



RESEARCH

ST LEADERSHIP STUDY

HOGAN PERSONALITY INVENTORY (MVPI): STATUS INTERESTS

by Mike Waylett, March 2023

PHASE III of the ST Leadership Study looks at what individuals value and appreciate, the type of workplace they will find motivating, what types of behaviors they will reward in others, and how best to reward them. To complete this deep dive, we examine the survey results from nearly 200 Heads of School who completed the Hogan Motives, Values, and Preferences Inventory (MVPI) in 2022, which includes ten primary scales categorized into four clusters: *Status Interests*, *Social Interests*, *Financial Interests*, and *Decision Making*.

MVPI scores above the 65th percentile are considered high, those below the 35th percentile are considered low, and those in between are considered average. While no distinction is made between what is a good or bad score, or what is a correct or incorrect response, resulting scores indicate the type of environment individuals most desire. This article and the three that follow each look specifically at one of these four clusters to examine how various factors (e.g., age, gender, and size of school budget) may affect scores. This first article looks at *Status Interests*.

The *Status Interests* cluster includes three MVPI scales – *Recognition*, *Power*, and *Hedonism*—and describes how an individual may want to be perceived in relation to others. Individuals with high *Recognition* scores seek public recognition and acknowledgment for their good work, and they value opportunities to be seen and the center of attention. Conversely, those with low scores tend to be reserved, less interested in calling attention to themselves, and eager to share the credit for their accomplishments. At times, faculty and staff may be resentful of heads with high *Recognition* scores if they feel their leaders are more concerned about their own recognition than the school being acknowledged for its successes.

Those with high *Power* scores seek opportunities where they can be successful, get ahead, and serve in leadership positions. Individuals with low *Power* scores are not interested in competition, or personal advancement, and are content allowing others to lead. At schools in survivor mode – low enrollment and financial instability—boards may become impatient and frustrated with those heads who have low *Power* scores.

High *Hedonism* scores indicate a desire to be part of a fun and entertaining work environment. Hogan notes that “a high *Hedonism* culture is one where people strive to perform at a high level, and then periodically take time to relax, celebrate, and have a good time together.” Individuals with low scores, on the other hand, prefer to be part of a more business-like and serious work environment. Interestingly, an overwhelming number (106) of heads prefer to create more business-like and focused workplaces versus 29 who desire more relaxed environments.

As a group, heads' scores fell in the average range in each of the *Status Interests* scales; although, the average score (35) for *Hedonism* bordered on the low range (Figure 1).

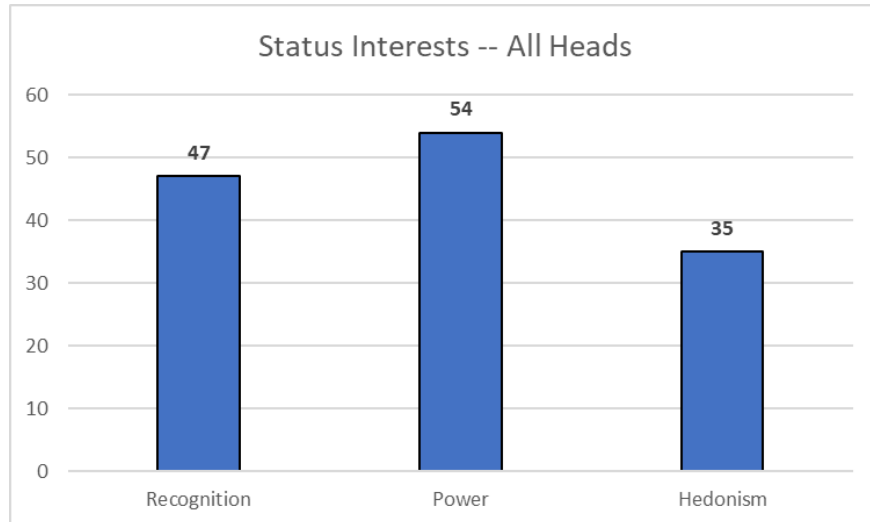


Figure 1: Status Interests for School Heads

The composite scores above suggest that many of the heads surveyed are moderately interested in working at schools where their accomplishments and those of others are recognized, where opportunities exist to take on challenging projects and opportunities, but not at the expense of minimizing the value of life outside of work, and where what they consider to be an appropriate balance between work and having fun exists. School employees who share similar values with their heads will likely enjoy and appreciate their work environments. Conversely, those whose values are inconsistent with their heads of school will likely be dissatisfied and may seek other work opportunities.

When we consider the average scores in this cluster for corporate leaders and heads, we see similar figures for *Recognition* and *Power* but a significant difference for *Hedonism* (Figure 2). Overall, Heads tend to be more reserved, cautious, and they will take issue with those employees who they consider to be less committed to their work-related responsibilities. This may suggest that boards, which are comprised primarily of corporate leaders, tend to be motivated more by having fun and entertaining than school leaders.

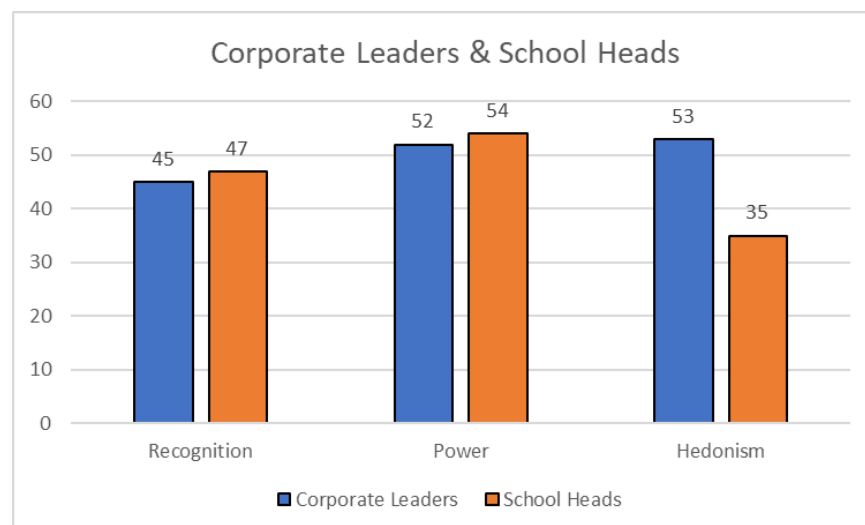


Figure 2: Status Interest Scores for Corporate Leaders and School Heads

INTERVIEWS WITH HEADS OF SCHOOLS

To provide additional insight regarding Status Interests, specifically *Recognition* and *Power*, below are lightly edited conversations with two heads of schools, one who scored higher than average and one who scored lower than average on both of these scales.

HIGH ON RECOGNITION AND POWER

At 100, your score in the *Recognition* category was higher than the average score. As a Head of School, where do you see these behaviors occurring?

I do think our job is sort of set up for that. It's a highly visible public-facing job both on and off campus. Admissions events, advancement events, parent events held on campus, and community events are great opportunities to be recognized and to feel good about being the face of the school. I do a lot of work in the community, present a lot, and give many talks and workshops. And so even externally I feel like I get that opportunity to be visible and to be seen for what I could contribute to others' work. I think that is also a part of my job, keeping the school's name in the public conversation. And so again, I think the role is really set up well for that.

Your score in the *Power* category was 94, which is also higher than the average score. As a Head of School, where do you see these behaviors occurring?

You see that a lot in decision-making and want to always remember that you need to be the ultimate decision-maker in a way that feels good. And where you're not power-hungry and wielding power and control. The head's key role is knowing what the community is comfortable with. I was sitting in a meeting this morning about a student who is on suspension with the possibility of expulsion and knowing that ultimately, I have to make that decision. And so sometimes they're very difficult and not fun decisions. But what I appreciate is knowing that this is my decision to make. And so I need to be really mindful of how I'm making it. I need to have all the information; I need to lead in a way that aligns with both my values and the school's values. And I'm excited by those challenges. And a lot of times it is challenging.

Have there been times when your qualities in these two areas may have created conflict or tension? Can you provide an example?

Sure. I think people can sometimes feel that as you're trying to do your own show; you're trying to turn this into your school – that it has to be your way. I do feel like if anything major goes down at the school, I am going to be on the hook. I'm going to be the last one standing between that incident and the school's survivability. And because of that, I want to have the decision-making power that I need. So, I remind people all the time that I'm the one ultimately accountable for everything that happens. And therefore, there have to be moments where I just say, this is what we're doing, or this is not what we're doing.

LOW ON RECOGNITION AND POWER

At 2, your score in the *Recognition* category was lower than the average score. As a Head of School, where do you see these behaviors occurring?

So, I think as I've gotten older, I've really found that the most effective way to lead is to lead through other people. I've gotten better at coaching and giving legitimate authority and leadership opportunities to my senior staff. I'm not one to want to claim their victories. Those are their victories. And our school has had a really great run under that model, in large part, because I had the right people in the roles where they had the skills and the willingness to take on their various obligations and responsibilities.

I don't necessarily need people to come over and pat me on the back. That's never really been my experience or my desire. It's nice to get a nice thank you note or card, but I don't sit in my office waiting for somebody to come by and knock on the door and tell me how great a job I'm doing. I'm much more invested in the idea that I'm playing a role, a leadership role. I've gotten more adept at public appearances, but I don't seek them out.

Your score in the *Power* category was 23, which is also lower than the average score. As a Head of School, where do you see these behaviors occurring?

That's a very interesting question because I do feel very much engaged with the success of the people around me. And I would say 90% of what I do is to work through other people and to be vested in that model because I think it gives my direct reports a sense of autonomy. But if I'm the one that's claiming all the power and success, they don't get that autonomy. I think if the category that we're talking about is a desire for power, I've just chosen a much more distributed notion of power in the school. What I want to do is empower others to do what they find important and relevant. There may be change that they need to pursue. I want to be a coach for that. I want to be a rallying person for them. I want to cheer them on in that. But I don't necessarily have to have the mic.

Have there been times when your qualities in these two areas may have created conflict or tension? Can you provide an example?

Sometimes with my leadership style, some members of my leadership team have expectations of leadership that may not be matching what they want me to be. Sometimes when I'm delegating, I may have to tell someone I want you to come to me for help if you need it, but this is yours to do. That to me is about sharing, about shared leadership and growth. If I'm doing it for them, they're not growing. I'm investing in individuals who have particular expertise that I don't have. And that I have found it to be a very effective way with the caveat that the right people must be in that room. And if the right people aren't in that room, it doesn't work.

SPECIAL TOPIC

CURRENT AGE OF HEADS AND RECOGNITION AND POWER SCORES

With a correlation of .34, there is a weak relationship between *Recognition* and *Power*. The same is true with *Recognition* and *Power*'s relationships with other MVPI scores. As such, we can usually expect that as *Recognition* and *Power* scores increase or decrease, other MVPI scores may not necessarily move in the same or opposite direction.

It is interesting, though perhaps not surprising, when we consider the *current age* of school heads, that we see distinct differences within both the *Recognition* and *Power* scales, more so than with any other variable (i.e., gender, education, age at first headship, number of headships, and size of school operating budgets). Furthermore, the mean scores for these two scales fall within the average range (the mean *Recognition* score for those aged 60-69 falls just below the average range) and, with low minimum and high maximum scores at the outer limits, both scales have large standard deviations (Figures 3 & 4). Given the small number of participants and larger standard deviations for the youngest (30-39) and oldest (70+) head groups, we will focus our observations on the three that fall in the middle age groups.

	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
Number of Heads	6	49	90	35	9
Mean	50	60	44	34	51
Std. Deviation	37.20	27.00	26.49	24.01	36.34
Minimum	2	0	0	0	4
Maximum	91	100	98	80	94

Figure 3: Recognition--Current Age of Heads

	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
Number of Heads	6	49	90	35	9
Mean	49	66	50	48	56
Std. Deviation	36.08	27.10	27.11	23.93	31.06
Minimum	7	9	1	6	16
Maximum	94	98	98	98	95

Figure 4: Power--Current Age of Heads

Recognition scores reveal certain aspects regarding individuals' preferred work environments – their interest in being noticed and their accomplishments acknowledged, their willingness to share with others credit for their success, and the types of tasks and assignments they most enjoy completing whether they be visible or behind-the-scenes. While all three age groups scored at the outer limits, particularly those in the 40-49 and 50-59 groups, older heads appear less concerned with working in and creating environments that allow them to be front and center. Particularly significant, is the difference in the mean scores of the 40-49 group versus those of the older two groups. Younger heads, who are interested in advancing their careers, may be more likely to seek high-profile assignments and opportunities.

In **PHASE I** of our Leadership Study, we asked heads to take the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI), which is used to measure normal, "bright-side" personality or what is seen when people are at their best. What the research has shown is that there is a positive relationship between *Recognition* and the *Sociability* scale in the HPI. *Sociability* measures the degree to which a person needs and enjoys being with people. A person with high *Sociability* scores gets energy from being around large groups of people; a person with low scores gets energy from being alone or with small groups of close friends. High scorers get energy from a broad range of new



experiences; low scorers get energy from the familiar. High scorers get energy from the attention of others; low scorers get energy from avoiding the limelight. One can imagine the tension that might exist between a head and board if the head feels his or her accomplishments are not being sufficiently recognized publicly.

Harry Truman once said, "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." At times, one's active pursuit of recognition may be an unintended hindrance. Phase II of our Leadership Study, the Hogan Development Survey (HDS), looked at what Hogan calls the "dark side" of personality and provides insight into what characteristics may act as derailers for individuals in stressful situations. Four of the HDS scales, which are grouped into one cluster, are found to have a positive relationship with *Recognition: Imaginative, Colorful, Bold, and Mischievous*. Individuals with high scores in this cluster respond to stress by "moving against others," and managing self-doubt through manipulation and charm. Additionally, these high scorers expect to be liked, admired, respected, and may resist acknowledging their mistakes.

Individuals with high *Power* scores want to be seen and recognized, look for opportunities that will allow them to advance in their careers, value healthy competition, and tend to dislike those who do not share their intense desire for winning. These individuals enjoy being in charge and empowering others; however, they may also assume wrongly that others in their work environment share their passion for competition and success. Individuals with low scores, on the other hand, are less interested in being in the limelight, are not necessarily looking for advancement opportunities, and shy away from competition. Here, our results indicate that older heads are more concerned with getting along with colleagues and giving them more autonomy to complete their responsibilities.

Power has a positive relationship with *Ambition* in the HPI; however, more so than any other MVPI scale, *Power* also has a positive relationship with the derailers in the HDS, namely, *Imaginative, Skeptical, Colorful, Bold, Mischievous*. A negative relationship exists with *Cautious*.

While one might expect a strong correlation between *Recognition* and *Power* scores, as noted earlier, this was not the case with the heads who completed our survey. Where we do see similarities between these two scales is when we look at the scores in relation to the heads' current ages. Like the *Recognition* scores, on average, older heads have lower *Power* scores than their younger counterparts. And again, we see the most significant difference in mean scores between the 40-49 group and the older groups.

CONCLUSIONS

MVPI scores, including the three scales discussed in this article, provide valuable insight into the type of work environment where an individual will most likely thrive. For heads, it's these scores that determine the type of work environment they will create in their schools. Accepting a headship at an independent school may be the most consequential decision in one's professional life. So, too, selecting a new head is an independent school board's most important responsibility. During the hiring process, candidates and trustees should look for congruence between the existing work environment at a school and those candidates value and need to be most productive and successful or agree that a change in the work environment is in the school's best interest.

Our study found that younger heads, on average, seek more *Recognition* and *Power* than their older counterparts. Why? Perhaps, older heads, who at a younger age desired less recognition, better survived as heads of schools. Or as heads move closer to retiring, does their need for recognition and power become less important to them as professionals? Or, as the head who scored high in both the *Recognition* and *Power* scales and whose comments are included above surmised, "Part of what you must do as a young head and as a new head is establish yourself as a recognizable leader. Establish your decision-making and your power and authority. Trust in your power and authority and help folks understand how you're leading and where your lines are. And then when you've got that established, feel like you can lean back some and you don't need to work as much for that power and recognition because you have it."