coordinators (Glover & Harris, 2016).

The following sections begin with expounding the search criteria, followed by a thorough description of the conceptual framework. Then, a review of the current

literature includes the importance of leadership in today's environment, the different approaches to identifying relevant leadership potential, and the contextual application of such leadership in education, focusing on universities and the existing knowledge about unit coordinators in the recent literature.

Literature Search Strategy

For this review, I chose a filtered search to exclusively select peer-reviewed journals, books, and published dissertations. The databases from which I derived the documents included Business Source Complete, SAGE Premier, Education Source, Education Research Complete, and Academic Search Complete. The key search terms used were *leadership, leadership potential, unit coordinator, leadership identification, talent management,* and *university*. These keywords were used in each of the listed databases, even education subject terms (i.e. *unit coordinator* and *university*) were entered in business and management related databases. Similarly, leadership terms were entered in education-related databases, in the hopes of gathering as many resources as possible about the relatively little research that exists about formal leadership at universities. I used Walden university's online search services to access resources at Google Scholar as well as Google Books, which were particularly useful for reviewing theories and other components of the conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

This study is analytically based on a conceptual framework constructed with the use of the following theoretical sources: Fiedler's contingency model (Ellyson et al.,

2012; Fiedler & Bons, 1976) Blake Mouton managerial grid (Blake & Mouton, 1980; Burke, 2014), Hersey-Blanchard situational leadership theory (Bess & Dee, 2012; Gates et al., 1976), and Bennis' six leadership qualities (Bennis & Thomas, 2013). These theories and concepts are aligned with Church and Silzer's (2014) *Leadership Potential BluePrint* which will be later discussed in this chapter (see Table 1) and presented as the backbone to this conceptual framework.

Fiedler's Contingency Model

The contingency factor in Fiedler's contingency model implies that there is no single best leadership style (Ellyson, et al., 2012). Instead, leaders are expected to deploy the right leadership strategy to match the situation at hand. The model includes the decision to focus on either completing tasks or building relationships in the workplace (Ellyson, et al., 2012). This decision is made by first identifying the leader's current orientation in terms of prioritizing task-completion over relationship-building or vice versa, then assessing the situation at hand in terms of leader-member levels of trust, task structure, and leader's position of power (Ellyson, et al., 2012). Based on the results of this assessment, the leader can determine the most effective leadership strategy using Fiedler's (1976) suggested course of action based on each situation.

Fiedler's contingency model is essential to this study as it provided a structured way of examining how unit coordinators make decisions in the workplace, especially since they operate in an increasingly contingent and volatile environment (Ahmed et al., 2015). Further, the model features a scale called the *Least-Preferred Co-Worker* (LPC)

Scale which allows the formulation of specific interview questions aiming at uncovering the personal characteristics and behaviors pertinent to unit coordinators (Ahmed et al., 2015). Finally, the model places great focus on tasks and relationship-building activities, which are elements that need to be better understood in unit coordinators (Pepper & Roberts, 2016), thus making this model particularly useful in the data analysis stage of the study.

The Blake Mouton Managerial Grid

Similar to an aspect of Fiedler's contingency model, Blake and Mouton's managerial grid (Burke, 2014) addresses the balance between being concerned for people in the workplace and being concerned for results. Blake and Mouton (1980) identified five leadership styles based on different levels of balancing relationship-building with task-completion. The team management leadership style is portrayed as most effective and features great involvement in both work and people (Burke, 2014). However, this model is mainly used to identify areas of weaknesses in a leadership strategy, thus allowing leaders to adjust their priorities accordingly (Burke, 2014).

The managerial grid was particularly useful when examining how unit coordinators are expected to respond to change at the university. Some of my interview questions addressed the extent to which unit coordinators adjust leadership strategies during significant changes and emergencies. The resulting data were later analyzed and compared to the current related research (Holt et al., 2013; Mattar, 2015) in which the

exclusive deployment of transformational leadership seems to be the recommended strategy.

The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory

Another theoretical source that takes into consideration the complexity, volatility, and uncertainty of today's environment is the Hersey-Blanchard situational leadership theory (Bess & Dee, 2012). The theory features four different leadership styles: (a) telling style, (b) selling style, (c) participating style, and (d) delegating style (Gates et al., 1976). These four leadership styles are to be deployed in such a way that they match four corresponding maturity levels of followers based on their experience and willingness to perform (Gates et al., 1976).

This theoretical source related well to my study's research questions since the composition of each suggested leadership style addressed the level of task-involvement of the unit coordinator (Evans, 2015), and the level of relationship-building (Pepper & Roberts, 2016) at which the unit coordinator is operating.

Bennis' Six Leadership Qualities

The previously described components of the conceptual framework focused mostly on the behavioral and strategic aspects of leading a department at the university. In order to have a means of examining the personal characteristics and qualities of a potential unit coordinator, the recent work on leadership by Bennis (Bennis & Thomas, 2013; Williams, 2012) was added to this conceptual framework, particularly focusing on

the six leadership qualities: (a) integrity, (b) dedication, (c) magnanimity, (d) humility, (e) openness, and (f) creativity.

Bennis' work seems to still be applicable in the 21st century (William, 2012) because the author's ideas advocate a leader's ability to embrace and even instigate change as a way to ensure the organization's survival, which is particularly relevant in the case of universities and educational institutions in general (Cosenza, 2015). The addition of Bennis' work (William, 2012) to the conceptual framework allowed for more depth in the analysis of personal traits and characteristics described by the interviewed unit coordinators. Bennis' work (William, 2012) also complements every other component of the conceptual framework by adding more detail to the dichotomous aspect of either focusing on task-completion behaviors or investing in relationship-building activities.

Literature Review

Leadership in a VUCA Environment

A VUCA world seems to be the prominent term in the recent literature when describing today's environment (Church, 2014). No matter where they operate, organizations today are subject to these constantly evolving surroundings (Church, 2014). Church (2014) reported the costs caused by organizations' inability to effectively respond to the increasingly dynamic nature of the business environment. The future of businesses seems to depend on an organization's ability to acquire, retain, and develop relevant leaders (Church, 2014). Otherwise, grim statistics are very likely to continue showing up

as Church (2014) reported huge losses incurred by companies that are unable to successfully manage talent and potentially go out of business.

The apparent costs of disregarding the nature of a VUCA environment has particularly drawn the attention of boards of directors, chief executive officers (CEO), and investors (Church, Rotolo, Ginther, & Levine, 2015) who seem to display an increased interest in leadership strength and talent. The business environment is frequently described in the literature as hypercompetitive in such a way that boards of directors, CEOs, and investors are competing for talent. The competition is further fueled by the changing workforce demographics (Church & Silzer, 2013) and this seems to play an important role in planning the strategic workforce.

Moreover, the emergence of corporate and societal pressures led organizations to become more aware of sociopolitical, environmental, economic, and technical challenges (Prinsloo, 2012). Leadership is being recognized as the key component to resolve this ambiguity and dissonance, since it enhances organizations' ability to adapt, integrate, transform, and sometimes destroy or let go of obsolete and irrelevant systems. Prinsloo (2012) added that today's VUCA environment revolves more around acknowledging the global evolution of perceptions such as clear value systems and a display of integrity, as opposed to operating under short-sighted and often dubious agendas. Leadership would facilitate this transition by allowing organizations to smoothly embrace the risks imposed by today's global environment instead of disregarding its challenges (Prinsloo, 2012). These risks include he rapid pace of technological advances, the frailty of the global

economy, the ecological threats, the depletion of vital resources, and the proliferation of private information especially with the arguably uncontrollable rise of social media (Prinsloo, 2012)

The shift from old traditional leadership values to new, more relevant leadership values around the world is apparent in the recent literature. Lee et al. (2015) reviewed the literature on the old leadership core competencies in Korea, prior to a widely recognized VUCA environment, and noted that these included qualities such as military bearing and high intelligence which seemed to be essential at the time. Lee et al. (2015) later consulted experts operating in a VUCA environment and found that although most of the traditional leadership values were still relevant, they were not as essential as having a global mind and citizenship in such a way that a successful leader today would be exposed to global environments, and is able to understand and accept multiculturalism. Kim and Dyne (2012) explained the relevance of this cultural intelligence and intercultural contact by pointing out the acceleration of globalization. The ability to successfully interact with people from different cultures has become inevitable in an environment where it is very likely to operate in multicultural groups.

In summary, the ever-changing imperatives of today's environment have led organizations to either embrace change or incur sever and potentially fatal losses. Boards of directors, CEOs, and investors have recognized the importance of leadership when it comes to realigning organizational strategies and structures with the constant shifts of the environment (Church, 2014). The old, rigid, and traditional leadership values seem to

cost organizations more problems, ranging from ordinary production issues to shocking crime and warfare repercussions (Prinsloo, 2012). Leaders throughout the recent literature are invited to let go of their attachment to the status quo (Steven, 2012) and embrace new relevant values such as maintaining a global mind (Kim et al. 2015) and developing a cultural intelligence.

Leadership Potential Identification

The importance of leadership has been established in terms of its pivotal role in ensuring the survival of organizations in today's VUCA environment. As a result, both practitioners and scholars have become more interested and involved in leadership potential identification (Church & Silzer, 2014). Particularly, HR practitioners have been requesting more research on how to identify competent leaders for their organizations (Dries & Pepermans, 2012). More research has been completed, but the literature on leadership potential identification still lacks empirical or reliable ways to determine leadership potential, despite the apparent efforts of researchers and scholars. The literature on leadership potential identification remains flawed with many gaps as well as methodological limitations and generalizability challenges.

Defining Leadership Potential. The lack of clarity around how to identify leadership potential begins with ways of defining the phenomenon of leadership potential as Allan Church (Church, 2014) has paired with numerous researchers in the hopes of not only pioneering reliable means of predicting leadership, but at least being able to provide a clear definition of what it stands for in today's world. In their BluePrint on how to

identify leadership potential, Church and Silzer (2014) explain that it is difficult to define leadership potential because it is a broad construct that depends on the context in which it is examined. The authors ultimately agreed upon defining leadership potential as simply "individuals who later become successful organizational leaders" (Church & Silzer, 2014, p. 52). However, this simple definition obviously leaves out core determinants of leadership potential which remain the main interest of both practitioners and scholars in this field, such as the skills and abilities, as well as the characteristics and behaviors of potential leaders.

Helsing and Howel (2014) agreed with Church's (2014) claim that the definition of leadership potential depends heavily on the context in which it is examined. The authors acknowledged the universality of some skills and behaviors such as interpersonal skills and decision-making skills while at the same time recognizing the variability of these factors according to organizational contexts and particular leadership roles. Church (2014) particularly links the definition of leadership potential to the efforts of Talent Management (TM) practitioners, explaining that it has become a popular and topic among executive search firms, recruiting consultants and overall professionals in the staffing industry.

However, the problem remained that the definition of leadership potential was still too broad. This led to the unification of all relevant works in the literature in the hopes of producing a comprehensive framework that could be used for identifying, developing, and assessing leaders. Church and Silzer (2014) grounded their work in

theory, science, as well as practice in order to describe leadership potential as a *multi-dimensional construct* (Church, 2014) that is mainly composed of individual characteristics, and specific behaviors and skills. This construct, dubbed the *Leadership Potential BluePrint* (Church & Silzer, 2014) has since become widely recognized and used among major corporations including PepsiCo, Citibank, and Eli Lilly.

The Leadership Potential BluePrint. Church and Silzer (2014) claimed that the *Leadership Potential BluePrint* represents the latest thoughts on talent management. The model is grounded not only in theory but also in practice. The authors first reviewed the theories and studies on organizational behavior and applied psychology. Then, they collected data and leadership frameworks from top consulting organizations. Thirdly, they reviewed recent studies on benchmark methods used in top companies. Then, the authors examined internal models and similar practices used by majorly successful organizations. Finally, Church and Silzer (2014) combined their internal and external experiences in terms of assessing individuals as well as the development and staffing of leaders. The *Leadership Potential BluePrint* is mainly designed for human resource professionals, senior leaders and managers, as well as chief talent management officers. Its purpose is to help this audience make better decisions when it comes to identifying high potential and developing leadership.

Table 1. The Leadership Potential BluePrint (Silzer & Church, 2014).

Leadership Potential BluePrint					
Career Dimensions					
	Leadership Skills		**Functional/ Technical**		
Managing people	Motivating, inspiring & influencing others	Developing others	Business knowledge	Technical & functional skills in one area of expertise	
Growth Dimensions					
	Learning Skills		**Motivation Skills**		
Adaptability	Learning interest & orientation	Openness to feedback	Drive, energy, initiative	Career ambition, commitment	Results & achievement orientation, risk taking
Foundational Dimensions					
	Personality Characteristics		**Cognitive Capabilities**		
Social & interpersonal skills	Assertiveness & dominance	Maturity, emotional self-control, resilience	Cognitive abilities, intelligence	Strategic & conceptual thinking, breadth of thinking	Dealing with complexity and ambiguity

Church and Silzer (2014) described three dimensions that include the main building blocks of leadership potential: foundational dimensions, growth dimensions, and career dimensions.

The foundational dimensions. Church and Silzer (2014) explain that these core dimensions, made out of specific personality characteristics and cognitive capabilities, are the most fundamental building blocks for leadership potential. According to the authors, they have a direct impact on individuals' leadership potential. Their relative stability across time, situations and experiences make these dimensions the most reliable ways of showcasing potential for leadership (Church, 2014).

Personality characteristics which include interpersonal skills, assertiveness, and emotional stability seem to directly impact individuals' effectiveness when dealing with other people, thus making it easier for raters to predict leadership success. Similarly, cognitive capabilities could be used to deal with ambiguous and complex challenges, which are particularly relevant in today's VUCA environment (Church et al., 2015).

The growth dimensions. According to Church and Silzer (2014), the variables that intervene in these dimensions contribute to individuals' learning capabilities, thus predicting leadership development and growth. For instance, individuals who display high degrees of adaptability and who are open to feedback are more likely to become successful leaders in the future, according to the BluePrint. By the same token, individuals who demonstrate a low drive, poor organizational commitment, and do not take enough risks, are very likely to fail, according to Church and Silzer (2014), if promoted to a leadership position.

Unlike the foundational blocks of personality characteristics and cognitive capabilities, the building blocks of growth dimensions are presented in the BluePrint as

subject to change over time and experience. Church and Silzer (2014) explain that there is an ongoing interaction between learning skills and motivation skills in such a way that one constantly fuels the other, creating a positive feedback loop. For example, individuals who successfully learn new skills are very likely to translate their success into an increased motivation, which in turn provides them with more impetus to learn additional skills and gain more knowledge.

The career dimensions. The building blocks in the career dimensions are most prone to development, which led many organizations today to invest heavily in relevant programs that develop both leadership skills and functional/ technical skills of individuals, hoping to ensure at least that the identified individuals would be able to carry out their basic leadership tasks. Unfortunately, Church and Silzer (2014) pointed out that this one-sighted approach does not resonate well with the fact that leadership potential is a *multi-dimensional construct*, and is very likely to be the explanation behind the losses incurred by those organizations.

When it comes to the building block of leadership skills, raters would examine how well individuals manage and motivate others in their currently existing team, no matter how small it is. According to the BluePrint, this may be an early indicator of leadership potential and such individuals may be ready to handle a bigger team, which often means getting promoted to a leadership position. Similarly, functional/ technical skills can be perceived as early indicators of how well individuals are acquainted with the necessary skills to succeed in their field. Church and Silzer (2014) noted that these skills

are specific to the industry in which the organization operates and should be matched with the corresponding leadership positions.

Current applications of the BluePrint. The leadership potential Blueprint (Church & Silzer, 2014) comes with a set of questions related to each group of dimensions and can be used by organizations to manage talent and plan leadership recruitments. This is particularly useful in contexts where organizations are relying on intuition or *gut feeling* (Dries & Pepermans, 2012) to identify potential leaders. For this study, I derived several interview questions from the Leadership BluePrint in order to better understand how teachers, in the specific context of universities, display leadership potential.

In other contexts, major corporations such as PepsiCo are currently assessing leadership and developing programs using the BluePrint in order to facilitate making key leadership transitions. Managers and HR leaders at PepsiCo are mainly focusing on the Career and Growth dimensions of the BluePrint since the organization seems to deal with a considerable amount of new hires (Church & Silzer, 2014). Another major corporation making use of the BluePrint is Eli Lilly, combining psychometric ratings with individual meetings in order to make final assessments about individuals' leadership potential

Approaches to Identifying Leadership Potential

Numerous studies on leadership potential identification have emerged as a response to the idea that there is no single universal way of designing a leadership talent program. Dries and Pepermans (2012) explained that most organizations have been

giving up relying on past performances and competency frameworks in order to assess individuals' leadership potential. The authors explained that such obsolete strategies have been disproved due to respectively high risks of halo bias and invalid assumptions.

Moreover, organizations used to rely on instinct or gut feelings (Dries & Pepermans, 2012) as an informal and subjective way to identify potential leaders, hoping to avoid the costs and burdens of developing more valid frameworks. In their review of the literature on leadership potential identification, Dries and Pepermans (2012) explained that organizations today are increasingly getting line managers to become fully engaged in the process of leadership potential identification by embedding the processes in the strategy of the organization. In the following paragraphs of this section, I will describe ways in which researchers have recently approached the development of frameworks of leadership potential, along with the perceived strengths and weaknesses of each. These approaches to identifying leadership potential can be categorized as follows: Psychometric Practices, Holistic Assessment Approaches, Theoretical Models, and the development of Scales and Models for Measuring Leadership Potential.

Psychometric Practices. In her integrated assessment of leadership potential identification methods, Prinsloo (2012) summarized current psychometric practices as behavioral, psychological, and spiritual dimensions that can be examined and in many cases measured in the hopes of generating reliable means of predicting leadership effectiveness. Such practices include IQ and EQ tests, as well as personality tests, namely the big five personality factors or the Five Factor Model (FFM).

IQ tests and leadership potential identification. Despite the significant correlation between intellectual functioning and leadership competence, the predictive power of IQ tests remains no more than 30% when it comes to predicting leadership effectiveness. Nonetheless, IQ tests have remained part of the arsenal of many practitioners and scholars (Church et al., 2015), namely due to their static nature (Prinsloo, 2012) as well as their structured and reliable content. However, an obvious weakness remains that such intelligence predictors do not necessarily mean that the tested individuals will be able to transfer their intellectual functioning to a leadership context.

The predictive power of EQ and personality tests. Prinsloo (2012) reported the existing controversy when it comes to how well personality and emotional intelligence (EQ) tests predicted leadership effectiveness. It seems that the personality factors of the Five Factor Model (FFM) do not apply well in a leadership context. The problem appears to be due to the fact that these tests measure preferences solely and disregard the dynamic state of personality. In prior times (Goleman, 1996), proponents of EQ believed strongly that it predicted leadership effectiveness with impressive accuracy. Later studies (Prinsloo, 2012) refuted the predictive power of EQ, describing it as no more than 2% in a leadership context.

In summary, psychometric practices do not seem to adequately predict leadership effectiveness, mainly due to the complexity of the leadership context. While some correlations do exist between the proposed variables and leadership competence, this approach does not seem to yield overall reliable results when deployed on its own.

Holistic Assessment Approach. Operating under the assumption that there is no one ideal way of identifying leadership potential in any organization (Church et al., 2015), the holistic assessment approach combines new tools that go beyond the theoretical assumptions or IQ, EQ, and personality tests, in order to ensure the contextualization of results (Helsin & Howell, 2014). Prinsloo (2012) listed some of these new tools which include cognitive tools such as computerized simulation exercises, computerized questionnaires, and computerized games that capitalize on archetypes and indirectly generate insight on individuals' leadership potential. The main strengths of this approach lies in the fact that it is contextualized and is grounded in both qualitative and quantitative research. An obvious shortcoming appears to be the cost associated with acquiring and maintaining the necessary equipment, which might explain its exclusive deployment in large corporations (Church et al., 2015).

Theoretical Models. Some researchers in the field of leadership potential identification have applied theoretical models, either through direct application of a theory such as constructive-developmental theories (Helsing & Howell, 2014) or through the use of mediators such as the motivation to lead (Luria & Berson, 2013) in order to predict leadership effectiveness.

Constructive-developmental theory. Helsing and Howell (2014) provided a great example of how theoretical models can be applied to identify leadership potential in organizations. The authors introduced the Adult Development Theory and explained that potential leaders are more likely to have reached the *Self-Authoring Leadership* stage

(Helsing & Howell, 2014) than the rest of candidates who are likely to be stuck in the *Socialized Leadership* stage. In order to test this theoretical application, Helsing and Howell (2014) conducted semi-structured interviews with 32 highly trained members in a leadership program and selected three cases for further analysis. The interviews followed the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) template in which the different stages of leadership development could be identified. The results of these interviews were later paired with the actual leadership performance of these individuals in order to test out the validity of the theoretical model.

While the predictions of applying the adult development theory coincided well with the actual leadership performance of the participants, the study still presents obvious limitations when it comes to its small sample size. Nonetheless, this study showcased the importance of having in-depth case analyses when approaching leadership potential identification as such an approach allowed the authors to pinpoint contextual factors as well as other individual features which usually make up the complexity of the phenomenon.

Mediators as predictors of leadership potential. The recent literature on leadership potential identification features many studies in which the researches make use of mediators based on theoretical knowledge in order to predict leadership effectiveness. Luria and Berson (2013) used the Motivation to Lead (MTL) as a mediator that predicts the emergence of leaders in a military context. Similarly, Allen et al. (2014) used MTL along with other mediators such as implicit leadership and self-efficacy in order to

predict leadership performance. In a more globalized context, Kim and Van Dyne (2012) used cultural intelligence as a mediator and successfully predicted leadership potential among working adults.

These three listed studies by Kim and Van Dyne (2012), Luira and Berson (2013), and Allen et al. (2014) used specific mediators in such a way that their approach begins with the identification of a relevant theory which justifies the selection of a particular mediator. The next step would be to formulate hypotheses based on how the researchers expect the mediators to predict leadership effectiveness. Then, quantitative tests would be carried out on participants in order to find out how well the selected mediators were able to predict leadership effectiveness. If the results were promising, then the researchers would either call for or carry out themselves further validating quantitative studies by applying the same tests to different populations or different contexts.

Despite the quantitative and empirical strength of this approach, an obvious weakness to using mediators lies in the initial step. The approach relies heavily on having a theoretical foundation as the main assumption behind the entire process. Any threat to the pertinence of the theory would result in the collapse of the entire validity of the results. Another obvious limitation to this approach was pointed out by Kim and Van Dyne (2012) and revolved around its lack of consideration regarding additional proximal and distal predictors of leadership potential which are usually overshadowed by the use of a single mediator.

Scales & Models for Measuring Leadership Potential. The most prevalent trend in the literature seems to be the development of scales and models for measuring leadership potential. Such efforts are justified not only by the recognized weak predictive power of the previously discussed approaches, but also by the pertinence of this method as it takes into account the various complexities of leadership potential. For instance, most leadership potential measurement scales are developed with the contextual factor in mind (schools, universities, military, public health, etc.), they go beyond traditional theories (Prinsloo, 2012), and most importantly they are anchored in both qualitative and quantitative research.

A famous study by Dries and Pepermans (2012) seems to have pioneered the development of scales and models to measure leadership potential. Following the usual steps in this approach, Dries and Pepermans (2012) initially reviewed all the existing literature on leadership potential in order to come up with 77 criteria related to leadership potential. Then, they conducted a qualitative study through a focus group of leadership experts in which they were able to categorize the criteria into four quadrants.

The resulting leadership potential identification model was ready to be taken to the second quantitative part of the study. Dries and Pepermans (2012) tested the model by surveying 179 respondents made out of top managers, HR managers, and line managers who mostly confirmed the validity of the *two-dimensional model of leadership potential* (Dries & Pepermans, 2012), consisting of four quadrants: analytical skills, learning

agility, drive, and emergent leadership. The developed model, anchored in both qualitative and quantitative research is ready to be applied in an organizational context.

Lee, Kim, Park, Lee, and Yu (2015) followed the same approach pioneered by Dries and Pepermans (2012) and later popularized by many researchers such as Dr. Hanks (2012). In their version of the study, Kim et al. (2015) first reviewed the literature on leadership potential in order to build the relevant conceptual framework. Then, they took the qualitative step by conducting semi-structured interviews with 13 leaders at Korean universities.

The analysis of the data generated from this qualitative study allowed Kim et al. (2015) to develop a scale for measuring leadership potential. This scale was then taken to the next quantitative step, in which the researchers conducted a pilot test in order to determine how well the developed scale would be able to measure leadership potential. The 305 students who participated in the questionnaire provided the researchers with the data necessary to confirm the validity of the developed leadership potential scale.

In my study, I will be conducting the initial step of this approach which is the qualitative step. This highlights one of the drawbacks in developing scales/ models for measuring leadership potential which is the effort and long time it takes to conduct two studies in order to first develop the scale/ model, and then test out and confirm its validity. Moreover, it is very likely that the developed scale/ model would fail the quantitative test, in which case even more effort and time would have been wasted. With that said, this approach remains the most solid of all the presented approaches so far, as it

accounts for the complexity of the phenomenon of leadership potential (Church et al., 2015; Dries & Pepermans, 2012), and it is anchored in both qualitative and quantitative research.

The importance of leadership in today's VUCA environment has been established and the various approaches to identifying leadership potential have been identified. The method of developing scales and models for measuring leadership potential was described as the most pertinent in this field, and this study will be described as an initial step (the qualitative step) towards the development of a scale/ model for identifying leadership potential in an educational setting.

Leadership in Education

Abbas, Khalily, and Riaz (2016) reviewed the various models of leadership that were proposed throughout the century and concluded that leadership today has entered a new era filled with innovative leadership approaches. Ahmad, Reaburn, Samad, and Davis (2015) noted that the evolution of such new leadership approaches led to many disagreements in the literature regarding which type of leadership would best fit in an educational context.

It appears that the predominant approaches revolve around the Full Range Leadership Theory (FRLT), particularly transformational and transactional leadership (Abbas, Khalily, & Riaz, 2016) followed by even more recent approaches that some researchers (Jones et al. 2012) consider to supersede their predecessors in an educational

setting; these are known as distributed leadership (Hairon & Goh, 2015) and system leadership (Boylan, 2016).

Full Range Leadership Theory (FRLT)

Although the Full Range Leadership Theory is composed of transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire, the specific educational context of universities which is the main focus in this study will only include the first two leadership styles in this theory. The decision to leave out laissez-faire from the review is justified by educational researchers' depictions of the sole pertinence of such a passive indifferent style in a virtual learning environment (Bogler, Caspi, & Roccas, 2013).

Transformational Leadership. Having received the most attention in the recent literature, the transformational leadership style draws popularity from its effectiveness in increasing the psychological well-being of employees, thus increasing job satisfaction levels and reducing turnover rates (Abbas et al., 2016). In their pursuit for the best leadership style to fit a university setting, Ahmad et al. (2015) recognized the benefits of transformational leadership when it comes to fostering an environment filled with motivation as well as a clearer vision towards the future. Bogler et al. (2013) built on previous studies to describe the classroom as a small organization in which the teacher is the leader and the students are the followers. As a result, the authors were able to identify transformational leadership in a university setting as an effective way of raising students' consciousness about moral and ethical values. Moreover, Bogler et al. (2013) explained that transformational leadership in the classroom results seems to have positive

correlations with students' additional efforts, instructors' competence, as well as the likeability of instructors.

Referring to Church et al.'s (2015) descriptions of the demands of today's VUCA environment, it appears that transformational leadership may be particularly effective when it comes to shaping the Research and Development (R&D) culture that is much needed in today's world (Asmawi, Zakaria, & Wei, 2013). Universities in particular could benefit from the role played by transformational leadership in this domain. Asmawi et al. (2013) explained that transformational leadership seems to support R&D and aspects of innovation by equipping leaders with the ability to shift their followers' attention towards seizing new opportunities. The proactivity of transformational leaders and their ability to inspire followers to strive for greater achievements seems to be ideal in a classroom setting.

Going further into details about how transformational leadership has become a predominant approach that is described as ideal in the literature on educational leadership, Asmawi et al. (2013) describe the four dimensions of transformational leadership as follows: the *Idealized Influence* works in such a way that students identify with their teachers and perceive them as role models whose behaviors and characteristics they wish to replicate. *Inspirational Motivation* allows teachers to provide meaning as well as challenge to students' work, while *Intellectual Stimulation* encourages the innovativeness and creativity of students. Finally, *Individual Consideration* seems to suit

the educational setting perfectly as teachers in this dimension can act as mentors to individual students and thus focus on those individuals' different needs.

Transactional Leadership. Abbas et al. (2016) simplified transactional leadership by going back to a context similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs in which this type of leadership satisfies followers' basic needs. Transactional leadership is described as an exchange model in which good work is rewarded with a positive outcome. In an educational setting, transactional leadership can be perceived as rewarding hard working university students with higher grades.

Abbas et al. (2016) explained that despite this direct and meditational relationship between leader and follower, transactional leadership does not necessarily hinder creativity or innovativeness, but it actually enhances it in some cases. Indeed, students may be motivated to get higher grades and would thus look for new ways of displaying hard work and discipline in order to be recognized by their teacher. The same applies to university employees, as the researchers also reported that transactional leadership seemed to significantly contribute to the well-being of employees, their organizational commitment, as well as their overall job satisfaction.

Bogler et al. (2013) identified two factors in transactional leadership which they found to be particularly relevant in an educational context: *Contingent Rewards* and *Management by Exception*. The *Contingent Reward* involves a pre-agreement in which the leader promises to give a reward upon the completion of a specified task. A usual classroom example would be the case in which the teacher describes the rules for passing

a test and later rewards the students by grading them according to how well they followed these established rules. On the other hand, *Management by Exception* involves responding to an unusual situation as it shows up. A classroom example would be the case in which the teacher would give all students a *satisfactory (S)* grade unless someone does not show up to class, then this person would receive a *failing (F)* grade.

Contemporary Leadership Approaches in Education

Researchers in the educational leadership field (Abbas et al., 2016; Ahmed et al., 2015) have discussed the evolution of leadership by distinguishing between the usual top-down approaches which Ahmed et al. (2015) referred to as the heroic standpoints, and the collective approaches which the authors referred to as post-heroic standpoints. In this section, such post-heroic approaches are discussed in terms of how a shared and dispersed leadership style like distributed leadership or system leadership would be particularly effective in today's educational setting.

Distributed Leadership. The prominence of distributed leadership (DL) in the contemporary literature on education brought popularity to this leadership theory despite its emergence in the management literature a few decades ago (Hairon & Goh, 2015). Distributed leadership includes a list of common principles, of which the following are mentioned in an educational context:

- DL is a leadership that is broad-based
- Decision making in DL involves multiple levels
- DL includes both formal and informal leaders

- DL provides links between lateral and vertical leadership structures
- DL extends to and encourages students' voice
- DL is flexible and does not encourage permanent groupings
- DL ultimately focuses on the improvement of leadership and classroom practice

Hairon and Goh (2015) used the previously listed principles of distributed leadership to justify the pertinence of this leadership theory in an educational context. The authors explained that DL creates significant opportunities for school improvements by influencing the climate and environment of the school as well as bringing enhancements to teachers' instructional capabilities. However, the lack of empirical research on distributed leadership in education renders it an elusive and broad concept to this day.

An interesting point about distributed leadership is that it resonates well with the idea that leadership practices are contingent upon contextual factors (Lambright, 2015). Indeed, Hairon and Goh (2015) explained that societal and cultural values determined whether distributed leadership would be well received or not in a particular organization. The authors concluded that distributed leadership seems to be the ideal leadership strategy to deploy in an educational context, but they also recognized that there needs to be more research and empirical evidence on this subject.

System Leadership. Yet another leadership theory from a post-heroic standpoint (Ahmed et al., 2015), system leadership features leading from below as Boylan (2016) suggests in his thorough review on this relatively new leadership approach. The author

explains system leadership in an educational context by describing the way it extends leadership from within the university to outside networks which include other schools or wider organizations. Boylan (2016) also identified the recent recognition of system leadership as an approach that brought improvements to schools in England as well as enhancements to the professional development of teachers in the country (NCSL, 2012).

Boylan (2016) identified five characteristics of system leadership in terms of its application to the educational context. First, system leaders are concerned about improvements not only in their schools but also in others'. Second, system leaders encourage and commit their staff to work for the benefit of both their school and others'. Third, system leaders perceive schools in terms of unified learning communities and thus focus on their overall personal and professional development. Fourth, system leaders are concerned with equity and make sure everyone at stake is included in the decision-making process. Finally, system leaders have a broad and clear view in such a way that they understand and manage the way classrooms, schools, and systems impact one another.

An important point Boylan (2016) made in his central argument on system leadership is that more research and attention should be allocated towards unit coordinators and that they should be recognized as system leaders. The author explained that future research on teacher system-leadership should focus on teacher identity especially in terms of activism, interschool collaboration, and the development of pedagogical programs and projects. Boylan (2016) also identified a gap in teacher

system-leaders' moral perspectives and purposes which still needs to be addressed in the literature. Finally, system leadership in an educational context seems to relate well to distributed leadership in terms of extending leadership to a broader network environment, regardless of the formality of individuals' roles.

Unit Coordination

Scott and Scott (2016) reported that leadership in universities is gradually being reallocated from research activities to teaching activities. This once existing tension in the literature between research-intensive and teaching-focused institutions seems today to slowly dissipate since teaching has been recognized as an equally important task to that of research (Scott & Scott, 2016). In the previous section, transformational and transactional leadership, along with distributed and system leadership were identified as particularly relevant in a university setting. A link to the classroom was made in such a way that transformational leaders inspired and motivated students by acting as role models and mentors to them; transactional leaders provided the reassurance and certitude of success to students who were willing to work hard enough; system leaders displayed activism and involvement in the educational community in such a way that they seized any opportunity that might benefit the classroom and the overall quality of education; distributed leadership shares many similarities with system leadership in terms of extending leadership across different stakeholders, particularly including the students themselves. Distributed leadership was identified as an approach that includes both formal and informal leaders, which creates a natural link between this approach and the

concept of unit coordination that is considered a subset of distributed leadership (Mujis et al., 2013).

Defining Unit Coordination. As of today, researchers seem to agree that there is still no common definition for what a unit coordinator stands for (Cosenza, 2015). Lowery-Moore et al. (2016) explained that most current definitions of unit coordination are presented in terms of the roles of such leaders in an educational setting. Such fuzziness may also be explained by the dependency of the definition on the context in which a unit coordinator operates. For instance, unit coordinators can be found in a university setting, but they can also be found in a kindergarten (Ho & Lin, 2015) which is very likely to result in several differences in terms of what is expected from a unit coordinator in each of the two contexts.

Nonetheless, a common interpretation of unit coordination in the recent literature exists in terms of *formal* roles and *informal* roles (Cosenza, 2015). As a result, the concept of unit coordination is presented as a set of practices and behaviors that are carried out in a collective manner. When interviewing 64 unit coordinators at Australian universities, Pepper and Roberts (2016) reported that most respondents described unit coordination as a means of creating liaisons, collaborations, and networks with others while at the same time updating and maintaining education resources.

The *formal* leadership roles are described as managerial and pedagogical, such as teaching, leading administrative tasks, conducting research, and maintaining unit quality (Pepper & Roberts, 2016). The *informal* leadership roles are more personalized and stem

from the unit coordinator's own motivation and desire to make a change. These include leading new teams, coaching and mentoring, as well as setting up groups for action research (Mujis et al., 2013).

Holecek et al. (2016) and other researchers (Glover & Harris, 2016; Durden et al., 2014) adopted a more pedagogically sustaining definition of unit coordinator by describing unit coordinators as culturally relevant teachers who take into account cultural experiences and backgrounds of students in order to design and promote relevant curriculums. Glover and Harris (2016) emphasized the *cultural competence* that is fostered in a classroom led by unit coordinators, along with a *sociopolitical consciousness* that unit coordinators develop in their students' minds in order to bolster the levels of *academic success*.

Whitney (2013) justified her studies on the development of unit coordination by stating that the findings should contribute to better defining and understanding what unit coordination stands for. The researcher reviewed the existing literature and concluded that unit coordination is the practice of improving education and maintaining the motivation behind its development. Whitney (2013) also noted that unit coordination was defined on several occasions as having the potential to influence colleagues and alter their practices to the benefit of the overall educational institution. The author identified a serious gap in the literature, stating that research still has not clarified how leadership potential is displayed, thus calling for further research on this matter. Cosenza (2015) echoed Whitney's (2013) call for further research with the following statement:

> Additional qualitative research that includes the perceptions of how administrators view unit coordination and how they view the development of unit coordination would provide additional insight on the dynamics of unit coordination and perhaps the types of individuals that emerge as unit coordinators (Cosenza, 2015, p. 97).

Further, Evans (2015) categorized unit coordination under *academic leadership* in the literature and recognized it as an essential component in today's education lexicon. Evans (2015) examined unit coordination in UK-based universities and acknowledged the explicit emphasis that British universities place on the need for applicants to be engaged in academic leadership.

Behaviors & Personal Characteristics of Unit Coordinators. Mujis et al. (2013) emphasized the confidence and increased expertise that all unit coordinators seem to share in common. The researchers explained in their study on how Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) can become unit coordinators that confident and increasingly expert individuals are more willing to embrace new approaches by taking more risks. Such risk-taking behavior harmonizes well with the demands of the VUCA environment previously discussed in this review. Mujis et al. (2013) also mentioned the motivation to lead (MTL) as an essential component in the make-up of NQTs who are likely to become successful leaders. Pepper and Roberts (2016) added to the previously listed behaviors and characteristics that most of the unit coordinators they interviewed seemed to agree that

they were skillful in influencing others despite their leadership roles being informal or not being recognized yet as leaders.

One of the main themes identified by Cosenza (2015) when analyzing the common behaviors and characteristics of unit coordinators revolved around *Role Modeling*. It appears that unit coordinators not only were perceived as role models by their students, but by their colleagues as well. As a result, the researcher was able to infer that unit coordinators were displaying respectful behaviors, high-quality characteristics, and desirable professional dispositions in a consistent fashion. Cosenza (2015) also reported relevant characteristics and behaviors such as leading by example and being open to listening to new ideas.

Li, Hallinger, and Walker (2016) emphasized the importance of trust in facilitating the production and development of social relationships in schools. The researchers explained that successful unit coordinators seem to be particularly adept at building trust within faculty and the overall education community. According to Li et al.'s (2016) review on the role of trust in education, unit coordinators contribute to the successful improvement of universities by facilitating productive liaisons between the different parties involved.

When studying program leaders, Murphy and Curtis (2013) explained that such unit coordinators who occupied both formal and informal leadership positions seemed to undergo a significant amount of pressure due to the fact that they were engaged in volunteering activities that often went unrecognized or unrewarded. As a result, such

resilient unit coordinators often attributed their success to their great interpersonal skills and their willingness to quickly respond to emerging situations (Murphy & Curtis, 2013).

Hashim and Ahmad (2013) explored the professional journey of new entrant teachers who aimed at achieving expertise and leadership through experience. The study aimed at identifying the factors that contributed to the success of already established successful unit coordinators. Among those factors, the desirable behaviors and personal characteristics of unit coordinators seemed to revolve around having *individual values*. Hashim and Ahmad (2013) explained that the interviewed unit coordinators seemed to be autonomous when it comes to self-directed learning, they displayed great commitment when it comes to work, and had unshakable work ethics.

Bond and Sterrett (2014) studied the development of unit coordinators in universities and summarized the set of behaviors and characteristics which according to their exploratory study facilitates the development of leadership in university teachers. Bond and Sterrett (2014) mentioned the ability to know oneself while being conscientious of others. Further, the authors listed the ability to reflect on experience, collaborate with others, and have a mentoring attitude towards those who need guidance. Finally, Bond and Sterrett (2014) echoed Cosenza's (2015) as well as Murphy and Curtis' (2013) findings by reporting respectively confidence and resiliency as important personal characteristics a unit coordinator ought to display.

Tasks & Relationship-Building Activities of Unit Coordinators. The next theme explored in the research questions of this study is related to the specific tasks and

relationship-building activities of unit coordinators. According to Mujis et al. (2013), such formal roles include both pedagogical and management responsibilities and take up the majority of unit coordinators' professional life (Pepper & Roberts, 2016). In this section, such tasks and relationship-building activities are drawn from the recent literature, listed and summarized as follows.

Cosenza (2015) interviewed 42 unit coordinators and asked them to define unit coordination. Most participants responded by listing the formal roles played by unit coordinators at universities which was particularly convenient for gaining insight into the specific tasks and activities of a unit coordinator. Among the identified themes, Cosenza (2015) listed collaboration as an important task and relationship-building activity that the interviewed unit coordinators seemed to engage in on a regular basis.

Collaboration. Successful unit coordinators work with their colleagues to improve the overall practice. They include others in their decision-making process and keep the benefit of their students in mind. Further, unit coordinators provide support for each other which according to the respondents in Cosenza's study (2015) seems to be an additional way of demonstrating leadership. Such collaboration meant that it did not matter who the site administrator was; everyone was involved in the decision-making process and as a result felt empowered. Cosenza (2015) also explained that collaboration allows to set common goals for the not only the department, but the university as a whole. As a result, the entire educational community would benefit from the multitude of ideas stemming from the cooperative work of different teachers.

Formal roles. Mujis et al. (2013) distinguished between formal and informal roles that constitute a unit coordinator's work. Cosenza (2015) delved deeper into the formal roles by identifying and summarizing such traditional roles listed by his respondents: acting as a department chairperson, representing a unit within the university, and being a member of a leadership committee. The tasks related to such formal roles seem to provide unit coordinators with the opportunities to represent colleagues and effectuate change.

Li et al. (2016) proposed a model in which four core tasks and relationship-building activities of unit coordinators were identified: setting the strategic direction in the workplace, working on the development of people, constantly updating the design of the organization, and managing the learning program. Such core tasks and activities seem to be repeated consistently across the literature in different locations across the world such as Hong Kong (Li et al. 2016), Australia (Pepper & Roberts, 2016), Pakistan (Abbas et al., 2016), the UK (Evans, 2015), the US (Morris & Laipple, 2015), and many others. While such information might not be enough to predict leadership potential in newly qualified teachers (NQT), it still provides the researcher with a clearer idea of what to expect when interviewing unit coordinators in a new setting such as the one proposed in this study.

In a study on the preparedness of academic administrators, Morris and Laipple (2015) identified several additional formal roles such as giving performance reviews, running meetings, and allocating resources. According to the authors, effective unit

coordinators are conscientious of such activities whether they occupy formal or informal leadership roles within the university. Indeed, as a formal leader, the unit coordinator would have to directly experience and undergo such tasks and is expected to develop the necessary competence in those areas in order to succeed. As an informal leader, that same unit coordinator may not necessarily have a direct experience with allocating resources, but is still invited to work closely with their administrative teams (Morris & Laipple, 2015) in order to increase the overall effectiveness of the education strategy and decrease the amount of unnecessary conflicts.

Unit coordinators are mainly described as university teachers who also occupy formal leadership positions. In their study, Pepper and Roberts (2016) recognized the addition of new responsibilities to unit coordinators' workload and listed the following tasks and relationship-building activities: handling difficulties with teaching such as dealing with large classes, managing workload, leading education, maintaining unit quality, being involved in technological advances when it comes to online resources such as podcasts, and integrating research with teaching.

When it comes to the recent literature on the tasks and relationship-building activities of a unit coordinator, some researchers (Glover & Harris, 2016; Durden et al., 2014) seemed particularly interested in unit coordinators' concern with designing the school curriculum in such a way that it should be based on the cultural backgrounds as well as the experiences of students. Glover and Harris (2016) explained that one very important task of unit coordinators is to provide *culturally relevant teaching* to their

students. Such task involves integrating academic learning with real-world problems, which Durden et al. (2014) describe as resulting from a relationship-building activity that occurs between the unit coordinators and their students. Indeed, unit coordinators seem to intentionally make connections between the classroom experience and the students' home experiences, thus creating a special bond that further contributes to their academic success.

Current Challenges of Unit Coordination. Whitney (2013) and Cosenza (2015), among several other researchers, identified a lack of understanding on how to identify and develop unit coordinators. Such poor understanding, coupled with a lack of research in the literature, seems to have resulted in significant challenges for unit coordinators in today's educational insitutions. Boud et al. (2014) found that new unit coordinators still perceived their role as ambiguous and lacking direction. Similarly, Morris and Laipple (2015) reported shocking statistics reflecting how unprepared unit coordinators seemed to be when they got promoted to formal positions. Cosenza (2015) even pointed out that most of his interviewed unit coordinators had never thought of themselves as being officially leaders and that they had to find their own way to make things work.

Morris and Laipple (2015) estimated that one in five academic leaders would resign every year. Interestingly, such shocking percentage of resignation (20%) was attributed to high stress and low job satisfaction. This goes hand in hand with Murphy and Curtis' (2013) explanation that resilience was an essential component of successful unit coordinators, especially those occupying both formal and informal roles. For

instance, the pressure and the amount of responsibilities that is required of unit coordinators can be especially daunting when such leaders are also engaged in volunteering activities and are actively working for the benefit of the education community.

Going back to Morris and Laipple's (2015) study on the unpreparedness of academic leaders, the authors explained that departments might be expecting too much of new unit coordinators. Indeed, a review done by the authors revealed that successful unit coordinators reported a minimum of 6 years served in their administrative position before they had learned and acquired all necessary leadership skills for that position. Not to mention that such individuals are in most cases not receiving any proper guidance, no official training, and very little support.

In a similar article, Boud et al. (2014) also reported that most unit coordinators seemed to have learned their roles along the way, and a couple respondents indicated that they had received nothing but folders from previous occupants of the position. Boud et al. (2014) expressed their concern about the fact that there was a lack of mentioning training or at least a systematic and formal introduction to the leadership role. Moreover, the authors discussed that many coordination positions still operated informally and seemed to have unclear boundaries. As a result, unit coordinators had no clear sense of what was expected of them in such positions.

The main issue with such fuzziness around the role of academic leaders is the fact that many practitioners, particularly HR managers, would be unable to identify the right

unit coordinators to promote to a formal leadership position. For instance, a unit coordinator's position seems to involve much more than performing basic administrative tasks. Both studies of Morris and Laipple (2015) and Boud et al. (2014) recognized that unit coordinators who lacked informal leadership skills (inspiring, influencing, motivating others, etc.) were unlikely to succeed at their job and negatively impact the overall performance of the department.

Further, Mujis et al. (2013) discussed the importance of fostering a suitable environment for unit coordination to flourish successfully. Through their case studies and surveys, the authors were able to identify that many failures of unit coordination were linked to a lack of support, poor communication, and a lack of cohesion in the department. Such challenges would have been solvable if unit coordinators were given more formal attention from the administration. But it is difficult to blame the institution when the literature itself has not yet fully defined and provided a thorough understanding of unit coordination.

Summary and Conclusions

In order to survive in today's VUCA environment, organizations are urged to let go of obsolete strategies while updating and maintaining the quality of new processes (Lambright, 2015). Identifying and enlisting relevant leaders has been recognized as the key to leading such ongoing and complex change as many researchers believe that competent leaders are behind the survival and success of major corporations today (Church et al., 2015). However, the problem seems to be that identifying competent, as

well as contextually relevant, leaders remains an unreliable task for practitioners such as HR managers, top managers, and line managers (Dries & Pepermans, 2012: Lambright, 2015). Despite the myriad of approaches, ranging from psychometric tests (Prinsloo, 2012) to the use of various theoretical models, researchers still recognize the lack of empirical and reliable means of identifying leadership potential.

Nonetheless, a recent trend in the literature was inspired by Church and Silzer's (2014) extensive studies on leadership potential, in which researchers would develop scales and models for identifying leadership potential and would anchor their approach in both qualitative and quantitative research. Church and Silzer (2014) popularized this approach with the introduction of the *Leadership Potential BluePrint* (see Table 1), and instigated a series of studies in which researchers attempted to understand leadership potential in different organizational contexts. For this study, I chose to follow the most recent approach for identifying leadership potential by taking the initial qualitative step of identifying leadership potential in university teachers. Based on the results of the analysis, future quantitative research can be carried out to validate the results and complete the development of a model that may be used in an educational context.

When it comes to leadership in an educational context, a noticeable trend in the literature revolved around the use of transformational leadership, followed by transactional leadership in the Full Range Leadership Theory (Abbas et al., 2016). However, more recent reviews have reported the popularization of innovative leadership strategies in education, which included distributed leadership and system leadership.

Such contemporary and post-heroic approaches (Ahmed et al., 2015) are based on extending leadership to a broader environment which seemed to be particularly effective in an educational setting.

Both transformational and distributed leadership were directly linked to the concept of formal leadership at universities, thus making those two leadership strategies particularly relevant in this research. Reviewing the literature on university leadership revealed a noticeable lack of understanding about the aspects of the leading a department (Cosenza, 2015) along with more confusion with regard to the actual role of unit coordinators (Boud et al., 2014). The remaining part of the review covered the themes presented in the research questions which were initially drawn from Church and Silzer's (2014) *Leadership Potential BluePrint* and adapted to the educational context of this study. These themes revolved around the behaviors and personal characteristics of successful unit coordinators, as well as the tasks and relationship-building activities they excelled at. These were identified and listed throughout the literature review and will be employed during both the data collection phase, as well as the analysis phase of the study.

Following Whitney's (2013) early identification of a lack of understanding in the literature on how leadership develops in university teachers, Cosenza (2015) explicitly called for qualitative research in which an administrative point of view is examined regarding how university teachers display the potential to becoming a unit coordinator. In Chapter 3, I describe in detail the methodology used to uncover the behaviors and

personal characteristics of successful unit coordinators, as well as the main tasks and relationship-building activities that predict successful department leadership in a university teacher.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to examine how university teachers demonstrate the potential to become unit coordinators, by seeking to uncover the main behavioral patterns, personal characteristics, tasks, and relationship-building activities (Evans, 2015; Pepper & Roberts, 2016) that make a university teacher suitable for leading a department. A multiple-case strategy (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2013;) was selected particularly for the advantages of demonstrating consistent patterns and behaviors (Zach, 2006) across the different interviewed unit coordinators, but also for achieving a deeper understanding (Patton, 2012) of the potential to lead a department among university teachers. The following sections in this chapter include a detailed description and justification of the research design, the participant selection, the instrumentation, as well as the data collection and analysis procedures. Finally, I discuss issues of trustworthiness ranging from the credibility and transferability of findings to the ethical procedures and issues related to this study.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions were posed for this study:

Central Question: How do university teachers demonstrate the potential to becoming unit coordinators?

Subquestion 1: What relationship-building capabilities make university teachers excellent candidates for becoming unit coordinators?

Subquestion 2: What task-completion capabilities do potential unit coordinators display at the workplace?

At this stage of research, the potential to becoming a unit coordinator at a university is defined as the capabilities and building blocks (Church & Silzer, 2014) possessed by university teachers, which allow them to become successful unit coordinators. Keeping in mind the variations on the definition of leadership at universities (see Chapter 2), for the purpose of this study, leading a department is defined as a set of skills and behaviors carried out in a collective manner (Cosenza, 2015) with the aim of creating liaisons in the education community (Pepper & Roberts, 2016) while maintaining and updating the quality of teaching (Li et al., 2016).

Qualitative Research: Multiple-Case Study

In Chapter 2, the literature on leadership at universities was presented to highlight a gap in understanding the way university teachers displayed the potential to becoming unit coordinators (Cosenza, 2015; Whitney, 2013). Following on Cosenza's (2015) specific call for future qualitative research from an administrative point of view, a multiple-case study was chosen so that the potential for becoming a unit coordinator is examined from the point of view of such administrators (who are unit coordinators themselves) in the hopes of achieving a deeper understanding of how university teachers display the potential to becoming unit coordinators.

While other research designs would have potentially helped addressing the research questions of this study, a multiple-case design was the best choice for several

specific reasons. First, it is designed to take the researcher as well as the reader deep into the world of subjects, thus providing more vivid and richer pictures of the studied phenomenon (Zach, 2006). Second, case studies are described as particularly effective when trying to achieve deeper understanding of a small number of subjects (Patton, 2012), which in this case applies to the relatively small number of unit coordinators whose knowledge on leading a department I wished to thoroughly examine. Third, during the stage of theoretical replication (Yin, 2013), the specific patterns that were identified in the first few cases can be confirmed or disproved as further cases are explored..

Finally, the multiple-case design superseded other possible design choices for this study due to its effectiveness when it comes to uncovering new divergent themes (Maxwell, 2013). Other research designs do not emphasize the replication feature that is included in a multiple-case design. As a result, any emergent theme that was not predicted in the literature review, such as a new behavioral pattern or a new set of leadership characteristics, would be better examined through a multiple-case design where such divergent themes can be examined during the process of replication.

Role of the Researcher

Since I was not in a position to observe behavioral patterns and other characteristics of formal leadership potential in university teachers over a period of time, it was more convenient to examine unit coordinators' descriptions of how they observe and experience such patterns and themes over the period of their careers so far. My direct observation of university teachers' behavioral patterns, characteristics, tasks, and

relationship-building activities was simply not realistic despite it being desirable. This is not only due to the complexity of how formal leadership potential is displayed, but also to the fact that it occurs over an undefined period (Maxwell, 2013). Not to mention that it would have been too intrusive to follow university teachers around or observe them in class without influencing their behavior.

Taking the unit coordinator's descriptions of leadership potential at face value, my role was to interview the participants and record their own views and perceptions of how university teachers display leadership potential. An obvious interviewer bias might stem from the leading questions (Yin, 2013) in such a way that I imposed specific frames drawn from the literature through which the unit coordinators are supposed to respond. For instance, some unit coordinators might have additional data that go beyond personal characteristics and behaviors through which they recognize potential unit coordinators. In order not to miss out on such potentially valuable information, I made sure to ask if the respondents have additional insights on the topic which were left out during the interview.

Similarly, confirmation bias was addressed by constantly evaluating respondents' impressions and stirring away from the assumption that their answers will be identical to the ones I reviewed in the literature. Finally, in terms of the asymmetrical power relation (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015) of the unit coordinator as the interviewed subject and me as the interviewer, a halo effect (Patton, 2012) could have occurred such that I perceived certain unit coordinators as particularly knowledgeable because some of their answers

concurred with the literature I already reviewed. As a result, there was a risk I might assume that the entirety of their responses would be accurate and valid as well, which may not always the case. In order to address this halo effect, I evaluated each answer and each theme separately as recommended by Yin (2013) and remained aware and focused throughout the interviews.

Methodology

In this section, the methodology is described with details regarding how participants will be selected, which data collection instrument will be used, and how recruitment, participation, and data collection was carried out. This section also includes a detailed data analysis plan in which transcribing, coding, and connecting themes to research questions are discussed and described.

Participant Selection Logic

Unit coordinators make up the entirety of the studied population and the unit coordinators at American universities in Lebanon were selected as the population for this study. Unit coordinators are university teachers that occupy formal leadership positions on top of their informal leadership activities (Pepper & Roberts, 2016). As a result, they are more likely to possess well-rounded knowledge about leading a department. Further, unit coordinators' administrative role at the university matches Cosenza's (2015) call for future research on exploring unit coordination from an administrator's perspective.

A typical case sampling was used in such a way that the normal unit would be a university teacher occupying a unit coordinator position at a university and having held

that position for more than 6 years. The rationale behind this exact criterion was drawn from Morris and Laipple's (2015) report in which successful and knowledgeable unit coordinators averagely seemed to make it past their first 6 years, whereas the majority of newly recruited unit coordinators struggled up to 6 years before resigning. To avoid selecting a participant who falls in the latter category of unit coordinators, I chose to follow Morris and Laipple's (2015) recommendation and seek experienced participants who are successfully managing their job and who are more likely to have pertinent information about leading a department.

I studied 20 different cases such that five unit coordinators were selected from each of the four American universities in Lebanon. Such universities were contacted and visited for the purpose of introducing myself and my intent as a researcher. First, I contacted the universities and presented my doctoral project, particularly emphasizing the benefits and positive impact my study may have on both the institution as well as the university students. I sent emails to each unit coordinator inviting them to participate in the study. I found the contact information (email/phone number) of unit coordinators online on the website of each university.

I followed up on the responses by phone, explaining to the unit coordinators about the consent form and sending it to them by email. I set a meeting (time/ location) for each interview so the participant had at least 3 days to review the study information and ask questions before giving consent on the day of the interview. I met with the unit coordinators at the agreed upon location (coffee shop or any location outside campus),

signed the consent form and conducted and recorded the interview. Once data collection from the first five unit coordinators was successful, I proceeded to set up interviews with coordinators at the next site. A total of 20 unit coordinators were selected because, according to Yin (2013), having 20 cases from different sites would produce enough variety of results to reach saturation.

Instrumentation

When it comes to case studies, Yin (2013) recommended the use of multiple sources for data collection in order to enrich the emerging description of the cases. However, there is a lack of multiple sources of data when it comes to unit coordination characteristics and behaviors, not only due to an absence of prior relevant studies in Lebanon (Mattar, 2016), but also because the process of leadership identification in universities is rarely documented formally (Cosenza, 2015). As a result, I relied solely on in-depth interviews as the main source of data collection for this study, especially since interviewed unit coordinators did not provide any documents that were relevant for triangulating the results.

Interview Protocol. Semistructured interviews were employed in this study as the main source of data collection. Semistructured interviews were appropriate for this type of research as they provide reliable and comparable data (Merriam, 2009) which will prove useful during the theoretical replication (Yin, 2013) stage of the multiple-case study.

The interview protocol followed Church and Silzer's (2014) recommendations such that the formulated questions followed the basic and key questions provided by the authors (see Table 2) on how the BluePrint can be applied to organizations during the process of leadership planning and succession. Such questions were divided into three sections so that the first section addressed the foundational dimensions of leadership potential, the second set addressed the growth dimensions of leadership potential, and the third set addressed the career dimensions of leadership potential including leadership skills and technical skills of unit coordinators.

Table 2. Key Questions for Using the Leadership BluePrint (Church & Silzer, 2014).

Dimensions	Key Questions
Foundational Dimensions	• What are the critical personality characteristics that future leaders at the organization ought to have in order to operate successfully? • What personality characteristics in future leaders require minimization in order to successfully lead the organization? • What is the level of conceptual or strategic thinking that would contribute best to the survival of the organization?
Growth Dimensions	• What type of growth and learning orientation is needed for future leaders in the organization? • What kind of energy, drive, and commitment future leaders ought to have in order to successfully lead the organization?
Career Dimensions	• What level of performance and leadership behavior do current leaders expect from future candidates? • What is the right mix of functional abilities and skills that future leaders ought to display at the organization?

However, it is important to keep in mind that a list of questions does not make the entirety of an interview protocol, as Jacob and Fergurson (2012) explained that the protocol includes procedures, beginning/end scripts, as well as prompts for collecting informed consent. For this study, the created interview protocol followed the practical suggestions found in the work of Jacob and Ferguson which is grounded in both academic lectures and practical teaching experience with generations of new interviewers.

In order to guide the interview process, a script was developed in such a way that all important information is mentioned and sufficient details are not left forgotten. Jacob and Ferguson (2012) mentioned the importance of alleviating the potential concerns of participants through professional and clear wording. Further, the script included a section in which I introduced myself and presented my intent as a researcher in the field of university leadership and talent management, in order to initiate the phase of building rapport with the interviewed unit coordinator.

Similarly, Janesick (2016) emphasized the importance of developing the interview protocol with rigor, preparing as many questions as possible ahead of time. According to the author's extensive experience in the field of interviewing, five to six thoughtful questions would usually yield over 1 hour of data (Janesick, 2016). With the help of the leadership potential BluePrint (Church & Silzer, 2014), I was able to generate seven meaningful questions (see Table 2), which means that I can estimate an hour of interviewing time per respondent.

Tape recorder (digital). As Jacob and Fergurson (2012) pointed out, maintaining eye contact during the interview is essential to building rapport, establishing trust, and making respondents feel appreciated. Using a tape recorder would allow me to focus more on communicating face to face with the respondents and less on taking notes while they speak. I will carry both a digital recorder as well as a back-up recorder to each interview, and a notebook for the purpose of taking field notes during the interview. Janesick (2016) reported numerous cases in which the recorder (even digital ones) would malfunction or have technical problems, hence the importance of carrying a back-up recorder. The digital recorders I am using will be tested to carry a capacity large enough to hold more than the actual 60 minute duration of the interview (Patton, 2012).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

In order to understand how university teachers display leadership potential, I posed two main subquestions based on an extensive literature review. These revolved around uncovering the specific behaviors and personal characteristics of university teachers that reflect future leadership, as well as identifying the specific tasks and relationship-building activities that potential future unit coordinators usually excel at. These subquestions were further branched into specific questions using Church and Silzer's (2014) leadership potential BluePrint, and allowed the development of an interview protocol which will be the main data collection instrument for this study.

The unit coordinators who will participate in this study will be contacted and interviewed either on site (at the university) or in a convenient place to meet for an

interview (office, libraries, home, etc.). Jacob and Fergurson (2012) recommend the use of quiet, safe, and easy to access locations in order to minimize background noise during the recording, as well increase the level of comfort during the interview which according to Patton (2012) reflects heavily on the quality of data produced during the interview.

I will be personally conducting all 20 interviews as I may be best equipped with both the knowledge and the motivation needed in order to successfully probe respondents into generating the best answers possible to the research questions posed in this research. According to Maxwell (2013), the researchers themselves are the instruments of the research in an interview and hold a significant effect on the research design which ultimately affects the quality of data collection. As a result, it is expected that I optimize the level of my performance as an interviewer which I plan to accomplish by following Jacob and Ferguson's (2012) detailed interviewing procedure. Some of the steps include starting with a script and collecting consent by giving the interviewed unit coordinators plenty of time to go through the forms and answering any questions they might have.

The frequency of data collection will be in such a way that I will be conducting one interview per unit coordinator for a total of 20 different interviews. Unless the interview is interrupted for an unexpected reason, there should be no need for more than one sitting to collect the data necessary for this study. Unit coordinators have a very busy schedule (Pepper & Roberts, 2016) and it may be challenging enough to gain their participation when it comes to investing one hour out of their time to answer interview questions. Unit coordinators also care about contributing to the educational community as

system leaders (Boylan, 2016) and it is my job to present their participation in terms of the positive social change and positive impact it may hold on the educational community.

In terms of the duration of data collection events, it was already estimated that five to six questions often yield up to an hour of interviewing time (Janesick, 2016). Since my interview protocol includes seven key questions, I estimate at least an hour per interview. This information will be included in my beginning script (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012) in such a way that the interviewed unit coordinators are aware of this time limit and agree upon it during the collection of consent. In order to make the most out of the agreed upon duration of the interview, it is important to block off interruptions and minimize disruptions (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012). Cell phones will be turned off or at least muted, and schedules should be cleared in such a way that there would be no rush preceding or following the data collection event.

As previously mentioned, a digital tape recorder will be used to record the interview, accompanied by a notebook on which brief and strategic notes (Patton, 2012) can be taken. I will make sure that the device is working prior to the interview by testing it and checking its capacity levels as I progress from one interview to the other. Further, an electric plug will be carried at all times in case of power shortage and I will make sure to enter the interview session with a fully charged up recording device. As previously mentioned, a quiet place would ensure the best quality of recording, as well as placing the microphone close to the participant. The recorder will be placed on a stable surface (Patton, 2012) and I will test the system before beginning the interview. During the

interview, I will set the tone by speaking in a clear and not too fast pace. I will also make sure to stop recording during breaks and interruptions.

Data Analysis Plan

The central research question "how do university teachers demonstrate the potential to becoming unit coordinators?" in this study had to be broken down into two main sub questions. The data collected throughout the study specifically aims at answering those two sub questions, thus allowing the researcher to piece together an answer to the central question. For instance, the first sub question "what behaviors and personal characteristics make university teachers excellent candidates for becoming unit coordinators?" would be answered through its equivalent interview questions developed using the BluePrint (Church & Silzer, 2014), specifically in the Foundational and Growth dimensions categories of questions (see Table 2). By the same token, the second sub question "What specific education tasks and formal relationship building activities do university teachers with the potential to becoming unit coordinators engage in at the workplace?" would be answered through its equivalent interview questions developed in the same instrument, specifically in the Career dimensions category of questions (see Table 2). By answering each set of questions, the respondents would hopefully provide insightful data on each research question allowing the researcher to ultimately bring the different analyzed pieces together and answer the central research question.

Open and Axial Coding. The transcribed interviews will go through two cycles of coding: a First Cycle coding also referred to as Open coding and a Second Cycle

coding also referred to as Axial coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). During the open coding phase, the *Descriptive* coding method will be used in order to draw the topics that would allow me to create categories which are particularly relevant to the sub questions in this study. This coding method will be combined with the *Deductive* coding method in which I would come up with a list of codes prior to fieldwork drawn from the literature review. At the same time, I will remain open to what participants have to say by including the *Inductive* coding method in which new codes would emerge as the data is being collected. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) combing the *Deductive* and *Inductive* coding methods can be perceived as the qualitative way of confirming or disproving existing knowledge while at the same time leaving room for new categories to emerge, which is exactly what is needed in this study.

During the Axial coding phase, the open codes will be grouped together in such a way that they fit into either the Foundational, Growth, or Career dimensions in the *Leadership Potential BluePrint* (Church & Silzer, 2014). Knowing that each of these three dimensions includes at least two building blocks (see Table 1), the Axial coding phase should result in at least 6 categories of findings. Such categories are made sure to be exhaustive and mutually exclusive (Maxwell, 2015) in such a way that they each relate to a different aspect of the formulated research questions.

Software used for Analysis. There seems to be a lack of multiple sources of data related to leadership at universities (Cosenza, 2015), especially in Lebanon (Mattar, 2016). Since I will be solely relying on interview transcripts as my main source of data, I

could not justify the necessity of using of complex Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). Instead, I chose to rely on the Microsoft Software Programs such as Microsoft Word for transcribing the interviews and creating codes, while Microsoft Excel will be used for designing, creating, and displaying Matrices or Networks.

Within-case and Cross-case Analysis. Using Yin's (2013) recommendations, I will be conducting a within-case analysis as an initial step, followed by the cross-case analysis. It will be an ongoing, overlapping, and dynamic process in such a way that discrepant cases and confirmatory cases will be identified as the data collection process will be taking place. Attention will be given to such discrepant cases in such a way that the potential reasons behind their inconsistencies are discussed and the level of trustworthiness in the study is increased. Each within-case analysis will be treated separately, resulting in individual case studies having each their own report along with the categories of themes related to each of these individual cases. The next step would be to compare those findings using the cross-case analysis in order to identify the agreement across the cases and ultimately develop a final multiple-case report.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

In order to ensure the internal validity of this study, the following strategies will be employed during and after the data collection phase. In terms of triangulation, the validity of the conclusion may be increased by constantly comparing findings and conclusions with the existing body of literature and resolving any discrepancies. Patton (2012) described the importance of prolonged engagement when it comes to building experience and knowledge about how to handle participants and the data they provide. I will be spending a minimum of 20 total hours interviewing unit coordinators at universities which are likely to result in increased exposure and experience that will boost my credibility in the field when it comes to interpreting and analyzing data. In terms of saturation, Yin (2013) explained that it is the responsibility of the researcher to monitor cases until they reach saturation and that there is no set amount of cases to ensure saturation. With that said, 20 different cases seemed enough to eventually reach the point where no additional insightful information can be extracted from the data. Finally, I may keep a reflexive journal (Janesick, 2016) in which I will keep regular entries about the research process. I may record in the journal the details of the study such as logistics, different interviews, and my reflections after each encounter. According to Janesick (2016), this increases the researcher's level of consciousness when it comes to remaining as objective as possible throughout the study.

Transferability

In order to establish transferability when it comes to the results of this study, the following strategies will be deployed in terms of both thick description and variation in participant selection. According to Freeman (2014), the usual explanation of thick description is lacking in terms of what it is actually intended to portray. The author argued that in order to reflect transferability and verisimilitude, the researcher has to represent the topic with abundant details and tie it directly to cultural and individual complexity (Freeman, 2014). With that information in mind, I will make sure to give enough attention to the cultural context in which unit coordinators are examined, in order to emphasize the fact that findings may be transferable within the cultural context of this study, but less so outside such boundaries. When it comes to variation in participant selection, I followed Yin's (2013) recommendations for multiple-case studies and settled for 20 participants. According to the qualitative expert, 20 participants is a large enough number to ensure transferability of results, and reasonable enough to avoid oversaturation.

Dependability

The best way I can demonstrate reliable results in my qualitative research is by keeping track of all the data I am gathering along the way and keeping a reflexive journal (Janesick, 2016) in which the trail of data collection and analysis is documented in parallel with the actual study. I will also make sure to point out findings that resonate with other researchers' conclusions in the field, while at the same time highlighting

differences and discrepant cases in order to ensure the representation of different perspectives.

Confirmability

In order to avoid researcher bias and other factors that may interfere with the objectivity of the study, I will keep track of my progress in a reflexive journal (Janesick, 2016) as it seems that being simply aware of oneself during an interview may not be enough to ward off researcher bias reflexes and habits. The journal may help ingrain the behaviors of objectivity in terms of manner of speech, body language, probing, interpreting responses, as well as analyzing data in general.

Ethical Procedures

The unit coordinators will be initially contacted by phone and e-mail, in which full disclosure will be provided regarding who the interviewer is and what the purpose of the interview will be. I will request their agreement to meet at a convenient location and a convenient time. An informed consent should reflect this agreement as well as the participants' wish to participate in this study (Patton, 2012). Based on Nachmias and Nachmias' (2014) recommendations, such informed consent would include an explanation of the procedures of the study, a description of what the participant can expect from the questions, a list of the expected benefits from this study, an instruction that the participant can withdraw consent from the interview at any point with no negative consequences whatsoever.

Using an ethical checklist (Patton, 2012), I will make sure that the study's purpose is clear to participants, and I will promise and deliver both a copy of the tape recording, the transcripts, as well as the results of the study to each participant. While there are no perceived risks associated with unit coordination, some sensitive political, religious, or cultural information might stem during the interviews. Such topics are not included in the interview questions, but they will be welcome and treated objectively in the report as long as the participant mentions them and describes them as playing a significant role in shaping university unit coordinators.

Names of unit coordinators in the studied cases will be fictionalized (Nachmias & Nachmias, 2014) in order to ensure the confidentiality of respondents. By the same token, I will not mention which case corresponds to which site, as this might give hints regarding the identity of the respondent. Otherwise, audiences that are familiar with a particular university might recognize unit coordinators based on their narrative. As for the original recordings and transcripts, they will be stored on my personal computer and external hard disk, only to be accessed by the participants and me.

Summary

This qualitative study is aimed at exploring the way university teachers demonstrate the potential to becoming unit coordinators through a multiple-case analysis (Yin, 2013; Merriam, 2009) in which the relevant behaviors, personal characteristics, tasks, and relationship-building activities (Pepper & Roberts, 2016) of such potential leaders are investigated. The multiple-case design was used for its advantages when it

comes to not only providing means of replication as the researcher goes from one case to another, but also for the room it allows for additional data to stem as the data collection progresses.

This chapter included a justification of the participant selection process in which unit coordinators where identified as a source of data that researchers in the literature such as Cosenza (2015) seemed interested in when it comes to exploring the leadership of departments from an administrator's perspective. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 20 unit coordinators, 5 from each of the 4 American universities in Lebanon, resulting in 20 different cases which will be analyzed separately at first, followed by a cross-case analysis. Such analysis will include both an open and axial coding in such a way that the researcher would end up with themes matching each category of questions. These categories were based on Church and Silzer's (2014) *Leadership Potential BluePrint* and will be used to answer the research question assigned to each accordingly. As a result, the researcher may be able to put the different pieces of analysis together at the end of the study in order to answer the main research question.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to understand how university teachers demonstrate formal leadership potential by seeking to uncover the main behavioral patterns, personal characteristics, tasks, and relationship-building activities of teachers that enable them to become excellent candidates for leading a university department. In order to achieve this understanding, a specific central research question was formulated: How do university teachers demonstrate the potential to becoming unit coordinators? Answering this central question entailed examining two different dimensions of leading a university department, as illustrated by the following two subquestions:

- What relationship-building capabilities make university teachers excellent candidates for becoming unit coordinators?

- What task-completion capabilities do university teachers with the potential to becoming unit coordinators display at the workplace?

The above two subquestions are designed to capture the essence of the *Leadership Potential BluePrint* developed by Church and Silzer (2014), of which the different dimensions can be categorized into either relationship-building capabilities or task-completion capabilities. This approach was inspired by Fiedler's contingency model (Ellyson, et al., 2012), the Blake-Mouton managerial grid (Burke, 2014), and the Hersey-Blanchard situational leadership theory (Bess & Dee, 2012), in which all three seminal

theories and models adopt the dichotomous view of relationship-building activities versus task-completion activities.

This chapter provides a description of the results of the multiple-case study and will be divided into two main sections. First, I present a case-by-case analysis for the 20 case analyses. Secondly, I present a cross-case analysis in which I combined the findings to answer the central research question. The main uncovered patterns and recurrent themes are described throughout this chapter, accompanied by their respective participant quotations.

Research Setting

This multiple-case study was conducted in the local community setting of universities campuses in Lebanon. I met individually with 20 unit coordinators who each preferred that the interviews be conducted in their offices on university campus. The research plan originally involved meeting outside campus to avoid complications with rules and regulations, but all participants expressed their preference towards meeting on campus for both time and comfort conveniences. The settings were confidential and relaxed with little to no interruptions, which allowed participants to be fully present and engaged during the interview. The participants were fully aware of the confidentiality measures and were able to express themselves freely.

Demographics

This study did not consider the gender, age, ethnicity, or marital status of unit coordinators since the assumption was that these do not play any definitive part in

demonstrating leadership success. For instance, characteristics and attributes such as respondents' level of maturity were assumed to be independent of age. By the same token, dominance and assertiveness were assumed to be independent of gender. As a result, the only demographics that will be displayed are the type of department being led (e.g. Faculty of Arts & Sciences, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Computer Sciences.) and the current leadership level of the interviewed unit coordinator (e.g. chairperson, dean, acting chairperson) at the university. The given pseudonyms are in an XY format in such a way that Y is a random letter that indicates the university to which the participant belongs. This would allow the identification of different participants belonging to the same Y university. For instance, participant CC and participant DC are two different unit coordinators belonging to the same university. The full list of the 20 interviewed unit coordinators is presented in the following Table 3.

Table 3

Participant Relevant Demographics

Participant Alias	Faculty/Department	Title/Leadership Level
AA	Law & Political Affairs	Chairperson
BB	Philosophy	Chairperson
CC	Health Department	Chairperson
DC	Arts & Design	Chairperson
ED	Computer Science	Chairperson
FB	History & Archeology	Chairperson
GE	Nutrition & Health	Chairperson
HE	Translation	Chairperson
IF	Hospitality Management & Marketing	Chairperson
JG	Marketing	Chairperson
KG	Nutrition	Chairperson
LE	Food Sciences	Chairperson
ME	English	Chairperson
NB	Civilization Sequence	Associate Director
OE	Music	Dean
QE	French	Chairperson
RB	English	Chairperson
SB	Computer Science	Chairperson
TB	Mathematics	Chairperson
UF	Arts & Design	Chairperson

Data Collection

Throughout this study, I collected qualitative data from 20 participants. A total of 20 in-depth interviews were conducted at seven different universities in Lebanon. Each unit coordinator was interviewed once. Each interview lasted between 25 and 50 minutes. The data was audio recorded after each participant provided written consent.. I approached participants by email and often followed up with a phone call to decide on a

suitable time for the meeting. The consent form was sent via email prior to the meeting to give participants plenty of time to review it. Two participants provided an online signature for the consent form. The remaining 18 participants provided a handwritten signature using a printed consent form which I brought with me to the meeting.

After each interview, I followed up by sending an email to each unit coordinator thanking them for their participation. The email contained attached documents which included a scanned copy of the signed consent form. All 20 recordings were transferred to my personal computer as well as an additional storage device, all password protected. I personally transcribed each interview on Microsoft Word documents and sorted the transcriptions in such a way that each participant had a specifically created folder with all related documents for each case.

The only variation from the data collection plan presented in Chapter 3 is regarding the data collection sites. Due to either unavailability or unwillingness to participate by certain approached participants at the four originally targeted universities, I had to extend the study to additional universities in Lebanon in order to fulfill the required (N=20) number of participants. The original plan was to interview five unit coordinators from each of four different universities. The actual data collection resulted in interviewing one unit coordinator from university A, six unit coordinators from university B, two unit coordinators from university C, one unit coordinator from university D, six unit coordinators from university E, two unit coordinators from

university F, and two unit coordinators from university G, for a total of 20 participants from seven different universities.

Data Analysis

This study is characterized by an early and continuous form of analysis. As Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) explained, coding is not something researchers do to prepare the data for analysis; it rather drives the ongoing process of data collection and as a result, the researcher often reshapes the perspective and the instrument for the next case at hand. Such ongoing reshaping of the analysis framework is exactly what happened during this multiple case study, in such a way that each case analysis led to additions to the emerging map of what characterizes successful unit coordinators at universities.

As planned during the methodology phase, I used a combination of both inductive and deductive data analysis techniques (Yin, 2013). With that said, the analysis is predominantly deductive as the information provided by each unit coordinator was analyzed through the existing framework of Church & Silzer's (2014) *Leadership Potential BluePrint*. The inductive aspect can be seen through the additions that I had to make to this existing framework, as some emerging themes (mainly teamwork and collegiality) were not mentioned in the leadership potential blueprint.

The following is a description of the finalized categories and themes of this multiple case study, along with respective examples of participant quotations (Table 2) to illustrate how the coding took place for each of those categories and themes. A total of seven categories that enclose a total of 18 themes were identified for this study. The

categories are (a) leadership skills, (b) functional/technical skills, (c) learning skills, (d) motivation skills, (e) personality characteristics, (f) cognitive capabilities, and (g) teamwork/collegiality. The themes include: managing people, motivating others, developing others, business knowledge, technical skills in one area of expertise, adaptability, learning interest and orientation, openness to feedback, drive and initiative, career ambition and commitment, results and achievement orientation, social and interpersonal skills, assertiveness and dominance, maturity and emotional self-control, cognitive abilities, strategic and conceptual thinking, dealing with complexity and ambiguity, and collegiality.

As previously noted, each of these themes belong to their respective categories (see Table 1) with the exception of teamwork/collegiality which is a significantly recurrent theme that emerged from the data and as a result had to be added to the existing framework of this analysis. The frequency of occurrence varied for several themes in such a way that some cases featured themes that were more prominent than others. These themes will be discussed in detail in a later section of this chapter, along with graphs to better illustrate the frequency of occurrence for every theme in this study.

Each of the seven categories has already been described in Chapter 2 under the *Leadership Potential BluePrint* section (Church & Silzer, 2014), except for the added category of teamwork/collegiality. This category mainly describes unit coordinators' ability to function in a team. I decided to add the term "collegiality" after participant NB coined this term during the interview. It appears that in the case of unit coordinators at

universities, teamwork mostly occurs between colleagues who seem to be sharing responsibility in a congenial way. As a result, collegiality can be perceived as the term to describe desirable teamwork qualities in unit coordinators.

The following is a description of each of the 18 themes, followed by concrete examples (Table 2) to illustrate the occurrence of each in the actual data for this multiple case study:

Social and interpersonal skills. This theme describes unit coordinators' ability to build successful relationships at work, whether with faculty or students. It is particularly characterized by highly interactive unit coordinators who display significant interest in connecting with others, resulting in skillful means of communication, along with noticeable humane qualities which revolve around empathizing with others and building trust in the workplace.

Teamwork and collegiality. This theme describes unit coordinators' display of a shared responsibility, characterized by an inclusive decision-making process and a distributed leadership. Collegial unit coordinators seem to encourage congenial relationships with other professors and make sure that communication is always taking place among different members of the team.

Technical and functional skills in one area of expertise. The interviewed unit coordinators unanimously praised the importance of displaying high levels of expertise at their workplace. This includes extensive experience in a field, mastery of academic skills, and interdisciplinary expertise. The latter seems to be particularly useful when leading a

university department which often includes managing multiple disciplines and different courses at once.

Maturity, emotional self-control, and resilience. This theme describes the desirable characteristics and attributes of successful unit coordinators who all seem to be exceptionally patient, humble, objective, hardworking, and diligent.

Career ambition and commitment. This theme describes high levels of commitment to the department displayed by successful unit coordinators along with a sense of duty and a noticeable interest in furthering their academic career at the university.

Motivating, inspiring, and influencing others. Successful unit coordinators seem to be highly influential in such a way that they have a propensity for instigating positive change in the emotional state of others. This theme describes ways these unit coordinators motivate faculty as well as students to achieve goals at the university.

Dealing with complexity and ambiguity. As predicted in the literature review, unit coordinators are operating in VUCA environments. This theme describes different ways successful unit coordinators deal with the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of leading a department. These ways include multitasking and having a multicultural and globalized mindset.

Drive, energy, and initiative. This theme describes the dynamic and active characteristic of successful unit coordinators. Such effective leaders seem to always be

pioneering projects at the university while maintaining a clear vision for the department, coupled with a noticeable passion for their job.

Results and achievement orientation. This theme captures a common trait among successful unit coordinators which is not only being goal oriented, but also caring about the reputation of the department through regularly seeking achievements.

Openness to Feedback: This theme illustrates unit coordinators' willingness to listen to others. Successful unit coordinators seem to encourage feedback, pointing out that such feedback is essential for the daily management of the department. This theme not only describes the willingness to listen to students' complaints, but it also includes unit coordinators' willingness to receive criticism and suggestions from other professors.

Managing People: This generic theme encompasses the different ways successful unit coordinators go about distributing tasks, particularly through delegation. It also describes the way these unit coordinators handle daily interactions, which particularly features an open-door policy that seems common across the data.

Learning Interest & Orientation: This theme includes successful unit coordinators' tendency to seek new knowledge on a daily basis. Such lessons are sought not only from books and articles, but also from people they meet, ensuring their constant growth in the field.

Assertiveness & Dominance: A less predominant theme in the data, assertiveness and dominance describes successful unit coordinators' ability to exert power through presence, confidence, and decisiveness.

Strategic & Conceptual Thinking: This theme describes the ability of successful unit coordinators to devise effective plans in order to solve problems in the department. This theme includes unit coordinators' ability to diagnose such problems in order to respond to them effectively.

Cognitive Abilities & Intelligence: This theme is similar to the one above, except that it encompasses unit coordinators' overall levels of intelligence, which includes all three of emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and the cognitive intelligence captured in I.Q. tests.

Business Knowledge: This theme describes unit coordinators' level of understanding of the market in order to manage the curriculum effectively. It also includes unit coordinators' understanding of how business is run in educational organizations.

Developing Others: Successful unit coordinators seem to care about the success of their students as well as that of their colleagues. This theme describes the different ways successful unit coordinators create opportunities for others to grow.

Adaptability: This theme describes successful unit coordinators' ability to respond to new environments by making necessary changes. This theme includes the adoption of new habits, and letting go of undesirable attributes in order to perform more effectively in the workplace.

The following (Table 4) illustrates each of the above themes with examples of participant quotations and their respective coding:

Table 4: *Coding & Themes Examples*

Participant	Interview Excerpt	Coding	Theme
AA	"My ability to be a team-leader and connect with different members of the team definitely contributed to my selection."	Building successful relationships	Social & interpersonal skills
BB	"We always make sure that we are moving in consensus. One has to make sure that everyone is on board when taking decisions."	Consensus building	Teamwork & Collegiality
DC	"It is very important to be an expert in your field. If you are a chairperson of a department, you need to learn as much as possible about the courses taught in that department."	Academic expertise	Technical & functional skills
CC	"I let go of my strictness in the sense that I am more willing to give others a chance before placing the blame."	Patient and forgiving	Maturity & Emotional self-control
FB	"I think we all feel a responsibility towards the department, so in order to reject this position you must have a good reason to do so."	Dutifully committed to the department	Career Ambition & Commitment

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

During and after the data collection, the ongoing analysis relied heavily on constantly comparing findings with the existing body of literature. Such form of triangulation (Patton, 2012) is embedded in design of the conceptual framework since all identified themes (except for Teamwork and Collegiality) were confirmed in the Leadership Potential BluePrint (Church and Silzer, 2014) which in turn is the result of an extensive review of the entire literature on leadership potential identification. Moreover, I spent over 20 hours meeting with qualified and experienced unit coordinators at universities. Such prolonged engagement is described by Patton (2012) as an important means of boosting the researcher's credibility when it comes to handling relevant data. For data saturation, the arguably large number (N=20) of interviewed respondents decreased the likelihood that any additional insight could be missed. Finally, I managed to keep a reflexive journal in which I organized my 20 different encounters with the participants, along with notes about our "small talks" after the interviews. This approach was inspired by Janesick (2016) who explained that such increased level of consciousness during the data collection process would allow me to remain objective as I go from one participant to the other.

Transferability

The sample (N=20) in this qualitative study was designed for the purpose of optimizing transferability. Following Freeman's (2014) recommendations, I ensured an

abundant amount of details and tied those to the cultural as well as individual complexity of each of the 20 unit coordinators I interviewed. Moreover, the large number of unit coordinators from different universities and different faculties added to the variety of contexts and abundance of data generated.

Dependability

As I was gathering data, I kept a reflexive journal in such a way that I added new entries after each interview. These were composed of small notes about what was learned from each interview about not only each participant but also the topic in general. According to Janesick (2016), this would further increase reliability of results because otherwise, it would be easy to lose track of findings as I was moving from one interview to the next. I also identified findings that were echoed in the existing literature, while at the same time highlighting the differences and new themes that emerged from the study.

Confirmability

According to Janesick (2016), the reflexive journal can help in reducing researcher bias. I made sure to be as objective as possible by being self-aware when it comes to any reaction I developed during each interview. For instance, during one interview, participant UF went on a very long tangent about the sexist behavior in her workplace and she genuinely expressed her frustration to the point of earning my sympathy. I immediately recognized during the interview that I was losing composure so I expressed my sympathy and immediately changed the topic back to the questions at

hand. If I did not maintain my objectivity, the interview would have been derailed from the topic and I would not have been able to generate all the relevant data.

Study Results

The research questions for this study involve uncovering on one hand the ideal behaviors and personal characteristics for succeeding as a unit coordinator, and at the other hand, the specific tasks and relationship-building activities that successful unit coordinators are expected to engage in at the workplace. This multiple-case study revealed such behaviors, characteristics, and activities since I uncovered the related patterns and themes that emerged from the interviews. Such identification of patterns and themes took place over two phases:

- A case-by-case analysis
- A cross-case analysis

This section will be divided accordingly, which means that I will first present the 20 cases separately. I included for each case an illustrative graph with the frequencies of occurrence for each theme so that the reader can easily compare each case and accompany the researcher through the identification of the main trends regarding behaviors, personal characteristics, and activities that seem to be most prominent among successful unit coordinators.

Finally, I will present a cross-case analysis, summarizing the findings by identifying commonalities as well as discrepancies, in order to answer the two sub questions and ultimately the central research question of this study. The cross-case

analysis will also include the same illustrative graph, although cumulative of all 20 cases. The cases are not presented in any specific order; the assigned participant aliases have been done randomly, so I will present the cases in the alphabetical order of these aliases.

Participant AA

Participant AA is particularly proud of his team leading abilities and compared his work to that of a captain with a ship and a crew. He explained that just like a captain would do at sea, it is important to make sure that everyone on board is working well together, each performing tasks in harmony with the other, in order to reach the destination and objectives desired. Participant AA mainly focused on two aspects of leadership: interpersonal skills and commitment.

Relationship-building capabilities: Alongside his noticeable career ambition and remarkable commitment to the department, Participant AA seems particularly skilled when it comes to socializing, building successful relationships with faculty and students, as well as having good overall interpersonal abilities. His sociability extends to postgraduate lives as he maintains relationships with his students even after they graduate. He explains that this has allowed him to "learn about what the job market needs in terms of updating the curriculum". Participant AA expresses his genuine care about students by saying "we are here not only to transfer knowledge, but also to prepare students to fly by their own wings". Moreover, his interpersonal skills revolve around being open and transparent with anyone at the university. "When you are transparent from the start with everyone, you have nothing to hide. They [students and faculty] do

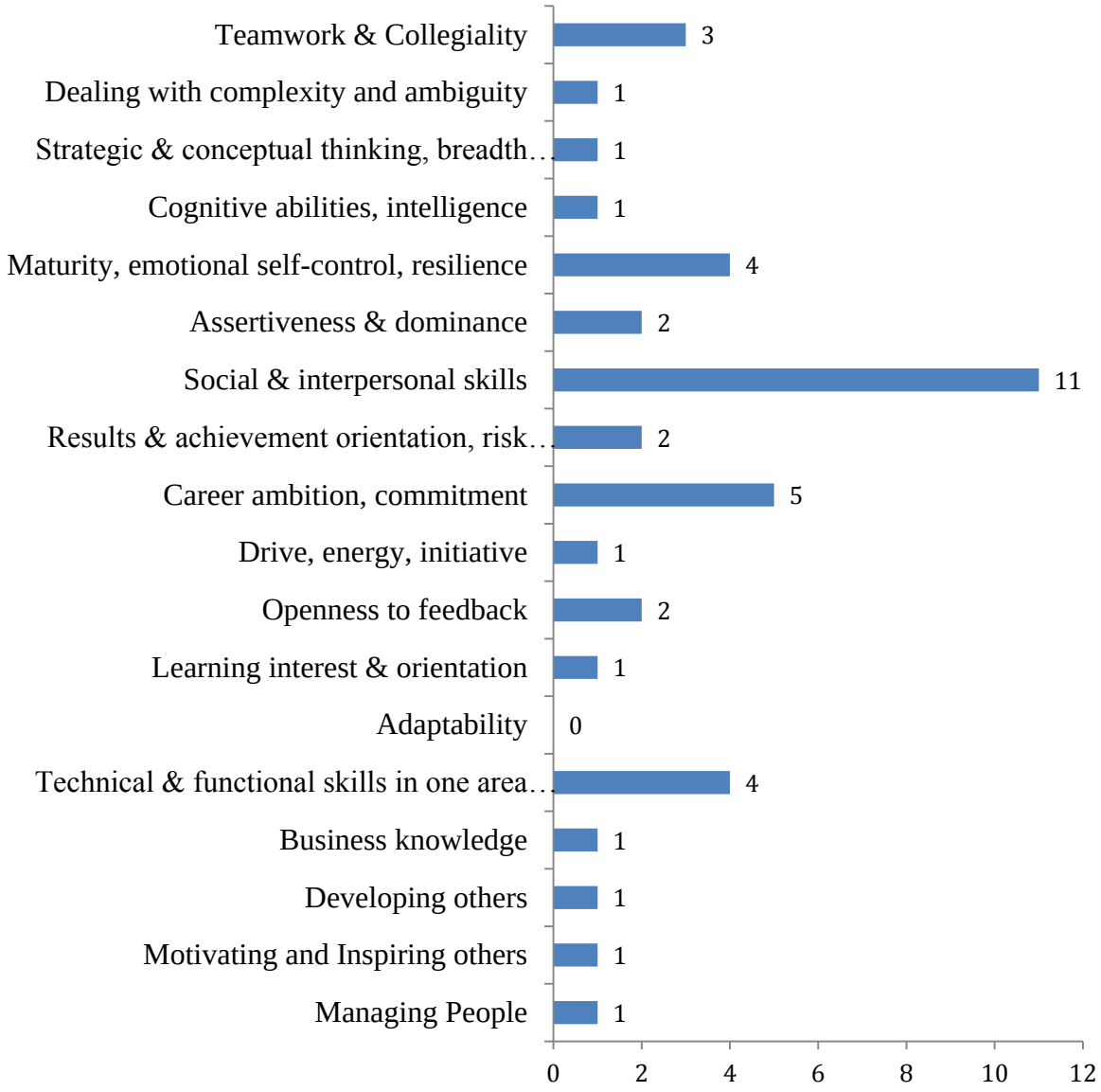
not feel manipulated and most conflicts are avoided this way". He is a big proponent of the "open-door policy", as it further facilitates transparency as well as openness to feedback, which seems essential in this job. Participant AA knows how to empathize with others and attributes this interpersonal ability to his personal maturity and emotional independence which he had to build over the years.

Task-completion capabilities: Noticeably goal oriented, participant AA praises the importance of maintaining positivity and objectivity in order to continuously reach objectives. His commitment to the department is apparent through the clear vision he maintains when it comes to always being aware of the specific purpose and clear function that everyone should have in his department. Furthermore, participant AA demonstrates his commitment and career ambition by describing the administrative work as "necessary and simply has to be done", which is particularly remarkable considering that most unit coordinators described in the literature usually dread administrative work (Morris & Laipple, 2015). Participant AA explains that "many complain about the tediousness of the administrative work, but in my opinion you cannot go without the administrative tasks. One must simply accept it. It is not interesting, but it is not difficult either".

Participant AA praised teamwork and collegiality by describing his work as "a linking role". He explains that "you need to learn how to interact with the people on top and the people below; […] we don't only forward decision from top to bottom, but we also take feedback from students and send this to the administration above".

Finally, participant AA stressed the importance of being an academic expert as a prerequisite to successful leadership at the university. Candidates should be “leaders in their field of study”, he explains. Moreover, learning the principles of management seems to be important as he describes such functional skills as particularly helpful in a job that involves managing, motivating, influencing, and developing others on a consistent basis.

Figure 1: Participant AA (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant BB

Participant BB has had the chance to lead the department at many occasions since the university adopts a rotation system. “We do things a little bit differently at the department”, she explains.

Relationship-building capabilities: Teamwork and collegiality seems prominent in participant BB’s case: “we select among ourselves the chairperson ahead of time, so that when the consultation happens, we are all in agreement”. All decisions seem to be made as a team. Participant BB explains that moving in consensus is essential as she has to make sure that everyone is on board when taking decisions. Whenever conflicts arise, she looks for common grounds and makes sure to find healthy compromises. “We are consensus builders”, she proclaims. “Others think that once you become a chair, you are the decision maker but it is not true and it is not healthy for the department to have this centralized way of thinking”. This distributed form of leadership is further characterized by encouraging collaborations at work.

Participant BB also demonstrated a noticeable high level of social and interpersonal skills, as she seems to easily build successful relationships by seeking good relations with other departments and faculties. She encourages interacting with others on a frequent basis and brushes off conflicts as “fights among siblings” that immediately get resolved. She empathizes with others and comforts them by always stressing the importance of not taking things personal and ensuring everyone that there is no ill will

behind actions. Participant BB always creates opportunities to interact with her students by mandating frequent office visits as part of their graduation requirements.

Task-completion capabilities: Participant BB is dutifully committed to the department as she explains that “leading is a task that you have to do. Just do it. There is no need to show off about how good of a leader you are. It is a duty to lead the department. It is not a goal or something enchanting to pursue”. She is also particularly passionate about her career, stating that she personally loves teaching and finds that her students are great fun to teach. She describes them as very special students, keen and eager to learn. She believes in them, stating that “once you motivate them the right way, they can be excellent people”.

Figure 2: Participant BB (theme frequency of occurrence)

Participant CC

Participant CC attributes her nomination to the numerous positive evaluations from her peers as well as the satisfaction of students with her work.

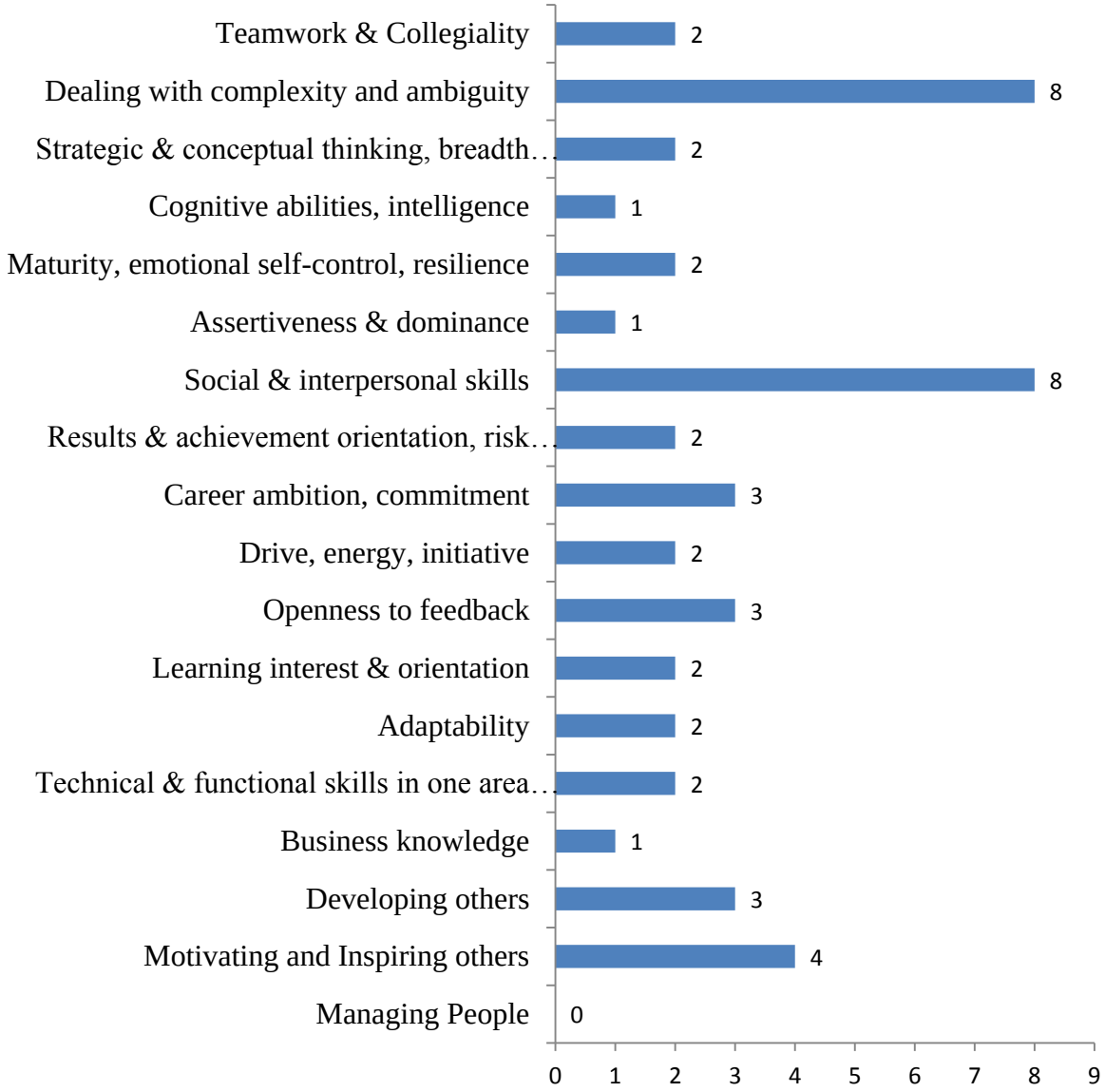
Relationship-building activities: When it comes to social and interpersonal skills, participant CC seems to be particularly interactive as she loves being involved in the progress of her students. She developed empathy over the years, slowly letting go of her original strictness and replacing it with patience and forgiveness which helped her build successful relationships with her students. She explains that after taking the position of a coordinator, she understood that it is important to share the responsibility and help students work on their weaknesses. They appreciated that and often thank her for these efforts. “I often get thank you letters, tokens of appreciation, and sometimes flowers after they graduate”, she explained. She also developed a diplomatic personality which, according to her, is important when working with faculty members on a daily basis. She attributes her overall success to her ability to build a great network of successful relationships. She worked at earning people’s trust which makes it easier for her to influence and motivate others in the workplace.

Task-completion capabilities: Participant CC has to deal with a very complex environment as she is responsible for more than just one division. As a result, she had to develop abilities that better allow her to deal with such complexities. Multitasking is a prominent characteristic with participant CC as she explains that “many different tasks […] need to be performed all at the same time. Without multitasking, I believe that I

would not have been able to correctly perform my job". Moreover, she had to develop timeliness by organizing herself and becoming efficient at all her tasks.

Participant CC is particularly involved in the life of her students and enjoys motivating and positively influencing them. "By giving the students more time to adapt, they had more confidence to make a change by themselves", she explains. She is proud and committed to her department: "I feel very proud of the graduate program because through our evaluation I was able to see how good our students are. We have one of the top programs in the university".

Figure 3: Participant CC (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant DC

Participant DC is a driven and energetic unit coordinator who seems devoted to the mission of successfully running her department. Her high energy and drive for success are apparent in the initiatives she continuously takes when it comes to creating new programs and disciplines depending on the market's needs. She admits that she may be too energetic at times, but she learned to control it with patience and maturity.

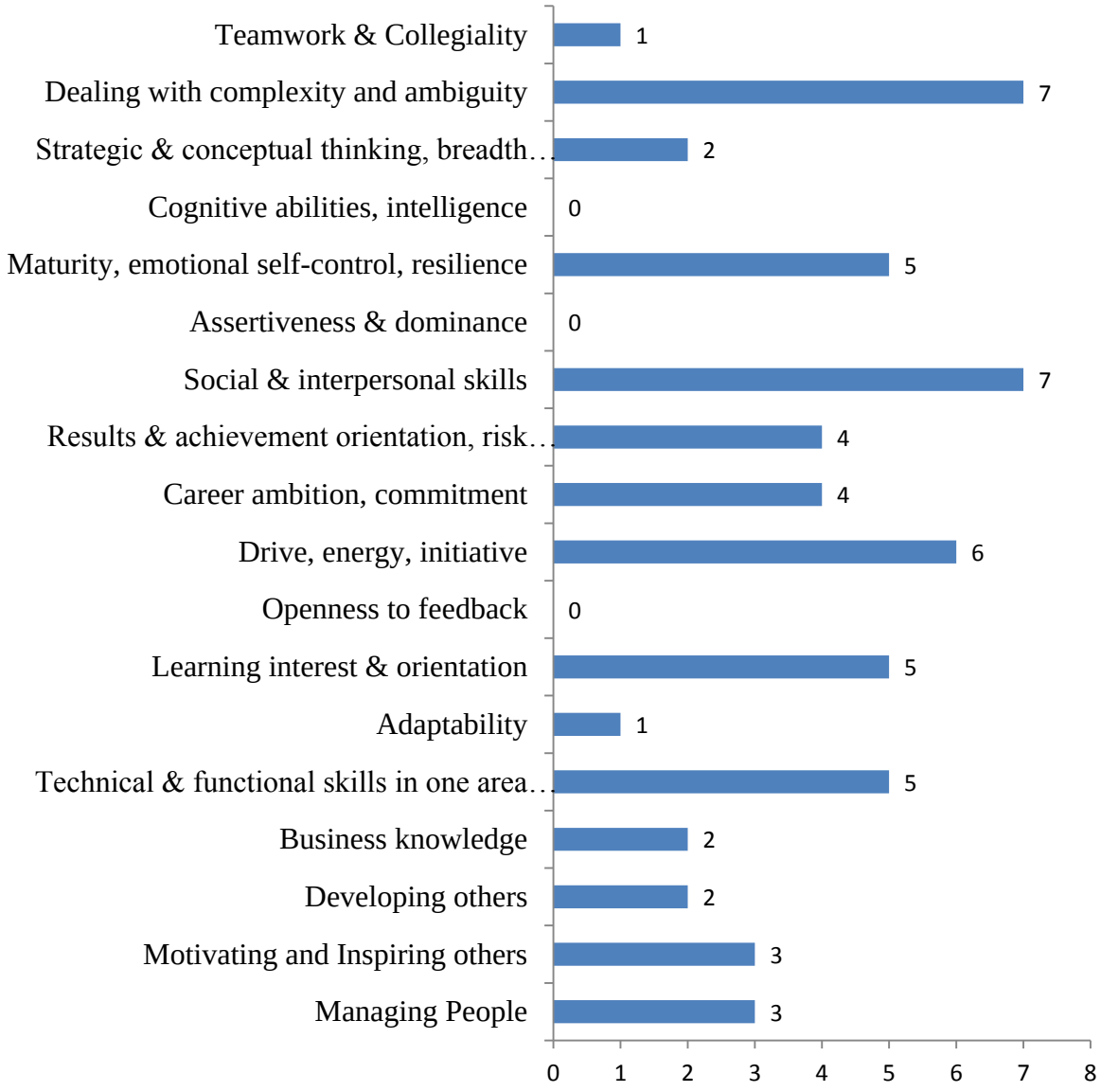
Relationship-building capabilities: Participant DC has developed her social and interpersonal skills over the years and focuses on attributes like humility and being close to people. She is a proponent of the "open-door policy" which reflects her transparency, openness and approachability. She praises maturity and emotional self-control as essential traits one needs to develop when leading a department. She also mentions positivity as an essential component of successful relationship building. She cares about her students and says: "It can be very rewarding when students come back to your office to thank you for your advice".

Task-completion capabilities: Participant DC takes great pride in her job, leading by example and being on a mission. Her level of involvement is remarkable as she explains that one has to "be very close to the department and learn in detail about the methodology of teaching, the course content, and being overall absolutely involved, exposed, and open to all that is going on in [the] department". She invests in extra-curricular activities that echo the identity and voice of her department, and is always looking for challenges to keep moving forward. Her level of commitment to the

department is very high as she states: “I always fight for this department; I consider it my baby and will protect it with everything I can”.

Participant DC describes her environment as very complex and had to develop ways of dealing with such complexity. She mentions multitasking and the ability to deal with various perspectives at the same time. “We have to face problems with the administration, other competing universities, political challenges, as well as economic changes”, she explains. There are days when you have to deal with chaos at work. You have to step back and reorganize yourself and prioritize tasks in order to make things work”. She demonstrated the importance of being resilient and always on the lookout for the next challenge.

Figure 4: Participant DC (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant ED

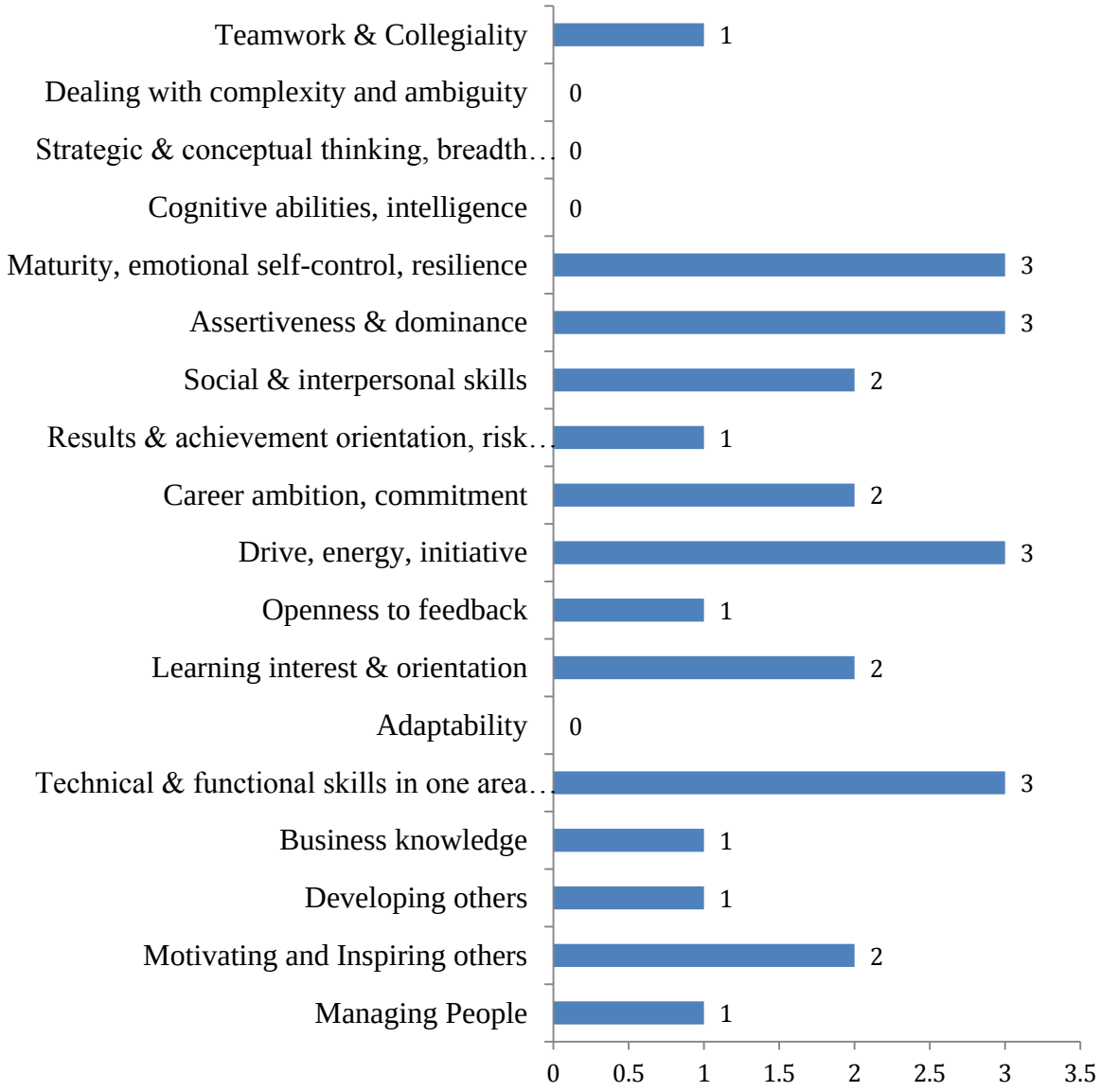
Participant ED is characterized by an all-round balanced personality, with high levels of maturity coupled with qualities of assertiveness. He is also driven, energetic, and always on top of his constantly evolving field of study. He explains: "we are always changing things around. We make sure our courses have the latest material offered to the students".

Relationship-building capabilities: Participant ED praises the importance of being resilient in the face of adversity and developing a strong personality. This self-confidence does not necessarily have to get in the way of always taking into consideration other's opinions. Professionalism is equally important according to participant ED as he explains that differentiating between personal and professional relationships has to always take place during evaluations and task distribution. He is highly interactive as the job requires many daily meetings with students and instructors. His interactions are underlined by honesty, objectivity and emotional self-control. He is also driven by his passion towards teaching: "I enjoy teaching more than anything. It gives me knowledge every day. I learn every day from the students as well as from updating the courses. I get new knowledge all the time and I enjoy that".

Task-completion capabilities: Participant ED is constantly researching new ways of improving his department and often implements projects that were not originally mandated in his employment contract: "All these are not mentioned in the contract. I do my own research on this matter and come up with new ideas". He cares about developing

his students and is always making sure that instructors are using the latest teaching methods. When dealing with students, he motivates them by making them believe that they can master all the “nice and fancy technologies”. He constantly holds competitions through which students can win interesting prizes. He explains that students would be indirectly learning a lot from these events.

Figure 5: Participant ED (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant FB

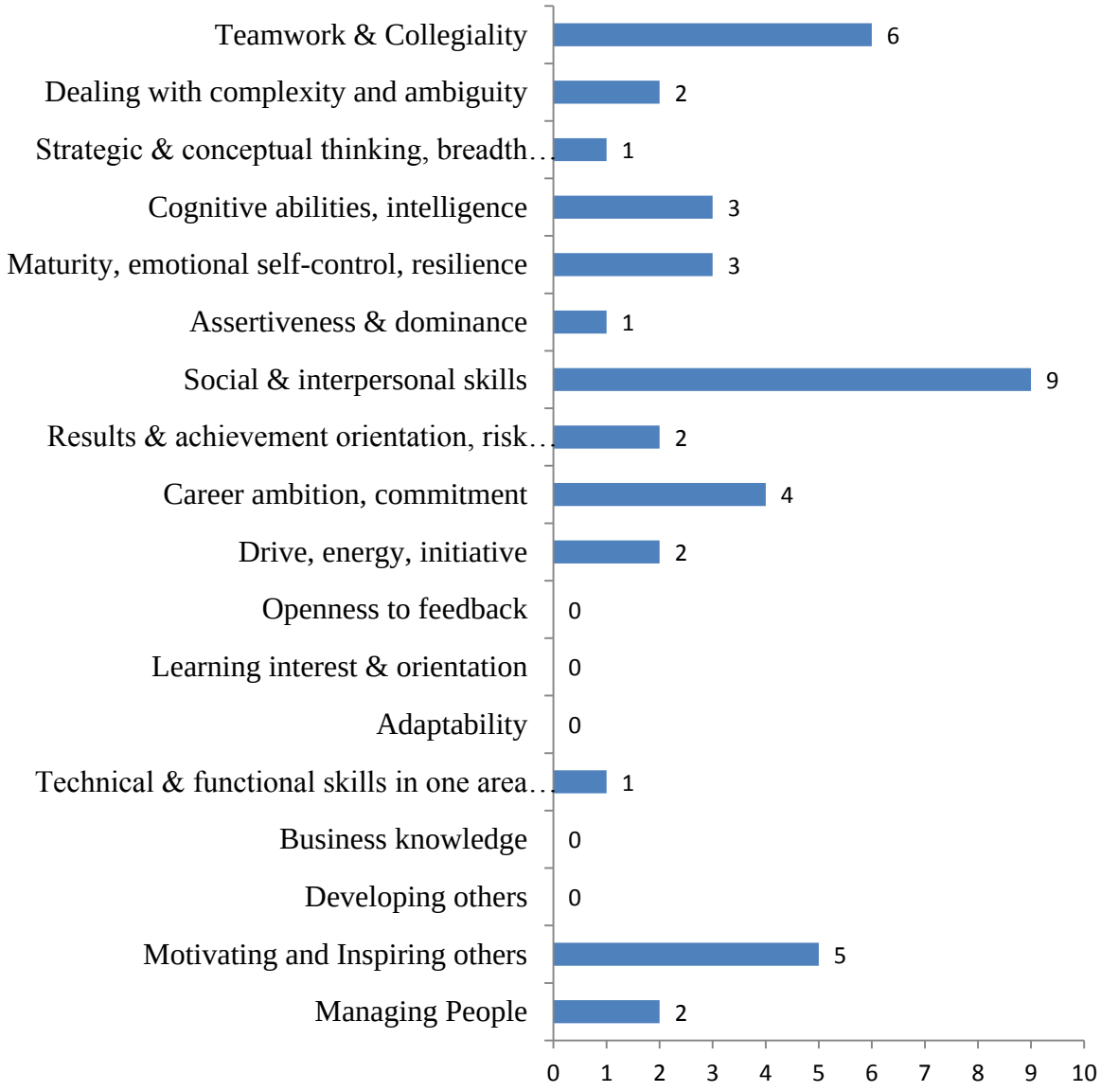
Participant FB found himself in this position due to a rotation system at the university. He humbly explains that it was the circumstances that led him to a leadership position, and not any specific qualities or attributes. With that said, he had a lot to say about what would be ideal for successfully running a department. For one, recognizes the attractiveness of the position as it gives him the power to steer the department in a certain direction. He says that this intrigues him as this is his chance to leave a mark.

Relationship-building capabilities: Participant FB is dutifully committed to the department and praises social and interpersonal skills as the key components for success in this field. His previous working experience helped him develop remarkable soft skills. As a result, the workplace environment he created around him is characterized by peacefulness and positivity. He is pleased with the relationships among his colleagues as he explains that "the level of maturity is relatively high in this department. This has always been the case over the last 13 years". Moreover, participant FB is highly interactive as he constantly talks face-to-face with colleague students, but he also tries "not to leave a single email unanswered, no matter if it is from […] colleagues, […] students, or a student abroad". He also follows up with students after they graduate and maintains his relationships. Participant FB is very trusting of others and promotes equal and fair treatment of everyone in the workplace. For instance, he explains: "You want to build trust, encourage people by telling them what went well and what did not, as well as to help them develop strategies on how to achieve things". He continues: "students and

colleagues should not be afraid of you. There should be a feeling of trust. No matter what the situation is, whether personal or not, they should feel that they can always talk to you".

Task-completion capabilities: Another predominant aspect of participant FB's leadership composition is his inclination towards teamwork and collegiality. "A chair is not a dictator", he states, explaining that the job is often about convincing others in the department to be on board with a certain decision. "It's not about telling people what to do, but rather managing things even in times of crisis". He believes that collegiality is very important for leading a department and he encourages collaborations which bring people together. Participant FB describes his department as "relatively harmonious" and is always making sure that "everyone is prospering together".

Figure 6: Participant FB (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant GE

Participant GE is remarkably focused on building successful relationships at work. She consciously recognizes the importance of communication and connecting with others. “A chair has to be understanding”, she explains. “You have to understand others’ needs and be as friendly as possible”.

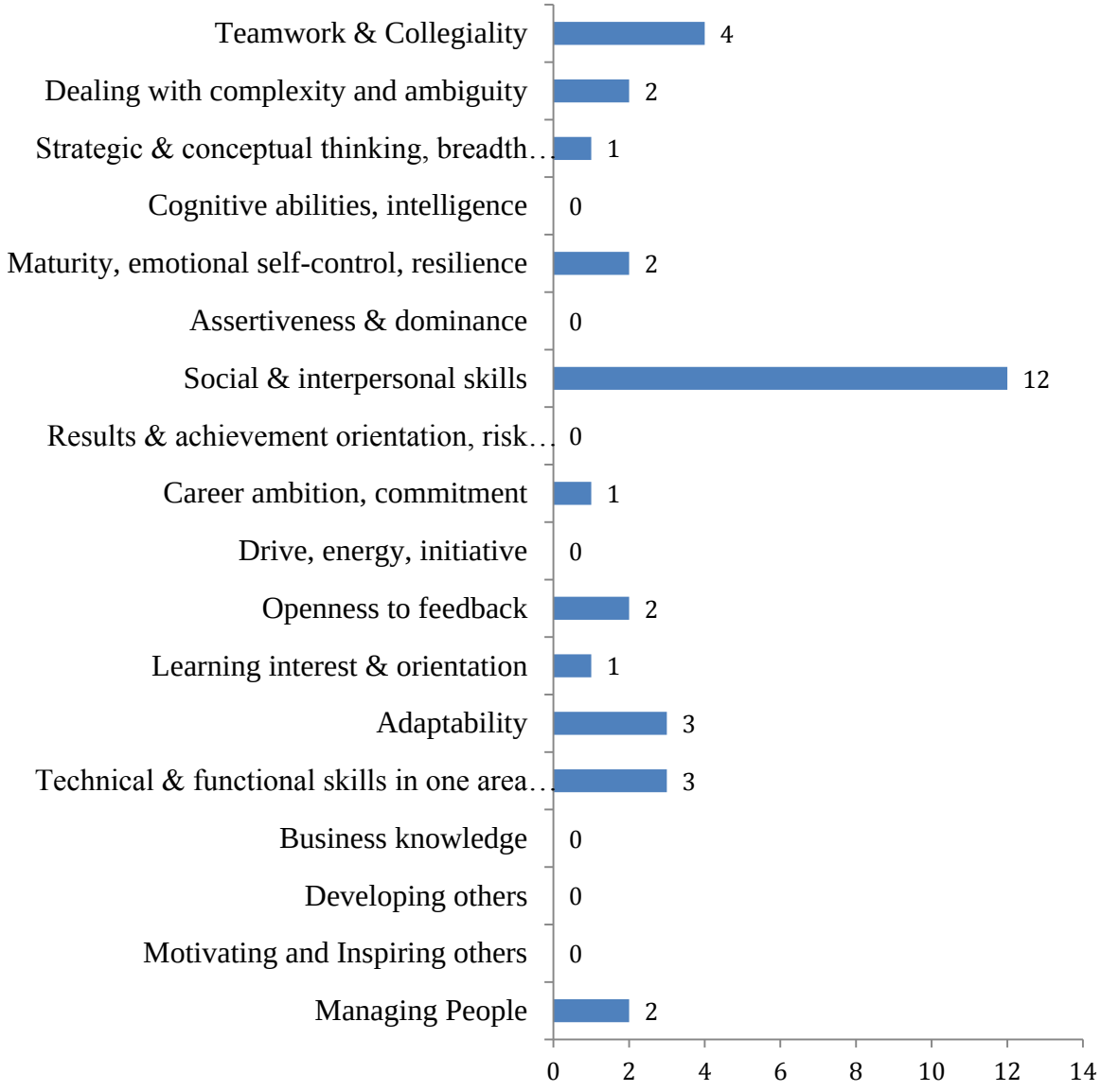
Relationship-building capabilities: Participant GE encourages positivity in her department and always jumps to the occasion of laughing together with her colleagues. According to her, this diffuses conflicts and proactively shields the department from unnecessary misunderstandings. By the same token, she encourages honesty and transparency at work. Her friendliness is balanced with an assertive personality as she explains that she is a strict person but at the same time a good listener. She ensures an abundance of interactions and maintains relationships with her students.

Teamwork and collegiality is another predominant aspect of participant GE’s leadership composure as she promotes collaborations and opportunities to coordinate with different team members. She further emphasizes that leadership is distributed in her department by saying that “it is not about having a head and subordinates, but rather being all equal”.

Relationship-building capabilities: Participant GE is a proponent of delegating work to her assistance and believes that this promotes teamwork in the workplace. Similarly, she attributes the successful learning curve of newcomers at her department to the great teamwork environment she has fostered over the years. She favors the “open-

door policy" as a great way of communicating openness and approachability. Most of her technical and functional abilities have been developed along the way. She believes in learning by trial and error which requires a certain degree of openness to feedback, adaptability, and a lifelong commitment to learning.

Figure 7: Participant GE (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant HE

Participant HE focuses on the humanitarian aspect of his job by making sure to add a humane touch to every interaction in the workplace. “I have never made others feel that they are distant to me”, he explained, which is why he particularly favors the “open-door policy”, inviting both students and faculty to always approach him with any matter the desire.

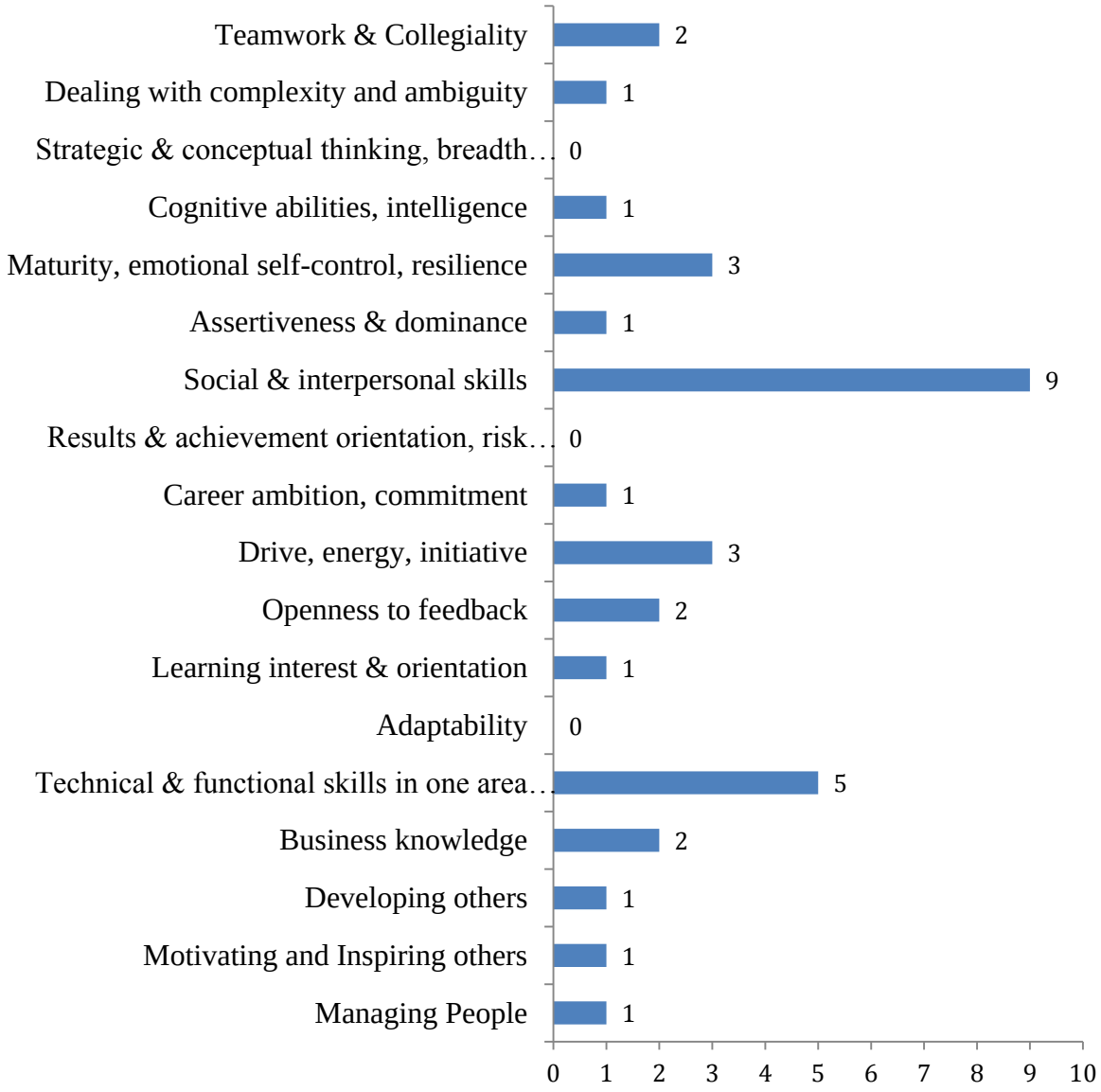
Relationship-building capabilities: Participant HE places great value on professors and promotes respecting each other in the workplace. When asked about how he balances this closeness with objectivity, he explained that he maintains a professional character that is separate from the one he holds in his personal life. He is self-reliant and proud of his academic expertise, but he remains humble as he explains that “it is impossible, whether you have the experience or not, to claim that you have acquired all the knowledge of the world”. Participant HE makes sure he is present very early and explains that physical presence is extremely important for a department leader. He believes that “this makes others feel positive about the department”. Similarly, he maintains an open mind to global ideas and advises leadership candidates to avoid being isolated from the world, despite the research responsibilities. “A researcher is never alone”, he explains, “You are a researcher working with others. As a researcher and as a human being, you should make sure you are not isolated”.

Task-completion capabilities: Beside social and interpersonal skills, participant HE stresses the importance of being always on top of his field and maintaining his

academic expertise. He explains: “The most important thing in my opinion is excellence, striving, and precision at work”. Similarly, he praises the importance of having a rich general culture in order to apprehend the different courses and programs offered in the department.

Participant HE also demonstrated a high level of maturity by being professional no matter what happens at work, as well as being objective and avoiding any form of favoritism at work despite his friendliness. He encourages others to always develop themselves and draws his own motivation from the positive environment he creates at work. He loves being at the department and even wishes he could go to work on Sundays. He explains his philosophy by giving the following example: “Presence is similar to holding a store. You cannot close the store and leave if there are no customers at the moment. I learned that from my father and his business”.

Figure 8: Participant HE (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant IF

Participant IF was an expert in her field long before she was asked by the university to become the chairperson of a department. She demonstrates remarkable social and interpersonal skills and rates communication skills as the number one determinant factor of a successful unit coordinator.

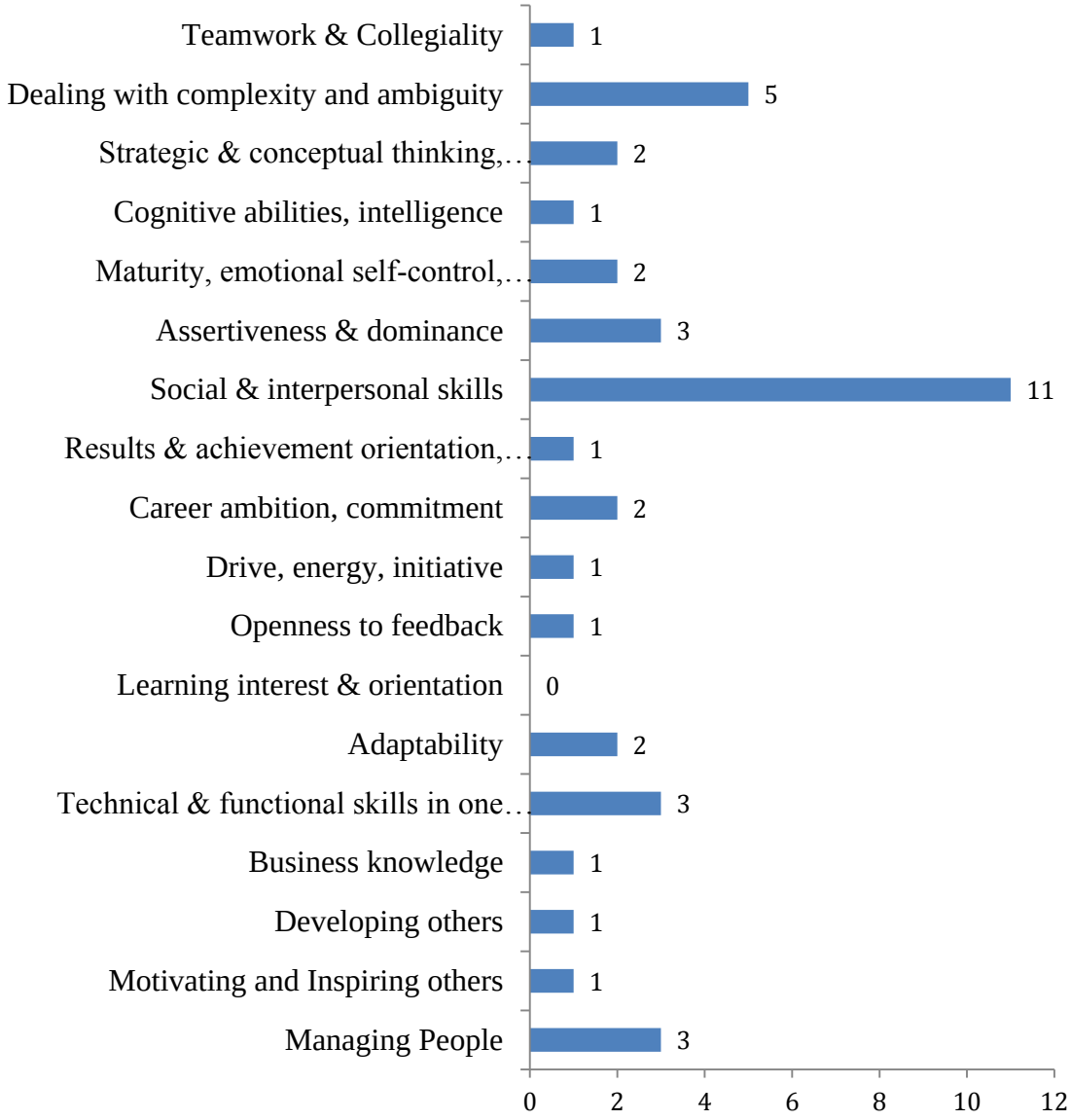
Relationship-building capabilities: Participant IF's ability to understand the different agendas of people has allowed her to effectively lead them, especially as she developed an assertive and dominant personality. She believes that maturity is extremely important for this position, especially when it comes to decision-making. She is highly interactive and likes to create an environment of communication and trust. She enjoys empowering people around her by guiding them first and later letting them take the lead.

Participant IF recognizes the complexity of her environment and explains that it is important to know how to deal with different people at work. She praises multitasking as an important quality which has allowed her to complete her administrative duties while still being able to do research. "There is a lot to do apart from your duties of teaching, services, and research. It is definitely a lot of work", she explains.

Task-completion capabilities: Participant IF attributes her success in dealing with complexity to her ability to organize herself and delegating responsibilities to qualified faculty members. She stresses the importance of being an academic expert and advises being always on top of the knowledge in her field. She explains that a competent and ethical candidate who has mastered communication skills would be the ideal candidate

for this position. Knowing how to delegate seems to pay dividends in this job as it has allowed her to create a support system around her. When it comes to experience, she points out that it is very important to have experience within the institution in terms of how things work around the university and this takes time to develop. Finally, her strategic thinking has allowed her to perform aggressively in the market, to the point of turning the university into an entrepreneurial institution.

Figure 9: Participant IF (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant JG

Participant JG is yet another example of a great communicator. She makes great use of her social and interpersonal skills by building successful relationships at work since the very start. She believes that by earning the trust of the top management, she was offered this leading position.

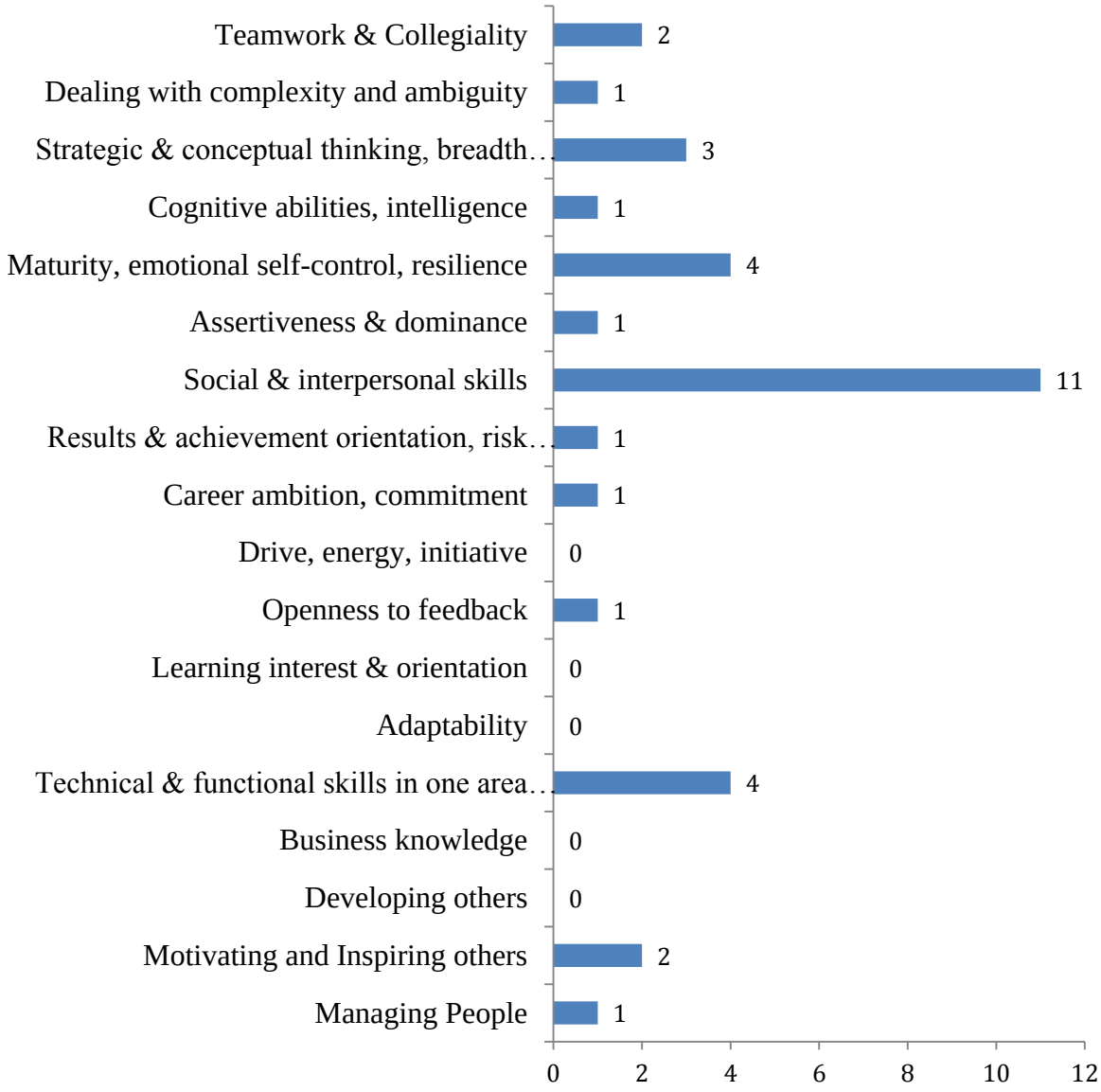
Relationship-building capabilities: Participant JG explained: "I became a leader because I have good communication and interpersonal skills". She recognizes the usefulness of emotional intelligence at work as she makes use of emotions to break ice between people and facilitate communication among them. She explains: "we do not base our decisions on emotions but emotions are very important because it's the humane part in business and that's why I say we would invest in people not in organization". She praises the importance of patience and wishes people were less impatient at work. She is particularly assertive when it comes to enforcing rules and regulations. Participant JG focuses on the humanitarian aspect of her job and explains that the unit coordinator's job is mainly about build liaisons between top and lower management. Maintaining a positive attitude has helped her along with a certain degree of charisma which she believes has contributed to her success at work.

Participant JG recognizes the importance of maturity in her job as she demonstrates a high level of emotional awareness and states that she always scans for emotional biases, stating that "when things get personal, they fail". She is committed to

serving other and is open to feedback. She spends considerable amounts of time motivating and influencing others by advising, mentoring, and coaching students.

Task-completion capabilities: Participant JG is involved in the strategic decision-making process of the university and always looks for competitive advantages that would allow her to better position her newly established university in the market. She believes that it is important to develop one's ability to diagnose problems, and recognizes that her position is one of service, stating that "the customer is always right" and that "we have to tell them that we listen to them and to their needs".

Figure 10: Participant JG (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant KG

Participant KG reflects her passion for the field by being constantly involved in the applications of her discipline to her community. She is particularly interactive and is comfortable being in the public eye.

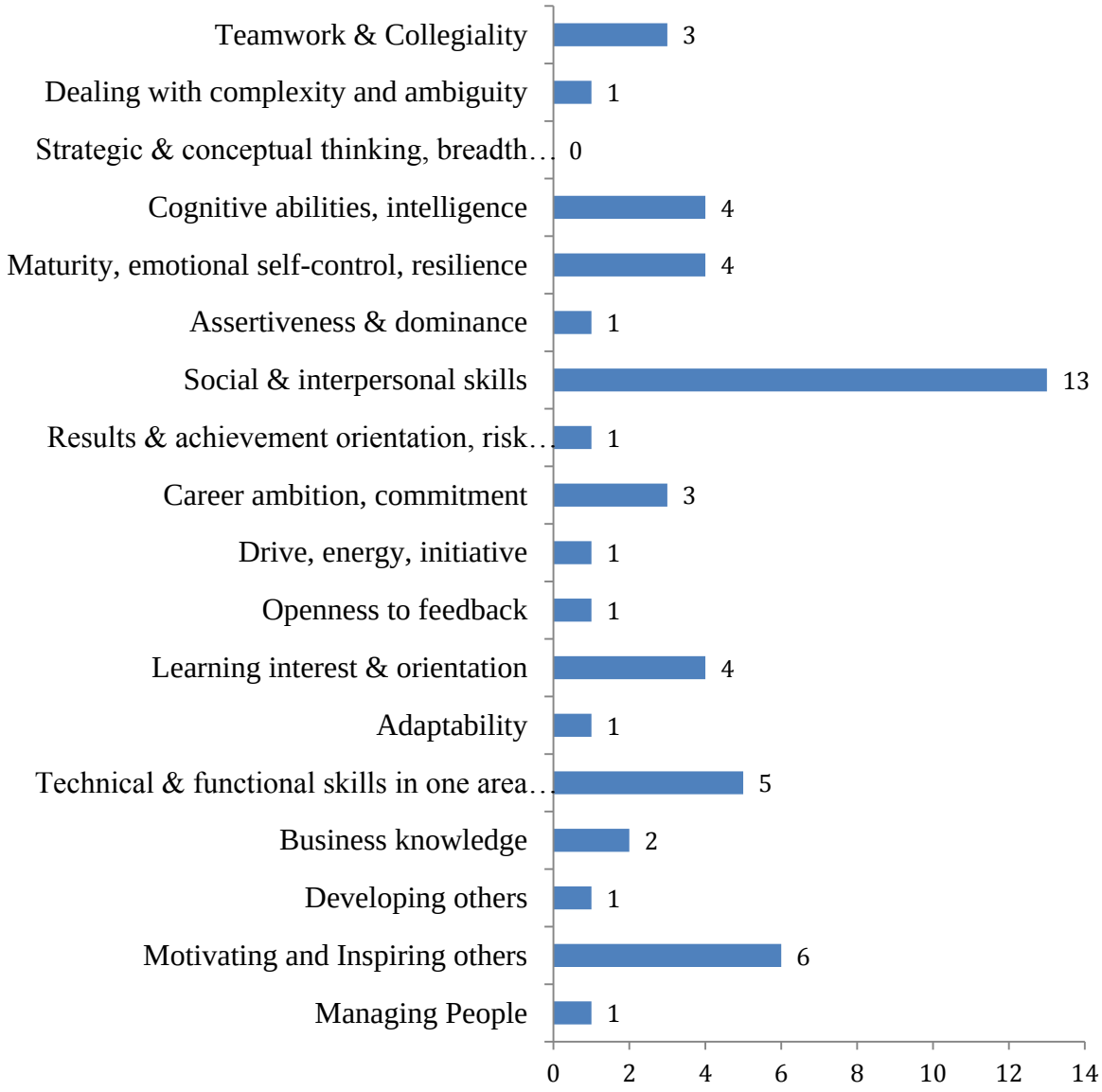
Relationship-building capabilities: She places great importance on the relation between students and their instructors, stating that "these days, students are very hard to deal with. They are not the type of students who would come to class and focus easily. They are on their I-phones and I-pads, and WhatsApp, so you have to get their attention in order to be a successful instructor". As a result, she developed a friendly yet professional personality. Participant KG believes that interactivity is extremely important in her field, as she often encourages group work in class and uses interactive material in class, such as YouTube videos and TV news. She is organized and remains humble despite her many achievements over the years. She developed her communication skills over the years and advises candidates for this position to take communication courses. She explains that "you are there to communicate with people, deal with their problems and understand that they are humans and not robots". She also favors hard work and diligence over any charismatic feature one could have.

Task-completion capabilities: Another predominant aspect of participant KG's leadership is her dedication to motivating, inspiring, and positively influencing her students. She explains that "in the field of nutrition, it's mostly females in class, so there is this 'I want to be like her' attitude", which participant KG views as an opportunity to

set the right example for her students. For instance, she consciously works on remaining active all throughout the year, in order to “walk the talk”. She influences her students not by telling them what to do, but by showing them how to do it.

Finally, participant KG explains that none of the above qualities could have been expressed if she had not developed a solid managerial expertise. She has been involved in leadership for a very long time and learned most of her management skills throughout her previous careers.

Figure 11: Participant KG (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant LE

Participant LE is a proponent of having a well-rounded personality for this job. He believes that a unit coordinator needs to have a high level of emotional maturity in order to manage people effectively. He is serious when it comes to his work and believes that this attitude earned him the recognition for getting this leadership position.

Relationship-building capabilities: Despite his serious attitude, participant LE remains open to others, particularly students and colleagues. “You need to be open for collaborations”, he explains. Respecting others is a priority for participant LE as he believes that this causes others to reciprocate, resulting in a much more favorable work environment.

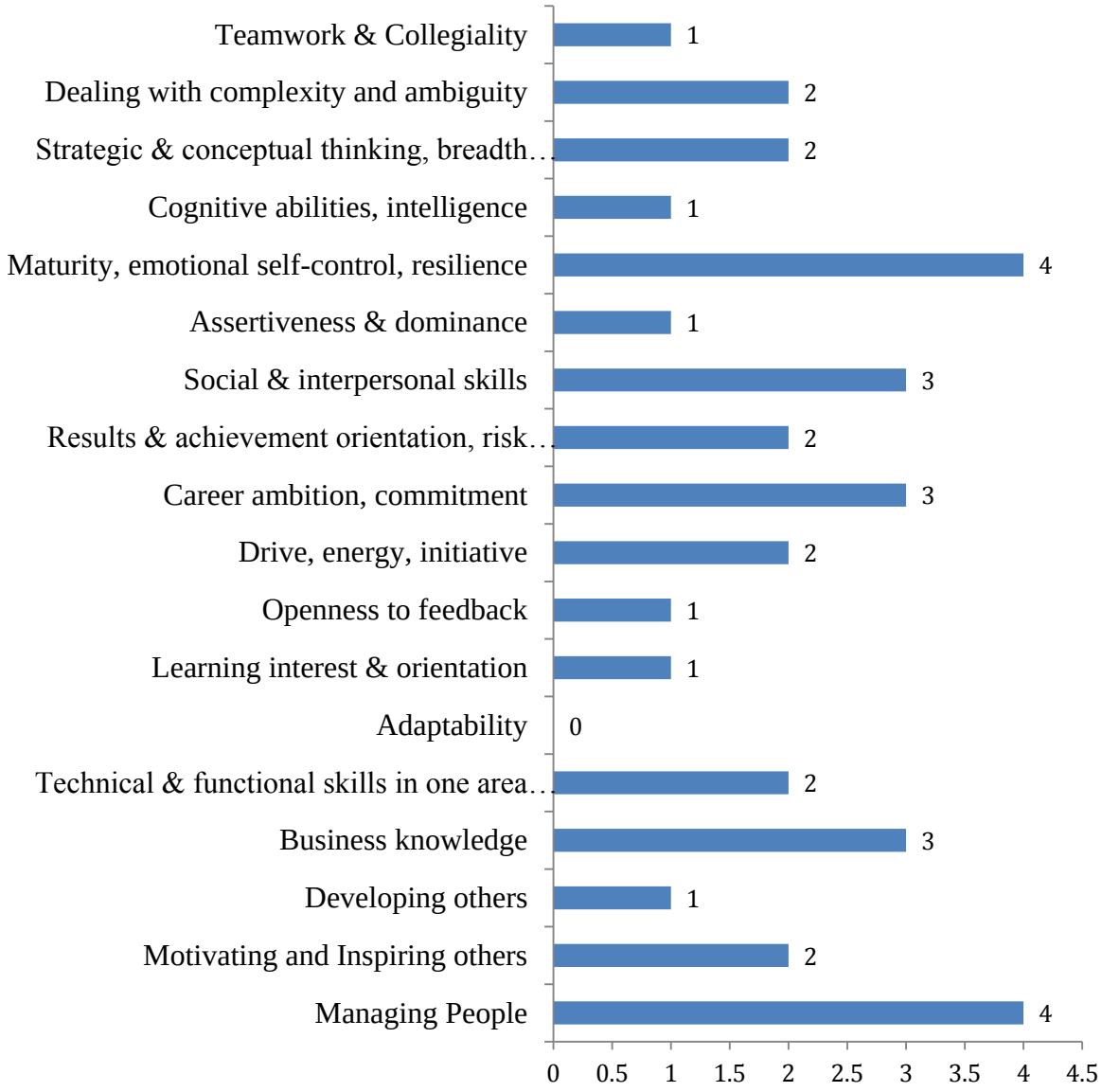
Participant LE is relatively young for this position. He believes that with young age comes a lot of ambition and one has to be careful not to get carried away by such zealous emotions. Leading the department at a young age, participant LE learned to be self-reliant, explaining that he did not burden others with unnecessary questions but rather tried to learn most things by himself. He believes that the secret of success in leading a department is to “work very hard and wait”.

Task-completion capabilities: Participant LE is a proponent of delegating work to the right people. He believes that a successful unit coordinator knows how to train individuals before delegating a task to them. He also developed a keen eye for recognizing the strengths of others and capitalizing on their advantages by giving them

appropriate tasks. He maintains a strategic view of the market and often consults with the ministry of agriculture in order to always be aware of new local trends.

Participant LE is passionate about his field of study. He explains: “I am very passionate about food technologies and processing. I am a food science lover and I aim at becoming an expert in this field”. He particularly enjoys creating new courses and programs based on the trends of the local market. For instance, he created two new courses about food packaging which was a knowledge that currently lacked in the market. Finally, he makes sure to regularly attend training sessions for course and program design, and believes that this will help him to remain head of the department for many years to come.

Figure 12: Participant LE (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant ME

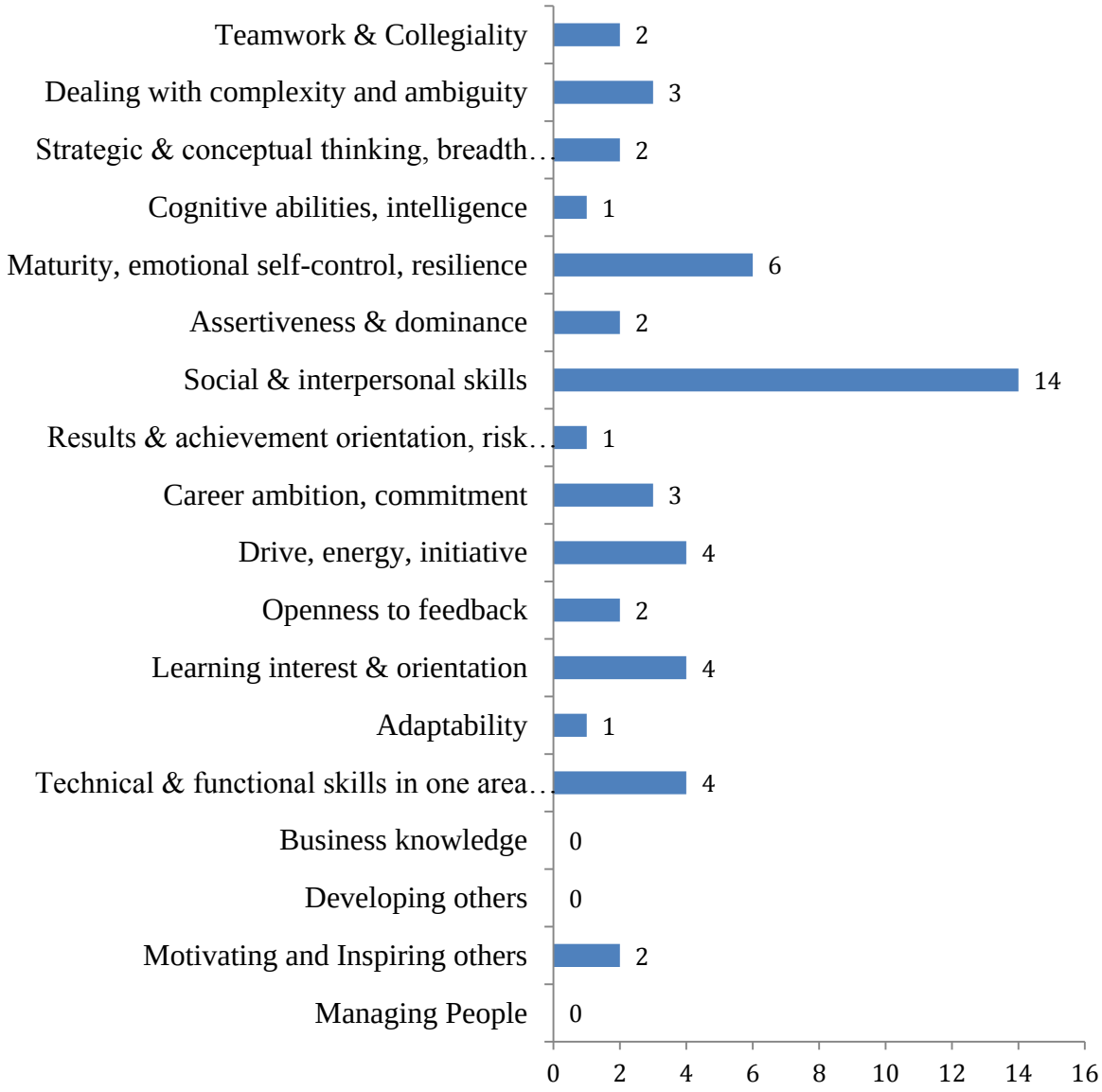
Participant ME has always been interested in teaching literature courses, and got to lead the department sooner than she expected: “It was not easy because I struggled with the students who were almost my age at that time”.

Relationship-building capabilities: The early experience taught her how to deal with students and she soon started developing a vision for the department. Participant ME has particularly worked on her interpersonal abilities and explains that having a positive attitude is what separates successful unit coordinators from others. She values confidence and trustworthiness as she explains: “you also want to have faith in your abilities as a unit coordinator or head of a department”. Participant ME is very friendly with students and makes sure to be transparent and honest with them. “I am very sociable and love being around people”, she states. She loves teaching and being in contact with her students. Being an excellent communicator allowed her to get things done around the department. She explains: “I am an excellent communicator, and I know how to use my charms to get my ideas through and influence people”. With that said, she is still open for learning more in the art of communication.

Another apparent feature in participant ME’s characteristics is her high level of maturity despite her relatively young age. She learned over the years to be assertive and hold responsibility for almost everything that happens in her department. She is open to feedback and is continuously learning new knowledge.

Task-completion capabilities: Teaching is her main passion and she describes herself as more of an educator than a leader. She explains: “I would say that leadership is something I am working on”. Participant ME learned the hard way that being the head of a department does not mean that she is the one that “calls the shots”. It is rather about negotiating with others and consulting with them before taking a decision. She learned that teamwork is very important, although she wishes she had more freedom to change things around, especially since she has many ideas for the department.

Figure 13: Participant ME (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant NB

Participant NB helped me coin the term "collegiality" after I had been using "teamwork" during most of my data collection phase. He differentiates successful unit coordinators from others by saying that "there is an academic freedom and a 'nobody controls me' attitude. This element when it is present in one person, it is okay, but when it is present in so many people, the chairpersons will have to harmonize them".

Relationship-building capabilities: Participant NB's approach revolves around knowing how to allow the other professors to express themselves freely, while at the same time ensuring a harmonious function in the department. He also believes that leadership should be distributed in a university department and that every professor is a leader of one expertise. For example, he explains that "there is a temptation to have leadership similar to the one in the business or military context, but you have to remember that as a chair you are the first among equals". He believes in a democratic environment where everyone is collegial and explains that "collegiality would be the best way to describe a successful chairperson. Of course, collegiality should be applied in its best sense, seeking to create balance in the workplace".

Participant NB developed remarkable social and interpersonal skills throughout his many years as a chairperson. He particularly developed patience and tolerance, as well as openness when it comes to listening to everyone's point of view. He loves engaging in dialogues and is very interactive in the workplace. When it comes to his managerial work, he believes that it is very important to be assertive and doing the right

thing despite potentially upsetting people. For instance, he explains: “you also want to learn how to be unpopular, because everyone wants to be popular. When you are doing your job properly, you end up with nobody really liking you, because you are not taking sides with anyone. The people who appreciate you are the ones who see what you are doing. So you have to put up with unpopularity. If you want to be popular, it’s another job to take”.

Participant NB is sociable and believes that the only way of building trust is to spend enough time with people. He empathizes with others and makes sure he remains humble despite his achievements: “Socrates is the wisest man in Athens because he is the only one who knows he doesn’t know. I love Socrates’ formula. If you lose that perspective, I think you mess up with everything you do, in the classroom, at home, and as a chairperson”.

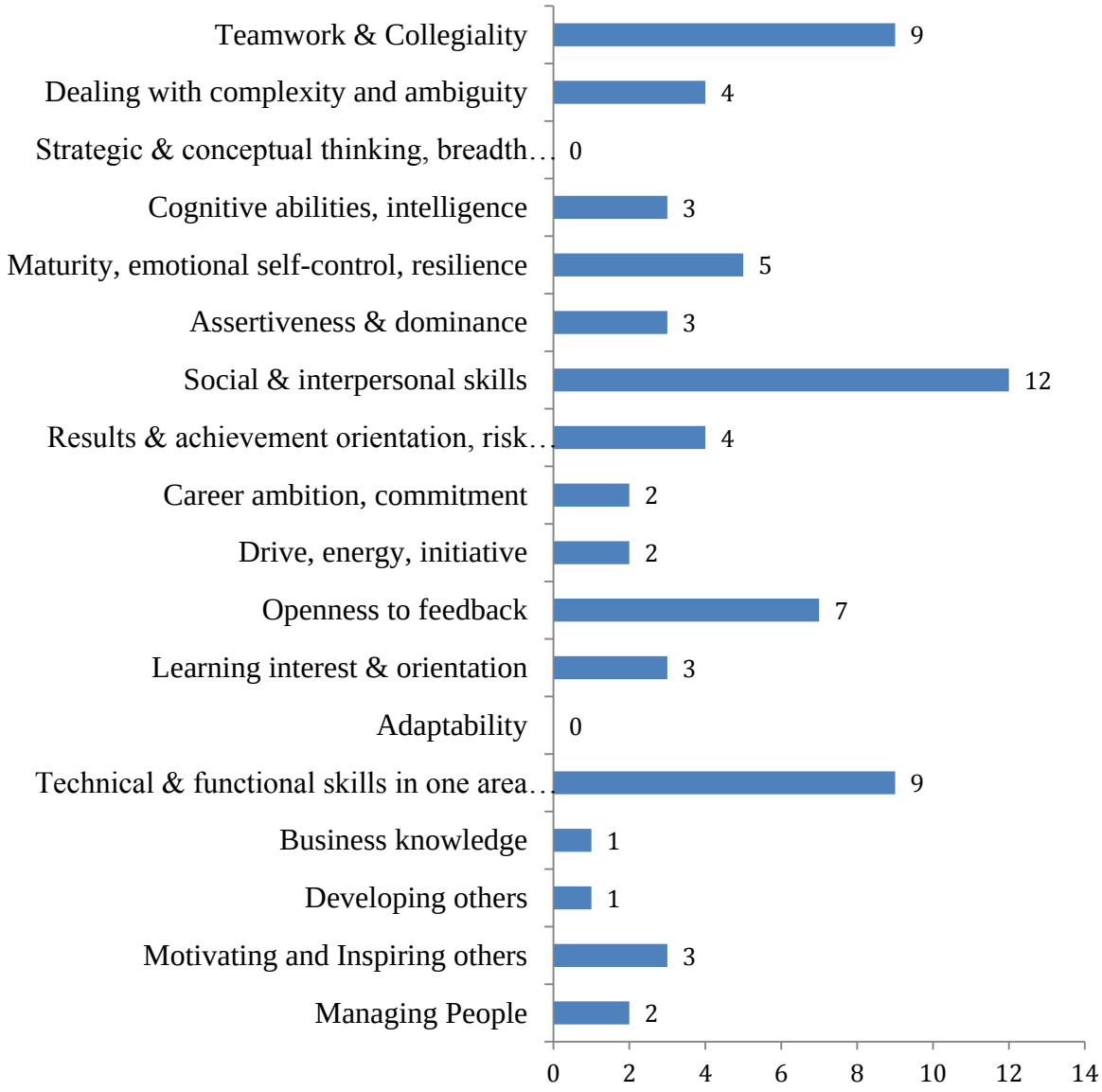
Task-completion capabilities: When asked about how he balances formal and informal roles, he explained about the importance of prioritization and being responsive as opposed to being reactive. He said: “You have to be careful as a chairperson not to be taken away by the tyranny of the urgent. There are no issues that are urgent, only people who are urgent. That’s one of the things a leader needs to grow in by the way; not to have a knee jerk response to an immediate request”. As a result, he was better able to organize himself and reach objectives in a timely and consistent manner.

Participant NB also helped me coin the term “interdisciplinary”, as he described the importance of being an expert in many areas in order to be successful at managing

different programs in a department. On top of his expertise in Civilization studies, he has considerable experience in Physics, Math, Chemistry, and Biology.

Moreover, participant NB believes in the importance of delegating work in his department. He explains that “the leader doesn’t always have to do everything. A leader knows what needs to be done and gets the best people to the right place. The leader has to know how to delegate but of course while staying in touch with the task”. He believes that a successful chairperson has to care about the humane aspect of the job. He explains that at the end of the day, the university is about teaching students and ensuring growth: “you want to be successful not in popularity, but in being able to impart scholarship and humanity to your students. This is what an academic unit is all about”.

Figure 14: Participant NB (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant OE

Participant OE has mastered social and interpersonal skills, and combines his social prowess with a remarkable discipline when it comes to developing his academic expertise.

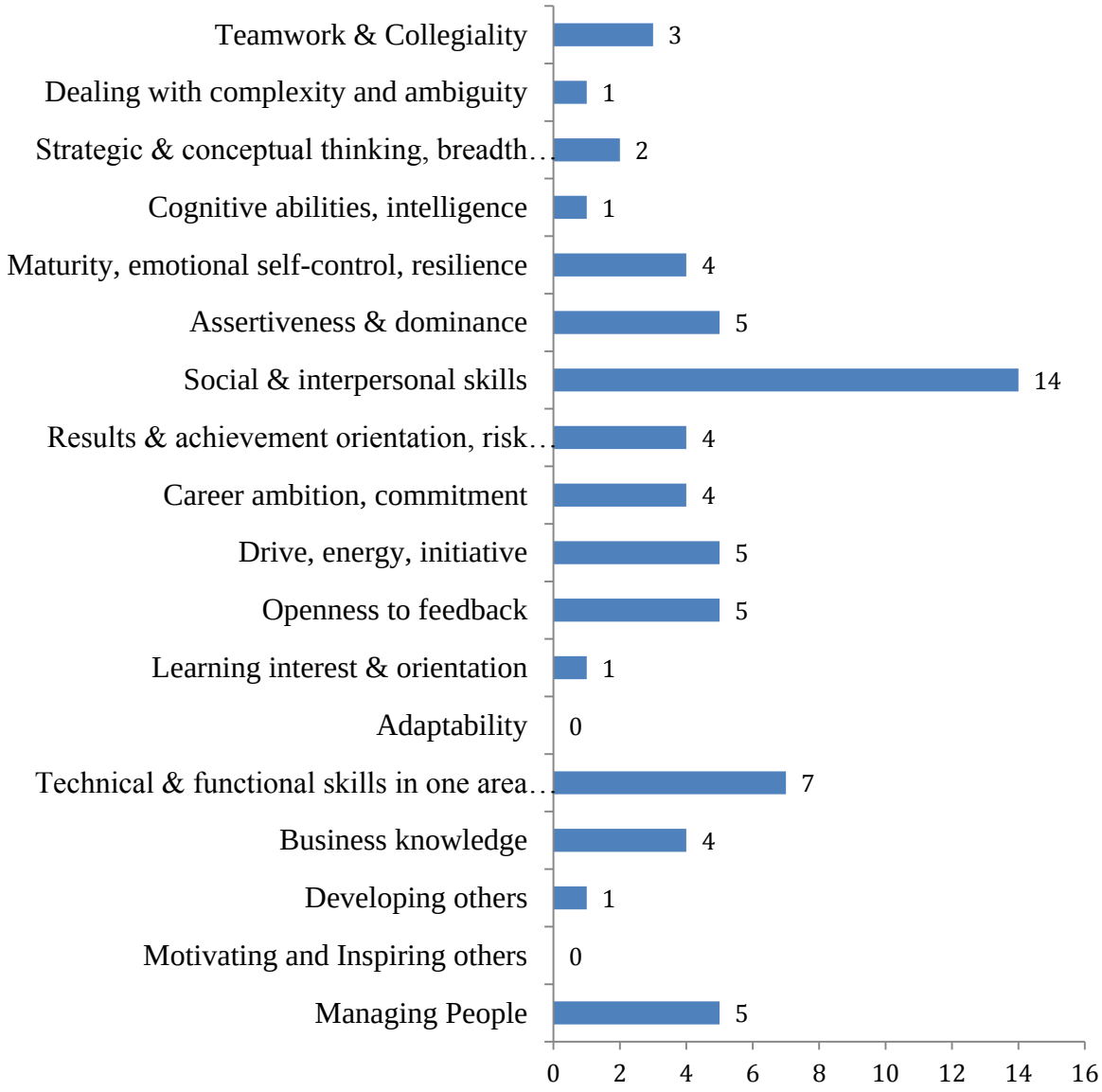
Relationship-building capabilities: Participant OE is aware of his charismatic abilities and believes in having a predisposition for leadership. He explains that "if a person has no charisma and no ability to lead, it would be a waste to put that person in a leadership position". He strives to be impartial and does his best to bring people together in the department. He recognizes that it is important to maintain vigilance in terms of always knowing what is going on in the department and not missing out on a single detail. Participant OE is particularly interactive and loves initiating conversations with his students and guiding them through life in general, which comes naturally to him as a religious leader.

Participant OE is noticeably assertive in his dealings, especially with students who he believes often make excuses skipping classes or missing exams. He is particularly strict when it comes to enforcing rules and regulations, often investigating and being deeply involved in matters that arise in his department. He does not hesitate to consult with other professors and is very open to feedback. He is a proponent of the "open-door policy" but he explains that "the closeness with students does not mean we become friends. It means that the dean's duty is to listen to everyone and all the complaints".

Task-completion capabilities: Participant OE is emotionally mature and praises the importance of having emotional self-control, explaining that he avoids spontaneous or impulsive decisions, but rather prefers to take his time before making a judgment. He said that he does not like to go back on a decision, and that is why he would rather take his time before giving his word. This kind of responsiveness instead of reactiveness seems to have earned him the respect of his followers.

Participant OE believes in the importance of being an expert in his field, and advises candidates to maintain their writing abilities and always contributing to the field in one way or another. He will always research any new detail that emerges during his practice. He is an avid learner and loves reading about management and leadership. Participant OE believes it is his mission in this life to lead and he will do anything to strengthen his gift.

Figure 15: Participant OE (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant QE

Participant QE learned how things worked around the university with depth and detail. She learned the different strategies deployed at her university and was able to run her department with great ease, despite the complexity of her environment.

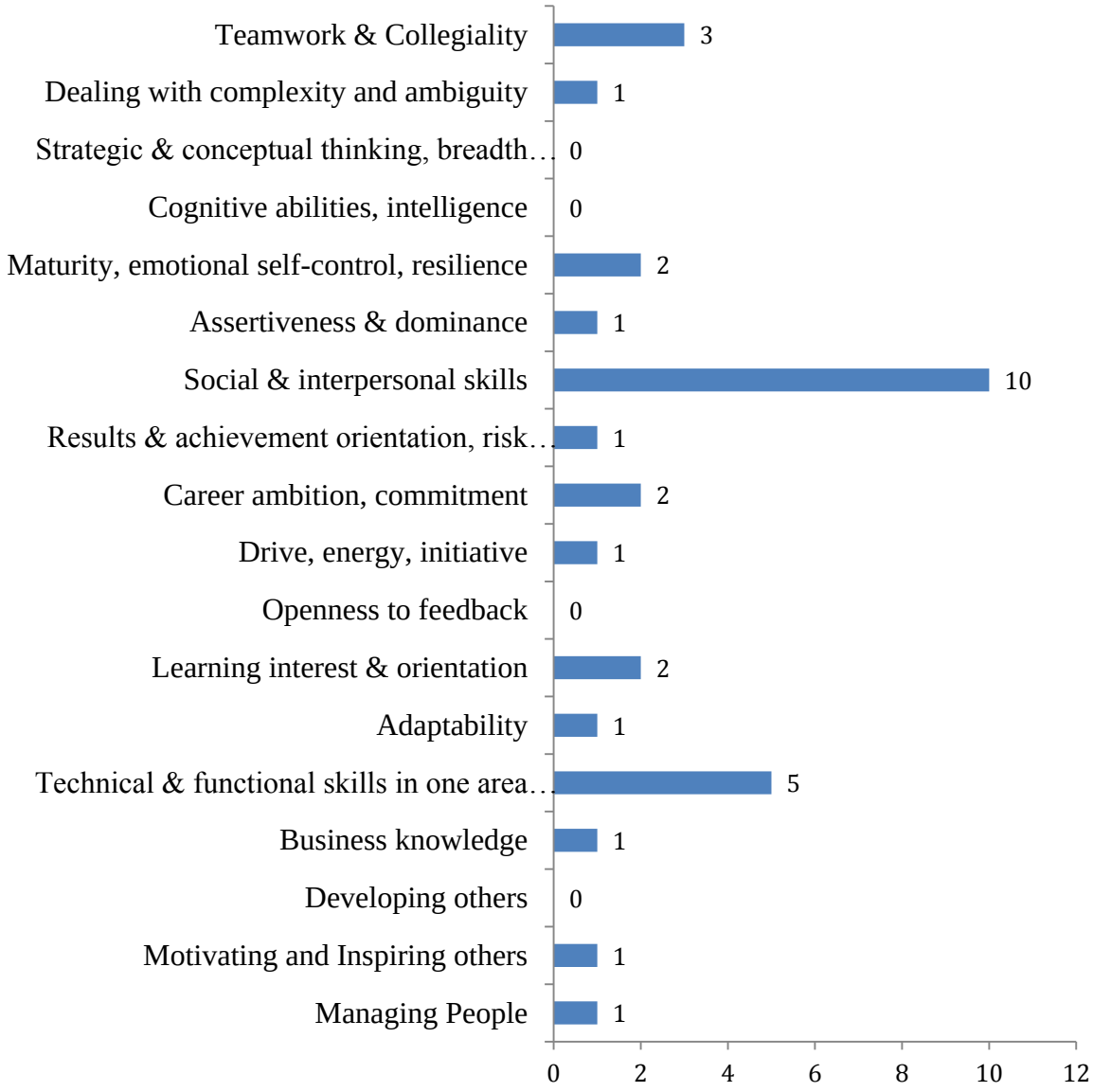
Relationship-building capabilities: Very early in her career, participant QE identified communication skills as a prerequisite for success in her job. She developed a stern character and a strong personality, working on her communication skills after seeing many people failing at their position due to not being able to communicate well with others. She explains that she often encounters "a chairman or two who would be very hard to communicate with and as a result make things way harder to achieve". Participant QE makes sure to be very approachable, and gets many visits to her office. As a result, small friendships often develop with students. She is satisfied with her relationship building capabilities and enjoys the friendly and positive vibe she has created on campus.

Task-completion capabilities: Despite her friendliness, participant QE values professionalism above anything else. She recognizes that the administrative nature of her job can often lead to reclusiveness, so she focuses on the social aspect of chairmanship by interacting abundantly with her students. She encourages teamwork and distributed leadership among faculty, but remains self-reliant when it comes to decision-making. Participant QE values modesty and humility, stating that "we acknowledge that there are often members of the faculty who stand hierarchically lower than us, and yet are much

more capable and competent than us". She is kind to everyone she meets, and genuinely wishes for the wellbeing of her students as well as her colleagues.

Participant QE is very happy to be a unit coordinator and does not mind at all the complexity of her job. She explains: "When I was a child, I always dreamt of having my own desk and playing this managerial role. I am happy today when I think that my career is very close to what I imagined in my youth".

Figure 16: Participant QE (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant RB

Participant RB provides a good example of how teamwork and collegiality can contribute to the success of a unit coordinator. She began by saying "One thing that I accepted when negotiating for this position was that […] I want to build structures in the department to do teamwork".

Relationship-building capabilities: Participant RB has mastered her social and interpersonal skills. She recognizes how important human relations are in her job. Whether she agrees with someone or not, participant RB will always find the "10%" she can capitalize on. What she means by that is that if someone goes 10% of the way in her direction, she will welcome that agreement and make the most out of it. Participant RB is transparent in her interactions and focuses on communicating clearly with others. She is also inclusive in her communication, meaning that she makes sure her messages are sent to everyone: "even people who are on leave; they need to receive their email to receive the information". Participant RB also believes in the importance of physical presence in her job, and makes sure she is present as early as possible in the department. She enjoys making small talk with everyone and believes it has a great effect on the overall atmosphere.

Participant RB cares about people in her department and seizes every opportunity to show her appreciation of her colleagues. For example, she explains: "It is important to stand up for them (talking about her colleagues). […] This got me into a little trouble as

some people did not like that, but I felt it was important because the people in the department needed our support".

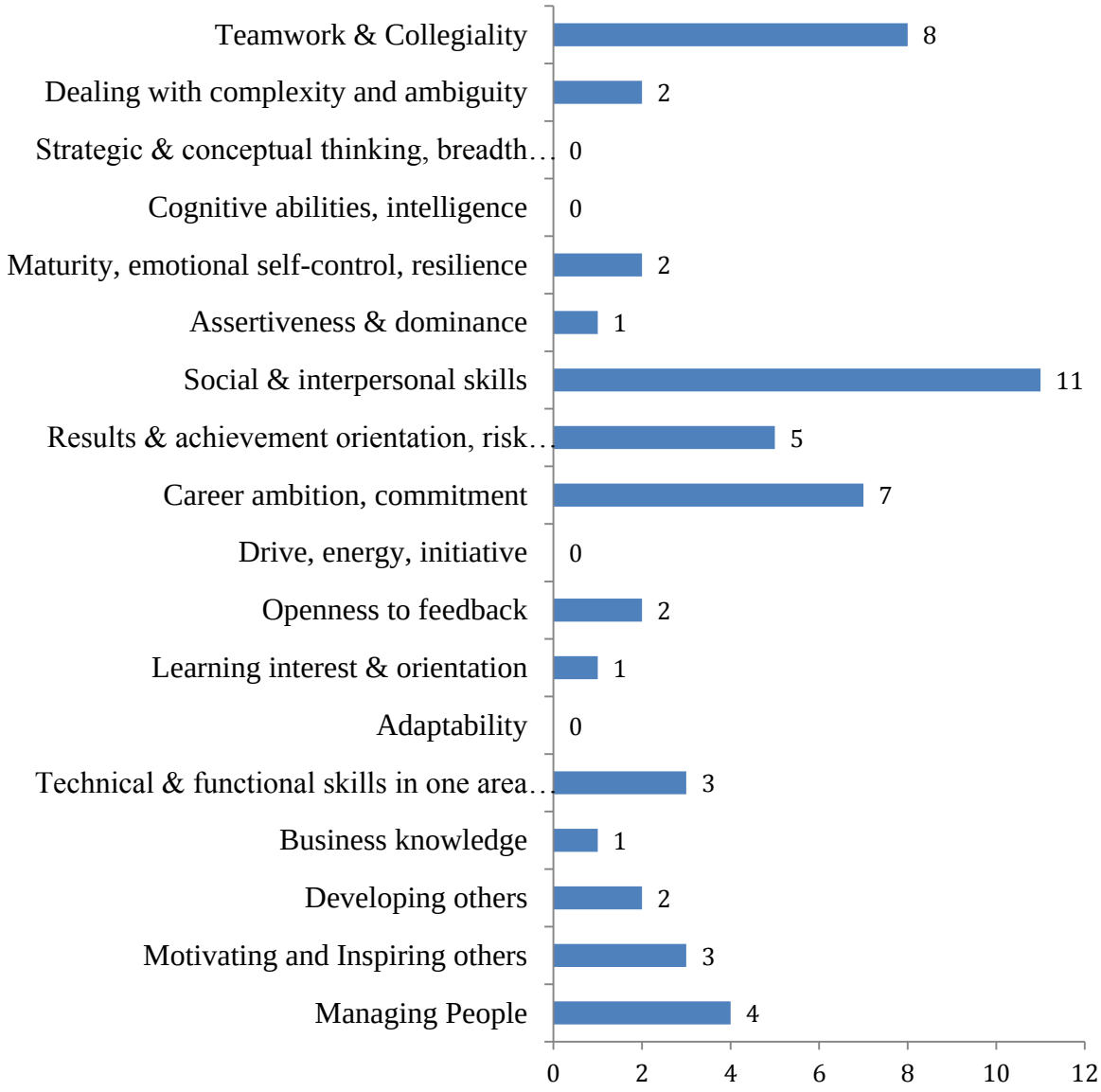
Overall, participant RB's philosophy revolves around investing in relationships at work. She believes that it is important not only to recruit good faculty, but also to work on retaining good faculty. She believes that by putting a lot of energy into relationships in her department, she has created a good atmosphere where working is pleasant and very smooth compared to other departments in the same university.

Task-completion capabilities: Participant RB loves having everyone involved in the leadership of her department as she explains that it gets people closer and also allows her to delegate much more often, which means that the complexity of her work becomes simplified. This aspect of her work reflected a possible reason why some unit coordinators seem to lead so easily compared to others described in the literature complaining about the tediousness and complexity of their position (Morris & Laipple, 2015). Apparently, successful unit coordinators like participant RB "lure" their colleagues with distributed leadership, offering them the privilege of being involved in the leadership of the department. As a result, the unit coordinator is able to delegate more work to those colleagues since they are more involved and more acquainted with what is going on in the department. The result is less work for the unit coordinator and more overall efficiency in the department.

However, this can only work if one creates "an atmosphere where everyone feels part of and can contribute and where you accept different opinions", participant RB adds.

She explains that it is important to give enough space for others to take leadership. She also argues for shared governance and shared responsibility in her department. The overall atmosphere she created at work has allowed her to get people on board with almost any decision she takes.

Figure 17: Participant RB (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant SB

Participant SB is an ambitious and achievement-driven unit coordinator who developed a pleasant and friendly personality. He values the humane aspect of his job and cares about leaving a positive mark in the department. As a result, he describes his role as "providing the ultimate support" for everyone around him.

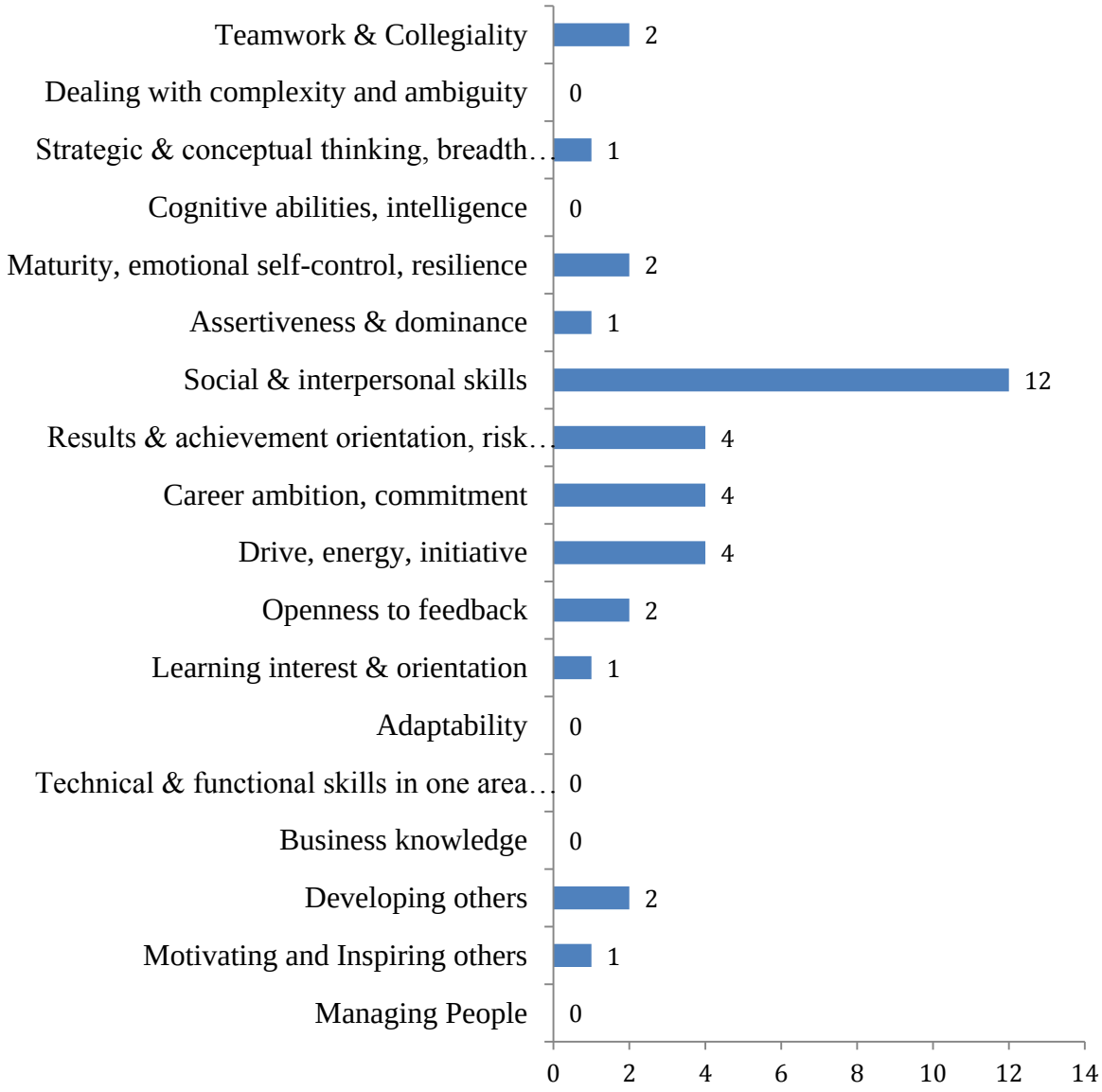
Relationship-building capabilities: Participant SB is kind and enjoys protecting others at work. Participant SB makes sure he never hurts anyone, through clear and direct communication. He believes in transparency and getting other professors involved in the decision-making process at the department. He has a noticeable focus on building successful relationships at work.

Participant SB is interactive and developed an assertive character when it comes to defending a point in which he believes. He is not sure if this is a good thing, but he does know that it is extremely important to be self-critical in this job. At one point, he explains that the position of a unit coordinator can become burdening when competition arises from other departments. As a result, he had to develop resiliency because "the outcome is way more satisfying". He does not enjoy confrontations and believes in diplomacy, friendliness, and overall trustworthiness.

Task-completion capabilities: Participant SB is extremely hard working, to the point that he barely gets any time to have lunch. He explains: "The only break I am getting currently is the time when I get to smoke a cigarette". He invested a lot of time into establishing good connections with reputable schools around him in order to attract

more students to his department. He takes such initiatives as he explains: “An entire day had to be invested in each school in order to achieve the goal. This was not part of my job contract; it is something that I took on by myself in order to improve the department”. He ends with a statement that reflects his commitment to the department by saying that “there is a lot of sacrifice that comes with succeeding at running a department. You really have to want to go out of your own way in order to improve the department”.

Figure 18: Participant SB (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant TB

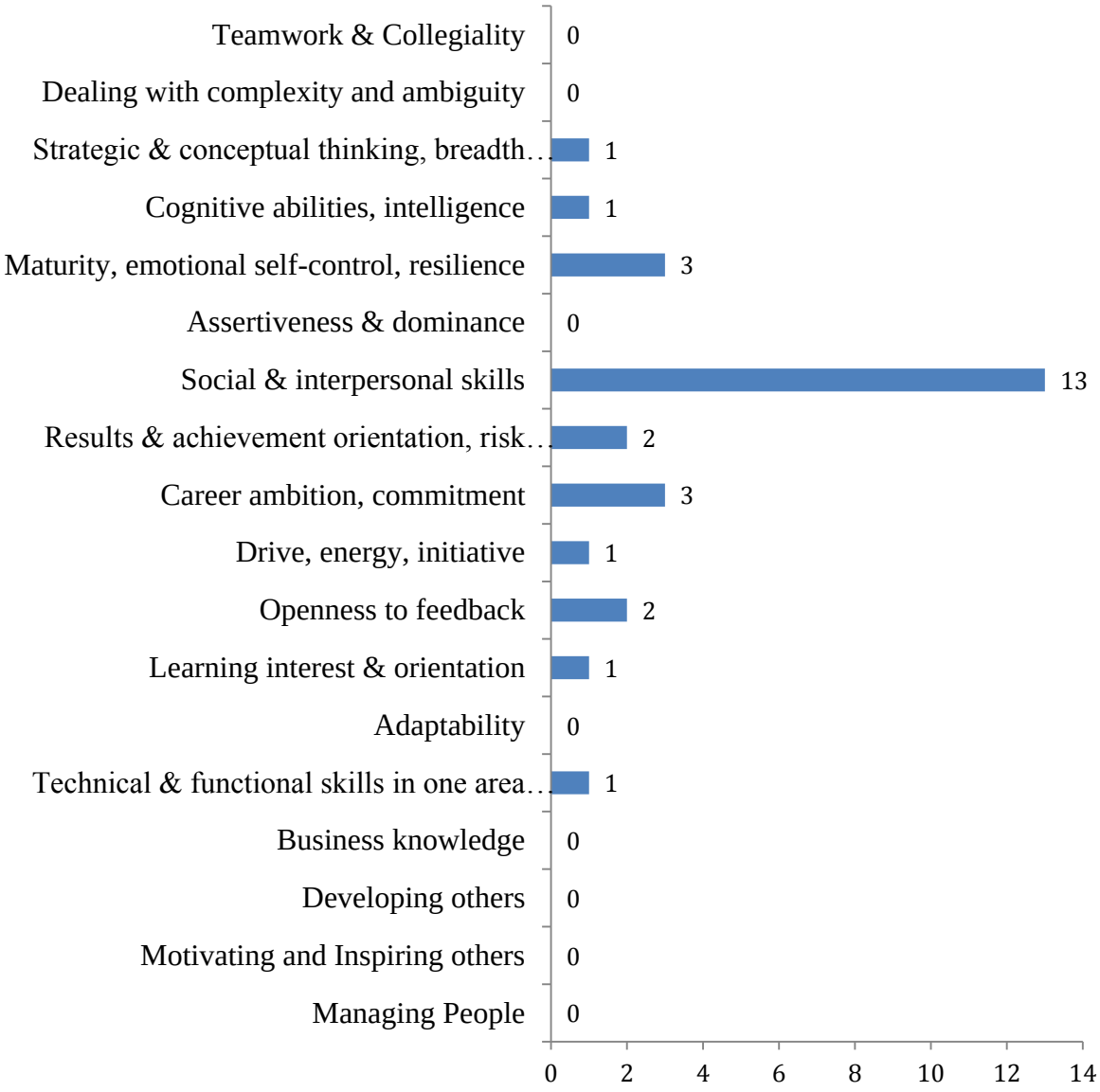
Participant TB has developed a "straight to the point" attitude in such a way that he is efficient at everything that he does, even at answering the interview questions. All of his answers were short and yet informative.

Relationship-building capabilities: He explained that he is focused on providing value to others all the time. "The chairmanship in itself is not a goal, but rather a means to improving the department and improving the university by promoting teaching and research", he explains. Participant TB is diplomatic with other members of faculty, and genuinely cares about the needs of others. He explains that he often sees other unit coordinators listen to people's needs but then later forget about following through. What he would rather do is listen to others carefully and "putting himself in their shoes". Then, he would "filter out the personal reasons behind the problem and try to rationalize the situation in such a way that a possible alternative may arise".

Participant TB empathizes with others and has developed patience throughout the years. He explains that maturity and emotional self-control are extremely important for this position: "It is very important to never take any issue personal but rather always think in terms of the other person's perspective. When I dropped the habit of taking things personal, I started getting much better results". Participant TB is very interactive. He praises the importance of having a pleasant personality and maintaining a positive attitude at work.

Task-completion capabilities: Participant TB believes that, in Lebanon, people often develop a “know-it-all attitude”. As a result, he made sure to be continuously learning new things and “nourishing his wisdom” on a daily basis. He explains that in terms of leadership skills, the position is not that demanding. In order to succeed, all one has to do is focus on helping others: “At this job, it is always about others”. Participant TB’s level of commitment to the department is particularly high as he cares about portraying a clear vision to his surroundings. He sets clear goals and deploys specific strategies to reach those goals consistently. He loves the managerial aspect of his job and believes that it “fits [his] style”.

Figure 19: Participant TB (theme frequency of occurrence)



Participant UF

Participant UF presented a discrepant case as, despite her success at the position, she did not enjoy being a leader at her university. She believes that she is not getting the recognition for her outstanding work by the male-dominated workplace. She explains: "this grieves me because […] when I speak to higher authorities, […] they mention ethics and equality, but in reality I don't see this happening".

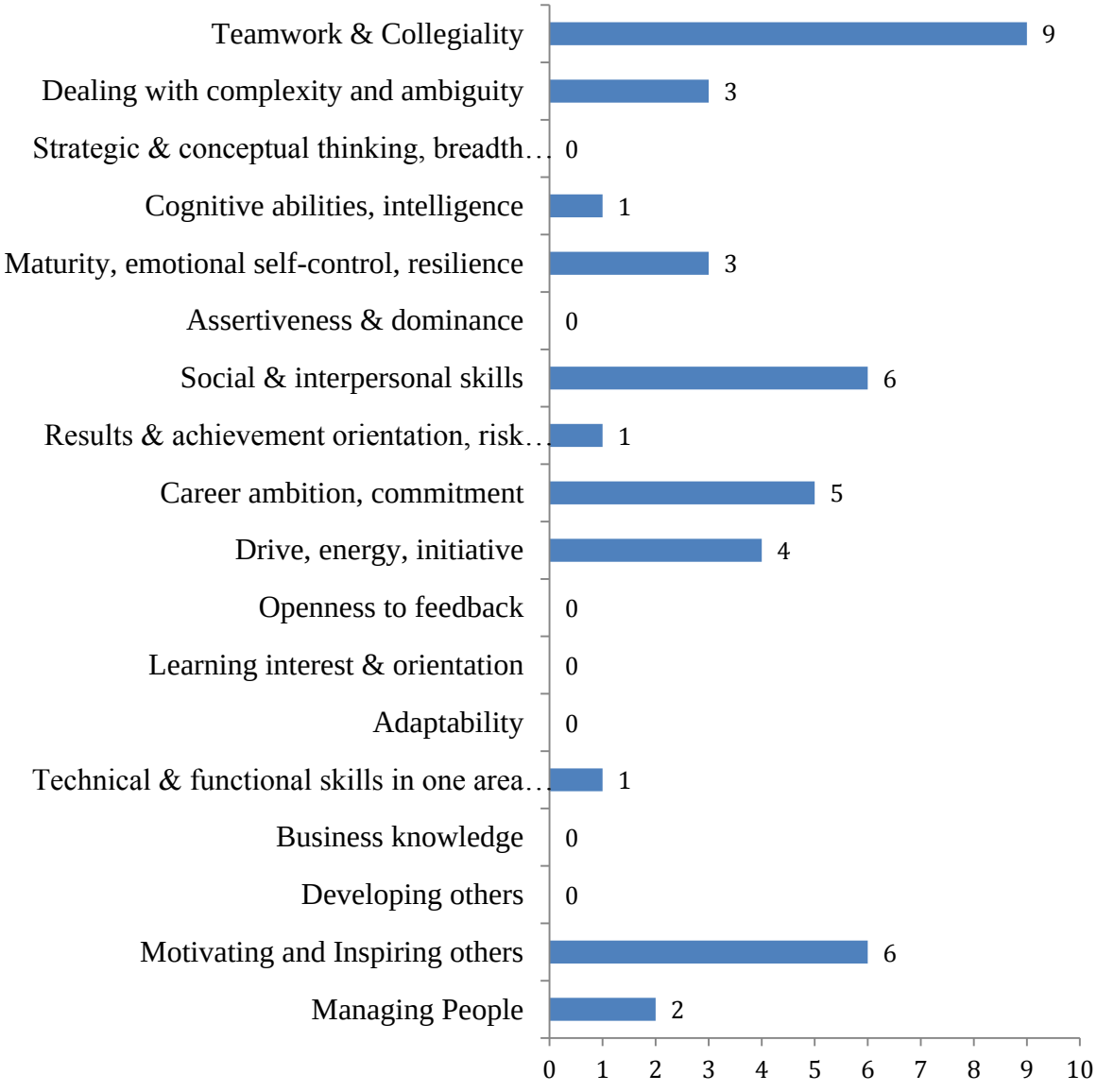
Relationship-building capabilities: Despite adversity, participant UF managed to display outstanding leadership. Her program has grown considerably ever since she joined the university. She is particularly observant as she is attentive to every single detail around her, particularly when it comes to her social practices. She is outspoken and cares about her students. She explains: "I am not here to accommodate the faculty, nor myself, but to make sure that every student is getting the best education ever". Her success resulted in more responsibilities assigned to her, which made her job increasingly complex.

Participant UF deals with complexity by being particularly interactive and encouraging teamwork in the department. "We should all interact to come up with decisions", she explains. Her leadership style is inclusive as she believes that it is very important to be a team player in her institution.

Task-completion capabilities: Participant UF is passionate about her field of study. She enjoys empowering her students and opening their eyes to how much difference they are capable of making in their community. She is an influential leader as she believes in

her team and makes them feel that they are all experts at what they do. This makes it much easier to delegate work. She explains that “the success is based on delegating responsibilities and consulting experts in the department before taking a decision”.

Figure 20: Participant UF (theme frequency of occurrence)



Cross-case Analysis

The cross-case analysis was an ongoing process as I went through each of the 20 cases separately. I was able to identify the recurrent themes across the data and ultimately illustrate the "ideal" unit coordinator in terms of the desired attributes and characteristics, as well as the relationship-building activities and tasks that would ensure success in the educational context of a university.

The cumulative frequencies of occurrence for each theme is illustrated in Figure 21, in which I combined the graphs from each case and was able to graphically provide the reader with an idea of what the composition of an ideal unit coordinator should look like based on the findings of this multiple-case study.

The most prominent category across the 20 cases was by far the unit coordinators' social and interpersonal ability. Particularly recurrent themes in this category were the ability to build successful relationships, whether with students or other members of faculty. Successful unit coordinators seem to be noticeably interactive and have developed a positive and pleasant personality in order to maintain a high frequency of interactions throughout their day. This propensity for relationship building seems instigated by the need for being involved in everything that is going on in the department. All unit coordinators demonstrated an interest in resolving conflicts and understanding people's motives in order to avoid problems in a proactive way. Honesty and transparency seems part of the interpersonal configuration of successful unit coordinators, as most interviewed participants demonstrated openness, particularly with a

very frequent mentioning of the “open-door policy”. This policy embodies the successful unit coordinator as it encourages interactions and reflects the approachability of the leader. Building trust in the workplace is an ultimate goal that most interviewed unit coordinators strive for. As a result, all interviewed unit coordinators have developed excellent communication skills in such a way that they ensure their messages are always clear, to the point, and inclusive.

The next most prominent category was teamwork and collegiality. The workplace environment of a successful unit coordinator seems characterized by distributed leadership in such a way that most faculty members are involved in the decision-making process. Successful unit coordinators seem to encourage teamwork and collaborations in the department. As a result, such unit coordinators spend considerable time building consensus and ensuring that everyone is on board before they take a decision. The main way to facilitate teamwork in a university department seems to revolve around being collegial in the workplace. As one participant pointed out, a unit coordinator is the first among equals. Successful unit coordinators encourage an environment of democracy and shared academic responsibility. They seem to achieve this by harmonizing the different perspectives of faculty members, instead of enforcing their own point of view.

The next prominent category revolved around ensuring a solid academic foundation, characterized by an unparalleled knowledge in the field and a consistently developed expertise. Successful unit coordinators seem to always be on top of their field, even to the point of developing interdisciplinary expertise. This can be linked to the

theme of maintaining a learning orientation. Most interviewed participants have demonstrated openness to feedback and an overall interest for growth and learning, despite their proven experience in their field.

When it comes to the foundational composition of successful unit coordinators, maturity and emotional self-control was a prominent category across the data. Most interviewed unit coordinators reflected high levels of patience and resilience which they developed throughout their years of leadership. Such high levels of emotional maturity seem to be instigated by the need for being objective and impartial. A tricky aspect of their job revolves around maintaining this objectivity while at the same time remaining open and friendly. Having emotional self-control and a high level of maturity seems to be the key for maintaining this balance.

The next prominent category revolved around having career ambition and commitment to the department. Most interviewed participants demonstrated fierce levels of commitment to the serving others and were particularly invested in their job. One participant went as far as to describe her department as her "baby". Successful unit coordinators seem to be involved in every possible detail of their job and strive to know about everything that is going on in their department. They often arrive early to the office and would stay overtime. Physical presence was listed in many cases as an extremely important feature of successful unit coordinators.

Motivating, inspiring, and influencing others seems to be another prominent relationship-building activity that successful unit coordinators engage in. One interesting

strategy many interviewed participants developed revolved around first motivating and inspiring other members of faculty in order to better influence them later when it comes to delegating tasks and responsibilities. This also extends to students, as successful unit coordinators seem to care about motivating and developing their students, often portraying themselves as role models. For instance, one participant mentioned the importance of "walking the talk" around students.

The next prominent category was the ability to deal with complexity. As expected, unit coordinators operate in a VUCA environment and they have to develop ways of dealing with the complexities and ambiguities of their environment in order to successful run the department. Most interviewed participants praised multitasking as one of their main tools for dealing with the complexity of their job. They also demonstrated high organization and time management skills. This category can also be linked with the theme of having developed cognitive abilities and overall intelligence. While having exceptional cognitive abilities does not seem to be a prerequisite for success in leading a department, it does seem to provide an edge when it comes to developing overall efficient ways of completing the administrative tasks.

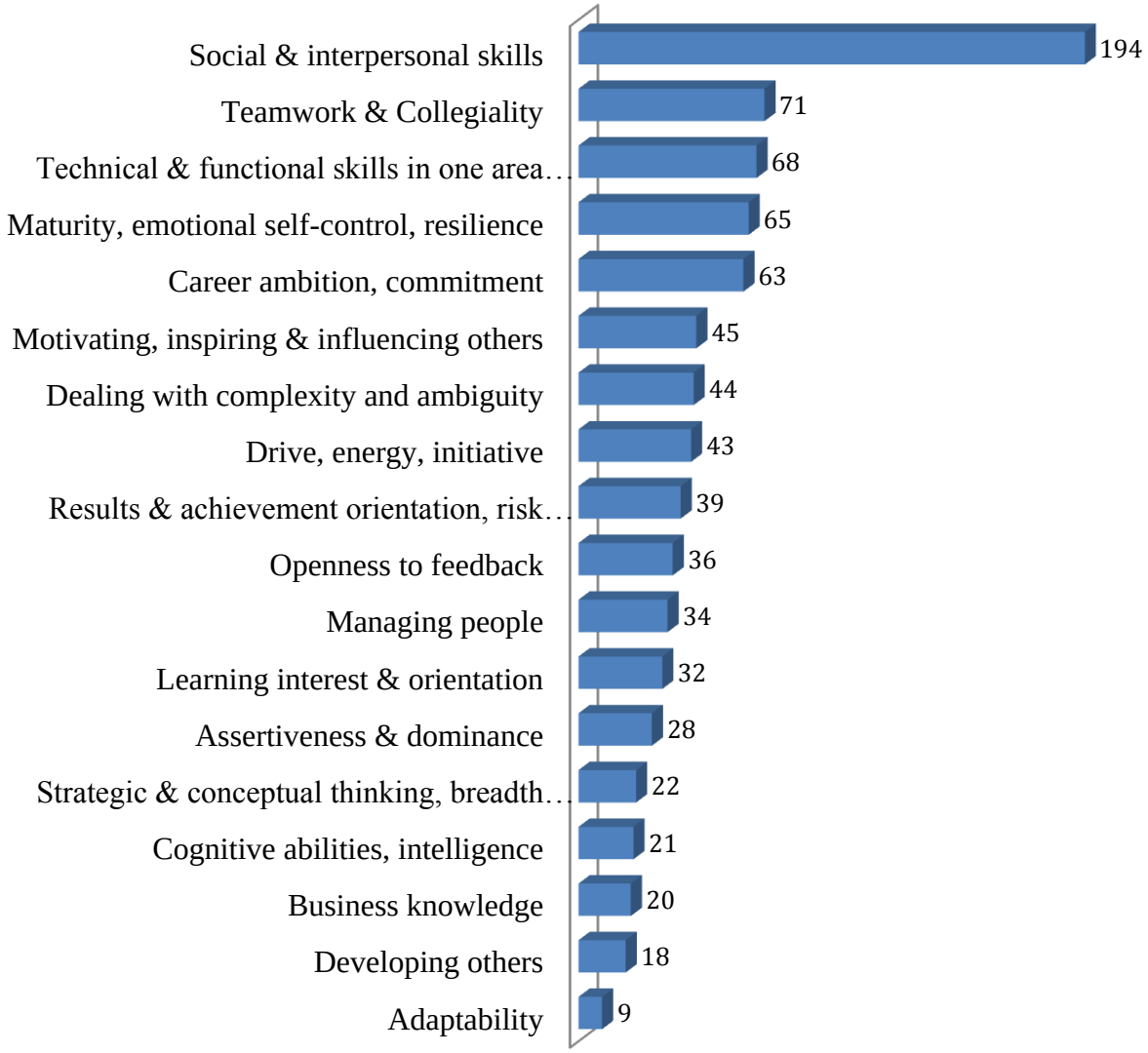
Almost all interviewed participants demonstrated high levels of drive and passion towards their job. High levels of energy seem to come hand in hand with the high levels of interactivity of successful unit coordinators. Such high levels of energy can sometimes go too far as seen in the case of one participant who reported that being energetic has often backfired and got her into bad tempers. However, such fierce involvement seems to

separate successful department leaders from others, especially when it comes to standing in the face of competition. Most interviewed unit coordinators demonstrated visionary qualities which allowed them to pioneer programs and ensure constant innovations in the department.

Successful unit coordinators seem to be results oriented as most interviewed participants demonstrated goal orientation and drew motivation from their achievements in the department. When it comes to the managerial aspect of their job, not many interviewed participants demonstrated an interest in the administrative work, describing it as “something that simply has to be done”; they seemed rather more interested in the human aspect of management, particularly focusing on two strategies: delegating responsibilities and maintaining an open-door policy.

While assertiveness and dominance showed up several times across the data, it does not seem to be an essential prerequisite for success in this context. Assertiveness and dominance seemed more prominent when dealing with students rather than around other faculty members. For instance, a few participants pointed out that assertiveness is particularly useful when enforcing rules and regulations.

Figure 21: Multiple-case Analysis (total theme frequency of occurrence)



Summary

In this chapter, a case by case analysis was presented with a total of 20 separate cases, leading to a cross-case analysis which allowed answering the research questions posed in this study. When it comes to the relationship-building capabilities (Sub question 1) that make university teachers excellent candidates for becoming unit coordinators, the final multiple-case analysis uncovered the following desirable attributes: sociability, interpersonal prowess, collegiality, maturity, emotional self-control, resilience, multi-tasking, drive, openness, assertiveness, and cognitive intelligence. When it comes to the task-completion capabilities (Sub question 2) that make a university teacher an excellent candidate for leading a department, the final multiple-case analysis uncovered the following: ensuring abundance of interactions, encouraging teamwork, consensus building, delegating tasks and responsibilities, holding an open-door policy, motivating, inspiring, developing others, ensuring a physical presence in the department, fostering an environment of honesty and transparency, and building trust in the workplace.

Based on the findings of this multiple-case study, any university professor who displays the above listed behaviors and develops the above listed characteristics and attributes is likely to succeed in leading the department and dealing with the complexities of such an educational context. In Chapter 5, I will further interpret the listed findings in terms of how they compare to the literature described in Chapter 2. I will also describe how future research can complement those findings and how practitioners, namely management at universities can put these findings to best use in the workplace.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to examine how university teachers demonstrate the potential to becoming unit coordinators, by seeking to uncover the main behavioral patterns, personal characteristics, tasks, and relationship-building activities (Evans, 2015; Pepper & Roberts, 2016) that make a university teacher an excellent candidate for a unit coordinator position. This multiple-case study was conducted as a direct answer to the recent calls in the literature by the likes of Whitney (2013) and Cosenza (2015) who pointed out that there is a lack of understanding on how leadership is developed in a university context, particularly regarding the characteristics of individuals who demonstrate such leadership potential. This qualitative study helped to identify such characteristics. A case-by-case analysis of 20 interviews with different unit coordinators, followed by a cross-case analysis, revealed that successful unit coordinators are mainly characterized by high social and interpersonal skills, a high level of teamwork and collegiality, a mastery of academic and technical skills in their field, a high level of maturity, resilience, and emotional self-control, along with a significant involvement and commitment to the department. This chapter begins with an interpretation of the findings in the light of the reviewed literature, followed by the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, ending with a description of social and practical implications of the results.

Interpretation of Findings

Most of the findings in this multiple-case study confirm or extend the existing knowledge in the discipline as each case presented direct examples to the reviewed literature in Chapter 2. In this section, I recollect the relevant points from the reviewed literature and provide excerpts from the interviews I conducted in order to showcase how the findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend such existing knowledge.

Prinsloo (2012) described today's environment as VUCA, which seems to directly apply to the workplace environment in which unit coordinators operate. Most interviewed participants pointed out how complex their environment is, and how they had to develop ways of dealing with complexity and ambiguity (See Figure 21*)*. For instance, participant CC mentioned that "the job is very complex" and had to develop multitasking as a way of dealing with this complexity. Similarly, participant NB explained that "you have to deal with very complex human situations" and had to develop empathy and trustworthiness in order to deal with such complex interactions.

Church and Silzer's (2014) *Leadership Potential Blueprint* was used as the main conceptual framework for this study and proved to be particularly fitting in the university context. With the exception of teamwork and collegiality, all 17 categories/quadrants (of the three main dimensions) were applicable to leaders in a university department. The uncovered main desirable characteristics and attributes of a successful unit coordinator revolved around a balance between the three dimensions proposed by Church and Silzer (2014): foundational dimension (social and interpersonal skills), growth dimension

(career ambition and commitment), and career dimensions (technical and functional skills in one's area of expertise).

Distributed leadership was described in the literature as a prevalent leadership style in education (Ahmad et al., 2015; Hairon & Goh, 2015). The findings of this multiple-case study confirm such prediction as the majority of interviewed unit coordinators seemed to apply (whether knowingly or unknowingly) a distributed form of leadership. For instance, participant RB stated: "I didn't want to do a [one-man] show. I want to build structures in the department to do teamwork", which is a postheroic way of shying away from traditional forms of leadership. Similarly, a participant provided statements like "I believe that the secret is that I never take decisions without consulting the team" and "we should all interact to come up with decisions", reflecting the distributed power in the department, coupled with teamwork and collegiality. Another participant cleverly pointed out that "there is a temptation to have leadership similar in the one in the business or military context, but you have to remember that as a chair you are the first among equals", which further reinforces the concept of collegiality.

Some participants displayed hints of transformational leadership styles, which echo Abbas et al.'s (2016) description of increasing the psychological well-being of employees in order to reduce turnover rates. This was particularly reflected in one participant's leadership style when she stated that she likes to "empower people in an environment of trust", as well as another participant's leadership style around students when she stated that "I have to be active. I have to walk the talk. I have to impress them.

…So this is influential, and not always by telling them what to do, but showing it to them". As a result, students were exposed to an inspiring behavior that is similar to what is portrayed in transformational leadership.

Pepper and Roberts (2016) speculated that the main activity of successful unit coordinators is to create liaisons, collaborations, and networks with others. This was directly reflected in all 20 interviewed participants. For instance, one participant described her job as mainly revolving around "playing the role of a liaison between the top management and the lower management". Another participant encouraged collaborations in his department by "bringing people and their resources together when working on projects". Such networks often extend to external surroundings as one participant reported that she collaborates with more than 43 universities that are affiliated with her department.

Mujis et al. (2013) advanced the idea of having an increased expertise which all unit coordinators in his study seemed to share. This was further confirmed in this multiple-case study as one the main prerequisites for success was reported to be academic expertise. Several participants described the importance of staying on top of their field of study. They explained that some fields of study feature constantly changing technologies, which require them to keep up with the new knowledge by constantly honing their expertise.

Morevoer, Mujis et al. (2013) mentioned NQTs' willingness to embrace new approaches. This was specifically reflected in most interviewed participants' openness to

feedback and learning orientation (refer to Figure 21). For instance, one participant humbly mentioned that “every single day in this profession you have to keep learning something new. It is impossible, whether you have the experience or not, to claim that you have acquired all the knowledge of the world”, reflecting his dedication to a life of constant growth and learning.

Cosenza (2015) mentioned role modeling as a common characteristic among unit coordinators. While this was not a prominent feature across the data, it was still mentioned by one participant who consciously worked on being a role model for her students by “walking the talk” whenever she was around them.

Li et al. (2016) discussed the importance of trust in facilitating the production and development of social relationships in school. This was confirmed across the data as most participants mentioned their focus on building trust among faculty as a prerequisite for proactively resolving conflicts and encouraging collaborations. For instance, one participant stated that “you need your colleagues to trust you”, and another participant similarly said: “I like to create an environment of communication, in which I can work and empower people in an environment of trust”, thus ensuring honesty and transparency in the workplace.

Murphy and Curtis (2013) explained that unit coordinators who occupy both formal and informal leadership positions seemed to undergo a significant amount of pressure because they were engaged in volunteering activities that often went

unrecognized or unrewarded. This was directly reflected in one participant's interview, when he stated that he

> visited [many] schools which were dispersed across the country. An entire day had to be invested in each school in order to achieve the goal. This was not part of my job contract; it is something that I took on by myself in order to improve the department. If it weren't for these informal tasks, being a chair would be one of the most relaxing jobs. (Participant SB)

Hashim and Ahmad (2013) advanced the idea of autonomy and self-directed learning when describing the ideal educational leader, adding that such a successful leader would display great commitment and have unshakable work ethics. This autonomy was apparent in one participant's interview when he stated that he likes "to find solutions [by himself] rather than burdening others with every single detail". His diligence and work ethics were also reflected in the following statement: "you cannot make an impact in just two years; you have to work hard and wait". Similarly, another participant displayed unshakable work ethics when he stated that "excellence, striving, and precision at work are the keys to success".

Bond and Sterrett (2014) mentioned the ability to know oneself while being conscientious of others. This emotional intelligence was apparent across all interviewed participants who displayed a high level of interpersonal abilities. Empathy was particularly featured among most of such unit coordinators. For instance, one participant displayed high levels of empathy when he stated: "I prefer to listen carefully to other

people and try to put myself in their shoes". Similarly, another participant developed empathy over the years after being constantly approached by her students with their problems. She described it as "an enlightening experience".

Murphy and Curtis (2013) predicted that resilience would be an important personal characteristic that unit coordinators ought to display. They were right as resilience was frequently mentioned across the multiple cases. Many participants stated that they are under different pressures and yet, they never succumbed and always ensured that they are being objective in their dealings with others. For instance, one participant explained that "when you are doing your job properly, you end up with nobody really liking you, because you are not taking sides with anyone, […] so you have to put up with unpopularity". Similarly, another participant became resilient by developing patience. She described the different pressures she has to deal with at the university and explained that "people need to be more patient, especially in higher education".

Finally, Li et al. (2016) proposed a model in which they highlighted the strategic direction of unit coordinators and their ability to work on developing people. Strategic thinking was apparent in several interviewed participants (see Figure 21), particularly one participant who enjoyed developing strategies for her department. She explained that she developed her strategic thinking by being "involved in developing strategic plans for the university at large". Similarly, the ability to develop people was mentioned several times in the data, especially when it comes to caring about students' educational growth. For instance, one participant developed competitions which students entered for free and

ended up learning indirectly about all the new advancements in the field. Similarly, another participant displayed how much he cared about his students' development when he stated that his mission was "not only to transfer knowledge, but also to prepare students to fly by their own wings".

Limitations of the Study

The qualitative nature of this study inherently suggests that the findings are not yet ripe for generalization. With that said, the relatively large sample of interviewed participants (N=20) was more than enough to reach data saturation. Still, until further quantitative studies are carried out, one cannot assume that the findings are applicable to any different settings such as a different geographical context. Another limitation is related to the subjective nature of findings, especially since I used a specific contextual framework (the Leadership Potential Blueprint) to analyze the data. A different researcher might interpret the data differently and come up with different/additional results. However, according to Church and Silzer (2014), the Leadership Potential Blueprint was built as a synthesis to all the existing recent literature on leadership potential identification. As a result, other researchers are very likely to come up with similar results even if analyzing the data under a different scope.

One limitation that was identified during the data collection was the fact that many interviewed unit coordinators had an intermittent experience due to the rotation system (refer to *Definitions*, Chapter 2). In other words, their cumulative experience was discontinuous since they were rotating leadership every three years. As a result, their

description of department leadership might not be as comparable to one particular participant who has had an uninterrupted experience of 20 straight years leading his department. Nonetheless, the answers of unit coordinators on a rotation system were very similar to the answers of those who were not part of a rotation system, but future researchers might still want to take this limitation into consideration.

Recommendations

Drawing from the previously mentioned limitations, I would invite future researchers to validate the findings in this multiple-case study by either bringing them to the next quantitative step or replicating the qualitative study in different contexts.

Recommendation 1: Quantitative Validation

I would particularly recommend designing a survey based on the developed quadrant in this study (see Figure 21, *Multiple-case analysis*) and get the input of a larger sample base, preferably a global one, on whether they believe the mentioned characteristics and attributes apply to their experiences. The findings would help confirm (or disconfirm) the validity of these findings in a larger and global context.

Recommendation 2: Qualitative Replication

I would also invite future researchers in the field of leadership in general to apply the same approach (i.e. using the Leadership Potential Blueprint as a conceptual framework) but to a different context, for example the military, hospitals, laboratories, or nursing home centers. It would be interesting to see how the composition of leadership would change based on each context. For example, the graph generated in Figure 21

would be differently skewed based for each context. This would further answer the literature's question on the ambiguity of defining leadership since it differs for every context in which it is deployed (Allen et al., 2014).

Implications

In Chapter 1, I introduced several implications for positive social change. After conducting this study, a few additional implications had to be added. Morris and Laipple (2015) explained that new unit coordinators have always struggled to adapt to the new administrative setting, often getting into the position without any prior training. This was further confirmed in the interviews I conducted; for instance, one participant stated that "not receiving enough guidance forced [him] to figuring things out by [himself]". The findings of this study would at least provide newcomers with a sense of direction as to what particular task-completion capabilities (Sub question 2) to adopt, and which relationship-building capabilities (Sub question 1) to develop in order to maximize their chance of successfully leading the department.

Students' postgraduate lives may indirectly be improved as a result of a better formation for unit coordinators. Holecek et al. (2016) explained how unit coordinators focus on the improvement of the lives of their students by providing guidance and inspiration for pathways that go beyond the classroom, specifically career pathways for the future. For instance, one participant stated that his job is not only to transfer knowledge, but also "to prepare students to fly by their own wings". Similarly, Durden et al. (2014) found that unit coordinators can significantly contribute to the academic

success of their students by providing them with culturally relevant teachings. This was apparent in another participant's interview when he stated that he was aware of a particular gap in the local market, so he introduced two new programs in his department to equip students with the relevant knowledge. The more similarly conscientious unit coordinators a university recruits, the better the lives of their students get.

The reviewed literature includes a need for a clearer definition of unit coordinators (Cosenza, 2015; Lowery-Moore et al., 2016). This study featured an in-depth analysis of 20 different unit coordinators who each described their daily tasks and their formal and informal roles (refer to Appendix B, Question 6). The findings of this study can help better define unit coordinators, since a clearer picture of their main relationship-building capabilities (Subquestion 1) and task-completion capabilities (Subquestion 2) has been illustrated.

Development of a Leadership Potential Identification Scale

Dries and Pepermans (2012) reported that there are currently too few empirical ways of identifying leadership. One implication for practice revolves around developing a *Unit Coordinator Leadership Assessment* tool, instrument, or scale. After empirically validating the findings of this study (through a quantitative follow-up study), practitioners can develop an assessment tool, based on the different dimensions and categories described in Chapter 4. For instance, the assessment tool would feature each quadrant with a Likert scale in order to assess candidates' score on each dimension (See Figure 22, p.156). The total score would be compared among different candidates in order to assess

their potential for leading the department. This would finally add an empirical touch to the leadership assessment which, according to Dries & Pepermans (2012), has always relied on instinct or gut feeling.

The following Figure 22 represents an example of how this instrument or scale may look like. It is important to note that this scale was built based on Church & Silzer's (2014) Leadership Potential Blueprint. The score for each dimension would be weighted differently, based on the findings of this study (Figure 21). For instance, the score for social and interpersonal skills would receive a larger weight than the score for adaptability based on the cross-case analysis (Figure 21).

Management would hire trained observers to assess each candidate, possibly by attending one of their classes, conferences, or even designing a leadership simulation. Candidates would go through different of observation cycles and would receive a leadership assessment score at the end of each cycle. The final results would be presented to university management for consideration in the final assessment of the next potential unit coordinator.

Figure 22: Unit Coordinator Leadership Potential Assessment Score Sheet (Example)

Dimension	Category	Score			
Foundational Dimension	**Personality Characteristics**				
	Social & Interpersonal Skills	1	2	3	4
	Assertiveness & Dominance	1	2	3	4
	Teamwork & Collegiality	1	2	3	4
	Maturity & Emotional Self-Control	1	2	3	4
					Total
	Cognitive Capabilities				
	Cognitive Intelligence	1	2	3	4
	Strategic & Conceptual Thinking	1	2	3	4
	Dealing with Complexity	1	2	3	4
Growth Dimension					**Total**
	Learning Skills				
	Adaptability	1	2	3	4
	Learning Orientation	1	2	3	4
	Openness to Feedback	1	2	3	4
					Total
	Motivation Skills				
	Drive & Energy	1	2	3	4
	Career Ambition & Commitment	1	2	3	4
	Results & Achievement Orientation	1	2	3	4
					Total

Conclusion

The aim of this multiple-case study was to understand how university teachers display leadership potential. In-depth interviews with 20 unit coordinators allowed uncovering on one hand, the desirable relationship-building capabilities of successful department leaders and, on the other, the task-completion capabilities that ensure their success. In terms of relationship-building capabilities, the final multiple-case analysis uncovered that successful unit coordinators are sociable, interpersonally skilled, collegial, emotionally mature, resilient, multi-tasking, driven, open, assertive, and cognitively intelligent. As for the task-completion capabilities, the final multiple-case analysis uncovered that successful unit coordinators ensure an abundance of interactions, encourage teamwork, build consensus, delegate tasks and responsibilities, hold an open-door policy, motivate, inspire and develop others, ensure their physical presence in the department, foster an environment of honesty and transparency, and build trust in the workplace. Any university teacher who displays the above listed characteristics and develops the above listed behaviors is very likely to succeed as a unit coordinator.

Future researchers and practitioners are invited to consider the development of a proposed leadership potential identification scale, based on the findings of this study. Such an instrument would answer the literature's call for empirical ways of identifying leadership potential, at least in the educational context.

References

Abbas, G., Khalily, T. M., & Riaz, N. M. (2016). The mediating role of work-related attitudes between leadership styles and well-being. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce & Social Sciences, 10*(2), 257-273. Retrieved from: http://www.jespk.net

Ahmed, E., Reaburn, P., Samad, A., & Davis, H. (2015). Towards an understanding of the effect of leadership on employee wellbeing and organizational outcomes in Australian universities. *Journal of Developing Areas, 49*(6), 441-448. Retrieved from: http://muse.jhu.edu/journal/258

Allen, M., Bynum, B., Oliver, J., Russell, T., Young, M., & Babin, N. (2014). Predicting leadership performance and potential in the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School (OCS). *Military Psychology, 26*(4), 310-326. Retrieved from: http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/mil/

Asmawi, A., Zakaria, S., & Wei, C. C. (2013). Understanding transformational leadership and R&D culture in Malaysian universities. *Innovation: Management, Policy & Practice, 15*(3), 287-304. Retrieved from: http://eai.eu/organization/innovation-management-policy-practice

Bennis, W. G., & Thomas, R. J. (2013). *HBR's 10 must reads on leadership*. Brighton, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Benoot, C., Hannes, K., & Bilsen, J. (2016). The use of purposeful sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example on sexual adjustment to a

cancer trajectory. *BMC Medical Research Methodology, 16*(21), 1-12. doi:10.1186/s12874-016-0114-6

Bess, J. L., & Dee, J. R. (2012). *Understanding college and university organization: Theories for effective policy and practice.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Bogler, R., Caspi, A., & Roccas, S. (2013). Transformational and passive leadership: An initial investigation of university instructors as leaders in a virtual learning environment. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 41*(3), 372-392. doi:10.1177/1741143212474805

Bond, N., & Sterrett, W. (2014). Developing teacher leaders through honorary professional organizations in education: focus on the college student officers. *Education, 135*(1), 25-38. Retrieved from: https://www.questia.com/library/p5118/education

Boud, D., Brew, A., Dowling, R., Kiley, M., McKenzie, J., Malfroy, J., … Solomon, N. (2014). The coordination role in research education: emerging understandings and dilemmas for leadership. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 36*(4), 440-454. doi:10.1080/1360080X.2014.916466

Cosenza, M. N. (2015). Defining teacher leadership. *Issues in Teacher Education, 24*(2), 79-99. Retrieved from: https://www.itejournal.org/

Boylan, M. (2016). Deepening system leadership: Teachers leading from below. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 44*(1), 57-72. doi:10.1177/1741143213501314.

Church, A. (2014). What do we know about developing leadership potential? *OD Practitioner, 46*(3), 52-61. Retrieved from: http://www.odnetwork.org/page/Publications

Church, A., Rotolo, C., Ginther, N., & Levine, R. (2015). How are top companies designing and managing their high-potential programs? A follow-up talent management benchmark study. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 67*(1), 17-47. Retrieved from: http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/cpb

Church, A., & Silzer, R. (2013). Going behind the corporate curtain with a blueprint for leadership potential. *People & Strategy, 36*(4), 51-58. Retrieved from: http://www.hrps.org

Dries, N., & Pepermans, R. (2012). How to identify leadership potential: development and testing of a consensus model. *Human Resource Management, 51*(3), 361-385. doi:10.1002/hrm.21473

Durden, T. R., Escalante, E., & Blitch, K. (2014). Start with us! Culturally relevant pedagogy in the preschool classroom. *Early Childhood Education, 43*(1), 223-232. doi:10.1007/s10643-014-0651-8

Evans, L. (2015). A changing role for university professors? Professorial academic leadership as it is perceived by 'the led'. *British Educational Research Journal, 41*(4), 666-685. doi:10.1002/berj.3163.

Freeman, M. (2014). The hermeneutical aesthetics of thick description. *Qualitative Inquiry, 20*(6), 827-833. doi:10.1177/1077800414530267

Garrin, J. (2014). *Inspiring change: Exercise self-efficacy, dispositional optimism, and perceived stress in college seniors* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ScholarWorks. (Available from http://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations)

Glover, C. P., & Harris, C. (2016). Professional dyads and culturally relevant literacy through the eyes of a beginning teacher leader. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 83*(1), 25-35. Retrieved from: https://www.questia.com/library/p438442/delta-kappa-gamma-bulletin

Hairon, S., & Goh, W. J. (2015). Pursuing the elusive construct of distributed leadership: Is the search over? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 43*(5), 693-718. doi:10.1177/1741143214535745

Hempsall, K. (2014). Developing leadership in higher education: Perspectives from the USA, the UK, and Australia. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 36*(4), 383-394. doi:10.1080/1360080X.2014.916468

Ho, W., & Lin, K. (2015). The effect of teacher's leadership style on the outcomes of early childhood education. *The International Journal of Organizational Innovation, 8*(1), 77-86. Retrieved from: http://www.ijoi-online.org

Holecek, C., Beckham, K., & McKethan, D. (2016). Developing teacher leaders in CTE. *Connecting Education & Careers, 91*(6), 35-38. Retrieved from: https://www.acteonline.org

Holt, D., Palmer, S., Munro, J., Solomonides, I., Gosper, M., Hicks, M., … Hollenbeck, R. (2013). Leading the quality management of online learning environments in

Australian higher education. *Australian Journal of Educational Technology, 29*(3), 387-402. Retrieved from: https://ajet.org.au/index.php/AJET

Helsing, D., & Howell, A. (2014). Understanding leadership from the inside out: assessing leadership potential using constructive-development theory. *Journal of Management Inquiry. 23*(2), 186-204. Retrieved from: http://jmi.sagepub.com

Jacob, S. A., & Fergurson, S. P. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 17*(6), 1-10. Retrieved from: http://tqr.nova.edu

Janesick, V. J. (2016). *"Stretching" exercises for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jones, S., Lefoe, G., Harvey, M., & Ryland, K. (2012). Distributed leadership: a collaborative framework for academics, executives and professionals in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *34*(1), 67–78. doi:10.1080/1360080X.2012.642334

Khan, S. & Malik, S. (2013). Is teacher leadership a fantasy or reality? A review. *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World*, *3*(3), 66-72. Retrieved from: http://www.wjeis.org

Kim, Y.J., & Dyne, L.V. (2012). Cultural intelligence and international leadership potential: the importance of contact for members of the majority. *Applied Psychology: An International Review. 61*(2), 272-294. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2011.00468.x

Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review, 84*(1), 74-84. Retrieved from: http://hepg.org/her-home/home

Lambright, H. (2015). Reflections on leadership: an interview with Sean O'Keefe. *Public Administration Review. 75*(4), 619-624. doi:10.1111/puar.12402

Lee, S., Kim, H., Park, S., Lee, S., & Yu, J. (2015). Preliminary Development of a Scale to Measure Leadership Potential. *Psychological Reports, 117*(1), 51-71. doi:10.2466/01.07.PR0.117c13z4

Lieberman, A. (2015). *The power of teacher leaders: Their roles, influence, and impact*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lowery-Moore, H., Latimer, R. M., & Villate, V. M. (2016). The essence of teacher leadership: A phenomenological inquiry of professional growth. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership, 7*(1), 1-16. Retrieved from: https://www.cpp.edu/~ceis/education/international-journal-teacher-leadership/index.shtml

Mattar, D. M. (2015). Lebanese cherishing a transformational educational leader. *Educational Leader, 30*(6), 1045-1071. doi:10.1108/IJEM-06-2015-0085

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M., Huberman, M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morris, T. L., & Laipple, J. S. (2015). How prepared are academic administrators? Leadership and job satisfaction within US research universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management, 37*(2), 241-251. doi:10.1080/1360080X.2015.1019125

Mujis, D., Chapman, C., & Armstrong, P. (2013). Can early careers teachers be teacher leaders? A study of second-year trainees in the teach first alternative certification programme *Journal of Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 41*(6), 767-781. doi: 10.1177/1741143213494188

Murphy, M., & Curtis, W. (2013). The micro-politics of micro-leadership: exploring the role of programme leader in English universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management, 35*(1), 34-44. doi:10.1080/1360080X.2012.727707

Nachmias, C. F., & Nachmias, D. (2014). *Research methods in the social sciences* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

NCSL. (2012). *System leadership prospectus*. Retrieved from: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education

Patton, M.Q. (2012). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Pepper, C., & Roberts, S. (2016). Valuing the leadership role of university unit coordinators. *Issues in Educational Research. 26*(1), 117-130. Retrieved from: http://www.iier.org.au/iier.html

Prinsloo, M. (2012). Towards an integrated assessment of leadership potential. *Integral Leadership Review. 12*(1), 1-31. Retrieved from: http://integralleadershipreview.com

Roller, R. M., & Lavrakas, P. J. (2015). *Applied qualitative research design: A total quality framework approach.* New York, NY: Guildford Publications.

Salatian, A., Zivkovic, J., Fatima, A., Jamal, S. (2012). Teaching adjustments by Nigerian faculty in an American style university in Nigeria. *Allied Academies International Conference: Academy of Educational Leadership (AEL). 17*(1), 47-52. Retrieved from: http://www.alliedacademies.org/affiliate-academies-ael.php

Scott, D. E., & Scott, S. (2016). Leadership for quality university teaching. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 44*(3), 511-531. doi:10.1177/1741143214549970

Steven, H. (2012). Leadership potential, leadership discretion. *People and Strategy. 35*(3), 10-11. Retrieved from: http://www.hrps.org

Whitney, A. E. (2013). When university faculty nurture teacher leadership: horizontal practices and values in a professor's work with teachers. *International Journal of Leadership in Education. 16*(1), 71-93. doi:10.1080/13603124.2012.707687

Williams, J. D. (2012). A marketing management application of Warren Bennis in today's business environment: Are his concepts still valid in the 21st century? *Review of Management Innovation & Creativity, 5*(15), 1-27. Retrieved from: http://www.intellectbase.org/RMIC

Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Sage.

Zach, L. (2006). Using a multiple-case studies design to investigate the information-seeking behavior of arts administrators. *Library Trends, 55*(1), 4-21. Retrieved from: https://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/library_trend

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I am a doctoral student at Walden University and am writing my dissertation on leadership potential identification in universities. During this interview, I would like to discuss with you your experiences as a unit coordinator as well as your perceptions of potential candidates for leading a department in the university.

I believe that your position as a unit coordinator in this university is relevant to the topics discussed in this research. The interview should take between 45 and 90 minutes. The information you provide will remain confidential and you will only be identified by your position, age, or gender. By the same token, the identity of the university will not be revealed in the description.

I will be using a recorder during this interview for transcription purposes. Otherwise, the recorded file will not be published and will be kept confidential. You will also be given the opportunity to check for the accuracy of the transcripts. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your professional history as a unit coordinator in this university.
2. What do you think are the critical personality characteristics that future department leaders at the organization ought to have in order to operate successfully?
3. What personality characteristics, in your opinion, future unit coordinators need to minimize in order to successfully lead at the university?
4. What is the level of conceptual or strategic thinking that you believe to be required in order to ensure the survival of the university in the future?
5. What kind of growth and learning orientation do future unit coordinators need to have if they wish to take on such a position?
6. What are your daily tasks as a unit coordinator? How do you balance formal roles with informal roles?
7. What is the level of performance and leadership behavior that you think is necessary for being a successful unit coordinator?
8. In your opinion, which functional abilities and technical skills should potential unit coordinators develop in order to successfully lead department?
9. Can you think of any other factors that we did not discuss that influence the process of identifying excellent candidates for leading a department?