ST LEADERSHIP STUDY, PHASE III

HOGAN MOTIVES, VALUES, PREFERENCES INVENTORY (MVPI): INTRODUCTION

by Rod Chamberlain, March 2023

> "The MVPI permits an evaluation of the fit between and individual and the organizational culture. This is quite important because, no matter how talented and hard-working a person may be, if his or her values are incompatible with the values of the larger culture . . . then he or she will not do well in the organization."
>
> Dr. Joyce Hogan and Dr. Robert Hogan, *Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory Manual*

As an organization that supports "our member schools in offering the best possible education to their students" through search and consulting services, we sometimes see good leaders that are having a hard time. Therefore, we started the three-phase Leadership Study three years ago to explore ways to understand better and prevent these situations. In Phase I of the Southern Teachers Leadership Study (2020), we discovered the impressive diversity of personalities among successful independent school heads and key administrators. The data provided several themes that can inform and enhance school leaders' work, particularly with their boards. Most of all, it verified that effective leadership comes in many shapes and styles.

PHASE I used the Hogan Personality Inventory to examine such "day-to-day" traits and behaviors as emotional stability, ambition, and conscientiousness. PHASE II (2021) looked at what Hogan calls the "dark side" of personality. The Hogan Development Survey (HDS) provided insight into what people do when they are under stress or feel a loss of control. So, while Phase I looked at how heads of schools find success, Phase II considered what might get in their way. Specifically, Phase II examined leader behaviors under pressure in terms of three clusters: *Moving Away* (flight), *Moving Against* (fight), and *Moving Towards* (join). Among our findings were that school heads scored higher than corporate leaders in *Moving Away* and *Moving Toward*, while corporate leaders scored higher on *Moving Against*.

In the summer of 2022, we conducted PHASE III of the Leadership Study with close to 200 heads completing the *Hogan Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory* (MVPI). As noted in the quote at the top, this personality assessment gives us a view into what people value and appreciate, the type of workplace they will find motivating, what kinds of behaviors they will reward in others, and how best to reward them. As in the other phases, we will examine the entire MVPI data set, then data segmented by demographic groups, and finally, individual participant interviews. There is much to learn here.

ABOUT THE MVPI ASSESSMENTS

The MVPI includes ten primary scales categorized into four clusters based on an individual's motivation in a workplace setting.

Cluster I: *Status Interests* Cluster - The first cluster includes three MVPI scales that describe how an individual may want to be perceived in relation to others.

Recognition – concerns wanting public acknowledgment for a job well done. High scorers tend to get excited about opportunities to be noticed. Low scorers tend to shy away from the spotlight and to share credit for their accomplishments.

Power – concerns an individual's desire for success, accomplishment, and status. Those who score high tend to aspire to leadership positions, enjoy telling others what to do, and are driven to succeed.

Hedonism – concerns having fun and entertaining others. High scorers seek excitement, variety, and a lifestyle organized around good food, entertaining friends, and fun times.

Cluster II: *Social Interests* Cluster - The second cluster also includes three MVPI scales and describes how an individual may want to relate to others.

Altruistic – concerns the desire to help others and contribute to society. High scorers tend to be concerned about others' well-being and enjoy fostering a sense of community.

Affiliation – concerns values associated with socializing and preferences for environments that provide the opportunity to work with others or to work alone. Individuals scoring high on this scale seek opportunities to network and enjoy interacting and engaging with others. Low scorers prefer working on independent tasks and focusing more on business/task-related activities.

Tradition – concerns valuing history, custom, and established moral codes. People with high scores want to preserve past ways of living; people with low scores wish to change and progress.

Cluster III: *Financial* Cluster - The third cluster includes two MVPI scales and describes how an individual may want to relate to financial and other forms of predictability.

Security – concerns wanting to minimize employment uncertainty combined with a need for planning, structure, and order. People with high scores value predictability; they take time to plan their day. People with low scores enjoy taking risks and testing limits. They are unconcerned with job security and tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty.

Commerce – concerns interest in business and money. Those who score high tend to be interested in budgets, finance, and moneymaking opportunities. Those scoring low on Commerce tend to value money only as a means to an end.

Cluster IV: *Decision-Making* Cluster - The final cluster includes two MVPI scales and describes how an individual may approach a decision.

Aesthetics – concerns valuing art, literature, music, and a lifestyle guided by imagination, culture, attractive surroundings, and opportunities for self-expression. Individuals scoring high on this scale typically focus on the quality of work products and enjoy work environments that provide opportunities to create innovative solutions.

Science – concerns valuing knowledge, research, technology, and data. High-scoring individuals are curious and enjoy problem-solving, analytical thinking, and objective decision-making. Those scoring in the low range are less interested in science and technology and prefer an intuitive problem-solving approach.

MVPI RESULTS SUMMARY

We invited about 700 current heads of schools from sixteen states in the South to participate in the study (some were retiring or in transition when they took the assessments). One hundred eighty-nine school leaders completed the MVPI.

The mean scores in the chart below suggest the "average" results for school heads as a group. These scores do not convey the variability or diversity of individual participants (which we will explore in subsequent Phase III articles). Larger sample sizes tend to regress to the mean. Thus, it would be very unusual for a group to exhibit scores in the 80th or 90th percentile. Also, it is important to note that the assessment data represent general trends within sample study groups and is not tied to actual on-the-job performance.

Independent School Heads Average MVPI Scores
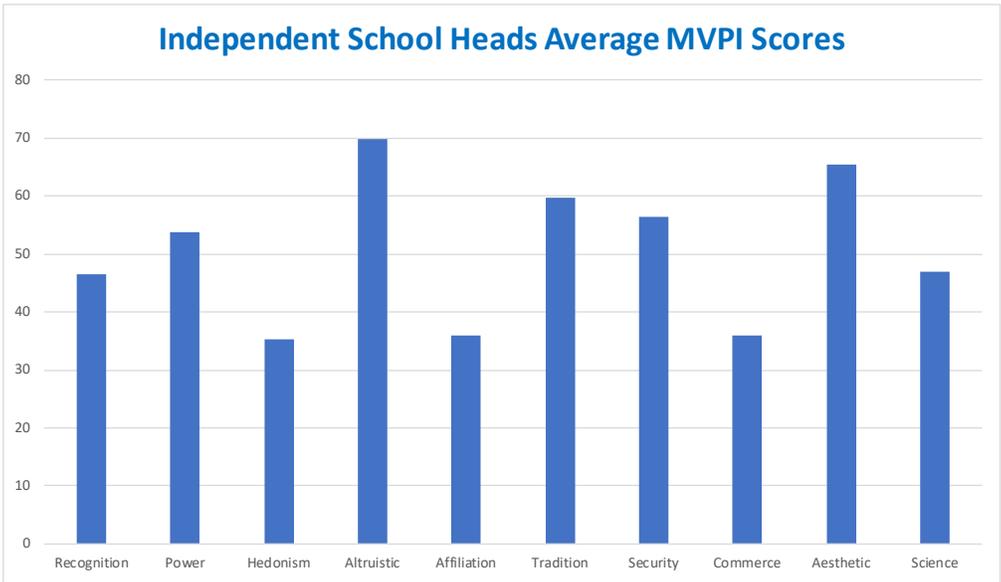
As one might expect, the two highest average scores of these school heads are *Altruistic* (70) and *Aesthetic* (65), reflecting a powerful desire to help others and society as well as a concern for the quality of the work environment. Perhaps a little surprising are the low average scores of *Hedonism* (35), i.e., tending to put business before pleasure, and *Affiliation* (36), i.e., preferring to work alone and valuing their private time. The lower score in *Commerce* (40) may reflect a limited interest in working with finance or monitoring budgets, which could be a source of tension with a Board filled with business people.

When we look at the ten scales in terms of the four clusters, we see the highest scores in the *Social Interests* cluster, focusing on how individuals want to relate to others. Two of these scales, *Altruistic*, helping others, and *Tradition* (60), preserving past ways of doing things, are significantly over 50%. Much like the other high MVPI scores, it is something one might have predicted for independent school leaders.
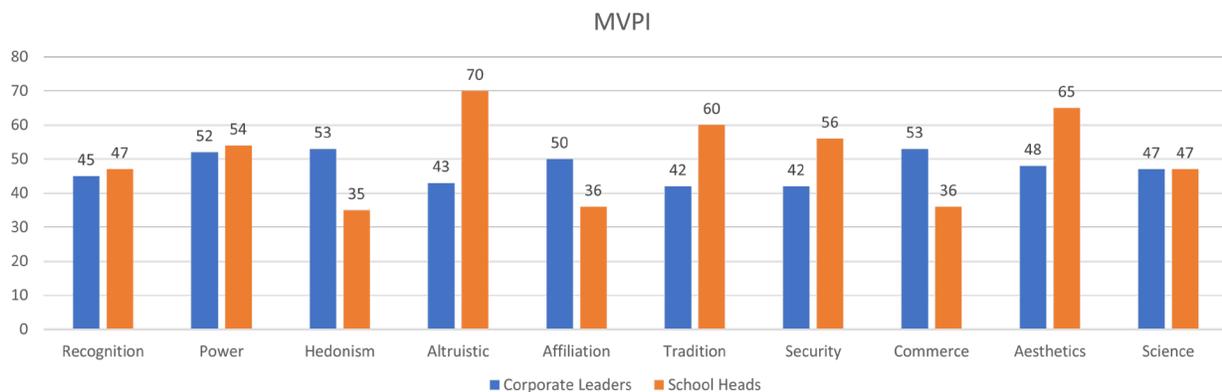
Comparing heads of schools' scores to the Global Norm is interesting. We found even better insights when we compared their scores to those of corporate leaders. Again, for Boards comprised primarily of businesspeople, the disparity in scores between the two groups may be instructive. In the first cluster, *Status Interests*, school heads and corporate leaders fairly similar. However, corporate leaders had their highest score in *Hedonism* (53), which was significantly higher than school heads, where it was their lowest score (35). This discrepancy may suggest that corporate leaders are more motivated by having fun and entertaining than school leaders.

Overall, corporate leaders were only higher than school leaders in three of the ten scales: *Hedonism*, *Affiliation* (50 vs. 36), and *Commerce* (53 vs. 36). Again, one might suspect a higher average score in *Commerce*, but the

difference in *Affiliation*, i.e., a desire to socialize and work closely with others, was surprising. Taken together, one can almost picture the deeply reflective academic preparing for a fund-raising event compared to board members who are excited about the opportunity to celebrate a school's achievements.

The fourth cluster, *Decision-Making,* reveals one more observation. For corporate leaders, there is a clear balance between *Aesthetics* (quality) and *Science* (quantity), i.e., 48 vs. 47. However, with school leaders, there is a strong tendency to lean towards *Aesthetics* (the look and feel of something) compared to *Science* (data and analysis), i.e., 65 vs. 47. One can begin to see how the differences in these decision-making approaches might impact capital campaigns and strategic priorities.

MVPI

Bar chart titled "MVPI" comparing Corporate Leaders (blue) and School Heads (orange):

Category	Corporate Leaders	School Heads
Recognition	45	47
Power	52	54
Hedonism	53	35
Altruistic	43	70
Affiliation	50	36
Tradition	42	60
Security	42	56
Commerce	53	36
Aesthetics	48	65
Science	47	47

In the coming weeks, we will shift our focus to demographic data and individual interviews. Our next report will provide insight into the *Hogan Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory* and the study's results based on the robust dataset provided by the close to 200 heads of schools, whom we cannot thank enough. As in **PHASE I** and **PHASE II**, we will try to answer some specific questions in our reports, such as:

- How might the age of a school leader be related to the desire (or need) for power and recognition?
- To what degree does gender play a role in the level of altruism in a school head?
- What are the characteristics of school leaders that might attract them to a predictable, stable school compared to a school experiencing significant changes?
- What is the relationship between the size of a school and the type of decision-making a head uses?
- How might pulling together the data from all three Hogan Assessments, i.e., the *Hogan Personality Assessment*, the *Hogan Development Survey*, and the *Hogan Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory*, improve a school's selection process of a school leader?

As you begin your review of our Leadership Study **PHASE III** reports, we hope they bring new insights to your work as a school leader. Understanding one's motivations and how they fit with an organization's culture is essential—making all the difference in long-term success. After all, as Ben Stein once said, "The indispensable first step to getting the things you want out of life is this: decide what you want."