DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 450 467   EA 030 888

AUTHOR   Soares, Louise M.; Soares, Anthony T.
TITLE   Images of the Superintendent.
PUB DATE   2000-04-00
NOTE   12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American
                Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April
                24-28, 2000).
PUB TYPE   Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Numerical/Quantitative Data
                (110) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Leadership;
                *Peer Evaluation; Peer Relationship; Perception; School
                Administration; *Self Concept; *Self Concept Measures; *Self
                Evaluation (Individuals); Self Management; Social Cognition;
                *Superintendents; *Teacher Administrator Relationship
IDENTIFIERS   American Educational Research Association; *Self Perception
                Inventory

ABSTRACT
                This study attempts to assess a profile of the "self" within
the administrative, supervisory, and leadership roles of the superintendent
as reflected in the perceptions of significant members of the school
community. Evaluation of superintendents has too frequently turned on the
nature of personal relationships with board members, failing to effectively
distinguish the superintendent's roles as both leaders and managers. The
"Educational Leadership" forms of the "Self-Perceptions Inventory" (1999) was
administered to 68 district superintendents and 55 principals from
elementary, middle, and high schools in both urban and suburban districts in
the Northeastern United States. The instrument included three measures of
self-perception. The "Self as a Person" scale, a semantic differential format
with 36 pairs of bipolar traits (for example, "optimistic vs. pessimistic")
provides a profile separate from the institutional role of the leader. The
"Self as Leader" scale uses the same format with different paired to traits
to yield a profile of leadership traits. The "Self as Manager" scale uses a
4-point semantic differential with 40 sets of phrases related to management
functions. These phrases fall into the five broad categories of instructional
leadership, legal/political issues, group dynamics, organizational
development, and resource allocation. The results of this study indicate that
superintendents see their roles in accordance with ability to "satellize"
around school board members and believe, accurately, that their constituents
view them less favorably than they see themselves. Principals' self images
are more closely aligned with students and teachers than with supervisors,
parents, and peers. Future longitudinal research should track principals as
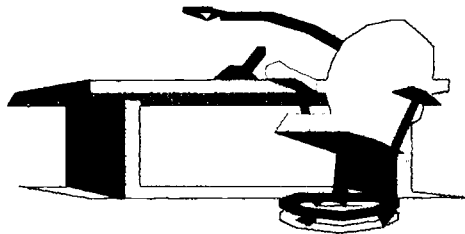they assume positions as superintendents. (Contains 10 references and 5 data
tables.) (TEJ)

AERA 2000

IMAGES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Louise M. Soares
University of New Haven

Dr. Anthony T. Soares
University of Bridgeport

American Educational Research Association
Annual Meeting
New Orleans, Louisiana

April 24-28, 2000

Images of the Superintendent

Louise M. Soares
Anthony T. Soares

Objectives. The purpose of the study was (1) to assess a profile of the self within the administrative, supervisory, and leadership roles of the superintendent at different levels and (2) the self as reflected in the eyes of significant others in the school environment.

Perspective. The superintendent maintains many roles in his/her tenure as the top educational leader in a school district and therefore has many constituencies. Evaluation of persons in the role of superintendent has generally proved to be difficult for most school board members. Too often they have resorted to assessing the value of the superintendent by how well he/she has related to the school board members themselves. Part of the problem, however, lies in the hurdle of separating the roles of the superintendent into leader and manager. Another part of the problem lies in the instrumentation for assessing the effectiveness of the agent in the role of superintendent.

Little research has been conducted on the effectiveness of school superintendents in either role, possibly because the position has often been viewed as idiosyncratic--to the individual function, the school district's differing goals, and the emphases of the board members. In recent years, the research literature on educators has focused on teachers and the building principals (Anderson, Herr & Nihlem, 1994; Joyce, 1990; Lieberman, 1988, 1992).

In contrast, the evaluation process for the building principal typically follows a different path. It often includes peer review and assessment of the principal by others at central office who assist the superintendent. Much of the research on effective schools pointed to the function of the principal to provide leadership and support to the teaching staff, to set goals, and to foster the implementation of those goals (Linney & Seidman, 1989; Mosteller, 1995; Rutter, 1983; Sadowski, 1995; Stringfield & Teddlie, 1991). Little has been said about the contribution to such efforts by the superintendent.

Methods. The "Educational Leadership" forms of the *Self-Perceptions Inventory (revised 1999)* were administered to superintendents and school principals to assess the following self-perceptions:

- Self as a Person
- Self as a Leader
- Self as a Manager
- Ideal Self as a Leader
- Ideal Self as a Manager
- Reflected Self in terms of peers, supervisors, teachers, parents, students, school board members, and community leaders
- Perceptions of Others--a companion scale that provides a profile of school administrators from the constituencies noted above (to obtain a measure of the validity of the self-pictures)

The companion scale, Perceptions of Others, was distributed to the others listed above to obtain a measure of validity of the self-pictures.

In the <u>Self as a Person</u> scale, a semantic differential format with 36 pairs of bipolar traits provides a profile of the superintendent as separate from the role. Examples: self-confident vs. insecure, optimistic vs. pessimistic, patient vs. impatient.

In the <u>Self as a Leader</u> scale, the same format is used, yielding a profile of traits important to an educational leader. Examples: knowledgeable vs. uninformed, enthusiastic vs. indifferent, fair vs. unfair.

In the <u>Self as a Manager</u> scale, the four-point semantic differential is used with 40 sets of phrases related to management functions, to which the respondents agree or disagree with the statement as attributable to the self. These phrases fall within five broad categories of:

1. Instructional Leadership
2. Legal & Political Issues
3. Group Dynamics
4. Organizational Development
5. Resource Allocation.

Data Sources. The superintendent pool consisted of 68 top executives from urban and suburban school districts from the northeast. Another pool for the purpose of comparison contained 55 school principals from urban and suburban schools at the three levels of elementary, middle, and high schools. To add to the self-profiles, representatives of the various constituencies were asked to rate the administrators on the same traits and functions that the administrators used for their self-perceptions.

Results of the Test Analysis. Reliability coefficients of the scales ranged from .85 to .91, assessing stability and internal consistency. Validity coefficients ranged from .33 to .51, assessing content, concurrent, predictive, and construct forms of validity. The item factor loadings ranged from .41 to .84. Tables 1, 2, and 3 display the specifics of the test analysis.

Results of the Score Analysis. The mean scores indicated consistently and significantly higher self-perceptions from the superintendents for self as a person than was found for principals in this study or teachers from a pervious series of research studies (e.g., Soares, 1990). Superintendents saw themselves as more effective leaders and managers than did the school principals, with the mean manager scores consistently highest of all.

The most interesting results came from the comparisons of their reflected selves in the eyes of various constituencies and the actual ratings of representatives from those constituencies. In all cases, the superintendents tended to see that others did not view them anywhere near the height of their own self-perceptions, except for school board members. The school board ratings actually were very close to the superintendents' self-perceptions, in contrast to all the other ratings.

The charted perceptions of the superintendents are noted in Table 4, as summarized from the mean scores in the original analysis. The companion analysis for the school principals is found in Table 5.

Discussion. It is clear from the results that superintendents tend to see themselves in their roles in accordance with their ability to satellize around the school board members. This is really not surprising since the school board has the authority to hire, fire, reward, renew contracts, and otherwise reinforce the work of the superintendent. In this study, the superintendents believe that other constituents see them in less favorable light than they do themselves--and they are correct in their assessments about the opinions these others hold of the superintendents. Unless, of course, these others cause friction and problems to such an extent that they reach the level of the school board to resolve, the interactional and mutual support of the superintendents and their school boards would tend to perpetuate the self-pictures of effectiveness of the superintendents and maintain their hold on the office of the superintendency.

A somewhat different picture emerged for the principals. Their self-images are closely aligned with the perceptions of them from students and teachers and less closely related to those from supervisors, parents, and peers. The views that they hold of their roles as leader and manager are very close. In contrast, the superintendents' self concepts are quite different as leader and as manager.

Future Research. The next phase in this research series would seem to be longitudinal in following the careers of the principals as some of them move from principal to superintendent. Will those who do move up to the role of superintendent change their self-perceptions to be closer to the picture painted above? And what about those who move into middle management positions--e.g., curriculum coordinator, assistant superintendent, etc? Would their self concepts be closer to what they were and where they came from or where they are going?

Such is the direction for future research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, G., Herr, K., & Nihlem, A. (1994). Studying your own school: An educator's guide to qualitative practitioners research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Joyce, B. (1990). Change school culture through staff development. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Lieberman, A. (1988). Building a professional culture in schools. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lieberman, A. (1992). The meaning of scholarly activity and the building of the community. Educational Researcher, 21, (6), 5-12.

Linney, J. A., & Seidman, E. (1989). The future or schooling. American Psychologist, 44, 336-340.

Mosteller, F. (1995). The Tennessee study of class size in the early school grades. The Future of Children, 5, (2, Summer/Fall), 113-127.

Rutter, M. (1983). School effects on pupil progress: Research findings and policy implications. Child Development, 54, 1-29.

Sadowski, M. (1995). The numbers game yields simplistic answers on the link between spending and outcomes. The Harvard Education Letter, 11 (2), 1-4.

Soares, L. (1990). Comparisons of student teachers and alternative route candidates. Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

Stringfield, S., & Teddlie, C. (1991). Observers as predictors of schools' multiyear outlier status on achievement tests. Elementary School Journal, 91, 357-376.

Table 1

Intercorrelations of Scale Clusters*

Intercorrelations of Self as Manager Scales							
FACTORS		FACTORS					FACTORS
	A	B	C	D	E		
A	[.91]	{.40}	{.51}	{.47}	{.33}		A
B	{.40}	[.93]	{.36}	{.37}	{.45}		B
C	{.51}	{.36}	[.90]	{.41}	{.39}		C
D	{.47}	{.37}	{.41}	[.93]	{.38}		D
E	{.33}	{.45}	{.39}	{.38}	[.88]		E

CODE :

A Instructional Leadership
B Legal & Political Issues
C Group Dynamics
D Organizational Development
E Resource Allocation

Reliability Coefficients: Bold, diagonal

* SELF-PERCEPTIONS INVENTORY, Educational Leadership Forms

Table 2

Summary of Factor Characteristics
(Self as Manager Scale)*

ITEM ANALYSES	SCALE				
	A	B	C	D	E
Number of Items	8	8	8	8	8
Range of Item Factor Loadings	59 to 75	71 TO 84	58 to 74	41 TO 62	54 to 64
Item-Factor Multiple	90	90	87	82	74
Adjusted R-square	81	81	76	67	54
Reliability (Alpha)	91	93	90	93	88

CODE:

A Instructional Leadership
B   Legal & Political Issues
C   Group Dynamics
D   Organizational Development
E   Resource Allocation

* SELF-PERCEPTIONS INVENTORY, Educational Leadership Forms

Table 3

Validity and Reliability Coefficients
<u>SELF-PERCEPTIONS INVENTORY, Educational Leadership Forms</u>

<u>Validity</u>

    1.   Content validity (expert pool):

                Leader: .52/$p < .01$

                Manager: .59/$p < .01$

    2.   Concurrent validity (job-ratings):

                Leader: .56/$p < .01$

                Manager: .60/$p < .01$

    3.   Predictive validity (on-the-job success):

                Leader: .51/$p < .01$

                Manager: .58/$p < .01$

    4.   Construct validity (leader & manager):   .49/$p < .01$

<u>Reliability</u>

    1.   Coefficient of stability (8 weeks):   .88

    2.   Internal consistency (alpha):   .85

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 4

Comparison of Self-Ratings & Other-Ratings
for
Superintendents' Leadership & Management Effectiveness

Scale	Person	SC/Leader	SC/Manager	RS/Peers	Peer Ratings	RS/Parents	Parents Ratings	RS/Sch.Bd.	Sch.Bd. Ratings	RS/Commun.	Commun. Ratings	RS/Teachers	Teacher Ratings	RS/Students	Students Ratings
75															
70															
65								* +	* +						
60		*	+												
55															
50	•														
45										+					
40				* +						*					
35					* +	* +					*	*		* +	
30							* +				+	+			*
25													*		+
20													+		
15															
10															
5															
0															

CODE: * = Leader Ratings
      + = Manager ratings

SELF-PERCEPTIONS INVENTORY, Educational Leadership Forms

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

11

Table 5

Comparison of Self-Ratings & Other-Ratings
for
Principals' Leadership & Management Effectiveness

	SC/ Person	SC/ Leader	SC/ Manager	RS/ Peers	Peer Ratings	RS/ Parents	Parents Ratings	RS/ Sch.Bd.	Sch.Bd. Ratings	RS/ Commun.	Commun. Ratings	RS/ Teachers	Teachers Ratings	RS/ Students	Students Ratings
75															
70															
65															
60															
55															
50		*	+								*				
45	*							* +						* +	
40				*			*			*	*	+			* +
35				+	*	*				+	+		*		
30					+	+							+		
25							+	* +							
20															
15															
10															
5															
0															

CODE: * = Leader Ratings
       + = Manager ratings

n = 55

SELF-PERCEPTIONS INVENTORY, Educational Leadership Forms

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC®

0 30973

REPRODUCTION RELEASE
(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Images of The Superintendent

Author(s): Louise M. Soares & Anthony T. Soares

Corporate Source:

Publication Date: 1999 - 2000

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

_____ Sample _____

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

[X]

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

_____ Sample _____

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

[ ]

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

_____ Sample _____

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

[ ]

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: *Louise M. Soares*

Organization/Address: 111 Teeter Rock Rd. Trumbull, CT 06611

Printed Name/Position/Title: Dr. Louise M. Soares

Telephone: (203) 375-5353   FAX: (203) 375-2999

E-Mail Address: Louise @ csstleconsultants. Com

Date: 4-24-00

(over)

ERIC®

Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation

University of Maryland
1129 Shriver Laboratory
College Park, MD 20742-5701

Tel: (800) 464-3742
(301) 405-7449
FAX: (301) 405-8134
ericae@ericae.net
http://ericae.net

March 2000

Dear AERA Presenter,

Congratulations on being a presenter at AERA. The ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation would like you to contribute to ERIC by providing us with a written copy of your presentation. Submitting your paper to ERIC ensures a wider audience by making it available to members of the education community who could not attend your session or this year's conference.

Abstracts of papers accepted by ERIC appear in *Resources in Education (RIE)* and are announced to over 5,000 organizations. The inclusion of your work makes it readily available to other researchers, provides a permanent archive, and enhances the quality of *RIE*. Abstracts of your contribution will be accessible through the printed, electronic, and internet versions of *RIE*. The paper will be available **full-text, on demand through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service** and through the microfiche collections housed at libraries around the world.

We are gathering all the papers from the AERA Conference. We will route your paper to the appropriate clearinghouse and you will be notified if your paper meets ERIC's criteria. Documents are reviewed for contribution to education, timeliness, relevance, methodology, effectiveness of presentation, and reproduction quality. You can track our processing of your paper at **http://ericae.net.**

To disseminate your work through ERIC, you need to sign the reproduction release form on the back of this letter and include it with **two** copies of your paper. You can drop of the copies of your paper and reproduction release form at the ERIC booth (223) or mail to our attention at the address below. **If you have not submitted your 1999 Conference paper please send today or drop it off at the booth with a Reproduction Release Form.** Please feel free to copy the form for future or additional submissions.

Mail to: AERA 2000/ERIC Acquisitions
                  The University of Maryland
                  1129 Shriver Lab
                  College Park, MD 20742

Sincerely,

Lawrence M. Rudner

Lawrence M. Rudner, Ph.D.
Director, ERIC/AE

ERIC/AE is a project of the Department of Measurement, Statistics and Evaluation at the College of Education, University of Maryland.