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A comparative study of inquiry into the personal qualities desirable for an elementary principal

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A comparative study of inquiry into the personal qualities desirable for an elementary principal

Abstract

Society has changed, schools have changed, students have changed, how about principals? Are superintendents looking for qualities in a principal that keep up with the times or are they looking for the same basic personal qualities they looked for in 1956? Much has been written of the changing roles of today's administrators. There is also some theoretical evidence that indicates a correlation between personality and leadership ability. There is much evidence that personal qualities are a definite factor in administrative selection criterion. What, then, are the specific personal qualities superintendents deem desirable for an elementary principal to possess today? How do those qualities compare with the qualities documented in William Robert Hall's 1956 study in which superintendents of four states were surveyed on their opinion of the qualities that an elementary principal should possess.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INQUIRY INTO THE PERSONAL QUALITIES
DESIRABLE FOR AN ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Department of School Administration
and Personnel Services
University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

by
Clayton Earl Naylor
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Desirable For An Elementary Principal

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the
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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

A study was done in 1956 which indicated the desired personal qualities an elementary principal should possess as perceived by a sampling of superintendents from a four state area.

Since 1956, our society has undergone drastic changes. The impact of the 60's and 70's is well documented with the assassinations of several of our leaders, the Viet Nam War, the "New Morality," changes in due process, equal rights, and the advent of a pervasive phenomena called "inflation," to name a few.

It is a common belief that schools are a reflection of our society. A microcosm, if you will. Schools have changed along with society and their role within that society has undergone many adaptations.

Statement of the Problem

Society has changed, schools have changed, students have changed, how about principals? Are superintendents looking for qualities in a principal that keep up with the times or are they looking for the same basic personal qualities they looked for in 1956?

Much has been written of the changing roles of today's administrators. There is also some theoretical evidence that indicates

a correlation between personality and leadership ability. There is much evidence that personal qualities are a definite factor in administrative selection criterion.

What, then, are the specific personal qualities superintendents deem desirable for an elementary principal to possess today? How do those qualities compare with the qualities documented in William Robert Hall's¹ 1956 study in which superintendents of four states were surveyed on their opinion of the qualities that an elementary principal should possess.

Once the study is completed, superintendents will have indicated that:

- 1) The desired personal qualities of an elementary principal are basically the same as those in 1956.
- 2) The desired personal qualities of an elementary principal are basically different than those of 1956.
- 3) Superintendents have no opinion as to what the desired personal qualities of an elementary principal should be.

Importance of the Problem

The information gathered will give significant insight into the present state of the practice of using personal qualities in the selection of principals. The data will be useful in formulating job selection criteria which can be used by all superintendents. This could help provide some consistency in the makeup of personnel from school to school. Also, this study will hopefully give a clear reflection of whether or not schools are adapting their educational

leadership needs to keep up with changes in the educational system or whether they, in fact, find that personal qualities desirable in an elementary principal are timeless and constant.

Assumptions

It must be assumed that:

- 1) Times have changed.
- 2) Schools have changed.
- 3) Personal qualities affect leadership capabilities.
- 4) Superintendents regard personal qualities to hold some significance in selection procedures.
- 5) The results of Hall's 1956 study are valid.

Definition of Terms

Personal qualities- Qualities an individual possesses such as attitude, presence, caring, friendliness, etc.

Role- The part an individual plays within the total scheme of things.
i.e. role of a principal within the educational system.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In order to inquire into the personal qualities desirable for an elementary school principal, William R. Hall, in 1956, designed a questionnaire that was sent to superintendents of a four-state area. Those states being Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The superintendents were from fifty-two Midwestern cities with populations ranging from twenty-two thousand people to one-hundred five thousand people. Cities with populations of above one-hundred five thousand were omitted because of their complex administrative structures, varied economic, political, and population makeups. A total of fifty-two superintendents were contacted.

Each superintendent received one of two forms of the questionnaire. Form I established an imaginary vacancy to be filled with a member of the instructional staff of the system. The superintendent was asked to list specific qualities that could be attributed to the individual chosen to fill that vacancy. Form II asked the superintendent to establish the qualities which made the outstanding principal in that system outstanding.

The use of the two forms was an attempt to assure validity. Both forms were open-ended in that they elicited free response.

Although this study is a duplication of Hall's efforts for the purpose of comparison, several changes were made in the design of the study, most notably in the questionnaire itself and the makeup of the population.

It was felt that with the amounts of research being done now (1981), as opposed to 1956, and the amounts of mail crossing the superintendents' desk every day, an open-ended design of instrument would significantly lower this study's rate of return. Therefore, an instrument that was simplistic in nature, would require very little time to complete, and that could easily be returned was determined to be more suitable to the needs of this study.

It was also felt that limiting the population geographically to the state of Iowa while at the same time expanding the parameters of district size. The reasoning being that the schools of Iowa are representative of the total Midwest and that by limiting the area to Iowa more variance in district size could be accounted for. Also, the author felt that a more accurate picture of rural school districts was made possible.

A questionnaire was sent to all two-hundred sixty eight superintendents of Iowa school districts having enrollments of three-thousand or less, whose administrative staffs are comprised of at least one full-time elementary principal, whose duties do not extend beyond the principalship. This measure was taken to assure purity of results in awareness of the fact that many school districts have principals that also teach or are charged with being principal of the middle school also. In addition, there are some superintendents in Iowa who are also the elementary principal. These schools were excluded.

The superintendents were sent one of two forms of the questionnaire. The school districts were placed in alphabetical order.

The first school district in alphabetical order received Form A of the questionnaire and the second received Form B, and so on. One-half of the superintendents received Form A and one-half received Form B.

The questionnaires were designed in such a manner that they could be filled out, folded in half, and simply placed in the mail, postage paid. (see Appendix 1, 2, 3)

Again for validity purposes, the situations that Hall presented in his questionnaires were essentially duplicated. (see Appendix 3, 4) Under the situations, however, this author listed the thirteen categories, with descriptors where needed, that Hall had identified in his study. These were listed in random order using the "random order table" as another aid in assuring validity. The superintendents were asked to rank order the desired personal qualities from one (1) to thirteen (13) with one being the most desired personal quality and thirteen being the least desired. There was also room for additional comments at the bottom to allow for the inclusion of some qualities the author may have overlooked.

The intention of the rank order questionnaire was to be able to make comparisons of the findings with Hall's 1956 findings in a purely quantifiable manner.

Demographic data was included on the questionnaire pertaining to years of experience and the level of experience (elementary, secondary, etc.) of the respondent. This data was to be used in the study to possibly make some inferences as to whether those items make a difference as to how the respondents rank order the qualities.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The 1960's and 1970's were remarkable times for society in general and our country's educational system.

Many of the developments of those two decades had made a marked impression on the face of our educational system. Most notably, a rise was seen in attention to individual rights in this country that had been translated into rather explicit students' rights by our judicial system. These rights ranged from personal rights to the rights of the handicapped. Inflation had forced a belt tightening so demanding that many school systems fought for their very survival. With the apparent rise in conservative sentiment, schools were finding themselves open to public scrutiny, and many times found themselves in public disfavor. The list of documented changes in our educational system went on and on.

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As Ruben L. Ingram, principal of the Mark Twain School, Long Beach Unified School District, pointed out, the problems facing principals today were... "problems of community involvement, contract management, personnel procedures and problems, legal interpretations, court and legislative mandates, not to mention fiscal concerns related to decreases in personnel, maintenance, curriculum support, supplies, etc." He also included the added responsibilities of remedial reading, School Improvement Programs,

increased media attention to test scores, and the ongoing demands by special interest groups for unique and/or individualized educational programs. Add to that desegregation, vouchers, and militant unionism by staff and a fairly clear picture emerged of the occurrence of change in our educational system.

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Thomas spoke to another side of the principalship that often went unobserved in studies and discussions of the role of the principal in today's schools. He spoke of this side of the principalship as the part "they forgot to tell me." He says:

But They Forgot To Tell Me...

- That I would be bombarded with fund raising salesmen who always show up at the wrong time, on the wrong day, selling everything from candy, pots and pans, to dried prunes.
- That five minutes before assembly insurance representatives who just happened to be in the neighborhood drop by to see if my policy needs updating.
- About the long distance calls I would receive from distributors informing me they have just completed a specially designed project for my school, and wanting to know how many gross we wanted, and stating that the supply is limited. A complimentary color T.V. would come with the order.
- About community leaders who would drop by to pledge their support, after offering a few vital recommendations.
- That I would make frequent visits to hospitals, jails, homes, churches, council meetings, board meetings, weddings, funerals, ball games, banquets, rallies, ground breakings, dedications, concerts, and baby showers.
- That I should not refuse coffee or tea when visiting students in their home.
- That I would be called upon to settle family problems and community feuds that have nothing to do with school.
- That the police would call in the middle of the night to see if we left the lights burning in the teachers' lounge.
- That I would be called upon to help find runaway students.
- Some influential parents would attempt to apply pressure for disciplining their children.
- That my day would begin early and end late.
- That the staff would remain by my side only as long as I reflected their philosophies and beliefs; but would drift away when I came up with new ideas contrary to their way of thinking.

- That occasionally I would be attacked verbally, but should remain calm and discreet in responding.
- That I should have knowledge of School Law.

Although somewhat tongue in cheek, these incidents actually happened to Thomas during his first year as a principal. It was important to view this side of the principalship when defining the role of the principal because this was the side that most often went unsurveyed when studies were made in reference to leadership abilities.

It was only with a clear perspective in regard to the activities a principal might find her/him self involved that the role of the principalship could be defined and the qualities necessary to fulfill that role be spelled out.

An examination of the role of the elementary principal from 1960 to the present followed by a look at perceptions of qualities that model leaders should possess, and finally focusing in on the qualities a good elementary principal must possess, is essential to understanding.

Dean⁴ spoke of schools being highly autonomous which was reflected in the role of the 60's principal, that of little power in policy making and budget control functions.

A survey, initiated by The U.S. Office of Education and implemented by the National Elementary Principal in 1960, sought to determine if administrative functions of the central office were being transferred to individual schools and what those functions actually were.

It was found that the greatest amount of transfer (41.8%)

was in the field of assigning pupils to classes; the second greatest (41.5%) was in the improvement of instruction; and the third greatest (41.4%) was in the selection of educational materials. The survey, in effect, indicated no major trend toward relinquishing administrative responsibility from the central office to the individual schools.

The survey continued with a section pertaining to administrative problems. After an analysis of the results using a weighted composite of first, second, and third votes, the survey determined these to be the main problems principals faced in 1960 (in rank order):

1) Supervision of improvement of instruction; 2) Provision for exceptional children; 3) Obtaining adequate physical facilities; 4) Special education; and 5) Recruitment of teachers.

Benben⁵ predicted in 1960 that the future role of superintendent and principal would be one of quasi-autonomy. In other words, increasing administrative authority for the principal. He saw a new superintendency evolving; one of educational leadership with the principal carrying out his/her ideas. With a new view of the superintendency emerging, a new view of the principalship was to emerge.

He suggested that the individual school within a district should have its own personality and that the principalship should be free to develop that personality as it sees fit. This would involve less demand on the principalship for administrative and clerical duties thereby freeing it to devote more time to supervision of the instructional process.

Since the list of responsibilities of the principal, in most cases, was imposed by the superintendency to relieve itself of some of its burden, Benben suggested arriving at a clearer definition of the superintendency. Once this definition was made clear, the principalship, Benben believed, would be free to develop from the nature of its task.

In the 70's, the basic dimensions of the principalship did not change, but the behaviors of the principal in carrying out those dimensions changed because of new demands of society. Moser⁶ viewed the principal as a "planner of futures, allocator of resources, a stimulator of improvement, a coordinator of concerted effort, and an evaluator of process and product."

As planner of futures, the principal must go beyond the data and analysis of data. The principal is charged with the task of testing unproven hypotheses, analyzing ambiguities, with a deep commitment to relevancy. He/she must make decisions and act upon those decisions. The principal is seen as the one setting the goals for the future which will enable schools to allow the unrestricted pursuit of knowledge and understanding.

The principal, in facing the task of allocating time, materials, and other resources, will need, as Moser sees it, to set priorities, analyze how his/her time is spent and readjust his/her schedule regularly to accommodate priority items. This must be done to avoid being confined to the office at the mercy of the organization whose time is spent "wet nursing, psychologically massaging, and family counseling."

As stimulator of improvement, the principal is seen as one who listens to his/her staff, defines the teacher role, and lastly helps define the superintendent's role. The principal is the one who creates a climate in which the question is continually being asked, "Is there a better way?"

Principals have always been coordinators of concerted effort, but Moser saw that, in the 70's the principal would take part in the coordination, articulation, and continuity of education programs of the total school (K-12).

Lastly, as evaluator of process and product, Moser saw the principal of the 70's as one who, in response to increased public scrutiny, must evaluate educational programs succinctly. Then, he continues, perhaps "the accusations of the critics can be answered positively and forthrightly with hard data."

Goldhammer and Becker⁷ viewed the principal as someone who could not be a "stand patter." They saw decisions being made "around" the principal rather than "with" the principal. They saw the principal as the key to quality in the school.

A study was conducted by the Oregon State University aimed at determining the primary problems and responsibilities of the elementary school principal. This information was to be used to improve the training programs for administrators hence improving the quality of leadership.

They found that the top schools or "beacon schools" as they called them weren't in necessarily rich areas or poor areas for that matter. They were scattered throughout all socioeconomic strata.

One thing they had in common, though, was inevitably an "aggressive, professionally alert, dynamic principal" determined to provide what he/she deemed a quality program, at all costs.

They went on to say that these principals were superb tacticians. They were always devising new strategies for better programs. They (the principals) knew the ropes socially and politically. They even went over the heads of superiors to get what they needed. They were usually aggressive and many times too aggressive to stay within the administrative system but they did so well, they had to be tolerated.

An interesting sidelight that Goldhammer and Becker discovered was that the amount of higher education had very little effect, if any, on the quality of the principalship in those "beacon schools."

The late 70's started to see the principal in a high stress position, one of increased pressures and demands. Hendrickson.⁸

Pharis,⁹ in 1978, in describing the principal, states that the average principal believes that the phenomena of teacher bargaining has had a bad effect on the quality of education.

A study done in 1970-1 by The Commission of Schools of the North Central Association¹⁰ asked principals to rank order the priorities of four role functions: educational leadership, general administration, management, and crisis and conflict resolution. Leadership was ranked number one. Later, the authors attended a monthly meeting of principals in a north central school district in Florida. They asked the principals to brainstorm an extensive list of activities that consume their time. The activities were identified

and placed under five headings designated as areas of responsibility as reported in a search of literature. Those headings of responsibility were: instructional responsibility, management responsibility, leadership responsibility, conferences, and meetings.

The leadership heading was of special interest to this study because it seemed to point out some added dimensions of the principalship including teacher negotiations which was mentioned earlier by Pharis as having a negative effect on the quality of education. Franklin, Nickens, and Appleby presented this table indicating the priorities principals placed on various leadership activities:

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES			
Activities	Assigned Priority		
	Low	Medium	High
Supervising and evaluating teachers	31	40	29
Supervising non-instructional personnel	9	23	68
Supervising interns	15	55	68
Coordinating volunteers	57	30	13
Interviewing applicants	55	31	14
Inservice education	22	31	47
Developing positive human relations	10	47	43
Discipline of students	3	32	65
Grievance procedures	8	22	70
Extracurricular activities (clubs, etc.)	46	34	20

The responsibility most principals assigned as a high priority was Grievance procedures, a responsibility virtually nonexistent until the last two decades.

Pharis¹¹ also saw the principal as having had more responsibility for supervision and instructional improvement in 1978 than ten years before that 1968. The percentage of respondents to a National Elementary Principal Survey in 1968 indicated primary responsibility in this area was 75%. In 1978 that percentage rose to 86%.

Principals were split on selection of staff responsibilities with 43% saying they had all the authority they needed and 38% indicating they didn't have as much authority as they needed.

Pharis then concluded that principals were, in the late 70's, beginning to define their own roles within the context of the demands of the times and the opportunities envisioned, rather than have their roles defined by the people outside the principal's office.

The principal of the 80's, Abramowitz¹² stated, would be faced with two trends that would heavily dictate the role of the principal. They were declining enrollment in the public school and increasing enrollment in the private school. She saw the principal faced with issues of accountability and curriculum reform. Accountability would mean more principal involvement in assessing student and teacher performance. She advocated a renewed emphasis on academic excellence to make public education attractive once again, thus implying that the role of the 80's would be one of increased involvement in improvement of the public image of the schools.

Ingram¹³ saw the principal of the eighties as "Educational Executive." He believed that if a principal was to function effectively as Educational Executive several details, aimed at increasing authority, must first have been resolved. These details included:

- 1) Increased authority over staff selection, retention, and dismissal in order to assure commitment to the program.
- 2) Discretionary powers to organize the site administrative and support services (including administrative aides) in order to carry out the executive's plan.
- 3) Discretionary funds at the site to implement decision.
- 4) Data and information collection equipment and technology to provide a base for decision-making.
- 5) Freedom to determine daily activities, travel for professional purposes and expenses to support them in order to find solutions to problems.
- 6) Expert legal and legislative interpretations and advice.
- 7) Salaries and executive prerogatives commensurate with responsibilities in order to attract and retain executive-level people.

Ingram concluded by stating that strong leadership in the future would be vital and that all principals in the future must be prepared for this role.

With the changes that have occurred in the role of the principal, with that role being viewed as one of more responsibility, power, and complexity, it is beneficial to understanding to look at the personal qualities perceived as necessary to fulfill that role.

Most of the pertinent material written relating to this topic referred to the qualities of a typical leader which has direct implications on this study's focus on the elementary principal.

Hogan¹⁴ reported that early evidence suggested that leaders tended to be bright, sociable, self-confident, and responsible. She noted that Freud said that leaders evoked in their followers memories of the primal father. Aside from these characteristics, she made a very important point. She points out that, although there are features of leadership that are stable across all situations, as some situations change so did the requirements for leadership.

Finney¹⁵ focused in on the traits attributed to risky and conservative decision makers. He stated that there was an assumption prevailing that said that society rewarded risk takers. Therefore, society tended to assign more favorable traits to risk takers. This had proven untrue in the case of risk takers who didn't succeed as opposed to those that did. In general, society gave the highest personality attributes to the risk taker who succeeded, the next highest to the conservative decision maker, and the lowest personality attributes to risk takers who failed.

A sharply defined personality profile of a leader cannot be achieved, an article in Speech Monographs¹⁶ maintained, but focus on the profiles of types of leadership was possible. Specifically, autocratic and democratic.

Autocratic leaders were characterized as anxious, cautious, lacking in self-insight, unsympathetic, unaffectionate, and unfriendly. They were ranked high on being skillful, success-oriented, recognized authorities. The autocratic leader was revengeful, manipulative, and not considerate of feelings.

In contrast, the democratic leader was mature, forceful, foresighted, introspective, sympathetic, affectionate, and friendly. This type of leader was unable to do things better than others, non-aggressive, and accepting of equal blame in response to failures.

Personnel Psychology¹⁷ did some research that dealt with a leader's participation or lack of such with subordinates in problem solving situations. They found that a leader's participation with subordinates had a positive relationship on their job performance.

This suggests that a willingness to get involved democratically with workers should be considered a leadership attribute.

This concept of participation was underscored in the Journal of Personality and the Social Psychologist.¹⁸ They pointed out, though, that not all low participators were perceived as poor leaders. It was suggested that the ability to "facilitate effectively" was perhaps a better attribute to give the good leader. The overall amount of participation, either high or low, was not as important as the quality of that participation.

While much has been written about the attributes of good leadership, very little material focuses in on the attributes of, specifically, the educational leader.

The Phi Delta Kappan¹⁹ spoke of the Authoritarian Personality in education as a negative leadership attribute. It labeled that type of personality as weak, threatened, insecure, prejudiced, conventional, ethnocentric, moralistic, power oriented, superstitious, rigid, dogmatic, sadomasochistic. They did not suggest that all authoritarian personalities possessed each of these traits, only that they were common adjectives used in describing the typical authoritarian. It was to be assumed that "non-authoritarianism" was a desired leader attribute.

The elementary principal was the object of an article in the National Elementary Principal.²⁰ In this article, a profile emerged of the personal qualities of the ideal elementary principal. He/she was one who demonstrated intellectual abilities of the highest quality, was skilled in group techniques, showed evidence of sound educational background, had the ability to see the "whole picture" when resolving

a problem, possessed good physical and mental health, and displayed emotional stability and a healthy self-concept. He/she could deal with crisis in a patient, calm manner; communicated well; worked well within the community; planned, organized, directed well; possessed good decision making skills; understood the processes of change in schools.

There have been very few studies done in which superintendents' views of personal qualities of elementary principals, or any principals for that matter, have been recorded.

An article in the NASSP Bulletin²¹ dealt mainly with principals' performance but some inferences could be made that would have given some insight into superintendents' perceptions of personal qualities. Performances that involved staff communications, community relations were given a top priority. They also viewed goal setting of high priority which indicated task orientation as a desired quality. The other skills that were priority items involved competency in decision making and an ability to evaluate effectively.

Past research seemed to indicate general agreement that the role of the principal was changing. Some research, however, saw the principal not being able to cope with the added dimensions of the job while others saw the principal emerging as a new leadership force in the field of education.

It was agreed that personality traits were important to the leadership profile, but trying to develop one set of traits applicable to all leaders was a difficult, if not impossible, task.

Research indicated that a democratic, as opposed to autocratic, leader was desirable. This had been reiterated many times.

As for personal qualities of an effective elementary principal, the author could only make assumptions from the vast amount written on the personal qualities of leaders. There was little disagreement, from one study to the other, from one author to the other, as to what the two main personal qualities were: leadership qualities and administrative qualities.

Lorraine Scott²² viewed the leader as a mover of people and motivator that guided group activities toward common goals. She cited a list of leadership attributes put down by Boyd Lindop that said a great leader had self-confidence, strong opinions, a high level of skill in self-expression, a high store of information, and a willingness to accept responsibility. Then she listed energy, enthusiasm, confidence, sense of purpose, technical skill, verbal and written speech facility, modesty, lack of snobbishness, willingness to serve others, fearlessness in standing up for right, adaptability, willingness to try new things, courage, initiative, thoroughness, intelligence, curiosity, resourcefulness, ingenuity, originality, and the ability to anticipate problems as a partial, although lengthy, list of traits attributed to successful leaders.

She went on to say that these traits could be attributed to creativity also and that creativity and leadership are very closely related.

Alex Osborn²³ stated:

Creative thinking is vital to leadership. An executive must possess judicial judgement, but he also must excel in resourcefulness. He needs to recognize the value of creativity and to know how to tap and encourage the creative power of his associates ... Imagination is vital...The ideal top executive is both a creative pacesetter and creative coach...

Anwar Faily²⁴ deals with administrative ability in terms of behaviors which make an administrator effective.

He believes that the administrator needs a "clear view of philosophical beliefs and an inherent desire to perform effectively." The administrator, he feels, needs to have knowledge in planning, decision-making, communication, and desirable personal qualities (which he refers to as "ethical behavior").

Faily states that the higher up one goes in the organization, the more critical moral behavior becomes. Ethical standards such as honesty, fairness, compassion, concern, and human understanding must be adhered to, he believes, and are essential for the well being of the profession.

William R. Hall,²⁵ in 1956, had a much broader view of desirable personal qualities.

He conducted a study which sought to identify and categorize desirable personal qualities an elementary principal should possess, in the opinion of several Midwest superintendents.

This study was unique in that it dealt with superintendents' perceptions of qualities and did not deal at all with the role of the principal per se, a topic of which much has been written.

Hall devised two open-ended situations designed to elicit, in as free a manner as possible, the opinions of superintendents as to what they considered to be desirable personal qualities a good principal should possess.

After the returns were in, Hall singled out each comment written and categorized it into one of thirteen categories that he had listed.

Those categories Hall chose to group the comments under were:

- 1) Administering qualities
- 2) Training
- 3) Experience
- 4) Personality
- 5) Public Relations
- 6) Leadership Ability
- 7) Love of Children
- 8) Professional
- 9) General Intelligence
- 10) Respect of All
- 11) Willingness to Work
- 12) Loyalty
- 13) Dedication

Hall then rank ordered the qualities with the quality most often mentioned by superintendents at the top (1), continuing down to the least mentioned quality at the bottom (13).

His 1956 findings gave a view of the elementary principal as to what qualities were deemed most important by superintendents. His results show little disagreement among the superintendents as to the top four qualities. They were: Administering Qualities, Training, Personality, and Experience. There was much disagreement of superintendents of the next seven qualities and much agreement that Loyalty and Dedication were the least important qualities.

Hall highly recommended further research of this type and to this author's knowledge no study of this sort has been done since.

Chapter 3

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data generated by this study will be treated in two parts. Part I consists of a presentation of the data generated. Part II consists of an analysis of the data generated, including a comparison of this study with Hall's 1956 study.

PART I

Population

Parameters- Superintendents of Iowa schools having an enrollment of three-thousand pupils or less, with at least one full-time elementary principal on staff.

Size- Two hundred sixty-eight superintendents were included in this study.

Table 1 indicates information relevant to the response rate of this study.

There were many reasons for the invalid responses. Most were due to respondents assigning the same number to two or more items. Others simply omitted items. Still others did not complete the form at all because of an inability to judge one item as more important than another. Two respondents indicated that their principal was not employed full-time and one respondent added his/her own items to the list.

Table 1

	Form A	Form B	Both
Questionnaires sent	134	134	268
Questionnaires returned	107	104	211
Rates of return	79.3%	77.6%	78.7%*
Valid responses	101	94	195
Rates of valid responses	94.4%	90.3%	92.4%

*total rate of return of this study

It had been hoped that the attention given to the form of the instrument would elicit a high rate of return. Attention was given to such matters as color of paper, boldness of lettering, simplicity of language, and ease of return. It is the opinion of this author that the comparably high rate of return that was achieved was due, at least in part, to this attention to the form of the instrument.

PART II

In order to gain a clear understanding of the results, a simple tabulation of the frequency of responses was necessary for Form A, Form B, and both together. A grid for each of these was made with the thirteen desired personal qualities surveyed as the vertical axis and rankings from one to thirteen as the horizontal axis. If a respondent ranked personality, for instance, as number 1 a tally was placed in the box lined up with coordinates Personality:1. If training was determined to have a ranking of number 8, the box having coordinates Training:8 received a tally, and so on.

This generated 169 tabulations per form and 169 for "both."

As a further simplification and to gain an overall picture as to how the respondents as a whole perceived the rankings of the items, it was determined to find the median response to each item. That is, to determine that ranking which fell midway between the upper half of the responses and the lower half of the responses.

Table 2 shows the medians of each personal quality for each form and finally the medians of each personal quality in respect to

the whole study (indicated by "both").

Attaching median rankings, enables this study to place all the items on a continuum, thereby generating a rank order indicative of the opinions of the respondents.

Table 3 indicates the rankings of the personal qualities as the respondents viewed them overall.

It is of interest to note that there is negligible difference between the two forms. This will come into this study's analysis of data later when comparisons are being made between Hall's data and this data.

The remainder of Part II is devoted to a comparison of this study's findings with those of William R. Hall (1956).

Table 4, indicates a comparison of rankings of personal qualities as found by Hall and this study and will serve to be a basis for the discussion that follows as an analysis of the data.

Since there was little disagreement from one form to another in this study in regards to the rankings, they were listed under one heading, "Both forms." The two forms used in 1956 were included because of several instances of disagreement from one form to the other. Hall made no mention of this phenomena in his treatment of the data. This author can only speculate the possible reasons for the discrepancy. The discrepancy must have come about because of the wording of the questionnaire itself which presented two situations that were interpreted differently by the respondents in the 1956 study. The difference in ranking of Experience from Form I to Form II may be attributed to the fact that Form II referred

Table 2

Personal Qualities	Form A	Form B	Both
Personality	3.7	4.2	3.95
Leadership Ability	1.4	1.9	1.65
Training	10.1	10.05	10.075
General Intelligence	7.0	7.1	7.05
Professional	9.75	10.0	9.875
Love of Children	3.85	3.0	3.425
Dedication	6.75	5.45	6.05
Respect of All	7.1	6.75	6.925
Public Relations	9.0	8.1	8.55
Willingness to Work	5.4	5.55	5.475
Administrative Ability	2.25	2.25	2.25
Experience	10.7	11.1	10.9
Loyalty	7.2	7.9	7.55

Table 3

Rank	Form A	Form B	Both
1	Leadership Ability	Leadership ABility	Leadership Ability
2	Administrative Ab.	Administrative Ab.	Administrative Ab.
3	Personality	Love of Children	Love of Children
4	Love of Children	Personality	Personality
5	Will. to Work	Dedication	Will. to Work
6	Dedication	Will. to Work	Dedication
7	Gen. Intelligence	Respect of All	Respect of All
8	Respect of All	Gen. Intelligence	Gen. Intelligence
9	Loyalty	Loyalty	Loyalty
10	Public Relations	Public Relations	Public Relations
11	Professional	Professional	Professional
12	Training	Training	Training
13	Experience	Experience	Experience

Table 4

Qualities	1956		1981
	Form I	Form II	Both Forms
Leadership Ability	6	8	1
Administrative Ability	1	2	2
Personality	3	1	3
Love of Children	7	9	4
Willingness to Work	11	6	5
Dedication	13	13	6
General Intelligence	9	5	7
Respect of All	10	10	8
Loyalty	12	12	9
Public Relations	5	4	10
Professional	8	7	11
Training	2	3	12
Experience	4	11	13

to a principal already in the system and possibly the superintendent assumed that principal already has experience or else he/she would not be in that position. This quality alone seemed to throw the other rankings off slightly.

To benefit ease of understanding in analyzing a comparison of the 1956 data and the 1981 data this author will address each quality.

Leadership Ability

This quality made a remarkable jump from a ranking of 6,8 in 1956 to a number one (1) ranking in 1981. Research has indicated that the role of the elementary principal has been emerging into one of prominence in the educational field. Much of the criticism of late aimed at the schools has been aimed at the elementary school, more specifically the elementary principal. Studies have shown that people are looking for strong leadership in their principals and this data tends to reinforce that concept in that superintendents are indicating that quality as the most important to possess. In 1956, superintendents in general were reluctant to relinquish any authority unless it was absolutely necessary. Today, principals are being given much more decision-making authority with regard to the kinds of programs they want in their particular building. They are being looked to as the experts in their field and as such they are expected to be leaders in determining the direction of their program and to see to it that their programs reflect the quality that is being demanded by all portions of the public sector.

Administrative Ability

This quality remained basically in the same position from 1956 to 1981. This would seem to indicate the timelessness of administrative functions. Principals must still be able to handle budgets, make schedules, provide firm discipline, and attend to the other administrative functions in a routine and efficient manner.

Personality

This quality remained in the top three both in 1956 and in 1981. This indicates that an individual's ability to communicate well with others and to remain pleasant even in adverse situations is still a sought after commodity.

Love of Children

There was an interesting jump in this quality from 7,9 in 1956 to 4 in 1981. Elementary schools today have gone through vast changes since 1956 in that they are looked to more and more as a place that children should want to go and enjoy. The authoritarian principal of the 50's has been replaced by the warm, caring principal of the 80's. This is not to say that the principal of the 50's was not warm and caring, it merely indicates that it is a quality that is held as a high priority in today's school setting in the middle of an uncertain world replete with broken homes, high crime rates, and a general lack of respect for the human spirit. The school is seen as one of the very few places left that offers warmth and caring. This is why it is deemed very important that a principal possess a love for children.

Willingness to Work

In the Sixties and the Seventies, many employers complained of the fact that the willingness to work was getting to be a rare commodity. This might explain the fact that this quality was held to be of more importance today than in 1956, although the difference in rankings was not great; 11,6 in 1956 and 5 in 1981.

Dedication

This quality made a great jump from 13 in 1956 to 6 in 1981. This might be related once again to the times. In 1956 it may have been assumed that an individual was dedicated, or else they would not be in education. Today, with the advent of the "me" generation and unions giving subordinates a feeling that they deserve a better work environment, etc., the principal of today might just be apt to do his/her job "to the letter" and leave it at that. With the criticism schools are getting today coupled with the taking away of adequate funds for schools by the government, the principal of 1981 is seen by superintendents as someone who must be dedicated, lest he/she lose the desire to continue to provide quality programs for today's schools.

General Intelligence

This quality received a middle rating (9,5 in 1956 and 7 in 1981) indicating that general intelligence is important but should not be viewed as an absolute necessity to the success of a good principal. there are enough exceptions to the notion that a principal

must be very intelligent to be effective to give credence to the number 7 ranking that it received.

Respect of All

This quality received similar ratings in 1956 and 1981; that being 10,10 in 1956 and 8 in 1981. Obviously, this is not a quality that causes concern to superintendents today. The fact that its ranking did rise a slight amount may indicate that this may be a concern that is just now beginning to surface, although this is only speculation on the part of this author.

Loyalty

Loyalty made a little greater jump than did respect for all. There is evidence to suggest that the school is being placed more and more in the political arena; couple this with the advent of negotiations and superintendents are increasingly looking to their principals for loyalty. This may be a quality that may see a jump in importance in the future.

Public Relations

Public relations took a significant drop from 1956 (5,4) to 1981 (10). This goes unexplained by this author. Evidence suggests that with public scrutiny of the elementary school at its highest in recent years, perhaps a principal with this quality is needed, albeit demanded. The only possible explanation of the marked drop is that is that superintendents still do not see public relations as a sought after quality. There are some who may suggest this to

be a reason for the demise of the school's public image today.

Professional

Very little needs to be said of the difference in rankings of 1956 (8,7) to 1981 (11). With all the other things a superintendent has to be concerned about in regard to selection of a principal it is to be assumed today that the individual is professional. It has been shown that the effectiveness of a principal is not directly related to the number of organizations he/she belongs to or whether or not he/she is prompt at coming to meetings. There is less regard today for professionalism in that sense of the word today than there was in 1956.

Training and Experience

These two can be treated together because of their obvious similarity in meaning and rankings by superintendents. They were both ranked high (2,3 and 4,11) in 1956 and low (12,13) in 1981. Whereas training and experience varied greatly in 1956 from one candidate to another in 1956, today these qualities are taken for granted. Today there is more uniformity in standards set for certification and standards set from one program to another. Many principals were hired in 1956 without Masters Degrees because they were not required. Today it is a different story. There are enough stringent requirements placed on a potential principal that a superintendent can be assured that any candidate will have the proper credentials before applying for a position.

It was intended that some inferences be made using the demographic data and the comments written in by the respondents. The amount of valid information gained from these two parts of the instrument was negligible, therefore this study chooses to treat them as limitations to the study. Perhaps if the demographic data section was more clear and was given a position of greater importance to the instrument, the results would have been more satisfying.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

A survey was sent to superintendents of Iowa schools having enrollments of 3,000 or less. They were asked to place in a rank order thirteen personal qualities listed, as they related to the situations presented on the instrument. The qualities were to be ranked in order of importance with one (1) being the most important quality, in the superintendents' opinion, and thirteen (13) being the least important. The results were then compared to a rank ordering of the same qualities that was done in 1956. Some of the qualities made significant changes in their perceived rankings from 1956 to 1981.

Leadership ability received a much higher ranking in 1981 than in 1956. It was seen as having a 6 or 8 priority in 1956 and received a number 1 ranking in 1981. Love of children and dedication went up considerably in ranking from 1956 to 1981. Three others made significant movement downward in ranking. These were: Public Relations, Training, Experience.

Conclusions

As stated in the introduction of this study, there is documented evidence that the demands of society are being translated into demands of schools on principals of today. Schools no longer

enjoy the relative safety of public apathy. Principals' roles have changed considerably and the goal of this study was to determine if superintendents were looking for some qualities to meet those changing roles in the principal of the eighties.

Much of the evidence generated by this study seems to indicate that, yes, superintendents are indeed looking for a different kind of principal than they looked for twenty-five years ago. Superintendents are looking for an educational leader. Someone who can lead the way into new and better programs. Superintendents are looking for dedication and a love for children, qualities perhaps taken for granted in the schools of the fifties.

Although public relations has been identified over and over as an area that is sorely in need of improvement in schools today, superintendents apparently still do not see this as a quality that should be given a high priority. This author feels that this is one of the main reasons that schools are receiving so much public criticism. Administrators should pay much closer attention to public relations in the future if they are to return to the public's favor.

Willingness to work, loyalty, and dedication all were indicated to be of some concern to the superintendent of 1981 suggesting that perhaps some of the "old-time" values are missed today and that a return of some of those old qualities would be welcome.

Recommendations

This author recommends that further study in this area be done with special attention given to the components that make up

the thirteen qualities. Then, it is recommended that a profile emerge of the ideal principal as seen through the eyes of the superintendent. One of the limitations of this study, arising out of a concern for higher rates of return, is that the qualities may have tended to be unclear and ambiguous in some cases.

A further recommendation is made to use the information generated in two ways. One way the information could be used is in the development of an instrument aimed at providing some consistency in the evaluation and subsequent hiring of the elementary principal. A second use of this data is in the training programs of future elementary principals so that these individuals can gain insight into the types of qualities they have that are of value to the superintendent and into those qualities that that individual may want to cultivate to increase his/her marketability on the job market.

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APPENDIX

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL PERSONAL QUALITIES SURVEY
Dept. of Sch. Admin. and Pers. Ser.
UNI
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL PERSONAL QUALITIES SURVEY

FORM A

<u>EXPERIENCE DATA</u>	<u>NO. YEARS</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
TEACHER		
PRINCIPAL		
SUPERINTENDENT		

LET US ASSUME THAT, WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT, THERE IS A PRINCIPALSHIP VACANCY AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL AND YOU INTEND TO FILL THAT VACANCY WITH A MEMBER OF YOUR PRESENT INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF. (TRY TO HAVE SOME DEFINITE INDIVIDUALS IN MIND.)
ASSUME NOW, IF YOU PLEASE, THAT YOU HAVE MADE YOUR CHOICE. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS SURVEY, RANK ORDER THE PERSONAL QUALITIES LISTED BELOW IN THE ORDER OF THEIR IMPORTANCE TO YOU, AS THEY PERTAIN TO THE SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL OF YOUR CHOICE, WITH 1 BEING THE MOST IMPORTANT TO 13 BEING THE LEAST IMPORTANT.

_____ PERSONALITY	
_____ LEADERSHIP ABILITY	(emanates authority, team-oriented, takes initiative to guide his/her programs in a given direction)
_____ TRAINING	
_____ GENERAL INTELLIGENCE	
_____ PROFESSIONAL	(attends all meetings, belongs actively to professional organizations, has a desire to further his/her education)
_____ LOVE OF CHILDREN	
_____ DEDICATION	
_____ RESPECT OF ALL	
_____ PUBLIC RELATIONS	
_____ WILLINGNESS TO WORK	
_____ ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY	(organizational, decision-making, and supervisory abilities)
_____ EXPERIENCE	
_____ LOYALTY	

PLEASE LIST ANY OTHER QUALITIES YOU DEEM IMPORTANT THAT ARE NOT MENTIONED HERE.

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL PERSONAL QUALITIES SURVEY
Dept. of Sch. Admin. and Pers. Ser.
UNI
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL PERSONAL QUALITIES SURVEY

FORM B

<u>EXPERIENCE DATA</u>	<u>NO. YEARS</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>
TEACHER		
PRINCIPAL		
SUPERINTENDENT		

AS A SUPERINTENDENT YOU NO DOUBT HAVE, OR HAVE HAD, ON YOUR STAFF AN ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL WHOM YOU CONSIDER OUTSTANDING.

PLEASE CONSIDER THAT INDIVIDUAL, THEN WITHOUT DIVULGING HIS OR HER NAME, RANK ORDER THESE PERSONAL QUALITIES IN THE ORDER OF THEIR IMPORTANCE TO YOU IN RELATION TO WHY THAT INDIVIDUAL IS CONSIDERED OUTSTANDING, WITH 1 BEING THE MOST IMPORTANT TO 13 BEING THE LEAST IMPORTANT.

___ PERSONALITY	
___ LEADERSHIP ABILITY	(emanates authority, team-oriented, takes initiative to guide his/her programs in a given direction)
___ TRAINING	
___ GENERAL INTELLIGENCE	
___ PROFESSIONAL	(attends all meetings, belongs actively to professional organizations, has a desire to further his/her education)
___ LOVE OF CHILDREN	
___ DEDICATION	
___ RESPECT OF ALL	
___ PUBLIC RELATIONS	
___ WILLINGNESS TO WORK	
___ ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY	(organizational, decision-making, and supervisory abilities)
___ EXPERIENCE	
___ LOYALTY	

PLEASE LIST ANY OTHER QUALITIES YOU DEEM IMPORTANT THAT ARE NOT MENTIONED HERE.

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL PERSONAL QUALITIES SURVEY

Dear Superintendent:

In partial fulfillment of requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Elementary Administration from the University of Northern Iowa, I am conducting a survey as to the qualities which make a good, successful Elementary Principal.

Iowa Superintendents of school districts with a total student enrollment of 3000 or less and with at least one full-time Elementary Principal on staff are being surveyed.

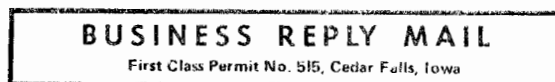
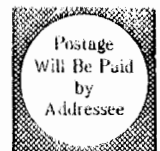
Please complete the attached brief questionnaire and return it at your earliest convenience. Your reply will have a real impact on this survey.

You will receive a copy of the results at the conclusion of the survey.

Thank-you very much for sharing some of your valuable time.

Sincerely,

Clayton E. Naylor
Dept. of Sch. Admin. and Pers. Ser.
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614



UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

CEDAR FALLS,

IOWA 50613



ATTN: Clayton E. Naylor
Ed. C. 508

FORM I

SENT TO ONE-HALF OF SUPERINTENDENTS
PARTICIPATING

Let us assume one of your elementary schools has a principalship vacancy and you are to fill the vacancy with a member from your instructional staff. I would like you to have definite individuals in mind.

Assume now, if you please, that you have made your choice. What I wish to know for purposes of my study, is: What specific or unique qualities of the teacher you selected determined your choice? Will you please list these qualities in the order of their importance to you?

FORM II

SENT TO ONE-HALF OF SUPERITNENDENTS
PARTICIPATING

In your school system you no doubt have an elementary principal whom you consider outstanding - superior to all the others as an administrator. Would you please consider that person, then without divulging his or her name try to state unique or specific characteristics in the order of their importance, which resulted in your choice of this individual.