



A study comparing the personal profiles of school superintendents and chief executive officers of business in the Upper Midwest
by Milton Keith Negus

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
Montana State University
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Abstract:

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An adaptation of the form used to secure the data for the Fortune 500 Study of the nation's leading executives was used for this study. Ninety-eight superintendents with a responsibility of 3,000 or more pupils received the questionnaire. Ninety-eight chief executive officers were simultaneously surveyed within the same region. The questionnaire provided information about age, salary, working hours, family background, political background, educational background, religion, sex and mobility.

The results of the study comparing chief executive officers and superintendents showed that the salary of c.e.o. 's were considerably higher; superintendents were more mobile; they were at the same age when first appointed to a top level position as well as when appointed to present position; c e. o. 's worked shorter hours; both took the same length of vacation; each grew up with the same economic background; both were born in same region; c.e.o. 's were more conservative in politics; the c.e.o. 's were slightly older; the superintendents were much more highly educated; both were 100 percent male.

This study brought out the need for greater public awareness of the similarities and discrepancies between the leaders of business and the leaders of education. Such awareness should point to the need for further study into the reasons why c.e.o. 's start their careers at a younger age and can remain in their positions at an older age; why c. e. o. 's are paid at a considerably higher rate; why more superintendents don't arrive at the top by moving up through the ranks in one district; why both executive types lack a politically liberal representation within their ranks.

The findings of this study should have value as basic data for future research comparing the personal profiles of c.e.o. 's and superintendents.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Approved:

Chairperson, Graduate Committee

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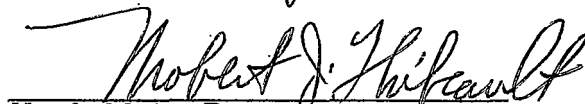
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ABSTRACT

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In many communities of America the school superintendent has the executive responsibility for one of its largest business enterprises. Nationally, superintendents have had the basic responsibility for the education of 44.8 million pupils, the supervision of about 2.2 million teachers, and control over budgets of \$66.8 billion annually (National Center for Educational Statistics, 15:2-3).

The superintendency has become a relatively new management position. For the first 200 years of American education there were no superintendents (Griffiths, 11:1). The first superintendencies emerged in the growing cities when it became impossible for school boards to effectively administer such vast systems. By 1870, thirty of today's largest cities had their first superintendent (American Association of School Administrators, Thirtieth Yearbook, 1:54). Today, the largest system administered by a superintendent is found in New York City. This superintendent is responsible for the administration of 1,099,004 students (ERS Bulletin, 10).

The incidence of significant executive responsibility is not a recent phenomenon nor is it restricted to the educational sector. The non-educational sector has relied on "chief executive officers" (c.e.o.'s) for a much longer period of time. King Solomon functioned as the c.e.o. throughout the construction of his temple in the tenth century B.C. Even centuries earlier, enterprising pharaohs served as c.e.o.'s while their great pyramids

were assembled (Benge, 3:V). The scope and type of responsibility for the c.e.o. changed according to the conditions of the time. Today, the world's largest business responsibility is headed by a single chief executive officer who is responsible for providing leadership for the EXXON Company which deals in sales of over \$44 billion per year (Editors of Fortune, 7:318).

Business serves as the backbone of our free enterprise society. Free public education is an essential ingredient to the survival of our democratic republic. This means that our American society has had to place considerable emphasis on the selection of capable people to head education and business organizations. Chief executives of each respective area have had to carry a substantial burden, not only to the institution served, but to the quality of our country's future.

The literature reviewed indicated that the managerial tasks performed by c.e.o.'s and superintendents were similar. This has been true in spite of the differences in their objectives. Even though the "output" of education has been far more difficult to measure than profit and loss, the corporate model of urban school governance showed many similarities with the structure of the business enterprise. Schools have adopted the business patterns of a growing central office staff; diversification of the structure of the schools into functional divisions such as vocational schools, guidance departments and attendance service; the creation of research and planning departments to provide evidence on operations and data for forecasting (Spring, 20).

Similar structural patterns have resulted in similar executive

activities by superintendents and c. e. o. 's. A remark by Donald C. Cook, President of American Electric Power Company, indicated a belief in this equanimity when he stated;

The requirements for success in government or business don't differ much. In government you are a civil servant looking after the public interest, and in business you are a corporate executive with an eye on the requirements of the public interest (Rose, 19:113).

There was further evidence that the functions performed by each were very similar. Business executives were interviewed by the staff of the American Management Association (21:147) in an effort to define the chief executive's work. The results provided a common view of the personal and unique responsibilities. Those activities most frequently mentioned were:

- Interfacing with the board of directors
- Setting forth the philosophy of the company
- Establishing corporate objectives
- Initiating and guiding strategic and long-range planning
- Providing leadership in accomplishing corporate objectives
- Determining the organizational structure and selecting personnel immediately below the chief executive level
- Counseling and evaluating the people who report to the chief executive officer
- Evaluating and guiding organizational performance
- Developing a successor
- Sometimes dealing with the financial community
- Performing certain ceremonial functions

A striking similarity is found in an itemization of tasks and duties of the superintendent listed by Morphet, Johns and Reller (14:315).

1. To serve a chief executive officer of the board of education and thus to be responsible for all aspects of educational service;
2. to lead the board in the development of policies;
3. to provide leadership in the planning, management and evaluation of all phases of the educational program;
4. to select and recommend all personnel for appointment and to guide staff development;
5. to prepare the budget for submission to the board and to administer it after its adoption by the board;
6. to determine building needs and to administer building programs--construction, operation, and maintenance;
7. to serve as leader of the board, the staff, and the community in the improvement of the educational system.

Even though superintendent and c.e.o. have followed dissimilar occupational routes, the evidence above offers an indication that many significant management tasks are similar within the two professions. Are the factors making up their personal profiles also similar? This study seeks that answer.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to compare the personal profiles of school superintendents and chief executive officers from business. A survey form containing selected factors was administered to all superintendents with student populations exceeding 3,000 pupils and an equivalent number of chief

executive officers from the same states in the Upper Midwest region.

Specific aspects of the problem investigation were: (1) What discernible trends in personal profiles are identifiable in each respective occupation, (2) when compared, which features were the same and which were different between the two groups of executives?

CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND PRODUCT

In light of the significance our American society places on education and business an examination of the personal profiles of the executive officers of each area was consequential.

The earliest national study of top school superintendents was conducted by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and published in 1923. The AASA has since conducted this nationwide analysis each decade (Knezevich, 12:14).

Business executives have been studied to a greater extent and for a much longer period of time. The earliest study was done by Mills (13) for the period 1600-1900.

The present study's major contribution to educational theory was to make a comparison of the personal profiles of c. e. o.'s and superintendents. The c. e. o.'s and superintendents with major responsibility in a coterminous region were surveyed by using an identical instrument. Past comparisons had to be based on unrelated studies on these leaders, given at different times, and using dissimilar questions.

For the first time, valid knowledge was gained on the similarities and differences between the personal profiles of these two types of executives.

Other contributions to our knowledge was the gathering of personal data commonly sought in the surveys of one occupation, but not gathered in the other. The profiles from past studies provided data on the business executive, that had not been elicited in the national studies of school superintendents. The reverse has also occurred. This study attempted to set new base data standards that would be useful to future researchers when trends are considered.

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

Care was exercised to limit this study to those general areas of the personal profiles that could corroborate the historical surveys of the past. The survey was designed so that trends could be observed within the respective professions and at the same time be compared with each other. Below are the specific questions to which answers were sought:

1. Do the personal profiles of superintendents and business chief executive officers of the Upper Midwest reflect a similar profile as is found in national studies of each respective area?
 - a. Age when first position was secured
 - b. Age at time of survey
 - c. Salary

- d. Working hours per week
- e. Occupation of father
- f. Economic status of family
- g. Political background
- h. Educational background
- i. Religion
- j. Sex
- k. Mobility.

2. Were there identifiable trends in aspects of the profiles of these executives within their respective professions?

- a. Number of different companies worked for
- b. Years in present position
- c. Age when first position was secured
- d. Age when current position was secured
- e. Years in current company/district before securing present position
- f. Salary when first joining company/district
- g. Current salary
- h. Hours worked per week
- i. Vacation time taken
- j. Economic background in which brought up
- k. Place of Birth
- l. Place of birth of parents

- m. Educational level of parents
- n. Political leanings today and four years ago
- o. Political party supported today and four years ago
- p. Current age
- q. Highest level of education attained
- r. Father's occupation
- s. Religious preference
- t. Sex
- u. Education

3. When the personal profiles of the superintendents and c.e.o.'s are compared in each of the defined areas, were there any significant differences between the two groups?

GENERAL PROCEDURE

The region of the Ninth Federal Reserve District was the area selected for the purposes of this study. It included Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Montana, Michigan's upper peninsula and the northwestern twenty-six counties of Wisconsin. This has been commonly referred to as the "Upper Midwest" for business identification purposes (Editors of Corporate Report Magazine, 5:3).

All superintendents serving a student population of over 3,000 pupils were surveyed. An equivalent number of chief executive officers were surveyed in the Upper Midwest region. Chief executive officers were selected

to match the superintendents as nearly as possible on the basis of (1) geographical location, (2) revenue and (3) employees.

A questionnaire consisting of six general areas was used. The topics include a general category; sections on being chief executive/superintendent; about your family; about your political background; about you; about your company/district. Copies of the questionnaires will be found in Appendix B, page 165.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

1. The Upper Midwest region was selected as the survey base. It was the established geographical area of the Ninth Federal Reserve District. The 1978 Fact Book of Corporate Report magazine (Editors of Corporate Report Fact Book, 5:23-398) was used to select comparable chief executive officers.
2. The questions selected were limited to those that had been sought in previously published national surveys for either c.e.o.'s or superintendents. This limitation allowed for longitudinal analysis by other researchers within the respective professional areas.
3. The first controlling factor applied to the selection of those to be surveyed was choosing only superintendents with a student enrollment of over 3,000 pupils.
4. The order of selecting business executives who were comparable with superintendents was, (a) so far as possible, selecting an identical

number of c. e. o. 's as superintendents from each state; (b) locating the c. e. o. in the same community as the superintendent; (c) selecting a business revenue level comparable with the estimated total school budget; (d) selecting a business that had the closest number of employees as the school system headed by the superintendent.

5. A 100 percent sample was taken of the superintendents in the Upper Midwest holding a responsibility of 3,000 pupils or higher. Therefore, generalizations can be made in relationship to the population as a whole within the responsibility range of 3,000 or more pupils.

No attempt was made to obtain a random sample of c. e. o. 's in the Upper Midwest region. Therefore, any attempt at generalizations to the population as a whole concerning trends cannot be justified.

6. The majority of sources considered in the review of related literature were from Montana State University and ERIC inter-library loan resources.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms defined include:

Top Superintendent: The chief executive officer of the board of trustees of an elementary and/or secondary school district. Student enrollment was the controlling factor in the selection of those included in this study.

Chief Executive Officer (c. e. o.): The person identified as the

executive head of the business organization.

Business: An all-encompassing term which includes industrial corporations, commercial banking companies, life insurance firms, financial enterprises, retailers, transportation companies, and utilities.

Upper Midwest: An area which includes the states of Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Montana, Michigan's upper peninsula, and the northwestern twenty-six counties of Wisconsin.

Personal Profile: The personal profile of superintendents and chief executive officers has been limited to those characteristics surveyed in some previously published national study. Included as factors are employment record, years as top administrator, age when appointed to first chief executive position, age when appointed to present company, annual employment income, job difficulty as compared to past, hours worked per week, duration of vacation, problem areas of concern, economic background of family, place of birth (self and parents), educational level of parents, father's occupation, political background, current age, type of secondary education, level of education attained, undergraduate class rank, religious preference, sex, number of employees in organization and revenues or budgets per year.

SUMMARY

Little is known about how the executives of business and education compare. Each respective area has had surveys conducted on the personal profile of the head person. Yet, there are no studies on record that show

how the two personal profiles relate to one another.

Many of the tasks of top management officials are similar, regardless of the occupational area. It is still unknown if unrelated professionals' personal profiles will likewise show similarities. Education management is a relatively new profession. As such, will this be a factor when compared with the historically established business executive?

Much remains to be learned about the inter-relationship of managers from differing professions. This study will add to our knowledge concerning the comparative profiles of comparable business and education executives.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reports the findings of selected national studies found in literature that provide a personal portrait of public school superintendents and chief executive officers (c.e.o.'s) of business. The review of literature is presented longitudinally in order to reveal historical trends. As no previous research has compared the personal characteristics of the superintendents and c.e.o.'s, each will be reviewed separately. These separate findings will then be compared in order to provide an indication of how the two personal profiles relate with one another from an historical prospective.

Table 1, page 14, contains the studies selected for a longitudinal review of the pertinent characteristics of superintendents and c.e.o.'s. Seven research studies covering the period from 1600 to 1976 were used. All were national in scope and dealt primarily with the personal profiles of superintendents and c.e.o.'s.

The earliest known statistical study of school superintendents was conducted by A. E. Winship (26:374-380) in 1899. The data upon which his statistics were based are deficient in several ways. The size of the sample was fairly small, and for many of the subject areas, it was even smaller because of gaps in the reporting of information. It did not approach being a random sample, since the cases were included on the basis of Editor Winship's judgment. The criteria for selection was not known. Despite the serious deficiencies in these statistics they were included to broaden the

TABLE 1

Selected Earlier Studies of Educational and Business Leaders

Authors	Winship	Knezevich	Tausig and Joslyn	Mills	Newcomer	Editors of Forbes	Burck Fortune 500
Year of Publication	1899	1971	1932	1945	1955	1974	1976
Sample Size	113	741	7,371	1,464	284,319,823	596	800
Sample Composition	Superintendents from 113 cities	Stratified sample of superintendents from varying sized districts	Men listed in 1928 Poor's Register of Directors	Businessmen listed in Dictionary of American Biography	Executives from transportation, utility and industrial companies	Company Executives from top "500" lists	Heads of top 500 industrial corporations & 300 chiefs of the biggest commercial banking, life insurance, retailers, transp. companies and utilities
Methodology	Unknown	Mail questionnaire	Mail questionnaire	Biography Comparison	Literature search and mail questionnaire	Mail questionnaire	Mail questionnaire
Period covered	1899	1921-22, 1933, 1958-59, 1952 1969-70	1928	1600-1900	1900,1925,1950	1973	1976
Applicable dimension							
Age	X	X	X		X		X
Salary		X			X	X	X
Working Hours		X					X
Family Background			X	X	X	X	X
Political Background					X	X	X
Educational Background	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Religion					X		X
Sex		X			X		
Mobility		X			X		

view of the early day superintendent.

Only one organization has sponsored a longitudinal study of the characteristics of superintendents on a national basis. The American Association of School Administrators' (AASA) initial yearbook was published in 1923 and was the first of a series of national scientific studies which portrayed the characteristics of the American school superintendent. This first AASA yearbook produced by the National Education Association (17) was based on the 1921-1922 school year. The National Education Association (16) also produced the second study for AASA and it was released in 1933. In 1952 the American Association of School Administrators (1) produced its own study. Again in 1960 the AASA (2) published its yearbook on the status of the school superintendent for the school year 1958-1959. When the yearbook was abandoned, the AASA appointed a special commission to produce a national profile of the superintendent of 1969-1970. Stephen Knezevich (12) authored the research.

The top business executives of the country have been analyzed by researchers to a greater extent than superintendents. The five business studies selected for a longitudinal analysis include Mills' study (13:20-44) of businessmen listed in the Dictionary of American Biography from 1600-1900; Taussig and Joslyn's (23) survey of men listed in Poor's 1928 Register of Directors; Newcomer's (18) literature search of executive profiles for 1900 and 1925 plus her own survey of 1950. Also included are two contemporary studies including the work of the Editors of Forbes magazine (6), who

surveyed executives from the Forbes "500" lists; and Burck (4) who investigated the characteristics of the Fortune "500" chief executives as well as 300 other leaders in major businesses and industries.

Table 1 indicates that the research reviewed did not encompass all nine areas that were basic to this study. Even as such, these studies were chosen because they covered the greatest number of personal profile areas and at the same time reviewed the event at an appropriate historical interlude.

This investigator's research portion of the present study was to elicit identical personal profiles and elicit data from both business and educational executives at the same point in time. These findings were used to fill in gaps existing in previous research. The new findings are useful to corroborate trends in the personal profiles of c.e.o.'s and superintendents.

BASIC AREAS OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical comparisons within the nine basic personal profile areas selected for study are compared between superintendents and c.e.o.'s. Even though the past research used in this chapter was not designed specifically for this type of comparison, much of the data analysis is useful as an indicator of past trends. This is especially insightful for the ensuing study conducted by this researcher. This review was further valuable for the intra-related trends within basic areas under study.

Age When First Position was Secured

The answer sought in the literature was whether the superintendents and c. e. o. 's secured their first positions at the same age. In the 1969-1970 school term, Knezevich (12:32) found that the median age of all superintendents at appointment of the first superintendency was thirty-six years. Knezevich (12:32) previously reported in a 1958-1959 study that the median age at first superintendency was thirty-five and six tenths years.

First appointed superintendents responsible for an enrollment between 3,000 and 24,999 pupils were reported in the 1969-1970 school term study by Knezevich (12:32: Table 17) to be of a median age of thirty-eight. This was two years older than the national average. The larger the enrollment the older the superintendent was at the time of his first appointment, reaching a median age of thirty-nine for those holding the largest positions.

In the business sector the median age for entry as a c. e. o. has varied over the years. Newcomer (18:112) found that the median age increased from 1900 to 1950. Her findings showed:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Median Ages</u>
1900	48
1925	49
1950	52

In a 1976 study, Burck (4:176) found that the median entry age for a c. e. o. was fifty. These studies indicate that the c. e. o. will likely be about ten years older than a superintendent upon entering his first c. e. o. position.

