

The Academic and Professional Preparation of School Music Supervisors in Canada

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(This article is the first of a series of three which will appear in the three numbers of Volume 21. We believe that there is value in having an extended look at a given topic in this fashion, and in the present instance the issue of music supervision is particularly timely. The cut-backs and budgetary prunings to which supervisory personnel are increasingly subjected make it imperative that we carefully examine our evaluative criteria. . . Ed.)

The Problem

The objective of the present study was to gather quantitative and qualitative data on a comprehensive and comparative basis across Canada relating to the following aspects of school music supervision:

- a. Academic and professional preparation of music supervisors;
- b. Historical and statistical information;
- c. Scope and nature of music supervisor activities;

Few national studies of music in Canada have been conducted. One example is Brown's landmark study of teacher certification in Canada.¹ In an as yet unpublished paper entitled, "A Preliminary Statistical Analysis of Music Supervision in Canada", the writer noted the sparseness of comparative data relative to aspects of school music in Canada.²

The role of the music supervisor in music education is of central interest in the present study. By virtue of his position as administrator and music specialist, the music supervisor has access to administrative and instructional information relative to his jurisdiction and can provide the qualitative and quantitative data input required in the study. Further, the music supervisor provides a catalyst for "grass roots" change as well as for administratively imposed change. If change is to take place in Canadian music education, it must directly involve the music supervisor.

In an effort to provide some base-line information on aspects of music supervision across Canada, the writer elected to undertake descriptive research study, using a questionnaire.

II.

Procedures

The Instrument

The questionnaire was developed over a six-year period. The original questionnaire formed the instrument of an as yet unpublished study entitled, "Report on a Pilot Study of Music Supervision in the Berrien County, Michigan."³ The questionnaire in its original form drew on Weyland's list of specific activities and problems encountered by music supervisors.⁴

Validity and Reliability

In terms of the *internal validity* of the instrument, it may be noted that the types of questions asked elicited the information desired. Open-ended questions, check lists, ranking and rating scales and "fill-in-the-blanks" questions were used. Also, a number of pivotal questions were included together with follow-up questions.

In terms of *external validity*, the claims are less rigorous. The writer elected not to run the questionnaire on a sample of music supervisors in Canada preliminary to the survey as the population was a relatively small one. The pilot project in Michigan served as a test-run of the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire was analyzed by two classes of graduate educational administration students in the University of Calgary, 1975 to 1976, all of whom had experience in educational administration in the field.

In terms of the *reliability* of the instrument, the extensive refinements in the questionnaire over an extended time-line - by removing and reworking questions which elicited multiple interpretations or which were redundant - strengthened the claim for the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of responses to individual questions was not tested.

Time-Line of the Study

The instrument was refined over the period 1970 to 1976. The final questionnaire was prepared in November, 1976, and mailed to respondents in January, 1977. Follow-up letters were sent in mid-February to respondents who had not returned their completed questionnaires. The cut-off date for receipt of completed questionnaires for inclusion in the study sample was May 30, 1977. The tabulation and analysis of data commenced in September, 1977.

TABLE 1

Region	(1) Number of questionnaires mailed	(2) Number of questionnaires returned "address unknown	(3) Number of questionnaires assumed to have been received	(4) Number of questionnaires returned N/A	(5) number completed returns	(6) Number of questionnaires included in the study sample
British Columbia	25	1	24	2	14	12
Prairies	61	2	59	7	25	25
Ontario	131	11	120	6	43	27
Quebec	26	2	24	3	6	5
Maritimes	21	0	21	3	10	10
TOTAL	264	16	248	21	98	79

Operational Definitions

The following operational definitions were used in the study:

1. MUSIC SUPERVISOR — TYPE I: The chief administrative officer responsible for school music in a given jurisdiction, exercising function with respect to both the hiring and dismissal of music teachers

2. MUSIC SUPERVISOR — TYPE II: The chief administrative officer responsible for school music in a given jurisdiction, exercising function with respect to one of either the hiring or dismissal of music teachers.
3. MUSIC SUPERVISOR — TYPE III: (MUSIC CONSULTANT) The chief administrative officer responsible for school music in a given jurisdiction, exercising no function with respect to either the hiring or dismissal of music teachers.
4. MUSIC SPECIALIST: A certified teacher presently teaching 40% or more of his/her teaching time in music, whose teaching speciality is music, i.e., he/she holds a diploma in music from a recognized conservatory of music or a university degree in music or school music.
5. JURISDICTION: The school board or province over which the supervisor administers the school music program.
6. JURISDICTION — SIZE TYPE I: A jurisdiction having a minimum of 29 music specialists (a minimum of 11 secondary school specialists); a minimum of 1900 students in secondary school music programs; and music specialists at both the elementary and secondary levels.
7. JURISDICTION — SIZE TYPE II: A jurisdiction having five (5) and less than 11 music specialists at the secondary level; and a minimum of 500 students in secondary school music programs.
8. JURISDICTION — SIZE TYPE III: A jurisdiction having less than five (5) secondary school music specialists; and less than 500 students in secondary school music programs.
9. ITINERANT TEACHER: A music specialist exercising purely consultative function operating in a jurisdiction in which more than 50% of the time is spent in teaching and demonstration in various schools in the jurisdiction and such consultation as is conducted is principally with classroom teachers who are not music specialists.

Sampling Procedures

A comprehensive list of music supervisors in all provinces in Canada was drawn up based upon W. Laughton, Compiler, *A List of Music Consultants, Music Directors and Music Supervisors* (St. Catharines, Ont. C.M.E.A. Resource Centre, 1974). The questionnaire was distributed to the entire population of music supervisors identified from this list, the objective being to gather information on as exhaustive a basis as possible. This was in keeping with the function of the research as a base-line study.

The task of identifying the population of music supervisors was a difficult one. A variety of designations for music supervisors is used across Canada, e.g., music director, co-ordinator, consultant, chief music supervisor, music supervisor, among others. Further, it is not possible to determine the role of the supervisor, co-ordinator or consultant simply with reference to the title employed. Some so-called "consultants" have clear supervisory and administrative roles while other so-called "supervisors" have only consultative roles as itinerant teachers. The task of identifying the population was particularly difficult in cases where

supervisors in rural school districts had a part-time itinerant or teaching function and a part-time administrative or consultative function.

The two-tiered local school board — provincial jurisdiction overlap and the presence of music supervisors at the provincial level who exercise varying degrees of control from an indirect influence on local school boards in western provinces to a more direct control in several Maritime provinces - generated an additional problem.

Another set of related problems resulted from the C.M.E.A. listing itself. The latest listing had been compiled in 1974 from information available through the C.M.E.A. membership files. It became clear that the list was by no means exhaustive or entirely up-to-date. On the other hand, current complete lists of music supervisors were not available at the provincial level in all classes. Thus the C.M.E.A. list, while incomplete and inaccurate in some cases, was the best national compilation available.

These difficulties account for the 24.9% of the music supervisor population who had been incorrectly identified or who could not be contacted.

The year for which data were reported was 1976. This year was chosen because it was a census year and enabled other statistical indices available from the government census to be used.

Response Rate

Table 1 summarizes the questionnaire response rate by geographic region in Canada; 16 questionnaires did not arrive at their destinations or were returned unopened; 21 questionnaires were returned marked "not applicable" with assorted correspondence indicating that the supervisor had retired and had not been replaced, that the questionnaire was not applicable to the respondent's situation or that, for a variety of reasons, the respondent refused to answer the questionnaire. In nine cases respondents indicated that the music supervisor position had not been filled following the retirement or resignation of the supervisor. The most common reason cited for the non-appointment of a music supervisor was the budgetary constraint faced by the school board.

Completed questionnaires were rejected from the study sample where:

- a. Insufficient information was given in the questionnaire return;
- b. The respondent could more properly be classified as in itinerant music teacher; or
- c. The respondent was clearly not a music supervisor (Type I, II or III) as operationally defined above.

Several formulas may be used in the computation of the response rate. With reference to Table 1 the following formulae was generated:

- 1.1 $\frac{\text{Column (4) and (5)}}{\text{Column (3)}} \dots\dots\dots \text{i.e., } \frac{118}{248} \text{ or } 47.58\%$
- 1.2 $\frac{\text{Column (5)}}{\text{Column (3)}} \dots\dots\dots \text{i.e., } \frac{98}{248} \text{ or } 39.52\%$
- 1.3 $\frac{\text{Column (5)}}{\text{Column (1)}} \dots\dots\dots \text{i.e., } \frac{98}{264} \text{ or } 33.33\%$

Even in the case of formula 1.3 which represents the most rigorous assumption, the response rate is acceptable.

Limitations

There were a number of important limitations in the study, as follows.

Not all the information that was desirable could be elicited in the questionnaire. The instrument was 12 pages long and time-consuming to complete.

Further, the smallness of the music supervisor population in Canada militated against the formal pre-testing of the instrument. This necessitated transferring the results of a pilot study of music supervision in the Berrien County, Michigan upon which the original instrument was based, to Canada where the population of music supervisors had not been demonstrated to be compatible. While these difficulties are typically encountered in base-line studies, they constitute an important limitation of the present study.

Information elicited was principally at the institutional integrative level of analysis. Investigations are also warranted at other levels of analysis, i.e., psychological, societal and historical levels. Further, the questionnaire elicited information from music supervisors only. It is also important to gather data from teachers, administrators and other relevant persons and organizations involved in music education in order to gain a comprehensive perspective of music supervision in Canada. The present study, however, constitutes a first step in this direction.

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FOOTNOTES

¹Malcolm A. Brown. A study of teacher education and certification in teaching of music in Canadian public schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, 1960.

²Estelle R. Jorgensen. A preliminary statistical analysis of music supervision in Canada. Unpublished paper available from the author, Faculty of Music, McGill University, 1974.

³Estelle R. Jorgensen. Report on a pilot study of music supervision in the Berrien County, Michigan. Unpublished report available from the author, Faculty of Music, McGill University, 1970.

⁴Rudolph H. Weyland. *A Guide to Effective Music Supervision*. 2nd Edn. Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown, 1968.