

**TITLE:** Teachers' Perceptions of Principals' Attributes

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**OBJECTIVE:** The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership characteristics of school principals in comparison with those of effective business managers.

**METHODOLOGY:** Data was obtained from 1,225 teachers in four states without regard to randomness. The teachers were participants either in graduate education classes or executive seminars. Respondents completed the Kouzes and Posner (1987) Checklist of Admired Leaders Characteristics.

**KEY FINDINGS:** Teachers varied very little from the business managers in their perception of the ideal attributes of principals. Four of the first five responses are identical to those of business managers. Caring was selected as fifth most important while managers selected intelligence in that rank. The authors suggest that the perception of teaching as a nurturing or compassionate profession could help explain why teachers thought principals should be caring. Spearman rank order technique was used to correlate the ordinal ranks of both teacher and business peoples' perceptions, which was statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ). Indeed, the similarities between the two sets of rankings were striking.

The conclusion is that teachers and managers have a high degree of similarity in their perceptions of the characteristics that business leaders and principals should possess. The implication for principals is clear: The better a principal understands teachers' expectations, the more likely a principal can fulfill the expectations of the role. Valid and reliable data on teacher expectations will assist principals to understand more thoroughly how those expectations can influence teacher behavior, which, ultimately, affects student achievement.