

The Effective Catalyst: An Analysis of the Traits and Competencies of Pioneers who have Catalyzed a Movement

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Abstract

This article reports on the largest-ever empirical research into the personal traits and competencies of an effective movement catalyst. The study compared survey results of 147 pioneers who catalyzed a movement with a control group of 160 pioneers who did not, spanning 38 countries across the globe. The study identifies 15 traits and competencies where effective catalysts rate themselves ≥ 4.5 on a 1-5 Likert scale, as well as where they show significantly higher self-ratings than non-catalyst pioneers in the same six regions. The study further identifies significant inhibiting and contributing (and internal/external) factors and their impact on the catalyzing of movements. Some of the study's findings challenge the conventional understanding of an effective movement catalyst among movement thinkers.

Key Words: catalyst, competencies, movement, pioneer, traits

Introduction

What traits and competencies characterize pioneers who have been instrumental in catalyzing a movement? What traits and competencies distinguish these effective movement catalysts from those who have not catalyzed a movement? These two questions formed the basis of an extensive Catalyst Competence Research project by Bethany Research Institute in 2020-21.

The study had a sample size of 307 pioneer missionaries, of which 147 had catalyzed a movement and 160 had not. Participants represented the largest mega-cultures of the world, with a focus on the regions or groupings where most movements have occurred, specifically Francophone Africa, East Africa, India, Indonesia, Latin America, and Ethnic Chinese. All participants completed an online survey (available in French, Swahili, Hindi, Indonesian and Spanish as well as English) with 95 questions; 45 of them also gave in-depth interviews.

Developing a List of Traits and Competencies

Based on a review of the relevant literature on empirical leadership studies and apostolic and movement leadership (including Prinz 2016), a list of 24 trait and competency constructs was developed. (Definitions can be found in Appendix A.) These 24 constructs were grouped into the following three domains, as shown further below in Table 1:

1. The “Big Five” personality domain: traits and competencies related to personality and character;
2. The “Spiritual” domain: traits and competencies of a spiritual nature, having to do with one’s relationship to God;
3. The “Socio-Influential” domain: traits and competencies related to social behavior and influencing others.

Table 1: Trait and Competency Constructs, Grouped into Three Domains		
Section 1: Individual traits and competencies (“Big Five” domain)	Section 2: Spiritual traits and competencies (“Spiritual” domain)	Section 3: Social Influence traits and competencies (“Socio-Influential” domain)
1. Openness to experience	1. Hunger for God	1. Extroversion

2. Creativity	2. Listening to God	2. Assertiveness
3. Drive to achieve	3. Evangelistic Zeal	3. Inspiring Personality
4. Conscientiousness	4. Expectant Faith	4. Influencing Beliefs
5. Internal locus of control	5. Fervent Intercession	5. Inspiring Shared Vision
6. Persistence	6. Tangible Love	(Number 6 was cut after the pretest)
7. Agreeableness	7. Confidence in Locals	7. Disciple-making
8. Flexibility	8. Confidence in the Bible	8. Empowering
9. Emotional stability		

After an initial pretest, a list of 44 questions was developed to measure participants' ratings of each of these trait and competency constructs (TCs). These are labeled TC1-1-1 through TC3-8-1, based on the three domains described above. In the following tables we will present respondents' average self-ratings for the 24 trait and competency constructs.

Traits and Competencies at Construct Level

All the trait and competency constructs examined had been identified in a literature review as those universally correlated with leadership effectiveness by empirical research. So it does not come as a surprise that effective catalysts rated themselves higher than non-catalysts for 21 of the 24 traits and competencies. (In each case, the means difference between catalysts and non-catalysts was statistically significant.) For 13 of the constructs, the difference between catalysts and control group was at least 1/3 of a Likert point (>0.33), and for seven of them it was almost half a Likert point (>0.46).

Table 2 below shows the trait and competency constructs that mark effective movement catalysts, sorted by self-rating by catalysts in descending order. Traits and competencies identified in the leadership literature review as characteristic of effective leaders are also rated highly by the effective movement catalysts. The only exceptions are the constructs at the bottom of the table, each with a rating lower than 4.0: *flexibility*, *extroversion*, and *emotional stability*.

The study also assessed whether the means difference between catalyst and control group ratings was statistically significant. Except for the three rows at the bottom of the table, the means difference between catalysts and control group members was statistically significant for all other trait and competency constructs.

Trait and Competency Constructs	Catalyst	Control	Difference	Standard Deviation
TC2-7 Confidence in Locals	4.88	4.53	0.36	0.77
TC2-8 Confidence in the Bible	4.77	4.39	0.37	0.81
TC3-2 Assertiveness	4.77	4.29	0.48	0.84
TC3-4 Influencing Beliefs	4.70	4.19	0.51	0.74
TC1-4 Conscientiousness	4.69	4.41	0.29	0.85
TC2-6 Genuine love	4.69	4.43	0.27	0.87
TC2-3 Evangelistic Zeal	4.68	4.39	0.28	0.64
TC2-4 Expectant Faith	4.67	4.36	0.31	0.94
TC3-5 Inspiring Shared Vision	4.66	4.23	0.43	0.77
TC3-7 Disciple-making	4.65	4.07	0.58	0.96

TC3-8 Empowering	4.63	4.11	0.53	0.97
TC1-7 Agreeableness	4.60	4.16	0.44	0.92
TC3-3 Inspiring Personality	4.60	4.06	0.54	0.92
TC2-1 Hunger for God	4.51	4.15	0.35	0.74
TC2-2 Listening to God	4.51	4.16	0.35	0.74
TC1-1 Openness to Experience	4.44	4.19	0.25	0.93
TC1-5 Internal locus of control	4.43	4.11	0.32	0.99
TC1-3 Drive to achieve	4.41	4.14	0.27	0.75
Average of all traits and competencies	4.41	4.06	0.34	0.50
TC1-2 Creativity	4.32	3.86	0.46	0.83
TC1-6 Persistence	4.30	3.98	0.31	0.98
TC2-5 Fervent Intercession	3.83	3.07	0.76	1.02
TC1-8 Flexibility (not significant)	3.47	3.63	-0.16	0.93
TC3-1 Extroversion (not significant)	3.27	3.37	-0.10	1.04
TC1-9 Emotional stability (not significant)	3.01	3.15	-0.14	1.20

To try to understand the reasons why three traits and competencies were not verified as significant, we offer some possible explanations. *Flexibility* brings strengths in certain situations but potential weaknesses in others. Empirical studies have shown that leaders are universally marked by flexibility; apparently this is less true of effective movement catalysts. Without further research, we are at this point unable to offer a clear explanation as to why this trait is not a significant marker of movement catalysts.

Extroversion is measured in this study on a behavioral level, not as a psychological inclination. At times, and as the situation demands, catalysts can be assertive, while at other times they may choose more introverted behaviors, giving space to others with the intent of empowering them. In balancing the two, catalysts may deliberately hold themselves back.

With regards to *emotional stability*, there is no apparent explanation as to why catalysts do not rate themselves higher.

Looking at the list as a whole, practitioners will benefit as they see what are the traits and competencies of those pioneers that God uses to catalyze a movement. It will give them a basis for an honest self-assessment of how much they have developed each of these traits and competencies as well as help them to identify their biggest gaps, providing direction for their ongoing development.

Findings at the Question Level

In the process of the survey's development, each construct was operationalized, meaning that the trait or competency was broken down into catalysts' specific behaviors, attitudes, and convictions. Table 3 shows the 22 responses where (a) catalysts rated themselves the highest (≥ 4.50), (b) catalysts and control group show a statistically significant difference, and (c) that difference amounted to at least 1/3 of a Likert scale point (≥ 0.33). Responses are sorted by catalyst self-rating in descending order. For all questions shown in the table there was a statistically significant means difference between catalysts and control group members.

**Table 3: Self-ratings for the 44 Questions Testing for Traits and Competencies
Sorted by Highest Catalyst Ratings**

Questions Measuring Traits and Competencies	Catalysts	Control Group	Difference
TC2-1-3 Hunger for God: Deep down, I feel a hunger to know God more and to be closer to His heart.	4.93	4.61	0.33
TC2-7-2 Confidence in Locals: I am confident that God grows and uses new disciples - He can use them as much or more than He can use me.	4.88	4.53	0.36
TC2-2-2 Listening to God: I regularly spend time seeking God's guidance.	4.84	4.46	0.38
TC2-3-3 Evangelistic Zeal: I regularly think about more effective ways we can share the Gospel.	4.78	4.40	0.38
TC3-5-3 Inspiring Shared Vision: To those around me, I express confidence that our goals will be achieved.	4.78	4.28	0.50
TC1-3-4 Drive to Achieve: Setting and achieving goals motivates me.	4.78	4.26	0.52
TC2-8-1 Confidence in the Bible: Others would describe me as someone who has a deep confidence in the power of the Bible for discipling and ministry.	4.77	4.39	0.37
TC3-2-2 Assertiveness: I am motivated to influence and bring change, wherever I go.	4.77	4.29	0.48
TC2-2-1 Listening to God: Others would describe me as a person who is strongly dependent on God for my life and ministry.	4.71	4.28	0.44
TC3-4-4 Influencing Beliefs: I regularly communicate my most important values and beliefs to others.	4.71	4.19	0.52
TC1-3-3 Drive to Achieve: Once I set a goal, I am motivated to work until I have attained it.	4.70	4.36	0.34
TC3-4-1 Influencing Beliefs: I regularly talk about my most important values and beliefs.	4.70	4.19	0.51
TC2-3-1 Evangelistic Zeal: Others would describe me as a person who is passionate about seeing as many people as possible saved.	4.68	4.35	0.33
TC1-6-2 Persistence: When things get hard, I am tenacious and push through until the job is done.	4.68	4.27	0.41
TC3-7-1 Disciple-making: My disciples give me the feedback that me discipling them has led to character formation and greater obedience to God.	4.65	4.07	0.58
TC3-8-1 Empowering: Others would describe me as someone who empowers others and develops their potential.	4.63	4.11	0.53
TC1-7-2 Agreeableness: I am characterized by pleasant conversation and companionship.	4.60	4.16	0.44
TC3-3-1 Inspiring Personality: People have said that they are proud of being associated with me.	4.60	4.06	0.54
TC2-1-1 Hunger for God: Others would say that I love God passionately.	4.54	4.14	0.40
TC3-5-2 Inspiring Shared Vision: I articulate a compelling vision of the future.	4.54	4.19	0.35
TC2-1-5 Hunger for God: I follow God, but I do not feel that I desire Him deeply. (inverted)	4.51	4.13	0.38

TC2-5-5 Fervent Intercession [coded]: On average, I spend this many hours per week praying by myself or with others on behalf of our adopted people: ____	3.75	2.78	0.98
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From this list in Table 3, we can glean best practices that distinguish effective catalysts from pioneers who have not catalyzed a movement—which takes the insights gleaned from Table 2 one level deeper. Not only do we see what the traits and competencies of effective movement catalysts are, but Table 3 also identifies the specific convictions, attitudes, practices, and behaviors in their lives. These can be seen as a list of what in organizational behavior theory is termed “Best Practices” and what missions research has labeled “Fruitful Practices” (Woodberry 2011). Having such a list will enable practitioners to identify practices and behaviors that have made a significant difference in enabling a movement to be catalyzed.

Differences between Same-Culture, Near-Culture, and Expatriate Catalysts

Table 4 below shows the trait and competency constructs distinguished by the origin of the main catalyst: he or she may be an expatriate, a member of a different people group near the group being reached (in the same country), or a member of the same people group. When comparing how each of these sub-groups ranked themselves, differences were typically small. The table only shows the eight trait and competency constructs which exhibited a statistically significant difference between the three groups.

Trait and Competency Constructs	Expat	Same country proximate people group	Same people group	All
TC1-7 Agreeableness	4.24	4.15	4.45	4.36
TC1-8 Flexibility	3.91	3.83	3.35	3.54
TC1-9 Emotional stability	3.43	3.37	2.88	3.07
TC2-5 Fervent Intercession	3.09	3.26	3.54	3.41
TC3-1 Extroversion	3.70	3.55	3.15	3.32
TC3-3 Inspiring Personality	4.06	4.38	4.37	4.32
TC3-4 Influencing Beliefs	4.28	4.25	4.53	4.43
TC3-7 Disciple-making	4.06	4.37	4.41	4.34
Average of all traits and competencies	4.18	4.28	4.22	4.22

Note that expatriate catalysts rank significantly lower than their counterparts on *agreeableness*, *disciple-making*, and *intercession*. They rank higher on *emotional stability*, *flexibility*, and *extroversion*. The catalysts from the same country, interestingly, rank in the middle between expatriate and same people group catalysts for most traits and competencies. Where they rank considerably higher than both other groups is *drive to achieve*. Catalysts from the same people group rank lower than the other two groups in *flexibility* and *emotional stability*. They rate themselves higher than the other groups on *intercession* and *disciple-making*. Overall, given that only eight of the 24 traits and competencies showed a statistically significant difference between the three groups, and that the average across all traits and competencies was not statistically significant, we conclude that catalysts from different cultural

backgrounds have far more similarities than differences in the traits and competencies they exhibit.

Contributing and Inhibiting Factors

While the study assumed that the traits and competencies of the movement pioneers would have a primary influence on movement outcomes, it also sought to measure other influencing factors. These other factors were grouped as eleven so-called “contributing factors,” which would be expected to positively influence the catalyzing of a movement, and ten “inhibiting factors” that would negatively influence the catalyzing of a movement.

These 21 factors can alternatively be categorized as “internal” or “external”: internal factors are those that can be influenced by the pioneers themselves and/or their teams, while external factors are outside of their immediate control and cannot be influenced directly (other than through prayer). Of the 21 factors, 13 were classified in the study as internal and eight as external.

The list of *contributing factors* is as follows, with (I) denoting internal factors and (E) external:

1. Prayer (I)
2. Received specific guidance from God (I)
3. Compassion ministry/met people’s holistic needs (I)
4. Right ministry strategy or method (I)
5. Contextualized ministry approach (I)
6. Discovery approach and discovery groups (I)
7. Reproducible disciple-making (I)
8. Raised up leaders effectively (I)
9. Conversions without human involvement (for example Jesus appearing to people in dreams or visions, or people coming to faith by reading the Bible without any human agent) (E)
10. Signs and wonders (E)
11. Prior openness to the Gospel (meaning that the people were ready to hear) (E)

The list of *inhibiting factors* is as follows (also with (I) and (E) denotations):

1. Time limitation due to tentmaking (I)
2. Time limitation due to family challenges (I)
3. Personal character issues (I)
4. Conflicts on the team or with ministry partners (I)
5. Money misuse or corrupting character (I)
6. Government opposition (E)
7. Persecution by society (E)
8. Lack of funding (E)
9. Key workers recruited away by better paying organizations (E)
10. Lack of prior openness to the Gospel (E)

Survey participants rated the extent to which each factor had impacted their ministry on a Likert scale of 1-5, with 1 representing *not at all* or *not at all significantly* and 5 signifying *very much* or *very significantly*. The effective catalysts were asked: “How much did this factor contribute to/impede the catalyzing of your movement?” Pioneers in the control group who did not catalyze a movement were asked a slightly re-worded question: “How much did this factor contribute to/impede your ministry fruitfulness?”

Table 5 displays the results for Contributing Factors; further below Table 6 carries the results for Inhibiting Factors. The first two columns show the average self-ratings of each group on the 1-5 Likert scale, sorted by the self-ratings of effective catalysts. Column 3, “Both,” represents the average of both groups, while column 4, “Difference,” shows the difference between the two groups. An asterisk behind the “Difference” value indicates that the means difference between catalysts and non-catalysts is statistically significant.

	Contributing Factors	Catalysts	Non-catalysts	Both	Difference
1	Prayer (I)	4.76	4.61	4.68	0.14
2	Received specific guidance from God (I)	4.6	4.35	4.47	0.25*
3	Raised up leaders effectively (I)	4.55	3.75	4.13	0.81*
4	Reproducible disciple-making (I)	4.52	3.97	4.23	0.54*
5	Right ministry strategy or method (I)	4.51	3.71	4.09	0.8*
6	Contextualized ministry approach (I)	4.33	4.2	4.26	0.12
7	Signs and wonders (E)	4.3	3.99	4.14	0.31*
8	Compassion ministry/met holistic needs (I)	4.17	3.67	3.91	0.5*
9	Discovery approach/groups (I)	4.16	3.45	3.79	0.72*
10	Prior openness to the gospel (E)	3.76	3.44	3.59	0.32
11	Conversions without human involvement (E)	2.65	2.78	2.72	-0.12
	Average of all Contributing Factors	4.21	3.81	4.00	+0.40*

It is remarkable that effective catalysts experience every one of the internal factors as contributing more significantly than the control group—factors which they themselves had influenced in the first place. The difference is most apparent with the following factors, where the difference between effective catalysts and non-catalysts is significant and amounts to at least 0.33 (1/3 of a Likert scale point): *raised up leaders effectively* (+0.81), *right ministry strategy or method* (+0.80), and *use of a discovery approach* (+0.72). All the factors where the ratings of the two groups differ most widely have to do with ministry strategy or approach: *raised up leaders effectively* (+0.81), *right ministry strategy or method* (+0.80), *discovery approach/groups* (+0.72), *reproducible disciple-making* (+0.54), and *compassion ministry/met holistic needs* (+0.50). Interestingly, there was not a statistically significant difference for the contributing factor *prior openness to the gospel* between both groups, even though catalysts rated this factor slightly higher than non-catalysts (but the inhibiting factor *lack of prior openness to the gospel* received a much higher rating in the control group; see below).

Significantly, all these factors are internal, meaning that they can be influenced by pioneers and their teams. The only external factor with a statistically significant means difference between the two groups, albeit amounting to only 0.31, was *signs and wonders*. The only factor that contributed slightly more significantly in non-movement ministry situations was *conversions without human involvement*, an external factor, but the means difference between catalysts and non-catalysts was not statically significant.

	Inhibiting Factors	Catalysts	Non-catalysts	Both	Difference
1	Persecution by society (E)	3.29	3.43	3.36	-0.14
2	Lack of funding (E)	3.05	3.38	3.22	-0.33*
3	Government opposition (E)	3.02	3.13	3.07	-0.1

4	Lack of prior openness to the gospel (E)	2.82	3.43	3.14	-0.61*
5	Time limitation due to family challenges (I)	2.7	2.98	2.85	-0.28
6	Key workers recruited away (E)	2.63	2.58	2.6	0.05
7	Time limitation due to tentmaking (I)	2.59	3.07	2.84	-0.48*
8	Conflicts on team or with partners (I)	2.47	2.51	2.49	-0.03
9	Personal character issues (I)	2.2	2.79	2.51	-0.59*
10	Money misuse or corrupting character (I)	1.76	2	1.89	-0.24
	Average of all Inhibiting Factors	2.65	2.93	2.80	-0.28*

The factors that catalysts rate highest as impeding movement breakthrough were *persecution by society* (3.29), *lack of funding* (3.05), and *government opposition* (3.02)—all external factors. Non-catalysts rated *persecution by society* and a *lack of prior openness to the gospel* equally high (3.43).

The internal inhibiting factors that catalysts rated most highly were *time limitation due to family challenges* (2.7), *key workers recruited away* (2.63), *time limitation due to tentmaking* (2.59), and *conflicts on team or with partners* (2.47). These ratings were mostly lower than those for external factors.

The most significant differences between effective catalysts and the control group are that non-catalysts face a greater *lack of prior openness to the gospel* (-0.61), their ministry is impeded more by *character issues of team members or partners* (-0.59), and they are challenged more by *lack of time due to their tentmaking jobs* (-0.48).

It is encouraging to note that both catalysts and non-catalysts give significantly lower ratings to the inhibiting than to the contributing factors. While variables such as *persecution by society* and *lack of funding* constitute a definite hindrance to movement breakthrough, they apparently have far less impact than variables such as *prayer* and *receiving specific guidance from God*, which affect outcomes positively.

The data provides answers to questions that are often raised about movements. First, effective movement catalysts are not more effective in catalyzing movements because their contexts are “easier.” The average external inhibiting factor rating for catalysts was 2.82, only slightly lower than for non-catalysts (2.92), a difference which was not statistically significant.

Second, movement catalysts may be partially more effective because the people among whom they are ministering are simply more open to the gospel. Effective catalysts rated a *lack of prior openness to the gospel* significantly lower than non-catalysts (-0.61). This difference needs to be qualified, though, since this factor was included in both positive and negative forms, with *openness to the gospel* on the list of contributing factors and *lack of openness* on the list of inhibiting factors. Effective catalysts assessed *openness to the gospel* as a more significant factor by a margin of only +0.32. There was also no significant difference between effective catalysts and the control group regarding their experience of *government opposition*, another factor related to the openness of a society for the gospel. Even so, the research confirms that a *lack of openness to the gospel* does play a role as a factor in the catalyzing of movements.

When comparing the significance of internal and external factors, as well as the total averages of contributing and inhibiting factors, the following table shows the differences between the catalysts and non-catalysts:

Table 7: A Comparison of Internal and External, Contributing and Inhibiting Factors

	Catalysts	Non-catalysts	Both	Difference
Average of all Internal Factors, both Contributing and Inhibiting	4.14	3.72	3.92	+0.42
Average of all External Factors, both Contributing and Inhibiting	3.24	3.04	3.13	+0.20
Average of all Contributing Factors	4.21	3.81	4.00	+0.40
Average of all Inhibiting Factors	2.65	2.93	2.80	-0.28
Average of all Internal Contributing Factors	4.45	3.96	4.20	+0.49
Average of all Internal Inhibiting Factors	3.66	3.33	3.48	+0.32
Average of all External Contributing Factors	3.57	3.40	3.48	+0.17
Average of all External Inhibiting Factors	3.04	2.81	2.92	+0.23

As could be expected, the contributing factors rate higher, and the inhibiting factors lower, for the effective catalysts than for the control group. The most significant difference is between internal contributing factors, pointing to the influence of effective catalysts' lives and leadership. Effective catalysts also rated both external contributing and external inhibiting factors higher than non-catalysts, indicating that generally speaking their ministry context is no more favorable than that of non-catalysts.

The Mutual Influence of Catalysts' Traits and Competencies and Other Factors

This section evaluates the influence of traits and competencies as well as contributing and inhibiting variables on movement outcomes. While the study assumed that the traits and competencies of the movement pioneers would have a primary influence on movement outcomes, it also sought to measure other influencing factors unrelated to the pioneers' traits. These variables were entered into a multivariate statistical analysis called regression analysis. A regression measures the simultaneous influence of several explanatory variables on a response variable (or outcome) in order to show which of these factors influence the outcome in a significant way.

The first regression analysis (Table 8) focuses on traits and competencies at the question level, which reflect specific behaviors or activities related to these traits and competencies. The results indicate which items differentiate effective catalysts from those who did not catalyze a movement. (Note that a p-value below 0.05 is statistically significant.)

Table 8: Traits and Competencies (Question Level) of Effective Catalysts that Differ Most Significantly from the Control Group		
Traits and Competency Items	Value	p-value
TC3-4-4 Influencing Beliefs: I regularly communicate my most important values and beliefs to others.	-0.910	0.000
TC1-6-5 Persistence: I tend to stop trying when things get very hard. [inverted] – re-worded as a positive: I don't give up, even when things get hard.	-0.512	0.012
TC1-3-4 Drive to Achieve: Setting and achieving goals motivates me.	-0.508	0.015
TC2-8-1 Confidence in the Bible: Others would describe me as someone who has a deep confidence in the power of the Bible for discipling and ministry.	-0.483	0.034
<i>Average of all Contributing Factors</i>	<i>-0.481</i>	<i>0.003</i>

TC2-5-5 Fervent Intercession: [coded] On average, I spend this many hours per week praying by myself or with others on behalf of our adopted people: ____	-0.452	0.002
TC2-3-3 Evangelistic Zeal: I regularly think about more effective ways we can share the gospel.	-0.407	0.049
TC2-2-4 Listening to God: I am too busy with other things to wait on God and listen to Him. [inverted] – re-worded as a positive: I regularly wait on God and listen to him.	0.346	0.052
TC1-3-1 Drive to Achieve: Others would describe me as an achievement-oriented person.	0.457	0.019
<i>Average of all Inhibiting Factors</i>	<i>0.499</i>	<i>0.000</i>
TC1-8-4 Flexibility: I find it hard to adapt to change. [inverted] – re-worded as a positive: I adapt to change quickly.	0.627	0.001
TC1-3-3 Drive to Achieve: Once I set a goal, I am motivated to work until I have attained it.	0.758	0.004

A total of six trait and competency questions correlated positively with movement catalyzing, each of them belonging to a different trait and competency construct. Four trait and competency questions correlated negatively with movement catalyzing, two of them belonging to the construct *Drive to Achieve*.

The individual trait and competency question with the strongest positive correlation with movement catalyzing was “TC3-4-4 I regularly communicate my most important values and beliefs to others.” This question is part of the trait and competency construct *Influencing Beliefs*, defined as the competence to influence others toward certain ideals, a process that shapes beliefs and transfers values. It is possible that this competence functions like a keystone among all competencies of an effective catalyst—and that its proficient practice is at the very heart of movement ministry.

This finding, although not entirely surprising, provides significant insights. For one, what is widely recognized as the foremost school of leadership, “Transformational Leadership,” has empirically identified *Influencing Beliefs* (or “Idealized Influence”) as one of only four competencies of transformational leaders (e.g., Riggio 2014). Also, from a movement philosophy standpoint, the effective transference of spiritual beliefs and values forms the key to movements because it leads to the multiplication of disciples and churches. It appears, then, that the single practice with the biggest impact on movement breakthrough is for catalysts to communicate often their most important values and beliefs.

Table 9 examines the importance of individual contributing and inhibiting factors, while also taking into account the influence of individual traits and competencies that were found to have a statistically significant influence on the catalyzing of movements.

Source	Value	Pr > Chi ²
Contributing Factor: Adopted right ministry strategy (Internal)	-0.293	0.017
TC3-2 Assertiveness	-0.289	0.029
TC2-5 Intercession	-0.276	0.005
TC3-4 Influencing Beliefs	-0.274	0.035
Contributing Factor: Raised up leaders effectively (Internal)	-0.263	0.058
Contributing Factor: Used discovery approach/groups (Internal)	-0.226	0.034

Inhibiting Factor: Time limitation due to tentmaking (Internal)	0.175	0.062
Inhibiting Factor: Lack of prior openness to the gospel (External)	0.202	0.034
TC1-3 Drive to achieve	0.264	0.060

The results show that five contributing and inhibiting factors correlate with movement outcomes, three positively and two negatively. As would be expected, the contributing factors all correlate positively with movement catalyzing, while inhibiting factors correlate negatively.

Four of the five factors with significant influence are internal. The only external factor is the inhibiting factor *lack of prior openness to the gospel*.

The analyses show that, *irrespective of the individual traits and competencies of the catalyst, the following factors correlate with movement outcome*. With each factor we added (in parentheses) the means difference between catalysts and non-catalysts from tables 5 and 6. The combination of descriptive and multivariate statistical analysis shows that factors with the highest and statistically significant means differences between catalysts and non-catalysts were also the factors in the regression with the greatest impact on movement outcomes.

Contributing factors:

- Raised up leaders effectively (0.81)
- Right ministry strategy or method (0.80)
- Discovery approach and discovery groups (0.72)

Inhibiting factors:

- Lack of prior openness to the gospel (-0.61)
- Time limitation due to tentmaking (-0.48)

Overall, it is evident that the most important factors behind movement catalyzing are (a) the traits and competencies of the pioneers and (b) internal factors that can be directly influenced by pioneers and their teams. Only one external factor—*lack of prior openness to the gospel*—played a role, albeit a lesser one, for the catalyzing of movements.

Summary and Conclusions

The research identified 22 traits and competencies that characterize effective movement catalysts and distinguish them from pioneers who have not catalyzed movements. Fifteen of these traits and competencies, with a more significant difference in the ratings, distinguish effective catalysts even more clearly from non-catalysts.

The catalysts who were interviewed in addition to completing the online survey referred to their intentionality and focus as an additional essential factor contributing to movement breakthrough. The non-catalysts did not mention either intentionality or focus at all—a significant contrast between the two groups.

The study also identified a number of specific convictions, attitudes, and behaviors that characterize effective catalysts and distinguish them from non-catalysts. These can be labeled “Best Practices.”

A total of six traits and competencies correlated positively with movement catalyzing in the regression analysis (Table 8). These are combined below with the findings of the descriptive statistics and the analysis of contributing and inhibiting factors.

The following explanatory variables (traits and competencies, and contributing or inhibiting factors) *were highly rated by catalysts* (at least 4.5 out of 5) and were shown in the regression analysis to have the most significant influence on movement outcomes:

- *Influencing Beliefs*: I regularly communicate my most important values and beliefs to others. (positive correlation)
- *Drive to Achieve*: Setting and achieving goals motivates me. (positive correlation)
- *Confidence in the Bible*: Others would describe me as someone who has a deep confidence in the power of the Bible for discipling and ministry. (positive correlation)
- *Fervent Intercession*: On average, I spend this many hours per week praying by myself or with others on behalf of our adopted people. (positive correlation)
- *Evangelistic Zeal*: I regularly think about more effective ways we can share the gospel. (positive correlation)
- *Drive to Achieve*: Once I set a goal, I am motivated to work until I have attained it. (negative correlation)
- *Raising Up Leaders Effectively* (contributing / internal)
- *Right Ministry Strategy or Method* (contributing / internal)

The following explanatory variables (traits and competencies, and contributing or inhibiting factors) *were rated relatively highly* by catalysts (higher than 4 on a 1-5 Likert scale) and were also shown in the regression analysis to have significant influence on movement outcomes:

- *Persistence*: I don't give up, even when things get hard. (positive correlation)
- *Listening to God*: I regularly wait on God and listen to him. (negative correlation)
- *Drive to Achieve*: Others would describe me as an achievement-oriented person. (negative correlation)
- *Discovery Approach and Discovery Groups* (contributing / internal)
- *Lack of Prior Openness to the Gospel* (inhibiting / external)

Taken together, these two lists present this study's first key finding, namely the leader traits and competencies that correlate with the effective catalyzing of movements.

The second key finding is that seven of the eight explanatory variables most highly rated by effective catalysts correlate positively with movement outcomes. Most notable among those key variables was regular communication of one's most important values and beliefs, a competence identified as integral to effective movement catalyzing. Practicing this key competence proficiently may well have the single greatest impact on movement breakthrough.

Identifying this competence as a keystone may well guide effective catalysts to practice it effectively, thus possibly making this study's greatest single impact on movement breakthrough.

The implication of these findings is that pioneers must focus more on developing positive traits and competencies within themselves and their teams, rather than being concerned about external inhibiting factors beyond their control. A positive focus on developing strategic traits and competencies is much more likely to lead to successful movement outcomes. The list of traits and competencies presented here as characterizing effective catalysts gives mission trainers a blueprint for their training curricula and points mentors to the areas on which to base their mentoring. Focusing on these traits and competencies in trainees and mentees will increase effectiveness in developing fruitful movement catalysts for the kingdom.

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Appendix A: Definitions of Traits and Competencies

Openness to Experience: Posture to actively engage in experiences in an open-minded way, with the expectation that there will be something new to learn.

Creativity: Using one’s imagination to come up with new and original ideas and innovative approaches.

Drive to Achieve: Motivation to achieve goals and to get things done and attain results that focuses effort and motivation on decisive actions.

Conscientiousness: Tendency to display self-discipline, act dutifully, and strive for achievement against measures or outside expectations, related to the way in which one controls, regulates, and directs one’s own impulses.

Internal Locus of Control: Belief that one has control over the outcome of events in one’s life as opposed to external forces beyond one’s influence, and that life outcomes derive primarily from one’s own actions.

Persistence: Capacity to work with distant objects in view, be tenacious in spite of challenges, overcome obstacles, and not give up amidst difficulties.

Agreeableness: A concern for social harmony that motivates individuals to seek out and maintain close, social relationships and to be considerate, kind, generous, trusting and trustworthy, helpful, characterized by pleasant companionship, and willing to compromise one’s own interests when interacting with others.

Flexibility: The willingness and ability to adapt to new situations, cope with change, and approach demands in novel ways, especially when stressors or unexpected events occur.

Emotional Stability: Being emotionally mature, stable, and able to regulate one’s emotions in ways helpful for interactions with others.

Hunger for God: Desiring depth in relationship with God, yearning to know and love him more deeply, evidenced in extended and habitual practice of spiritual disciplines chosen for best fit.

Listening to God: In a posture of dependence on God, regularly take time to listen to him, wait on him, seek guidance for life and ministry, and obey whatever he says.

Evangelistic Zeal: Being driven by a passionate urgency to see the Good News shared with all the lost and passionately sharing the Good News with everyone possible.

Expectant Faith: Exercising faith that God will show his power through one's life and in particular having expectant faith that God will grow a movement and save many.

Fervent Intercession: Praying regularly for extended times on behalf of the adopted people, for many to be saved in a growing movement.

Tangible Love: A genuine interest in the lives and welfare of the people to whom one reaches out, genuinely caring for them and expressing love to them in tangible ways.

Confidence in Locals: Confidence that God by the efficacy of his Word and Spirit can grow and use new and immature believers, and hence grow a local movement from local resources.

Confidence in the Bible: Confidence that God's Word contains eternal principles making it the ministry guidebook as well as the foundational discipleship tool, and hence a key ingredient in the growth of even the youngest disciple.

Extroversion: Tendency to focus outwardly on a behavioral level, on others rather than self, and to initiate conversations when with other people.

Assertiveness: Motivation to influence people and situations, even to the extent of dominating, sharing one's beliefs and convictions clearly so that people take notice, and being bold and courageous even when facing opposition and threat.

Inspiring Personality: Displaying a sense of authority and confidence, acting selflessly in ways that build other people's respect for them and instilling a sense of honor in others for being associated with them.

Influencing Beliefs: Talking often about one's most important values and beliefs, considering the moral consequences of decisions with people, and emphasizing the importance of living toward a purpose.

Inspiring Shared Vision: Articulating a compelling vision of the future, talking enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished, and expressing confidence that goals will be achieved.

Disciple-Making: Intentional Bible-centered teaching in the context of a relationship that is transformational and leads to heart obedience, encompassing spiritual disciplines and character formation.

Empowering: Recognizing the gifts of others, enabling them to develop these gifts, assigning responsibility and authority to others including the relinquishing of control and the risk of failure, and equipping them to carry out those responsibilities by means of mentoring, coaching or training.

Appendix B: Methodology

Definitions

Following David Garrison (2004; 2014), we define a movement as “a rapid indigenous multiplication of disciples making disciples and churches planting churches in multiple streams within a people group to the fourth generation.”

An effective catalyst is then defined as a pioneer who

- 1) has catalyzed a movement with churches that have multiplied to the fourth generation,
- 2) was the first to engage this people group with the gospel in a way that led to the catalyzing of the movement (not necessarily the first to share the gospel among them), and
- 3) was the most influential catalyst (compared to others who made contributions to the growth of the movement).

Catalysts who catalyzed a movement to the fourth generation of churches were designated as “effective catalysts,” while the other pioneers were designated as “control group members” or “non-catalysts.”

Study Design and Pretest

In a pre-test, a survey with 125 questions (an initial list of 25 trait and competency constructs measured through five questions each) was administered to 181 students, missions agency staff and missionaries, and Global South missionaries around the world. The results were subjected to a Reliability Analysis, which measures the internal consistency of each construct through Cronbach’s alpha coefficient.

The use of this Reliability Analysis streamlines the measurement of a construct by discarding survey questions that do not strongly correlate with other questions, but it does so at the expense of reducing complexity—a potentially significant drawback when evaluating complex sociological phenomena.

Of the 25 constructs, nine had good Cronbach’s alpha values ($>.80$), four had acceptable values ($>.65$), and 12 had poor values ($<.65$). After a subsequent Exploratory Factor Analysis with varimax rotation that yielded a 6-factor solution, the final survey consisted of 24 constructs measured by 44 questions. Constructs with low inter-item correlations were represented only by a single item, and one construct (“individualized consideration”) was removed.

Final Survey

The final survey was administered using a convenience sample, which yielded highly disproportional shares of pioneers from India, unevenly distributed between effective catalysts and control group members. Consequently, the influence of potentially significant factors on movement catalyzing, such as region, country, ministry network, ministry approach, the religion of the adopted people group, and fluency in their heart language, could not be evaluated.

The final survey results were again subjected to a Reliability Analysis, which yielded poor ($<.65$) Cronbach’s alpha coefficient values for seven constructs. Values improved significantly after deleting responses to questions with a negative response scale that differed drastically from those with positive response scales (within the same construct). It seems likely that non-native speakers in particular may have confused responses for questions that were asked in a negative way in order to mitigate social desirability bias. For four constructs, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients continued to remain low (between $.50$ and $.60$).

A subsequent Exploratory Factor Analysis after varimax rotation yielded a 3-factor solution without clear alignment for any single domain, featuring more problematic cross-loadings than at the pre-test factor analysis. This problematic Analysis constitutes an important limitation for the subsequent multivariate analyses that use constructs or domains (as opposed to individual

questions) as dependent variables. It also points to the complexities involved in reliably measuring traits and competencies through survey questions.

The regression analysis included a total of 33 factors, accounting for sample size limitations: (a) all questions related to four trait and competency constructs that were significant in a previous analysis; (b) the 22 trait and competency questions with the largest difference between the average response of all catalysts versus the average response of all control group members; (c) the average of all contributing and inhibiting factors.

The statistical significance of means differences in self-ratings between catalysts and control group members was assessed using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test (based on $p < 0.05$). For Table 4 showing self-ratings for expats, members of the same people group, and members of a proximate people group, the equivalent Kruskal-Wallis test was employed.