



Within higher education, graduate advisors are seen as the most influential figures in the academic career of aspiring scholars. This study sought to explain selected factors and how they influence the level of trust between graduate faculty advisors and graduate students through a non-experimental, descriptive correlational research design. The theoretical framework used for this study was Steven Covey's *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (2006). In this framework, trust is comprised of four cores of Credibility, two for Character: Integrity and Intent, and two for competence: capabilities and results. After conducting a census through an electronic questionnaire, the demographics, level of self-trust, comparison by gender, and correlation with years of experience were assessed. The target population for this study was graduate faculty that can advise in CALS at the University of Arizona.

The key findings of the study were:

1. Male graduate advisors perceived themselves to be more trustworthy than female participants regarding the Character attributes of trust. This could suggest that Character plays a more important role in being a trustworthy graduate advisor than the attribute of Competence.
2. Female graduate advisors had the highest scores in Intent and Results (attributes of Competence), indicating

that having pure intentions and producing better results make for a more trustworthy advisor.

3. Both attributes of Character (Integrity and Intent) as a trust factor had the highest mean scores, suggesting that Character plays a more significant role in being a trustworthy graduate advisor than Competence attributes (Capacity and Results). However, Competence attributes serve as a guiding leadership role for graduate students.
4. There was a negligible correlation between self-trust level and years of advising experience, suggesting that advising experience does not impact the level of self-trust that graduate advisors possess.

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations for practice are suggested:

- Graduate advisors should Increase self-awareness and seek growth opportunities.
- Implement classes that focus on developing and improving self-trust, utilizing accelerators for both Character and Competence.
- Students should not consider the years of experience that graduate faculty advisors possess.