

DESCRIBING AND EXPLAINING THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL
MORAL CODES CONSIDERED BY ADMINISTRATORS
AS THEY MAKE DECISIONS

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Every administrative action a principal will take is reduced to a decision. These decisions are made in an arena of overlapping moralities stemming from the organizational morality in concert with his/her personal morality. As Barnard stated, it is impossible to divorce one from the other. The purpose of this study was to attempt to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes considered by a set of school administrators as they make decisions.

This descriptive study examines the contributing experiences of 25 principals' backgrounds influencing the development and establishment of their personal moral code. The study also considers the role professional codes contribute to principal decisions. To establish a theoretical foundation for the project, the study explores the views of Hebert Simon, Immanuel Kant and Henri Bergson. . The three views describe morality from differing perspectives: Simon from an organization view, Kant's perspective duty-based morality, and Bergson's description of Open and Closed morality. Correlations are drawn from scenarios shared by principals as to which theory decisions represented.

The majority of the principals in this study came from hard working, modest backgrounds, where upward mobility and a ferocious belief in the power of education are common themes in their upbringing. Principals consider themselves an important piece of the

school organization. In reality, they are a good “fit” for leading the institution of schooling. The study concludes that in most circumstances, principals’ personal morality and organizational morality mesh to support safety, learning and efficiency in managing schools.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my parents,
Thomas (deceased) and Florence Phillips. For your
commitment, sacrifice and perseverance
to raise my brothers and myself to
appreciate life, our talents, and our values.

I also dedicate this project to my four brothers,
Larry (deceased), Frank, Tom Jr., and Dennis.
With pride we represent our parents' dedication.

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To my sons, Bryan and Brad, and other members of my immediate and extended family, so many times they heard, “I have to read”...”I have to write”...”I have to go to the library.” Their support in my absences is acknowledged and appreciated.

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I believe leaders are made. I have had a few solid role models to hone my skills as principal. These are same skills I hand down to all my understudies. Thanks to my coaching friends Jack Crabtree and Ed Gall who taught me the essence of leadership. They put me on the track. Thanks to administrators in my early years, who would always have time to build my credibility as an administrator. These early mentors include, Paul Thibault, Clem Corona, David Mieras, Clarence Lacny, Jerry Pound, and Ellen Ewing. They established my foundation and gave me a chance to lead.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

Background:

In his Functions of an Executive, Chester Barnard (1937) wrote: "the chief difference between the lower and the higher ranks is not in the capacity of responsibility, but in the condition of moral complexity. (p 275) By moral complexity, Barnard meant --(roughly paraphrased) – that, as one assumes a high rank in an organization, one takes on as set of moral codes in addition to personal moral codes. That is, as he explains, one takes on...

"government codes as applying to his company", . . the ..."system of objective authority", the . . . "general moral standards of his subordinates", the. . ." technical situation as a whole", . . . the "codes of official conduct", and the "good of the organization". (p. 273).

Again quoting Barnard, while many of these moral codes such as the "government codes that apply to his company" are, in most cases, a “non-personal” set of moral codes that overlap with one another. As in,

. . . one cannot divorce his professional conduct from his private morals. When such issues occur, the alternatives presented are either to violate one's personal morality or to fail in an official or professional obligation" (p. 274)

Barnard, who in his time had served as Board Chairman for AT&T, combined codes of personal morality with codes of professional behavior. He argued that in order to exercise administrative office, one had to combine personal morality with several professional codes. He added a warning of the consequences of moral failings:

Resignation or withdrawal is often a solution which circumstances legitimately permit. Then the result is maintenance of personal integrity. When resignation or withdrawal it itself highly immoral, as is sometimes the case, there is potential tragedy". (p. 274)

Addressing the duality of moral obligations, Crawford (2009) cites Robert Jackell's reflection on middle managers,

... and the moral maze they feel trapped in... the manager faces possibility of disaster at any time. But in his case, these disasters are arbitrary. They are result of corporate restructuring, not physics...unlike the entrepreneur, decisions can be reversed by someone higher up...and there is always someone higher up. It's important that reversals not look like defeats...you spend a lot of time managing what others think of you. Survival depends on crucial insight...with moral conviction, without losing your integrity... (p. 40)

The integration of personal morality into administration and organizational success also shows up in Cusick's "Passion for Learning" (2005), in which he argues that seven eminent Americans who administered large and successful endeavors combine strong moral codes with their administrative obligations. They...

...understood that the goal was responsibility, not riches, none suffered from or even entertained notions of unenlightened self interest. Doing the right thing was a social and utilitarian as well as a personal and moral duty. They took for granted that one's self and the world would be better off if one did the right, the ethical and moral thing (p. 157)

The starting point of this study is that a set of school administrators, like everyone else, has a set of personal moral codes. And when one attains one or other school-administrative positions, then one enters into a place where there are several overlapping, possibly competing, moral codes. Principals attend to the business of school through decision making. The range of decisions encompasses situations that may be considered routine to those that may have long term implications. Concurrently, principals assume roles that define the types of decisions that become the principal's responsibility. For instance, there are state and federal guidelines extending to curriculum, tests, and achievements; there are employee bargaining units, discipline codes, and special education rules about students who suffer from one or another impairment, etc. And, in time, an administrator's professional "codes" may conflict not only with other professional codes but with the administrator's personal moral code. To give one example,

NCLB demands that children designated as "special" in any form are obligated to take the state's annual achievement tests. These codes that accompany the position may sometimes conflict with what the administrator personally believes ...of what he/she does not believe and does not want to believe in. As one administrator recounted after having to enforce NCLB requirements which demand that impaired students take the state achievement test...

“...the teacher calls me, the kid's crying, he can't even read the test; she has to make him sit there and it's been two hours, so she's crying, and I have to tell her that he has to take the test. It's awful.”

The administrator is making a moral choice. In this case his obligation to enforce federal guidelines over the possibility of acting compassionately in favor of the frustrated teacher and crying student. The argument is that instances of overlapping and conflicting moral codes are -- if not frequent -- worthy of further study, particularly in a time and in a state where the rules continue to change. The taking over of school operational funding as Michigan did in 1994; the increased scrutiny of test results, and the parallel increase of the state's curricular guidelines, and less-than predictable enrollments occasioned by choice, charter, home schooling, and Michigan's employment downturn make administrative decision-making more complex or, if not more complex then at least changing in complexity. In terms of change, it may be similar to the time beginning in the mid 1960s with Civil Rights and ensuing "rights" movements that brought in levels of moral considerations to which administrators at the time were not accustomed. And such changes are likely to be reflected in administrative decisions and in potential conflicts with administrators' moral standards. There is also the matter of social class interests which may underlie any decision. As critical theorists note, "Any endeavor to apply social coercion in the interest of any given decision may be done to solidifying ideals that are sure to be intricately bound up with special class interests (Morals in review. (p. 309) (Rogers, A.K. Macmillan, 1927)

Again referring to Barnard (1937) quoted above, administrators are being asked to take on additional sets of moral codes. And, therefore, the purpose of this study is to attempt to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes considered by a set of school administrators as they make decisions.

Conceptual Framework

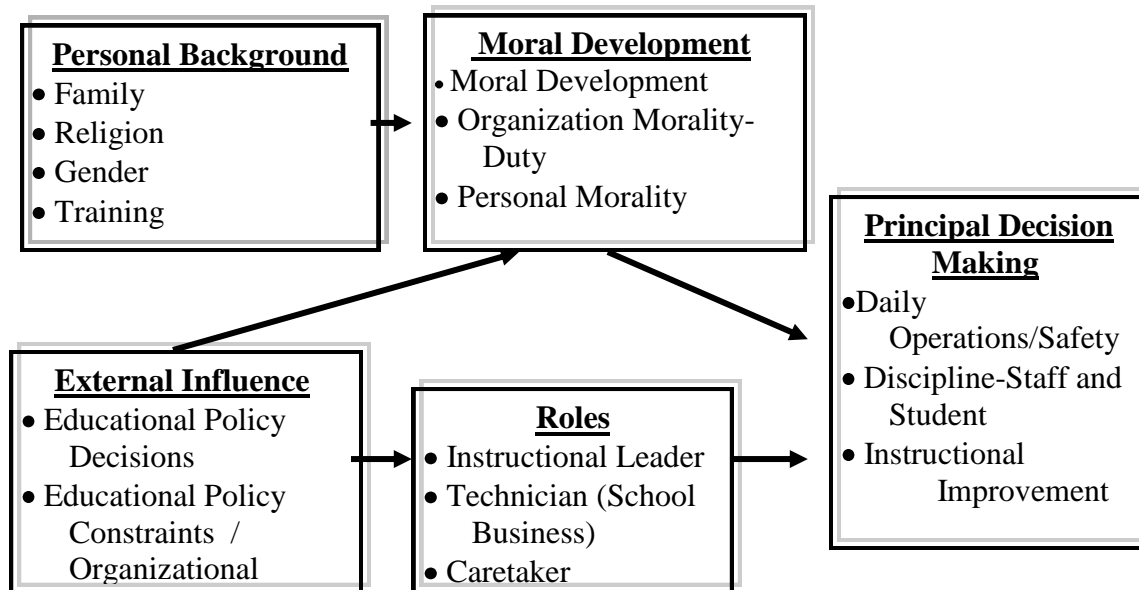
The purpose of this study is to attempt to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes of a set of school administrators as they make decisions. To develop an understanding of dilemmas, challenges and choices principals must consider in making decisions, the conceptual model for this study will focus on the following sources of influence:

- A. Decision making models, theory, principal preparation and practice.**
- B. Internal Influences including personal moral growth and resulting moral codes and the sources of influence.**
- C. Personal and Professional morals principals bring to their roles as decision makers.**
- D. External factors relative to policy decisions and to policy constraints.**

Every principal choice is reduced to a decision. School settings, complete with innate issues; provide endless opportunities for principals to make decisions. Many are instantaneous, drawing from experience as to what is the appropriate direction. Others are complex, take time and provide conflicting options. Still a principal finds his/herself in the midst of various overlapping interest and needs (Cusick, 1973). The setting supports a confounding array of choices, responsibility and human needs. As this study will attempt to explain the personal and professional moral codes a set of school administrators consider as they make decisions, it is necessary for this study to examine the array of influences that surround a principal making

decisions. This project will elicit these factors as influencing decisions and as they support or confound the principals' own morality.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study



Principal decisions are value laden. More than a player in bureaucratic master game plan, principals struggle daily with tensions and ethical dilemmas that position one value against another. The argument of this study will challenge the research to include another view of principal decision making. How does one's background, particularly the internal and external influences, develop the filters (values) from which principals make their decisions? The internal structures of family, social class and religion were set as the historical platforms to development personal stories of principals. The external influences or the "forces of the ages" (Cusick, 2005) are also critical contributors to the personal education of principals.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the practice of decision making, it was necessary to tap into existing research relative to the process. My research discovers that the literature is replete with scientific and qualitative contributions to the study of decision making.

My research also presents a myriad of models, studies, training, and practices, as well as theoretical elucidation of executive choices. The settings for the studies (both scientific and descriptive) vary from private sector, to military as well as education. Each of the studies and models, however, assumes a position from a manager's perspective where quantitative measures provide assigned values to the results.

School management is a significant responsibility for principals. The application to several of the models (to be reviewed in Chapter 2) is limited to management-related decisions. Although the school setting and interests are not extrapolated in these studies, it is appropriate to include this research as a backdrop to previous efforts in the study of decision making. However, the unique demands a school setting places on principal decision makers calls for an extended study beyond existing research.

The second key area of influence focuses on the interior factors weighing on principal decision making. A prominent hypothesis to this study is that personal background and its contribution to the development of individual principal's moral code is a critical consideration in the decision making process of principals. In the midst of other influences, to what degree does a principal's personal morality support or conflict with expectations?

Policy decision and constraints over the past two decades enhance the role of the principal. School improvement legislation, particularly the No Child Left Behind Act of 1995, shifts the accountability lens to the school setting. Notwithstanding, the effectiveness of the principal is identified as a key contributor to a school's success. Expectations placed on principals are clear...achievement is a non-negotiable. Most recently, Race to the Top legislation extends the NCLB act by mandating principal practice. In the coming years, a common curriculum will be in place to measure students' performance based on aligned and

common assessment. The literature is replete with descriptive reports on the intentions of NCLB. The goal of assuring all children will be proficient by 2014 has been determined to be an unrealistic goal. Yet the accountability of school buildings and in particular the principal is ratcheted up significantly. Have policy and policy constraints limited principal decisions making? Or does personal and professional morality hold up to policy in deciding what are the best courses of action for students? Are principal choices being limited or even eliminated? This study will provide a snapshot of a set of principals as to how they negotiate the external factors influencing their decisions.

Theoretical Framework

Studies on executive decision making have attempted to explain the process in relation to an external set of circumstances, conditions, or environment. Studies of this nature fail to consider individual human moral choices as a mitigating variable in the process of making decisions. The purpose of this study is to attempt to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes considered by a set of school administrators as they make decisions. The process is viewed as a personal endeavor, influenced by one's own history and background in the midst of circumstance, conditions, or environments.

To study the implications of organizational morality, the researcher has chosen the work of Hebert Simon who provides a theoretical lens into the underpinnings of organizational behavior. Simon's work speaks to organizational expectations and efficiencies relative to decision making in support of the organization's goals. Simon isolates decisions in terms what is good for the organization. Simon's theory provides a relative framework to research studying principal decisions:

The human being striving for rationality and restricted within the limits of his knowledge has developed some working procedures that partially overcome these difficulties. These

procedures consist in assuming that he can isolate from the rest of the world a closed system containing a limited number of variables and a limited range of consequences. (Simon, 1976, p.82)

Chester Barnard, cited earlier in providing perspective organizational morality, supports Simon's bounded rationality by separating personal needs from organizational needs:

...the decisions that an individual makes as a member of an organization are quite distinct from his personal decisions. Personal choices may determine whether an individual joins a particular organization, and continue to be made in his or her extra-organizational private life. But, as a member of an organization, that individual makes decisions not in relationship to personal needs and results, but in an impersonal sense as part of the organizational intent, purpose, and effect... (Barnard 1938), p. 77 cited by Simon 1976, pp. 202-203).

Alternatively, two prominent theorists provide another critical link to the researcher's attempt to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes of a set of school administrators as they make decisions. 18th century German philosopher, Immanuel Kant and French philosopher, Henri Bergson, influential especially in the first half of the 20th century, also support the intellectual foundation of the study.

Immanuel Kant's theory of the *Categorical Imperative* and *Deontological Ethics* establishes the moral obligation of performing one's duty. Kant's theory focuses on deontological or duty-based ethics. It judges the nature of actions and the will of agents rather than goals achieved. The inputs and intentions are critical, not the result. Deontological ethics are concerned with what people do, not with the consequences of their actions. It is from the Categorical Imperative that all other moral obligations are generated and by which all moral obligations can be tested. Kant (1959) also states that the moral means and ends can be applied to the categorical imperative...that the rational beings can pursue certain "ends" using the appropriate "means". Ends that are based on physical needs or wants always provide for mere hypothetical imperatives. The categorical imperative, however, may be based only on something

that is an “end to itself”. That is, an end that means only to itself and not to some other need, desire or purpose. (Kant, p. 421) Kant believes that the moral law is a principle of reason itself and is not based on contingent facts about the world, such what would make us happy.

Accordingly, Kant submits that moral obligation applies to all, but only rational agents (p.408).

A third theorist extends Kant’s theory. Henri Bergson’s theory of *Moral Obligation* acknowledges, but also broadens, Kant’s structured reasoning to explain “exceptional” occasions where the lines of duty and obligation cannot be followed to meet moral obligations. Bergson convinced many thinkers that immediate experience and intuition are more significant than rationalism and science for understanding reality. Bergson considers the appearance of novelty as a result of pure undetermined creation, instead of as the predetermined result of mechanistic forces. His philosophy emphasizes pure mobility, unforeseeable novelty, creativity and freedom; thus, one can characterize his system as a process philosophy. Bergson touches upon such topics as time and identity, free will, perception, change, memory, consciousness, language, the foundation of mathematics and the limits of reason. For Bergson, Kant fell short in his rational principles relative to the Categorical Imperative. Human emotions, intuition, wisdom and creativity provide an alternative view of duty.

It is between and within the deliberations of Simon, Kant and Bergson’s analysis that the foundation for this study is established. It is not the researcher’s purpose to explain in great depth Simon, Kant and Bergson’s theories. The underlying principles of their work will be utilized to explain and describe the moral codes of principals as they make decisions in their roles.

Initial Exploratory Questions

As the purpose of this study is to attempt to describe and explain the moral codes of a set of school administrators as they make decisions, four sets of questions will be addressed in the course of the pending research. The four questions are as follows:

1. What does research reveal about theories on morality and decision making? Related questions address conceptual models for decision making and to what degree these theories and models apply to principal decision making.
2. What are the skill sets that define the context of principal decision making? Specific additional questions dealt with the common pathways to the principalship, university preparation programs, formal experiences and mentoring.
3. How do principals' personal morals and moral development influence principal decision making? Considering particular dilemmas, specific additional questions focused on how family structures and religion impact a principal on resolving those dilemmas.
4. How have recent policy decisions, specifically The No Child Left Behind Act, made an impacted on principal decision making? To what extent does policy conflict with one's moral code?

Methodology

To extend current knowledge of what influences principal decision making, open interviewing has been chosen as the method of research. The research design enables the proposed study to elicit personally- constructed perspectives of decision making from practicing administrators. The ethnographic approach is also an appropriate means of dissecting the complexities of decision making. The qualitative approach provides a platform to understand behavior (decisions) of individual school principals as they are placed in the context of their lives. Variables of interest to which the questions are posed, focus on each person's experiences and background and the decisions they make in their role as principal. A critical consideration with the use of an open interview is that answers will not be standardized. The merit of utilizing

qualitative approaches such as interviews and observations will be expounded upon in greater detail in Chapter 3. It is important to note that a potential bias does exist in that the researcher is a practicing principal. Although every effort is made to present objective questions and responses, the opportunity to influence responses through cues and unintended affirmations does exist in human interaction and should be taken into consideration by the reader of this study.

To conduct this inductive study, the researcher utilizes the process of theoretical sampling. Glasser and Strauss (1967) describe the practice as:

“...a process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes this data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory whether substantive or formal (p.105).”

Theoretical sampling posits that the research may anticipate a patterns to emerge. Personal notes will accompany interview transcriptions as primary data. Themes and categories become products of the research and were not predetermined prior to the study.

The study is primarily limited to administrators at the middle and high school level. Although a few elementary principals have been interviewed, they make up a minority of the subjects included in the study. At the onset of the sampling process, an initial conversation with each principal disclosed the purpose and nature of the study. A formal consent form will be presented and reviewed, assuring confidentiality. Each interview will be audio- taped. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher and reviewed on numerous occasions. With the exception of three meetings, the interviews will be conducted in each subject's office. The settings provided an opportunity to make observations and collect artifact information. These observations serve to enhance the meaning and understanding of each of the interviews. These artifacts include:

Awards, trophies
 Family Pictures
 Individual family pictures
 Banners
 Photographs of events
 Newspaper clippings
 Accreditation (NCA) certificates
 Personal library
 Religious symbols
 School event posters

Student Art
 Diplomas
 Ball caps
 Gifts from staff/students
 Motivational posters
 Greeting cards
 Class photographs
 Door open/closed
 Personal interest artifacts/collections
 Stuffed animals/Other collections

Significance of the Study

The essence of principals' work is making decisions. Weighing in on these decisions is the increasing level of scrutiny on the principal's role in leading instructional programs to affect student achievement. Notwithstanding is specific language in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which speaks to the building principal as a primary contributor to a school's success or failure measured by State assessment programs. To the individual principal, making Adequate Yearly Process becomes a benchmark for effectiveness. Provisions of NCLB have not only increased the expectations for student achievement but have also creates an environment where instructional decisions become paramount in the role of the principal.

Never the less, the instructional day brings a myriad of decisions the principal must make in the midst of policy requirements. The interrelation of Federal, State and local policy with the responsibility of maintaining support and an environment conducive to learning, creates also overlapping interests (Cusick, 1992) and needs which results in a myriad of decision options and priorities in overseeing a school. Within this mix of circumstance, personalities and needs, the principal alone must sort what is of value and decide the course of action. The significance of this study places the attention on the variable of personal morals, unique to each administrator, as

a contributing influence on principal decision making. The absence of significant research on principal morality has created space to add to the body of knowledge on decision making as well as to extend the discourse on this significant aspect of the principalship.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

Introduction

As the purpose of this study is to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes that are considered by principals as they make decisions, the following review of literature is presented in a tiered hierarchy of relevant research. The review supports the conceptual model of the study. The tiered progression of research will also serve to address the research questions posed for this study.

To describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes that are considered by principals as they make decisions, it necessary to survey existing research on the two variables identified in the study, morals and decision making. While there is little research speaking to the relationship of morals and principal decision making, a compilation of studies exist that examines each variable.

To describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes that are considered by principals as they make decisions, it is appropriate to review the current literature dedicated to the study of morality and the sources from which it originates. A review of the primary theorists relative to organizational behavior, morals, moral development and moral decision making provides an initial tier of research supporting this project.

An abundance of research has also been conducted on executive decision making. Cited frameworks such as contingency theory, organizational theory, and leader-trait, as well unitary versus shared decision making models have provided contemporary guides toward understanding how decisions are made. While the researcher's purpose of this study is to attempt to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes of a set of school administrators as they

make decisions, and study the influences on (principal) decision making, these existing models provide a second tier of research that represent studies conducted on decision making.

A third tier to this literature review presents studies relative to how principals are prepared to become decision makers. The review indicates a variety sources, programs, experiences and options typically available to aspiring administrators. Suitably, mainstream literature is cited relative to principal development. In these studies, relationships and extraordinary experiences contribute to the unique tracks principals follow to their positions.

The final tier of the review provides space to the various external influences on decision making. In particular, educational policy and policy decisions are identified as having a significant influence on principals' decisions. Considerable focus is provided to current policy structures, processes and expectations. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 sets the stage and environment in which current decisions are made.

Decision Theory

Decision theory assumes that a standard is at hand, and proceeds to express this standard in a precise and useful way. Decision means that someone makes a choice. Decision theory is theory about decisions. The subject is not a unified one as there a multitude of ways to theorize about decisions, represented by many research traditions. Decision theory is an interdisciplinary area of study that concerns mathematicians, statisticians, economists, managers, politicians, psychologists and social scientists who are interested in the analyses of decisions and their consequences (Hansson, 1994). How each of these disciplines pursues decision theory may vary greatly. However, each of these areas can benefit from the variety of methods researchers have utilized in the same or similar problems. The basic representation of decision theory is the payoff

table which maps mutually exclusive decisions to mutually exclusive states of nature. Simply stated, “Decision X leads to Outcome Y” and “Decision Y leads to Outcome Z”.

Decision theory can be normative or descriptive. Normative decision theory refers to theories about how we should make decisions in order to be rational. What “should” means is there are prerequisites for rational decision making (see Kant). Descriptive decision theory refers to theory about how decisions are actually made—a perspective this project will undertake. Descriptive decision theories are complex. It teaches us the about the variability of human decision making. Since the normative decisions create hypotheses for testing against observed behavior, the normative and descriptive fields are closely linked. Hansson continues,

...Although the scope of the normative is very limited in decision theory, the distinction between normative and descriptive interpretations of decision theories is often blurred.
(p.7)

Condorcet (1793) provided the first general theory of the decision process. He divided the decision process into three stages. The initial stage includes the discussion of the principles that will serve as the basis of an issue. At this time an examination of the various aspects of the issues are identified and the consequences of different ways to make decisions are weighed. Most of the input at this point is personal. The second phase calls for a formal clarification of the question. Opinions approach and combine with each other form to a smaller number of general opinions. This allows for a reduced choice between a manageable set of the alternatives. The final stage consists of the actual choice of alternatives. Condorcet’s distinction between the first and second discussions was meaningful but not referenced in modern decision theory (Hansson, 1994).

Herbert Simon

To Simon (1955), decision making is at the heart of the organization.

A general theory of administration must include principles of organization that will ensure correct decision making, must as it much include principles that will ensure effective action...a theory of administration considers not only the process of the decision but the process of the action it creates. (p. 1)

Simon argues for assigned roles for individuals and limitations imposed on decision making. The roles define structure and create efficiency within an organization. As roles and functions are defined, insight into the structures and functions of the organization can be attained by analyzing the manner in which decisions and behavior of employees are influenced within the organization. (p.1)

...the organization thus, takes from the individual some of his decision autonomy. The decision with the organization makes for the individual ordinarily 1) specifies his functions, that is, the general scope and nature of its duties; 2) Allocates authority, that is who in the organization is to have power to make decisions for the individual; 3)sets limits on choices. (p.8)

Specialization of responsibilities takes the form of “vertical” division of labor...Simon states:

...(vertical division of labor)...is absolutely essential to a achieve coordination among cooperative employees. Vertical specialization permits greater expertise in making decisions.

With decision making responsibilities and parameters strictly defined, variance is minimized within the assigned divisions. Rationality is the goal. According to Simon, if decisions are evaluated through entire ranges of human value, rationality in administration cannot be attained. (p.13) Training supports the processes that lead to attainment of organization goals. Training influences organizational members to reach satisfactory decisions themselves. (p.15)

A primary premise of Simon’s vertical hierarchy of roles is the creation of tiers of responsibility layered to receive direction from the authority above. A system of hierarchy is

created where decisions reached in the high ranks of the organization will have no effect on employees at each level unless there are means to communicate the decision downward.

Vertical alignment creates a unified structure supporting the ideals and goals developed at the top of the organization. As goals are identified and roles are defined throughout the hierarchy, Simon defines a “unity of command” that keeps unnecessary layers within the organization to a minimum. (p.22) Unity of command limits the layers through which a decision must pass through before being acted upon.

Influence of Values on Rationality

Simon states that every decision involves elements of two kinds, “factual” and “valued”. Factual propositions are statements about the observable world and the way it operates tested to be true and false whether what they say about the world actually occurs or whether it does not (p.45). The propositions can be a description of the future state of affairs and then descriptions can be true or false in an empirical sense...addition to an imperative quality they select one future state of affairs in preference to one another and direct behavior toward the chosen alternative. In short, they have an ethical as well as good intent. (p.46)

Securing the Unitarian Perspective

Critical to the Simon unitary perspective is loyalty to the organization. Relative to Barnard’s assertions regarding an organizational morality, individual values should have minimal impact of efficiency. Yet, rationality is often challenged with conflicting values. Simon states,

...the individual is limited by his values and those conceptions of purpose which influence him in making decisions. If his loyalty to his organization is high, his decisions may reflect high acceptance of the objectives set. If his loyalty is lacking, personal motives may interfere with efficiency. (p.40)

To ensure loyalty and limit personal values, Simon states there must be purposeful action to limit individual judgment.

One function that (the) organization performs is to place organization members in a psychological environment that will adapt their decisions to the organization objectives and will provide them with the information needed to make decisions correctly. (p.78)

Simon answers the utility question of “happiness” and well-being by limiting the decision maker to the bounds of the organization. In other words, the wellbeing of the organization, not the well-being of the individual members of the organization, is of prime importance.

To influence organizational decisions, Simon provides mechanisms for the organization to apply:

- 1) Division of Labor – tasks are assigned, limiting attention to that task.
- 2) Standard practices-how particular tasks should be done in a prescribed manner.
- 3) Systems of authority, where decisions transmitted downward.
- 4) Channels of communication running in all directions through which information and decision flows.
- 5) Internalization of influence, where the organizations trains and indoctrinates its members. “ (p.104)

Morals and Moral Development

As the purpose of this study is to attempt to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes of a set of school administrators as they make decisions, a brief review of moral development and decision theory will provide an intellectual basis for the study.

Defining Morality

Rogers (1927) cites Fichte who derives moral duties from two premises . . . one’s obligation to respect one’s own dignity as a free being and one’s obligation always so to act as not to violate the equal freedom of other men. . . (p. 360) Fichte believes that, “ the kind of philosophy which one adopts depends on the sort of man one is . . . for a philosophical system is

not a lifeless piece of human nature that one might take or discard... but it is animated by the soul of the man who has it. (Fichte, p.434) Such notions of self and other run throughout the literature on morality. As MacDonald (2002) explains, morality is a system of rules that modifies our behavior in a social situation. It is doing well instead of harm and sets some virtuous standards of conduct or moral codes. It is a set of ethics that guides one's behavior.

Immanuel Kant – Categorical Imperative and Deontological Ethics

The Categorical Imperative is the ultimate norm for morality. All moral laws appear to us as an imperative. (Sullivan, 1994, p.28)

Harnack (1974), citing Kant:

It is necessary to distinguish between a person's moralities, a moral system and ethics. To talk about a person's morality is talk about his acts and his behavior...it is talk about the moral righteousness and wrongness. To talk about moral systems is to talk about the principles according to which one judges whether a person's act or behavior is right or wrong. To talk about ethics is to talk about the validity and justification of these principles. (p.70)

Kant's Categorical Imperative and sense of duty is grounded in association with the concepts of good will and maxims. Again Harnack quoting Kant:

"Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will. A good will is good not because of what is performed or effects, not by its aptness or the attainment of some of some proposed acts but simply by virtue of the volition... even if the act achieves nothing, there remains good will." (p.76)

In essence, Kant derives the good being in the effort, even if the results were not the intention (Sullivan, p.29)

To support reasoning making a particular act, Kant points to the principle of a maxim...a subjective principle of one's act, the principle by which a person, in fact, acts. Moral law can only be universal if the act is based a maxim which you can at the same time will that should

become a universal law. (Harnack, p.80) Our duty commands us to act in a law abiding fashion, first by adopting maxims or policies that can serve as moral rules for everyone and to act on those maxims ourselves. Kant often described the formulation and adoption of moral maxims as a kind of legislation, not unlike the enactment of public laws. (Sullivan, p.33)

Kant attempted to discover the rational principle that would stand as a categorical imperative to ground all other ethical judgment. The imperative would have to be categorical versus hypothetical or conditional, since true morality should not depend on individual likes and dislikes. Among the various formulations of the categorical imperative, two are separately worth noting:

Always act in such a way that you can also will that the maxim of your action becomes a universal law; or...

Act so that you treat humanity, both in your own person and in that of another, always as an end and not as a means. (Uleman, p. 171)

Although these are formally equivalent, the first illustrates the need for moral principles to be universalizable. Paton(1971) extends the formulation by positing, "To judge our own actions by the same universal standards which apply to the actions of others is an essential condition of morality."(p. 73) The second formulation points to the radical distinction between things and persons.

Kant's theory is an example of deontological or duty-based ethics. It judges the nature of actions and the will of agents rather than goals achieved. The inputs and intentions are critical, not the result. Deontological ethics are concerned what people do, not with the consequences of their actions. Duty is characterized by: Doing the right thing; do it because it is the right thing to; a demand that one should act out of respect for moral law, a demand that one should or ought

to act in this or that way. The morally good intention is always to do one's duty. (Sullivan p.31 Harnack p.83) It is the foundation for the categorical imperative.

People have the duty to do the right thing, even if it produces a bad result. Here lie the claims of Kant's critics. In consideration of war, preservation of self and others is one's duty (to kill is wrong). Yet in a war-like situation, killing is accepted. Kant would argue it is the good will, protecting the greater good that justifies the action. Stratton (2000) states that in defense of Kant's claims, only actions done solely from duty can have moral worth. Kant maintains this strong view because he held that moral good actions acquire their value from the moral worth of motives from which they are done. A morally worthy motive is one that is a) non-accidental related to the rightness of the actions done from it, when is it right; and b) subject to symmetry thesis-where the reasons a good willed person does an action and reasons why the action is right, are the same (p.16). A further examination of duty-based ethics would:

- Emphasize the value of every human being.
- Accept acts are always wrong (no matter what good comes of them).
- Provide certainty (prediction-good in schools).
- Deal with intentions and motives.

Duty - based ethics:

- Supports absolute rules...causes exceptions.
- Allows acts that make the world less a good place.

The Categorical Imperative is a purely formal and therefore universal norm for the moral acceptability of possible policies. Such policies, like the laws of natural justice in the public forum, have substantive content, for they refer to general kinds of actions that any agent, including those with generally described positions or roles, may or may not do or must or must not do in certain general described kinds of situations. (Sullivan, p.32) They are the sort of policies or principles that underlie our most immediate and particular surface intentions.

In summary, Kant argues it is that person's intentions, those "inner actions" that precede and cause our physical movements as their effects. To act in an ethically worthy fashion, we must have what Kant described as "submissive disposition" and a "moral attitude that motivates us to act from duty", "out of respect for" and "for the sake of" moral law. Relative to the relationship with religion, Byrne (2007) quotes Kant,

It is not merely religion which according to Kant is subordinate to morality. Morality is autonomous, it is self-sufficient and with respect to existence and validity, it is independent of everything else but everything else which in one sense or another which in a sense or another connected with morality, is subordinate to it. (p. 100)

Bergson's Theory on Moral Obligation

Henri Bergson (1935) speaks to the variance that occurs in "dutiful" situations. Bergson's work often references (and extends) Kant's perspective. His arguments relative to the limitations of Kant's narrow view of duty provided an alternative lens to moral decisions. His explanation of morality and moral obligation posits:

"Later we would say it was society...we would compare it to an organism whose cells, united by imperceptible links, fall into their respective places in a highly developed hierarchy and for the greatest good of the whole, naturally submit to discipline that may demand sacrifice on the part. This however can only be a comparison for an organism subject to inexorable laws is one thing and a society composed of free wills is another..." (p.9)

Bergson continues,

"From this first standpoint social life appears to us a system of more or less deeply rooted habits corresponding to the needs for the community. Some of the habits of command, most of them are habits of obedience, whether to obey a person commanding by virtue of a mandate from society or from the society itself, vaguely perceived or felt, there emanates an impersonal imperative. Each one of these habits of obedience exerts pressure on our will...As with all habits we have a sense of obligation." (p.10)

Bergson shows that there are two sources from which morality evolves, closed and open. Bergson's argument extends Kant's structured reasoning to explain "exceptional" occasions

where the lines of duty and obligation cannot be followed to meet moral obligations. Bergson postulates:

“Between the closed and open soul there is the soul that is in the process of opening. In a word, between the static and dynamic, there is to be observed in morality too, a time of transition... We have the purely static morality that might be called infra-intellectual and the purely dynamic, supra-intellectual. Nature intended the one and the other is a product of man’s genius. The former constitutes a conglomeration of habits which are in man... The latter is inspiration, intuition, emotion, susceptible of analysis and ideas the furnish intellectual notations of it and branch out in infinite details. Stopping in between to consider contemplation.” (64)

Bergson - Closed Morality

Nature has made certain species evolve in such a way that the individuals in these species cannot exist on their own. They are fragile and require a community for support. Bergson uses the analogy of a community of bees, where roles are defined to create, support and defend the hive. In society, the forces of these same needs, passed on through the generations, are the source of closed morality.

“However, the radical difference may be between primitive and civilized man, is due to almost solely to what the child has massed since the first awakening of its conscientiousness. All acquisitions of humanity during centuries of civilization are there, at his elbow, deposited in the knowledge imparted to him in traditions, institutions, the customs, the syntax and vocabulary of language he learns to speak. In short, the obligation we find in the depths of our consciousness and which as the etymology of the word implies, binds us to the other members of society.”(p.83)

In alignment with Kant’s moral imperative, Bergson closed theory reinforces rigidity to the rules. The survival of the community requires that there be strict obedience, strict cohesion, and the categorical imperative. Bergson submits:

All moral ideas interpenetrate each other, but none is more instructive than that of justice...it includes most of the others...Justice has always evoked ideas of equality, of proportion, of compensation... justice has been represented as holding the scales. Equity

signifies equality...Rules and regulations, right and righteousness are words that suggest a straight line. (p.69)

Bergson argues, however, that Kant's universal application of categorical imperative is not appropriate in all circumstances. He posits that closed morality really concerns the survival of a society, "my" society. Therefore it excludes "other" societies. Bergson uses war as an illustration to his argument.

Bergson - Open Morality

As open morality is concerned with creativity and progress (resulting from moral dilemma), it is not concerned with obedience and cohesion. Bergson refers to the morality as open because it includes everyone, universal and with a focus of peace. The source of open morality according to Bergson is creative emotions. The difference between creative emotions and normal feelings, is that with normal emotions we have a representation which causes feeling, (I see my friend, and then I feel happy); with creative emotion, we first have the emotion which then creates the representation. Bergson provides the example of the joy of a musician who, on the basis of emotion, creates a symphony, and who then produces representations of the music, in the score. Bergson in this example explains how the "leap of an intuition" happens, differentiating from the rigidity of closed morality. The creative emotion makes one unstable and one out of the habitual mode of intelligence which is directed at needs.

Bergson's extension of Kant's moral philosophy stems from the fact that in society there are many and unique obligations. Individuals in society deviate from particular obligations. When this illicit desire occurs, there becomes a resistance or deviance to society and acclaimed habits. If the same individual resists these resistances, a psychological state of tension occurs, experiencing the rigidity of obligations. According to Bergson, when philosophers such as Kant attribute a severe aspect to duty, they have externalized this experience of obligation's

inflexibility. For Bergson, if we ignore the multiplicity of particular obligations in any given society, and instead look at what he calls, “whole of obligation, (p.25) then we see that obedience to obligation is almost natural. According to Bergson, obligations rise from the natural need an individual has for the stability that a society can give. As a result of this natural need, society inculcates habits of obedience in the individual.

Yet, Bergson brings to bear another force. The second force is what Bergson calls “impetus of love.”(p. 96) The impetus of love, like joy but also like sympathy, is a creative emotion. The emotion must be explicated into actions and representations. The representation of the mystics explicates can be further explicated into formulas, for example, the formula of each person deserving respect and dignity. The formulas, which are expressions of creation and love, are now being mixed with the formulas that aim solely to ensure the stability of any given society; the two forces are mixed together in reason. Whereas the rational method used experience of resistance to the resistance to explain the force of obedience, in the mystical experience of the impetus of love the formula explains the force of creation. A reversal has taken place. The same forces that have generated the formulas are instead now being explained by those very formulas. How could some representation of intelligence have the power to train the will? How could an idea categorically demand its own realization? Bergson says this... “Re-establishes the duality (of forces), the difficulties vanish. (p.96). The two forces are complimentary manifestations of life.

Moral Development

As the purpose of this study is to describe and explain the personal and professional morals of principals as they make decisions, central to the discussion of morals is the development of morals. In an attempt to synthesize the essential findings relative to moral

development theories, this review continues with Piaget's (1965) moral phases and moves toward Kohlberg's (1975) extensions of that model. The cognitive approach taken by these models in concert with Bandura's (2001) research on social learning/ cognitive theory will support the intellectual foundation of this study.

Piaget (1965) identified two concepts of morality, heteronomous and autonomous, in his classic study on children's developing moral judgment. Piaget posits that when asked the reason for the moral decisions on transgressions (misbehavior), children process differently according to their cognitive developmental differences. According to Piaget, heteronomous morality of thinking is commonly utilized by younger children. In these instances, younger children are inclined to judge the behavior using rules handed down by authority figures. The heteronomous term is used to refer to the rules of "others." Characteristics such as egocentrism, rigidity of rules and objective responsibility mark this type of reasoning (Ruffey, 1981).

Egocentrism refers to children being caught up in their own point of view and not able to see an issue from other people's perspective. In this view, right and wrong are considered from the child's perspective rather other people's perspective (Yang, 2006). Heteronomous morality also views rules given by adults as something that cannot be changed.(Ruffey, 1981) Everything is totally right or totally wrong. From this moral position, children when asked why a behavior is wrong, children would respond because their teacher or parents say so.

Children making moral judgments using heteronomous morality also process through objective responsibility which leads them to judge an action according to its consequences (Piaget, 1965; Ruffey, 1981). Piaget states that, with increased interactions with peers (school age), heteronomous moral reasoning gives way to autonomous moral reasoning. At this stage of development, children begin to take other people's circumstances into account. With

autonomous morality, children gradually develop the concepts of fairness and justice. Piaget submits that children construct a sense of fairness through a “tit-for-tat” morality. Yet, he argues that children have not reached a mature form of morality until a more mature notion of justice emerges. This is what Piaget refers to “reciprocity as a fact” and “reciprocity as an ideal.” Developing heteronymous morality, older children have the ability to take other people’s perspectives and judge right and wrong by taking other people’s perspectives and intentions into consideration. Piaget was hesitant to refer to moral development as “stages” as there is overlapping progression of reasoning in moving from heteronymous to autonomous.

Kohlberg’s Theory of Moral Development.

Opposed to Piaget’s conservative approach to developmental stages, Kohlberg established moral development stages that he identified as invariant in sequence and qualitatively different by stage (Yang, 2006). He argued that children go through stages of development that move them to “moral adequacy” (Kohlberg, 1975) or moral maturity. While Piaget used stories (behavior) to depict moral development, Kohlberg used moral dilemmas as a means for studying moral development.

Through longitudinal and cross-sectional data, Kohlberg (1984) found that individuals’ moral reasoning tend to pass through several stages in a specific order. In his focus on moral reasoning, circumstances (other than transgressions), also are aligned with similar age trends. Kohlberg’s stage theory was strongly influenced by Piaget’s research. Consequently, they share many common perspectives. Three moral levels are featured in Kohlberg’s moral development theory: pre-conventional, conventional and post conventional. Six stages of moral development are grouped into these three levels (two distinct stages in each level). According to Kohlberg (1984), the term “conventional” means conforming to and upholding the rules and conventions

of society. For children at the pre-conventional level, they are not ready to understand and uphold these conventions and rules. Yang (2006) clarifies that individuals at the post-conventional level understand and accept the conventions and rules but acceptance is based on accepting the underlying moral principle of the convention and rules. More specifically, principles are judged by the underlying moral principle as opposed to the convention.

The pre-conventional level consists of Stage 1 and Stage 2 of moral development. Stage 1 is labeled as “punishment” and obedience (Kohlberg, 1984) or something that is given down by an external authority. Children see rules and conventions as something external to themselves. When asked to make moral evaluations, right is obedience to rules and authority and avoiding punishment. Kohlberg’s stage 1 of moral reasoning resembles Piaget’s (1965) heteronomous morality.

Stage 2 is the awareness of fairness by a child. As stage 1 defines rules in terms of authority status, stage 2 defines by equality and reciprocity. Similar to Piaget’s “reciprocity by fact,” Kohlberg’s stage 2 describes how children reason fairness. By stage 3, children enter to the conventional stages that allow them to take the perspective of others. Reciprocity, concern for others and understanding mutual roles characterize this stage of development. Kohlberg (1984) clarifies that, at stage 3 a child practices ideal reciprocity with close interpersonal contexts such as family or close friends. Similar to stage 3, stage 4 also recognizes and uses social conventions. Law and order are taken into consideration as opposed to interpersonal relationships. Perspective taking goes from an interpersonal level to a larger societal level.

Individuals at the post-conventional level understand and accept conventions but the acceptance is based on higher level of understanding of moral principles. Similar to the complex issues principals face daily, people at stage 5 view law as a flexible instrument and have the

ability to create alternatives. Stage 6 regards what is right according to their individually chosen principles. Kohlberg (1975) labeled this stage as “universal ethical principles”. The rationale is that the law and order rests upon these self-chosen principles and when laws violate these principles, each individual would act in accordance with chosen principles. Kohlberg (1984) conceived these principles as 1) principle of justice, 2) principle of role taking, or 3) principle of respect for personality (Yang, 2006).

According to Kohlberg’s (1975) six stages, moral maturity is not achieved until the post-conventional level. Kohlberg found that only 13% of his longitudinal subjects reach level 5 and all of these adults have obtained some type of graduate education. Early conclusions on levels of moral development for practicing principals suggest, actualized stage 6 development. The consideration of graduate work as the essential means for training administrators supports this argument.

Social Learning/Cognitive Theory

According to Bandura (2001), environmental factors influence behaviors through personal factors such as cognitive processes. He contends that observational learning is motivated and regulated by two cognitive processes. One process focuses on the response outcome expectation that says observational learning is more likely when the consequences of an observed behavior are rewarded rather than punished. Another process focuses on the how moral standards regulate which observationally-learned activities to pursue. That is, observational learning is governed by moral standards (Yang, 2006); within the Bandura model, behaviors can be regulated through the activation of moral standards. Included in this process are important concepts such as moral justification, social sanctions, disengagement mechanism and moral justification. It is Bandura’s argument, however, that without activation, moral

standards would not function to motivate or regulate behaviors. That is, moral standards are used as guides for behaviors but do not function as fixed regulators of behavior.

Moral Decision Making

There is no formula or algorithm for moral decision making, except as might be suggested by Jeremy Benthan's (1948) principle of *utility*.

... the principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever according to the tendency which it appears to have to argument or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question. (p. 2)

Plamenatz citing Benthan's (1948) utility principle is not a process that can be driven by a set of rules. It is more a personal assessment of every situation and puts the decision making, not the rules, at the center of the decision. Good moral decision making involves (a) knowing the facts of the situation, and (b) careful consideration of or the moral values that are relevant to the given situation. It is important to make the distinction that this discussion is not only about making moral decisions but how moral issues, notably those of the decision maker, impact those on the end of the decision. Benthan (1948) would have the decision maker consider their happiness. Hence the problem: bound in by overlapping sets of rules and regulations and sometimes a conflicting set of constituents, a decision maker has to ask whose well-being and happiness is important, or the most important, or of relatively less or no importance. *Expected utility* is more precisely called "probability-weighted utility theory." In expected utility theory, to each alternative is assigned a weighted average of its utility values under different states of nature, and the probabilities of these states are used as weights. An extension of utility theory is the notion of subjective utility which considers the growth of utility not on a linear fashion, more, less, better, or worse, but increase at a decreasing rate, or the more common *objective utility* where the emphasis is on probability of risk.

Moral Decision Making Models

Rest (1986) proposed a four-component model for individual ethical decision making and behavior, whereby the moral agent (person making the decision) must a) recognize the moral issue, b) make a moral judgment, c) resolve to place moral concerns ahead of other concerns, and d) act on moral concerns. Rest argues each component in the process is conceptually distinct and success in one stage does not imply success in any other stage (Jones, 1991).

Trevino (1986) offered a competing model which builds on the Rest model. Trevino's person-situation inter-actionable model begins with an ethical dilemma and proceeds to cognitive stages, wherein Kohlberg's (1975) cognitive moral development model becomes operative. Moral judgments made in the cognitive stage are then moderated by individual and situational factors. Ferrel and Gresham (1985) proposed a contingency framework for ethical decision making in marketing. In this model, an ethical issue or dilemma emerges from the social or cultural environment. The contingent factors that are considered by the decision maker are individual (knowledge, values, attitude, and intentions) as well as organizational (significant others and opportunity). Also considered in this model are related professional codes (Barnard, 1937), corporate policy, and rewards and punishment. The decision that emerges from this process leads first to behavior and next to evaluation of behavior, a starting point for a feedback loop.

An ethical decision making model presented by Dubinsky and Loken (1989) is based on theory of reasoned action. The model begins with behavioral beliefs, outcomes and evaluations, normative beliefs, and motivation to comply. The first two of these variables affect attitude toward ethical or unethical behavior. The latter two variables affect subjective norms toward ethical and unethical behavior. Attitude and subjective norms lead to intentions to engage in

ethical or unethical behavior which in turn affect actual behavior, ethical or unethical. Although these models reflect the moral considerations of decisions, they are mostly considering the morals of the workplace (cite Barnard) which may be different from the morals of the decision maker. However the considerations of attitudes and beliefs are relevant to the moral choices inherent in decision making.

Alternative Decision Theory Models

The discussion of modern decision making models generally begins with John Dewey's (1910) stages of problem solving. The Dewey model consisted of five consecutive stages: 1) felt difficulty, 2) the definition of the character of that difficulty, 3) suggested possible outcomes, 4) evaluation of the suggestions, and 5) further observation and experimentation leading to the acceptance or rejections of the suggestion. The model is still held popular regard as a scientific model for problem solving and decision making. Herbert Simon (1976) modified Dewey's five stages to make the model more suitable for the context of decisions in organizations. Simon posited that decision making consists of three principle phases: "Finding occasions for making a decision; finding possible courses of action; and choosing among the courses of action. " The first of these phases he called "intelligence" similar to the military use of the term intelligence; the second "design" and the third "choice".

Brim et al (1962) proposed an influential decision making process divided into five steps:

1. Identification of the problem.
2. Obtaining necessary information.
3. Production of possible solutions.
4. Evaluation of solutions.
5. Selection of strategy for performance.

The models offered by Dewey, Simon and Brim et al. (1962) are sequential in nature by dividing the decision making process into parts that follow a prescribed order. Witte (1972) was critical of division or stages and submitted that problem solving stages are performed in parallel as opposed to sequence.

Mintzberg, Raisinghani and Theoret's (1976) model agreed with the decision process consisting of distinct phases but not in sequential relationship. The argument here is that the relationship between the phases is circular rather than linear. The model is similar to the continuous improvement process introduced by E.W. Deming (1982) in as a foundation process of the Total Quality movement. Abram Wald's (1939) paper provided much of the modern landscape of modern decision theory. His work expounded on concepts utilized in present day processes including, loss functions, risk functions, admissible decision rules and mini-max decision rules.

Utility – The Rule of Maximization

Outcomes in decision theory are usually assigned values. These values are reduced as they are with Bentham, to a single entity, utility. The entity may or may not be identified with units of human satisfaction. Hansson (1994) posits that all moral decisions should, at least in principle, consist of attempts to maximize the total amount of utility. He continues that economic theory supports decision theory based on numerical representation of the values (degree of utility) although the units used may have different representations. In decision theory, the maximizing approach is almost universally employed.

Alternative are courses of action available at the time to the decision maker. These options may be considered *open* or *closed*. In an open situation, new alternatives can be discovered or invented by the decision maker. An example would be a building administrator's

use of discretion by developing policies and procedures unique to his building. In other circumstances, the set of alternatives can be viewed as closed where no alternatives can be added. Or, as in the case of the building administrator, course of action and procedures is outline by district policy. In actual life, open alternatives are common but do not support permanent solutions. In decision theory alternative sets are assumed to be closed. Closed decisions are more accessible to theoretical treatment and elements are mutually exclusive.

Contingency Theory/Leader Match

A review of existing relevant research finds Frederick Fielder's contingency model for leadership as a common reference in the study of organizational performance. In its time, Fiedler's work changed the way people studied leadership. An excerpt of Fiedler's (1971) research postulates that group performance depends on the match of situation favorableness. In other words, leadership decisions adapt to a specific environment.

Fiedler (1964) culminated 15 years of leadership study by developing the Contingency Theory as a conceptual model. His contributions were a departure from trait and behavioral models by asserting that group performance is contingent on the leader's psychological orientations and on three contextual variables: group atmosphere, task structure and leader's power position.

Leader Match

Fiedler's contingency theory was built on numerous studies with conditions, environment, task and dispositions of "workers" as variables toward effective performance. Relationships and variable roles include:

- *Leader-Member Relations*: The extent to which a leader has the support and loyalty of followers and relations with them are friendly and cooperative.
- *Task structure*: The extent, to which tasks are standardized, documented and controlled.
- *Leader's Position-power*: The extent to which the leader has authority to assess follower performance and give reward or punishment. (Chemer, 1997)

Four important ideas are posited from contingency theory:

1. There is no universal or one best way to manage.
2. The design of an organization and its subsystems must “fit” with the environment.
3. Effective decisions not only need to have proper “fit” with the environment by also between subsystems.
4. The needs of an organization are better satisfied when it is properly designed and the management style is appropriate both to the tasks undertaken and the nature of the work group.

Fiedler (1971) asserts that managers with proper training can learn to match various environments. His work has been applied as well as contested in subsequent studies.

Extensions of the Contingency Model

Contingency theory has been applied in various forms, including models directly related to decision making. The Vroom - Yetton (1973) Decision Participation Contingency Theory (also called Normative Decision Theory) is based on contingency factors. The model is represented as a linear process or decision tree. Vroom-Yetton asserts that effectiveness of a decision procedure depends on a number of aspects of the situation:

1. The importance of the decision quality and acceptance.
2. The amount of relevant information possessed by the leader and subordinates.
3. The likelihood that subordinates will accept an autocratic decision, or the likelihood that subordinates will cooperate to make a good decision if they participate.
4. The amount of disagreement among subordinates with respect to alternatives. (Jago, 1982)

The Vroom-Yetton model posits that, with appropriate training, managers can adapt leadership choices to varying environments and improve in performance.

In support of the Vroom-Yetton model, Leister et al. (1977) cites studies in which the results of the control and trained group leaders (armed forces) were compared. The results reflected a highly significant change in performance as a result of the “treatment–induced” trained groups versus the officers who comprised the control group. The results of this study also showed substantial improvement in performance occurred when leaders receive training with Leader Match.

Fiedler (1971) reviewed the effects of leadership training as an interpretation of the contingency model in succeeding studies. Of particular interest is the McNamara’s (1968) comparison study of directive-permissive variation in the leader’s behavior of elementary and secondary school principals. The correlations between measurement of worker disposition and performance were positive for newly appointed elementary principals and established secondary principals. Conversely measurement of worker disposition was negative for established elementary principals and new secondary schools principals. The interpretation of the data and analysis of two levels suggested the correlates of the contingency model were at play. The structures and processes that differed at each level (work) environment called for differing leadership (decision making) styles. Fiedler’s theory and its extensions were not without detractors.

Tjosvold & Wedley (1985) questioned the efficacy of the Vroom-Yetton model as a reliable predictor of managerial decision making. Tjosvold’s & Wedley’s findings suggest that no one method of decision making is effective under all conditions. The authors posit that social interactions (constructive controversy) can substantially affect the dynamics and outcomes of

decision making. Tjosvold posits only autocratic decisions involve no social interaction that typically undercuts decision making. The researchers hypothesized that constructive controversy accounts for a significant portion of the variance in successful decision making in addition to the variance attributable to the Vroom-Yetton model.

To test their hypothesis, Tjosvold & Wedley studied 58 middle level (experienced) managers enrolled in MBA programs in Canada. The participants were provided writing prompt regarding two recent decisions, one that was successful and the other unsuccessful. A choice of one of the recent decisions was considered in relation to a set of scaled questions constructed from the Vroom Yetton Model. The participants translated their thoughts via computer terminal.

Data analysis provided six different dependent variables for measuring the efficacy of Vroom-Yetton model. Compliance with the Vroom-Yetton model and the degree of constructive controversy was the independent variables which are capable of causing variances on the dependent variables. Relationships between the independent and dependent variables were analyzed using chi square tests, analysis of variance and regression technique.

The researchers found that constructive controversy was strongly correlated with the success of decision making. Managers reported that when controversy (discussion) was present, the decision makers were affirmed. The results from the study challenged the assumption that social interaction generally impedes decision making, a factor the Vroom-Yetton model did not consider. Decision making is at the core of the principal's role. From a practitioner's view, the contingency model aligns with many of the principal's daily decision making scenarios.

Unitary versus Shared Decision Making

Most studies of leadership and decision making focus on a central authority figure. Over time, leadership has been defined in terms of personal traits and situations (contingencies) (Fiedler, Leister et. al 1977), charisma (Vroom, 2003), and transactional, transitional and transformational leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003). Even in participatory leadership arrangements, the argument generally begins with the relationship the authority figure holds within the context of decision making and responsibility (Hite et. al, 2006). Each discussion reflects how the leader (person in authority) responds to or behaves in relation to subordinates. At one end of the continuum, autocratic leadership is characterized by highly centralized decision making and completely concentrated power. Conger (2000) argues top led organizations have a greater chance of achieving success than decisions driven by lower levels of management. Simon (1976) states that the task of administration is to establish the desired structure encourage certain behaviors and integrate activities to achieve organizational not individual ends. Deference to authority is not a choice, the hierarchy demands it. (Prethus, 1958) The other end of the continuum is characterized by highly participative decision making power equalization (Jago) and learning. (Senge, 2000)

The literature provides ample attention to both unitary (centralized) and shared decision making models. Studies of reform initiatives have provided alternative attempts to improve teaching and learning. Classic studies of the decision making models in Chicago (neighborhood councils) (Byrk et al 1998) and San Diego's Blueprint for Student Success (singular focus, theory E. top-down) (Bennis, 2000) reform initiatives bring to light the pros and cons each district model experienced. The participative nature of the Chicago reform broadened the decision making process. While innovation and ownership increased, principal decision making

latitude decreased. A vertically integrated featured in the San Diego reform effort create a closed system supported by a singular focus. The result was limited shared decision making, particularly in the areas of curriculum and instruction. Principals were viewed as field supervisors charged with the implementation of the district plan.

Society is too enamored with triumphant individuals. Systems that call for collaborative and cooperation make systems that make change not only effective but possible. (Bennis)

A shared decision making approach became more popular in the shadow of the private sector's quality circle movement (Langford, 1995). The essence of shared decision making is to include the stakeholders who will be most impacted by decisions as contributors to the decision to be made (Mitchell, 1990), as a means to increase human capital (Vroom, 2003), and as a means of improving achievement (Weiss & Cambone, 1994). The State of Michigan's P.A. 25 of 1990 required the shared decision making process in the development of district and building school improvement plans.

The variability of site-based decision making processes is evident. The degree of staff contribution is defined at the onset of the shared decision making process whereas the parameters of responsibility are identified and assigned to the contributors. Hanson (1990) divides the parameters into four levels: de-concentration, participation, delegation, and devolution. Other models identify five levels of decision making: decide, consult individuals, consult groups, facilitate and delegate (Vroom, 2003). Mitchell (1994) clarifies an oft-spoken misnomer, arguing that site-based, shared decision-making is not site-based management. Shared decision making does not lead change by itself. It can become a system to vent grievances and minor annoyances (Weiss & Cambone). Principals must be taught the skills of leading decisions that are a result of collaboration (Bradshaw & Buckner, 1994) Teachers resisted change and conflicts

resulted when principals utilized shared decision making as vehicles to foster large changes (Weiss & Cambone, 1994). The effects of shared decision making on student achievement are limited (Rice & Schneider, 1994).

Data- Driven Decision Making

Data-driven decision making in the field of education is modeled after the Total Quality movement in the private sector. The public sector adoption of data-driven decision making rejects tacit knowledge as justification for decisions. The continuous improvement process was introduced to Japan by W. Edwards Deming (1982) and later translated to an educational application by David Langford (1993). The well cited model calls for data collection to be comprised of discrete measurements of outcomes of a given process. In education, the measured outcome is typically student achievement data. “Data-driven decision making tells one what to do next. “ (Langford, 1999) As school improvement and accountability became part of the discourse in school legislation, the value of data driven decision making also became evident. (Michigan Public Act 25 of 1990) Principal development models emphasize data driven decision making professional development as a priority for aspiring and practicing principals (Petzko, 2008).

Emerging Models: Adaptive and Distributive Leadership

More recent studies have extended decentralized decision making as a means to allow decisions to be made at an organization’s staff level. Distributive leadership expands the decision making and responsibility for the outcomes of the decisions to various functions or departments in an organization. Elmore (1996) posits distributive decision making as a means to counteract teacher isolation, often referenced as “loose coupling,” and being resistant to change

(Zimmerman, 2006). The unintended effects of isolation cause uncertainty surrounding decisions to be carried out. By creating ownership and delegating authority and responsibility for results, distributive leadership extensions are designed to pick up where traditional shared decision making models often fall short (Elmore). No change can occur without willing and committed leaders (Bennis, 2000).

Adaptive leadership, as defined by Heifitz (1994) consists of the learning required to address issues people face to diminish the gap between values and reality. Adaptive decision making provides guidance while the leader assumes a position to view progress from the “balcony”.

Adaptive decision making is a result of changes in values, beliefs and behavior. In this expanded view of a participative model, there is a sense of reciprocity in which decisions are influenced by the environment. Implications for adaptive principal decision making could result from location, size and demographics of a particular school setting or dilemma (Koberg, 1986, Marshall, 1992).

To affect adaptive work requires decentralized thinking. It calls for the decision to be deflected to the stakeholders, to be allowed to “ripen” (Heifitz, 1994) and take an adaptive shape, resulting in broad thinking and resolution of emerging realities.

Competing Values Framework

The argument driving the proposed study asserts that principal decision making is influenced by one’s personal beliefs and values. In the theoretical models which are being discussed, the Competing Values framework offers a kindred relationship to the argument in the proposed study.

There is a growing recognition of the influence of values on school leaders. Administrators are not merely technical bureaucrats; they are politicians mediating among conflicting values (Marshall, 1992). What principals do (decide) falls outside the bounds of technical rationality and there are important dimensions to their work which cannot be reduced to technique. At times a principal's decision must choose between competing values of goodness (Greenfield, 1985). A viable argument is that one system of thinking (rational) is needed in one circumstance versus another (Leader Match), however, at times; two systems (rational and human relations) may be needed coincidentally to make a decision. In the mid 1990's, an integrated model represented a yet larger framework referred to as the competing values framework.

The relationship in the model delineates the tensions between controlling versus flexibility as well as internal versus external processes. The model presents a compelling viewpoint on the various roles and the varying degrees of leadership and levels of decision making each one supports. Quinn argues that the roles can change at any moment. A viable organization moves between roles as the task demands. On a daily basis, principals make decisions that often conflict with existing conditions and considerations. The challenge of principal decision making rests on understanding and acting within these competing values.

Principal Development

Instances of decision making define each role assumed by a principal. How does one prepare for these roles, develop the craft and hone the skills of a decision maker? What are the specific skills principals need to possess in order to affect decisions? Certainly formal university training provides the necessary credentials. Emerging from the studies of principal development is the notion of personal experiences and influences on developing and practicing principals.

Professional Pathways and Principal Learning

A variety of tracks, experiences, training, education, and support lead toward securing a principal's position. Career pathways to the principalship include: the direct routes (teacher to principal), the classic route (teacher to assistant principal to principal), the teacher leader route, and the school leader route (previously held leadership positions) (McGough, 2003). In the midst of these chosen pathways lies formal and informal sources of learning how to become an effective decision maker while acquiring the craft of a principal (Mertz, 2004).

McGough's research study explored the manner in which 23 school principals became aware and committed to new perspectives and practice. Each principal's story cites the formative and transformative changes that took place in their careers; these were collected and analyzed. To gain this perspective, McGough used four tools specifically designed for studying principals' stories. The findings indicated that the 23 principals' professional learning was influenced by their: 1) impressions of school and teacher in early childhood, 2) progression through a common perspective development sequence with patterned influences, 3) personal orientation to learning, and 4) a story about oneself as learner.

McGough's study offers valuable insights for the proposed study. The study explores pathways to the principalship, patterns of perspective development, and patterns of influence that affect principals' practice. Of particular interest is that the study places the principals' family at the center of influential factors. Three approaches situated in adult learning theory were posited as a foundation for analyzing the formation and transformation of principalship perspectives. According to McGough, the theoretical position an educator may take are attributive (learner as choice maker), representative (learner as meaning-maker) and situational (guided by socio-cultural determinants).

The discourse of principal development includes Mertz, (2004) who, in developing a conceptual model for aspiring principals, refers to the process as a “continuum of relationships” that reflect an evolving degree of competency and involvement in the role. Weiss & Cambone (1994) argue that some principals learn the craft to simply maintaining the status quo, while others are more innovative in their decision making. Principals must develop a specific set of skills in an era of constant change and increased accountability (Bradshaw et al., 1994). Practicing principals are implored to hone their skills in a time of changing policy. Internships, mentoring, degree programs and principal academies are the most common means for principal development.

Role of the Principal

Current models of training at the university level suggest there is movement away from top down leadership styles associated with the science of administration. For the past two decades, there has been a shift away from “being in control” (Leithwood and Duke) and a transition to collegial and empowering forms of leadership. Yet, recent policy decisions call for a return to a scientific model of running a school, where the principal spends more time in classroom supervision, conducting evaluations and using test data. This model is designed to recapture efficiency in an era of principal accountability (Brubaker & Simon, 1987 Hargreaves, 2008).

The literature can be conflicting and indicates a misalignment in presentation of technical aspects of the principal’s role. Principals’ work has been defined by patterns of practice that guide the role, including: systematic problem solving, managing school curriculum, nurturing interpersonal relationships and monitoring policies and procedures. (Trider and Leithwood, 1988) Varying schools of thought place the principal as sole decision maker while others call for

a skill set that requires a collaborative approach. Pezko's (2008) extensive study acknowledges the knowledge and skills necessary for administrative success, particularly noting the importance of rigorous instruction and standards-based position for improving student achievement. However, the outcomes of her study relate a human relations priority as a priority for success. Of the 18 different roles and responsibilities considered, human relations, personnel, and site-based leadership ranked in the top five.

As this review sought to identify what successful principals do and the decisions that comprise their work. The review also sought to identify of foundational knowledge and skills as they are debated in the literature. "Hard" or technical skills accompany non-technical or "soft skills" are identified in the literature as contributors to principals fulfilling their roles.

Technical Skills

To understand the scope of principal decision making, it is necessary to understand the scope of principal responsibility. What are the essential skills or expectations of competence for a principal? The Interstate Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) produced the ISLLC Standards for Schools Leaders which have been adopted by 35 states as well as integrated into the accreditation process for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (Pezko, 2008). The standards focus on developing school leaders whose priorities are improving teaching and learning and sustaining learning environments that allow success for all students (CCSSO, 1996).

The "hard", or technical, core of leadership would include the management responsibilities of the leader. Doing the "business of school" falls into this area. Evaluation, hiring, finance and scheduling are defined and responsibilities are implicitly undertaken by the principal (Leithwood and Duke).

McGough (2003) summarizes the technical aspect of a building leader:

- a. The principal as technician emphasizing the standards- based technical preparation for beginning principals.
- b. The principal as expert notion seeking to identify and disseminate problem solving skills used by successful, effective and/or expert principals.
- c. The principal as craftsperson notion phenomenally describing the pragmatic craft of the principalship toward reality- based understanding of the role.
- d. A fourth, newly emerging notion of the principal-as-partner advocating a philosophy of caring as the foundation for a new means of undertaking the role.

Non-technical (soft) Skills

Principals are managers of school curricula. As instructional leaders, principals need knowledge of curriculum processes to respond effectively to change. An ongoing debate centers on the degree of breadth and depth of any one subject area that principals should bring to the position. Are leaders most effective when they bring expertise in one area (Behar – Horenstein, 1995)? Stein & Nelson’s (2003) case study argues that administrators need to have some degree of understanding of the various subject areas. There are distinctions between pedagogical content knowledge and leadership content knowledge. It is plausible to suggest it is more desirable for a principal to possess an understanding of the macro-curriculum (Trider & Leithwood, 1988). The view would be from a holistic standpoint versus a depth of understanding of each subject area (Behar-Horenstein). The management of curriculum involves principals in decisions on curriculum objectives and the learning strategies that should be in place for students to learn. At this juncture, principals may introduce changes or improvement to the curriculum (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). In the development of principals, the training opportunities could include field-based experiences, observations or engage in teacher evaluation (Behar-Horenstein, 1995).

To demonstrate expertise in instructional practices, effective principals exercise both instructional and transformational leadership to facilitate change. Marks & Printy (2003) employed qualitative and quantitative instruments as part of a school restructuring study. Their

findings posit that strong transformational leadership by the principal is essential in supporting the commitment of teachers. Coupled with instructional leadership, the principal will be able to make decisions that will promote change through improved relationships and instructional practice.

Ethical Decisions in the Principalship

The role of the principal requires ethical commitments in order to advocate for the principles of democracy, respect, social justice and equity. Administrator values come into conflict almost every day. They are to consider the ethical dilemmas and then identifying the principles that guide them (Marshall, 1992). Ethical decision making is a dimension of principals' work that cannot be reduced to technique (Greenwood, 1985). Teachers reported that principals who practiced effective instructional leadership worked to create cultures of collaboration, inquiry, lifelong learning, experimentation, reflection (Blasé & Blasé, 1999) and trust. Many principal decisions are value laden. The meaning people give to events is shaped by their goals, values, feelings, existing knowledge and past experiences (Leithwood & Duke). Moral leadership practice has been defined as stimulating and encouraging the democratic process in which multiple participants, including children, have a real voice in schools (Bogotch et al.). Within an organization's beliefs and ideals are competing values. These values represent the organization culture, the basic assumptions that are made about such things as the means to compliance, motives, leadership, decision making, effective values and organizational forms (Kalliath et al.1999, Greenfield, 1985).

Learning the Craft

Mentoring

Mentoring is common practice in professional circles. Daresh & Playko (1990) describes mentoring as,

“...a continuing process wherein individuals within an organization provide support and guidance to others so that it may be possible for these individuals become more effective contributors (decision makers) to the goals of the organization.” (p.71)

While Mertz adds,

“Not only does everyone need a mentor, almost every supportive relationship is mentoring.” (p.548)

Principals learn from principals. New principals rely on field experiences that are well planned and support from highly qualified mentors (Petzko, 2004). Behar-Howenstein’s (1995) study further expounds on principal (adult) learning as a synthesis of experiences through mentoring, personal reflection, development of a personal educational platform, understanding interpersonal styles and personal professional development. The argument is extended to include a principal’s environmental and personal factors as the most important in influencing learning. Mentoring can help leaders become more creative, think more critically, perceive solutions to problems, and analyze situations from different perspectives (Shaughnessy, 1995). A concentrated effort is evident to highlight leadership preparation programs that have resulted in formal collaborative efforts between school districts and universities (Daresh, Sherman, 2005). Mentors must be selected and trained in the art of developing the protégé. The induction and continued mentoring provided by a school district can prove to be the factor that makes or breaks the mentor’s success (Petzko).

The scope of principal decision making is so extensive that anything less than a formal mentoring plan usually comes up short in preparing the mentee. The research addresses shortfalls in mentoring programs and practices. Mentoring in the informal, traditional sense has existed for centuries and promotes the status quo (Darwin, 2000). Mentoring is typically a relationship between a veteran who acts as a guide (Samier, 2000) and a subject who shares characteristics similar to the seasoned mentor (Gradiner, et al., 2000). Stand alone mentoring programs in districts typically include workshops in leadership skills and content area training, informal mentoring, internships and shadowing experiences.

Principal Schools - Internships/Academies

Formal principal training is, by and large, located at the university level and focuses primarily on administration (hard/technical). Most education administration training programs in the United States are characterized as hybrid/pre-paradigm departments, unlikely to undertake fundamental changes (Bjork & Ginsbert, 1995). The programs are typically comprised of courses that incorporate educational leadership, administration, organization, supervision, systems personnel or management, school law and finance, communications or community relations, contemporary issues, human resources and human resource development (Behar-Horenstein). As highlighted earlier, 35 states have adopted the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders (Petzko, 2004)) which have been regarded as the impetus to a groundswell of reform in the principal preparation programs. The revised standards (2008) are a result of new information and lessons learned about educational leadership in the previous ten years. Variations of like programs include additional experiences such as internships and selected courses that qualify principals for state certification. Course work must be interrelated and tied to problems of practice. Internships must be substantive and extend over time, requiring aspiring principals to

engage in the actual work of leadership (Petzko). Building leadership must be adaptive to change and circumstance (Fiedler, 1996).

Daresh's study (1988) submits that extending formal learning with the integration of field-based programs through internships, mentoring, personal reflection, and development of one's personal platform, as exemplified professional preparation, provides an optimum experience for aspiring principals. These activities according to Darish, are best situated in collaborations between universities and local schools. Principal academies permit current or aspiring principals to acquire skills that will allow them to address emergent changes in teaching, learning, instruction, curriculum, staff development (Behar-Horenstein, 1995)). Academies present an opportunity for adult learning that is contextual in nature that is life/task/problem solving centered (Boulton-Lewis et al., 1996). McGough (2003) submits the discipline of adult learning provides a substantive body of work that can be employed as a foundation for analyzing the formation and transformation of principal's perspective. McGough's study contributes with a broadened view of principal training by suggesting a three step approach to development: attributive, representative and situational approaches. Learning is also influenced mostly by attitude, life experiences and people influenced them. (Boulton-Lewis et al.)

Personal Development and External Influences

At this juncture, the review addresses a third and fourth tier of research affecting principal decisions. To support a challenge to the existing research, critical areas of principal personal development are identified. The influence of personal development on building leaders as a result of their own life experiences will be the variables for scrutiny. Because internal influences are personal in nature, relevant research is limited. External experiences and events are also posited as potential influences on principal choices. Relative policy decisions, training,

and profound personal experiences are identified as themes central to a principal's career experience.

Personal Background Structures

Role of the Family

Parenting styles can be classified in four categories which include authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and neglecting (Lee, 1999). Studies distinguish between parenting style as a composite set of beliefs and attitudes that provide a context for parent behavior. Parenting practices include specific goal-directed behavior through which parents perform their parental duties (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). The results of the study are used as predictors of self concept, locus of control, test scores, self-reliance and maturity.

Demographic Considerations

Basic demographic data regarding the number of practicing (male and female) principals provides a few insights into the principalship. Most notable are few teachers entering the position early in their career as opposed to the number of principals who come into the position with more teaching experience. This could reflect the need for more experience in times increased accountability and reform. A second, more prominent trend is the rising proportion of principals who are women.

	1993-94	1999-2000	2003-04
<i>Male/Female</i>	<i>86/14</i>	<i>78/22</i>	<i>74/26</i>

(U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

This trend is also observed in Canada. The proportion of eligible candidates who are women has increased from less than one tenth in the early 1970's to between the one third and

one-half (1990). Clearly, fundamental and far reaching social change is affecting aspirations, expectations and qualifications for educational leadership (Smith, 1991).

Historically, the image of the principal has been predominantly male. Studying male behavior and, more particularly, white male behavior is not in and of itself a problem. It becomes more problematic when inferences obtained in the study of male principals are extended uncritically to account for women principals' (Mertz & McNeely, 1998).

Religion

Research suggests that religion has traditionally been a vital source of norms and beliefs, an influence on family solidarity. In many cases, religion is how many families define themselves (D'Antonio, 1985). Bailyn (1960) refers to religion as an integrating function. Are there differences (achievement, predictors) in public and religious affiliated education (Marsh & Grayson, 1990)? Understanding the impact of religion in relation to gender differences is a starting point to personality development for men and women (Suziedelis & Potvin, 1981). How does the experience of religion span the lifetime (Paloutzian & Park, 2005)?

External Influences and Constraints

In the course a of principal's personal and professional growth there are policies, reforms, mandates, events, experiences, and training. What is the collective impact of these experiences and constraints on principal decision making? Cusick's (2005) citation of Henry Adams is an appropriate precursor to this section of the review, "Where external experience... allowed the forces of the ages to educate." (p.1)

Policy Development in an age of reform (1960-present). Taylor et. al (1997) posits,

"The way we think about educational policy making, is linked to the ideological or philosophical positions we hold, not only in relation to education, but also to the nature of civil society."(p.175)

The implication of Taylor's statement is that policy development and relative educational reform shapes principals' perspectives and decision making. Policy decisions and mandates leave little interpretation as to desired outcomes. What is usually left up for interpretation and individual discretion is "how" school officials decide to implement new policy. Many reforms were initiated after a major event such as the launching of Sputnik in the late 50's. The space race had begun and had not only caught the nation's attention from a national security standpoint but also caused fervor over the need for more math and science in school curriculum. In a broader sense, the historic event launched a significant age of reform in American schools

The list of legislative decisions related to education (law, amendments, and re-authorizations) is extensive. Congress has passed 75 bills alone from 1965 to 1988 (First, 1992). Following is a brief accounting of the significant policy decisions which emerged as examples of educational reform in response to the prominent values of their era.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act is aligned with the Civil Rights movement in the mid 1960s and the War on Poverty. ESEA passed in 1965 and provided major federal aid to schools (Title I) to assist them in providing remedial opportunities for students from disadvantaged homes. The Head Start program, designed help underprivileged preschool children, prefaced the act as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Re-authorization of ESEA through the next several decades provides credence to the value of the intended benefit of the policy. (In time, No Child Left Behind would expand on the original ESEA legislation.)

In 1975 the federal government expanded further into the field of education with the passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. The law was eventually replaced in 1991 as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Hayes,

2004). Suddenly school principals were faced with the inclusion of handicapped students in general education classrooms.

After a major stall in the formation and passing of educational policy in the Reagan administration, the Bush and Clinton years (Goals 2000) witnessed a re-focus on the educational needs of the country. Catapulted again to the forefront of the American consciousness, education received scrutiny supported by global comparisons of achievement (Hayes).

However, the literature is fairly consistent in identifying the National Commission's release of the *A Nation at Risk* report as a significant call for change in American Schools. Greg Toppo, in an USA Today (April, 2008) article quotes education historian, Dianne Ravitch (2000),

“A Nation at Risk was a landmark of education reform literature. Countless previous reports by prestigious national commission have been ignored by the national press and general public. A Nation at Risk was different. Written in stirring language that the general public could understand, the report warned that schools had not kept pace with the changes in society and the economy and that the nation would suffer if education were not dramatically improved for all children. It is also asserted that lax academic standards were correlated with lax behavior standards and that neither should be ignored. A Nation at Risk was a call to action.”

The 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk* was the catalyst for today's standards-based reform movement. The report made a strong case for the urgency of reform if the nation was to retain its place in the modern world. It was followed by a myriad of other studies and reports: National Assessment of Education Progress (The Nation's Report Card -NAEP), International Science Studies, the International Assessment of Educational Progress I and II, IEA Study of Reading Literacy (1991), the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMMS, 1994-1995) (Cuban, 1990), and the most recent No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Each one of these policy

decisions or studies raised awareness of the necessary improvements American schools were facing.

The *Nation at Risk* is one of the most influential reports to affect the education field. In the book *School*, the authors wrote that the *Nation at Risk* report “crystallized the growing sense of unease with public schooling in the business community by tightly coupling mediocre economic performance in the global marketplace.” (Mondale & Patton, 2001). In 1983 we were in two wars: The Cold War with the Soviet Union and an economic war with Japan. The report implies our national security was at stake, and poor student performance was putting the nation at risk (Sadker & Sadker, 2000). Certainly the Commission’s report was not only unforgiving regarding the shortfalls of American public schools, but it also initiated much debate on the schools should be fixed.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

In my current position as a public school principal, I believe that the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has had the most significant impact on the decisions I make in my role as a building principal.

Coincidentally, the intentions of the law are not only consistent with the recommendations of the *Nation at Risk* Report (Hayes), but beyond it as well. The executive summary of the law lists the following aspects of the law:

- Increased accountability (AYP) for states, individual schools and principals..
- Expand choice options for parents whose students attend low performing schools.
- Flexibility for local educational agencies in use of federal dollars to obtain results.
- A stronger emphasis on reading, especially for young children.
- High Qualified Teachers-criteria.
- Assistance for state and local districts in providing drug free schools.

(No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (H.R.1)

Taylor's asserts that how we think about policy decisions is linked to the ideological and philosophical positions we hold. What bearing does this consideration have principal decisions? The proposed study will explore the impact policy decisions have on individual principal choices.

Internal Influences

In his most recent book, A Passion for Learning, Philip Cusick (2005) speaks to the significance one's personal education has on shaping an individual,

It is not school but life where the knowledge one learns in youth is turned into action, and knowledge and action combine into the person one is. (p.163)

The proposed study develops an alternative conceptual framework for principal decision making. In essence, the study does not reject the models for decision making and discourse on how principals are developed. My argument is that there is another lens to consider.

To be able to describe and explain the personal and professional morals of principals as they make decisions, the study addresses principals' personal development as an influence on their decision making. Cusick's work posits that education is not an institutional undertaking but in more of a personal manner, an interior affair, something one does for oneself. With the exception of a few cited studies on ethics development and principal values, few studies examine at the personal development years of principals. How have youth, family and colloquial experiences played a role in the developing the morals and values of today's principals? Hayek (1988) submits,

"Learning how to behave is more the source than the result of insight, reason and understanding. Man is not born wise, rational and good but taught to become so. It is not our intellect that created our morals, rather human interactions governed by my reason and those capacities associated with it." (p.21)

Administrative experience can be reflected in organizational tenure or the number of years that an administrator has served in an organization (Hite et al., 2006) “Experience” denotes value of life stories or reflections of prior events and decisions. “Tacit” knowledge is information gleaned from experiences (Petzko,2008). There are things they just don’t teach you in schools of educational administration (Wilmore, 1995). The informal education of Cusick’s seven subjects extended beyond the requirements, diplomas and degrees of formal schooling...

In his book, Passion for Learning, Cusick summarizes the intellectual and moral development of the noted subjects:

...Education began with the early encouragement, early reading and writing and early interest in and personal identification with, ethical and moral issues and with large events and transcendental ideals. From there, and almost simultaneously, each inferred the power of intelligence and the power of intelligent expression...and more important, extra-institutional and informal associations wherein knowledge about events and ideas were and exchanged.(p.161)

Informal associations or “like-minded” individual provided life mentors for the seven subjects in Cusick’s work. In the contextual model for this study, personal stories as told by principals regarding their development as decision makers will coincidentally reflect their “personal identification with ethical and moral issues”, as in the case of Cusick’s subjects. This unique perspective enables the researcher to act on the purpose of the study, that is, is describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes that are considered by principals as they make decisions.

Principal Stories

In the daily, minute to minute moral decisions a principal makes, how does experience or training guide his or her actions? The answer may lie in the principal’s personal learning. Trider and Leithwood (1988)submit,

Clearly the interior lives of principals have an enormous bearing on how principals go about implementing policy; we should be surprised was it otherwise. Yet, we know very little about the personal beliefs and values that principals consider relevant in their professional decision making...(p.305).

Greenfield (1985) adds,

Principals act largely on the basis of a learned and internalized understanding of what is right and good – an understanding of one's own experience and personal background; one's belief, knowledge and personal values." (p.139)

In the landscape of private inner dialogue within the constructs of meaning one's lifetime lays the foundation of a learning story (McGough, 2003). Many principal stories begin in their youth. Patterns of influence include family situations as cornerstones in their development. Considering these experiences provides a starting point for inquiry in determining the storyline for principals. McGough designates this period the pre-principalship phase. Here considerations regarding schooling are formed along with family influences, school influences, and activity influences. The catalyst stage follows along the choices, questions and considerations toward teaching as a profession. Special interests would propel the individual to consider the big picture and administration, while in the stage of teaching. The administration phase considers the initial experiences of positional authority and relative events such as training, immersion, achievement. The steps leading into the principalship are propelled by internal and external forces with which one eventually complies with. Finally an established principal is when conviction, style, nurturance and enrichment manifest into a philosophy of leadership.

Values

A central argument to the proposed study is that principal values influenced by one's personal experiences provide validation in resolving and making decisions and resolving

dilemmas. An earlier citation of Quinn's contribution of the Competing Values Framework specifically addresses the tensions of conflicting values present in day to day decisions.

Principals possess power to shape their schools to work toward a plan that fulfills their goals and enacts their values. (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Schools administration values, expectations and activities are based on the assumption that its members will be male, and organizations seek managers with "traits assumed to belong to men with a tough minded approach to problems, ability to abstract and plan and to set aside emotions in the interests of task accomplishment (Kanter 1975)." Intriguing research has indicated that a women's value, way of knowing and moral decision making are guided by the ethic of caring (Gilligan, 1982). Chodorow (1974) posits that women's moral judgments are closely tied to feelings of empathy and compassions for others.

There are internal tensions balancing the human side with the more autocratic and manipulative aspects of leadership (Marshall, 1992). How do principals mediate the requisites of bureaucratic demands, politics, and policy constraints in concert with the selected values of stability/control, student growth and empathy/caring? The proposed study intends to utilize these values as variables of influence in principal decision making.

On the Job Training/Professional Development

Principals who join staff in learning are respected and deemed effective (Blasé & Blasé, 1999, Marks and Printy, 2003). School leadership must change because society constantly changes (Bogotch et al 1998). Practicing and prospective principals must consider the domain of staff development for themselves not as a means of providing clinical forms of supervision, but also as opportunities to raise the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both the leader

and the led, thus having a “transforming” effect on both (Leithwood & Duke, 1988). Expedient changes in policy require ongoing principal learning.

Personal Development - Profound Experiences

McGough (2003) dedicated a portion of the study to the patterns of influence affecting principals’ perspectives. These influences were charted against the route maps resulting in the ability to construct perspective storylines. The results of comparing the stages (youth to career), and the relative perspective increments and influence cluster changes over the stages revealed an evolution of purpose and thought on the way to the principal position.

Finally, McGough considered how the identified patterns of influence manifested in principals’ practice. Discrete patterns are identified in relative stages of life and education as influences as becoming a principal. Within these stages, learning also influences, mostly by attitude, life experiences and people. (Boulton-Lewis, et. al, 1996) The study presents common professional tracks of adult learners’ progression to the principalship.

Summary

The essence of this review has positioned morals and moral development as precursors to individual principal’s decision making. The platform for the study is established by Barnard in his citing the tensions between personal and professional morality. The works of Immanuel Kant, Henri Bergson and Herbert Simon have emerged as the theoretical foundation for the study to explain the motivations behind principal decisions.

The review also presents the theories, roles, contingencies, traits and data, as explained in the literature as models for executive decision making. Coincidentally decisions are influenced by external factors such as federal and state policy aimed at mandating desired educational outcomes. Lastly, the review examines principal development as decision makers. Preparation

for the role is explored and reveals a variety of pathways to the principalship. Formal education comprised of university training, internships and academies are further supported by both formal and informal mentor relationships. The knowledge and skills fostered in these arrangements provide a formal recipe for making decisions.

Can each of these variables provide a degree of insight on how decisions are made? The literature specific to identified processes or external factors provide a positive correlation between variables and decision making outcomes. However, the research is absent when considering the unique perspective of the decision maker as a determinant of decisions. Herein lays the purpose of this study: to describe and explain the personal and profession moral codes that are considered by principals as they make decisions.

Conclusion

To be able to describe and explain the personal and profession moral codes that are considered by principals as they make decisions, a comprehensive review of theory relative to morality and decision making substantiates the intellectual basis for this study. The perspectives of Simon, Kant, and Bergson serve as the lens by which data is sorted and provide a degree of “sense-making” (Segall, 2006).

The tiered of research as it is presented provides a review of the literature on morality and moral development. It also presents a secondary array of influences on administrative decision making. Within each model presented, an intellectual argument can be established as to its relationship to decision making and has some its relevance to principal decisions. Yet, the purpose of this study called for a more personal inquiry of practicing principals. To mobilize a study of this nature, the literature review presented two congruent studies which spoke to the personal stories as told by the identified individuals of interest. Through the work of Cusick

(2005) and McGough (2003) a conceptual model was developed for the study. The study let principals tell their story as prompted by selected questions. The questions are designed to inquire about the principals' personal stories in relation to developed and acquired morals, both personal and professional. McGough substantiates the framework:

The stories of principals are “grounded in a childhood exposures that were affected by a set of influences through specific phases of a professional development sequence, and to have been shaped by an underlying story about oneself as a learner that thread through one's experiences and provides as sense of coherence over time. (p.450)

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to attempt to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes of a set of school principals as they make decisions. In this chapter, I explain the theoretical framework and the methods used in the study as well as identifying the exploratory questions that serve as a guide for my research. This chapter will link the appropriate methodology and the theory chosen as the intellectual basis for this study.

In this section, the methods of data collection, including the processes used in interviewing are presented as well as the considerations of sampling strategies. I explain the strategies for data analysis, including the process for generating tentative conclusions. The interview protocol utilized in the research is also presented.

Theoretical Framework

Research progresses logically when the theory which provides its conceptual framework is closely and naturally related to the purpose and assumptions of the study (Cusick). To be able to describe and explain the moral codes considered by principal, the researcher must align with a theory. Cusick citing Weber (1942), who states, "...you can't study reality without some presuppositions." To study reality, the researcher must have some ideas about reality that will be studied. The method used has to reflect the researcher's ideas.

Two assumptions are critical to achieving this purpose. It was assumed that the personal and professional morals were best understood by studying the personal background of principals. A second assumption is that principals are a critical resource in understanding the impact of the moral development and values which they bring to the decision making table. The study has

chosen the theoretical perspectives of Simon, Kant, and Bergson as the intellectual basis and support for the study.

Along with the suppositions of the study, a theory of research must also be identified. To serve this requirement, a qualitative approach was chosen as means to address the research questions presented in the first chapter. A qualitative study provides for a deeper understanding of human behavior. The study will take on an inductive approach for generating relative data (Goldstone):

...(para-phrased) to accumulate and organize facts and evidence and you will be able to come up with explanations for all manner of specific phenomena and events (p.42).

In the case of this study, the primary instrument for data collection is the researcher. The primary method selected for this study is interviewing. Coincidentally observational notes are also made, identifying cultural artifacts. To describe and explain the personal and professional morals considered by a principal while making decisions provides a challenge to work beyond complex issues. To address the questions guiding the research, a method of inquiry is chosen to enable a deep understanding of dilemmas that surface in the research process. A qualitative approach enables the researcher to get underneath surface features and to probe for meaning and finally understanding. The qualitative approach is concerned with processes as opposed to cataloguing (Cook, p. 46). Qualitative researchers are interested in how people make sense of their lives and experiences. (Cresswell, 1994) The qualitative researcher physically goes to the people involved and collects, absorbs, analyzes and sorts information...and ultimately derives meaning and understanding from a process that builds theories from countless details that have been absorbed by observing and listening (Cook, p. 46). Data is sorted, recorded, interpreted and conceptualized. Out of data, theory emerges. Glasser and Strauss (1967) referred to this process as theoretical sampling:

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes this data and decides what to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. The process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory whether substantive or formal. (p.105)

The initial interviews are approached from a broader perspective. As the study progresses, the researcher finds the general perspective limiting in terms of relative data collection. Creswell (1994) posits...perspectives are altered, with the possibility of seeing alternative explanations for findings. (p.153)

From the findings, it is anticipated the identified suppositions will be affirmed. Accumulations of data will support new classifications of findings...from data the new theory will emerge.

The challenge then becomes presenting the data in a convincing fashion. Here the researcher considers the generalization, reliability and validity. Generalization of qualitative results is possible when the reader is convinced that the qualitative account is authentic and the reader feels he or she also has “been there.” Cook quoting Gertz (1988) (Segal, 2006) on the difficulties facing the ethnographer, both in “being there” and then writing about “being there”:

...to persuade readers...that what they are reading is an authentic account by someone personally acquainted with how life proceeds in some place, at some time, among some group, is the basis upon which anything else ethnography seeks to do—analyze, explain, amuse, disconcert, celebrate, edify, excuse, subvert---finally rests. (pp.143-144)

Generalization means that a relationship that holds for one group under certain conditions will probably hold true for other groups and the same conditions. Generalization of qualitative results is possible when the reader is convinced (see Gertz) the qualitative account is authentic and the reader feels that he or she has “been there”. (Cook, p.47)

The consideration of reliability is concerned with the consistency or repeatability of the study. Would another researcher find the same results while conducting the same research and using the same methods? Validity answers the question, “Is the explanation plausible?”

Initial Exploratory Questions

As the purpose of this study is to attempt to describe and explain the moral codes of a set of school administrators as they make decisions, four sets of questions will be addressed in the course of the pending research.

- 1 What does research reveal about theories on morality and decision making? Related questions address conceptual models for decision making and to what degree these theories and models apply to principal decision making.
- 2 What are the skill sets that define the context of principal decision making? Specific additional questions dealt with the common pathways to the principalship, university preparation programs, formal experiences and mentoring.
- 3 How do principals’ personal morals and moral development influence principal decision making? Considering particular dilemmas, specific additional questions focused on how family structures and religion impact a principal on resolving those dilemmas.
- 4 How have recent policy decisions, specifically The No Child Left Behind Act, made an impact on principal decision making? To what extent does policy conflict with one’s moral code?

Sampling Strategies

Theory emerges from data. To select participants in a grounded theory approach, the researcher become more selective in collecting a sample by focusing on the core variables that emerge as important to the theoretical understanding of the of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, J., 1998; Rudestram & Newton, 2007). The trick to choosing participants who can contribute to an evolving theory, is to select participants whose main credential is experiential relevance (Rudestram & Newton).

Research Procedures

Subjects-Selection Considerations

IRB review and approval (#1032388) for the project took place in April 2009. The project's continuance was approved for a second year in April, 2010. The interviews spanned a 15 month period beginning in September 2009 through December 2010. As discussed in Chapter III, one of the primary tasks in initiating the study was to determine a representative sample that would be interviewed. For practical reasons, it was decided to contact potential subjects through local, regional and state principal associations to enlist principal interest in the study. Principals responding favorably to the initial inquiry were contacted by email to confirm their participation. A copy of the project information and consent form was forwarded to each principal to provide further details relative to the study. Each email was followed by a phone conversation to set the date, time and location of the interview. Upon arriving at the site of the interview, the consent form was presented to each subject for their permission to participate. From this point, an audio-taped semi-structured interview generated data for the succeeding analysis. I also made notes on my observations at each setting. All the interviews, with exception of two, took place in the office of each principal. These notes are included in the succeeding analysis as related to the purpose of the study.

The majority of the individuals interviewed for this study were a representative sample of suburban school district administrators similar to the community in which I (researcher) am employed as a practicing principal. At the onset of the recruitment process, it was desired to select principals based on similarity to me in years of my experience in education as well as their chronological age. The data indicate that the majority of the principals did fall in within five to ten years of my tenure in education. Although principals' ages were not sought in the study,

anecdotal data placed many of the principals close the researcher's chronological age. The alignment of experience and age would provide a common frame of references for principals in terms of lifetime events and experiences in which they developed their personal and professional moral codes.

The majority of the principals selected can be considered to be middle to late "baby boomers." In their lifetime, significant world and national events have shaped educational policy decisions. These policy decisions were also accompanied by shifting social attitudes, economic growth and decline, civil rights, government mistrust, waves of educational reform, private and public scandal, and accelerated technological advances, along with daily news events that challenged the moral fabric of a nation. The "forces of the ages" (Cusick, 2005) shaped the principals' morals and outlook on life. As a collective group, the principals participating in this study shared heroes, family memories, as well as life's inevitable disappointments. It is the "era" by which the principals developed their personal moral code as well developing a professional code in their chosen career as educators.

It was interesting to note, even as products of when social change was on the agenda, how traditional values maintained their place in each of the principals' lives. Principals were gracious and honest when discussing their personal morals as well as how they translated into their professional beliefs. The dialogues with the principals were intense at times. Referring back to family efforts, struggles and life experiences created unexpected emotional responses to the questions. My transcription of these instances could not completely capture the entire essence of these responses. However, it is fair to submit the principals were honest, forthright and authentic in their comments. Their candidness is considered a valued contribution to this study.

Demographics

For purposes of confidentiality, the names of the principals, their schools, districts and communities will be substituted with pseudonyms. The names of individuals (teachers, students, parents, administrators, others) are also pseudonyms to protect their identities as well.

As mentioned previously, the principals invited in the study held positions in schools that were similar in several categories. With the majority of the schools situated on the outside boundaries of a major metropolitan area, each “new suburban” school held over 2000 high school students (exception where two high schools exist), and approximately 800 students in the middle schools. The size of the high school administrations vary by size and district. Large high schools staff two or three assistant principals. The districts with two high schools staff one or two assistant principals. At the middle school level, there is primarily one assistant principal at each building. Student achievement scores for the schools of principals in the study, as indicated by district state assessments results, are similar. In each of the buildings, an assistant principal is primarily responsible for discipline. All principals confide that they support and contribute to the handling of discipline issues, particularly the significant offenses. Assistant principals also contribute to curriculum and school improvement initiatives.

Mid-Course Adjustments

At the midpoint of the study a suggestion was made to consider contacting principals whose buildings fell outside demographic characteristics earlier described. As a result, several principals in alternative setting were approached to participate in the study. Four principals responded to the invitation. Aside to the size of the schools, all are characterized by significantly different demographics. Two high schools are considered to be situated in urban locals; one rural

high school in a town that borders the United States and Mexico; and one is an inner city school. None of the principals and schools was identified in the original design of the study. Yet, I was curious as to how the principals' responses would align or differ from the more heterogeneous sample. I was particularly interested in which of their personal and professional moral codes influenced their decision relative to their student populations. As the data will indicate, the focus at these sites is different than the suburban schools.

Revised Interview Protocol

After 10 interviews, I realized that the responses I was obtaining were only as good as the questions I was asking. Principals, like most individuals, keep their cards close to their vests when answering questions relative to their personal morals and beliefs. This was true in several interviews. Consequently, I submitted a revised interview protocol to IRB with additional questions to seek specific information from principals.

Interviews were conducted with 25 individual principals from 23 individual districts. Participants in the first set of data gathering activities will be selected from a homogenous sample of Michigan secondary school principals who possess the "phenomena of interest" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in the study. Interest is defined as seeking participants whose generational (age) experiences are similar to the researcher's background. The stratified sample would include secondary building administrators whose careers in education span at least two of the three previous decades. Gender representation will also serve as a point of study in the data collection. Variables for interest to which the questions will be developed will focus on each person's experiences and background and the decisions they make in their role as principals.

The pool of candidates was generated from a membership list of the Michigan Association of Secondary Schools. It is important to divulge the membership of the researcher in

this association. The selection may be representative of a convenience sample that may belong to MASSP and /or the Kensington Lakes Activities Association. Letters were sent to selected candidates meeting the sample criteria, inviting their participation.

To determine the efficacy of the interview process, a pilot or trial of the interviews is proposed. Initial interviews (2-3) were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the researcher in leading the interviews as well as the quality of the response the questions generated. Assessing the initial interviews allows the researcher to make necessary adjustments prior to making a final determination on the number of participants to utilize in the sample.

Data Collection

Interview

The interview is the most widely applied technique for conducting systematic research (Hyman et. al, 1975). Guides to interviewing, especially those oriented to standardized survey, are primarily concerned with maximizing the flow of valid reliable information while minimizing distortion of what respondents know. The manner by which a question is asked can greatly affect the results of research (American Statistical Association, ASA). Careful phrasing as to generate the data is critical to effective research.

Despite the passive approach on gathering information, it is not to say the interview is so technical and the procedures so standardized that interviewers can ignore contextual, societal and interpersonal elements (Fontana & Frey. 2000). Interviews are interactional encounters and the nature of the social dynamic of the interview can shape the nature of the knowledge generated. Inexperienced interviewers may not recognize that interview participants are “actively” constructing knowledge around questions and responses (Holstein & Bubrium, 1995). Active or

unstructured (Fontana & Frey) interviewing attends more to the ways in which knowledge is assembled than is usually the case in traditional approaches.

Active interviewing redefines the role of the interview. Both parties to the interview are necessarily active. Postmodernist ethnographers have concerned themselves with some assumptions present in interviewing and with the traditional, controlling roll of the interviewer.(Fontana & Frey) These concerns have led to new directions in qualitative interviewing focusing on increased attention to the voices of the respondents (Marcus & Fischer, 1986) and the interviewer – respondent relationship (Crapanzano, 1980). Meaning is not merely elicited by apt questioning, nor simply transported through respondent replies; it is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter. Respondents are not so much repositories of knowledge, treasures of information awaiting excavation, as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with the interviewers. Participation in an interview involves meaning-making work (Holstein & Gubrium).

The purpose of the study is to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes of principal as they make decisions. The position of the proposed study is to attempt to translate personal background and experience to moral development and the resulting influence of principal decision making. Active interviewing provides for opportunities to shape the form and content of what is said and create meaning that ostensibly resides with the respondent (Manning, 1967; Mishner 1986). The trick is to formulate questions and provide an atmosphere conducive to open and undistorted communication between the interviewer and respondent. In the translating experience of values, the interview needs to take on a dynamic, meaning-making process. One cannot expect to generate answers on one occasion to replicate those on another because they emerge from different circumstance of production. The validity of answers derives

not from their correspondence to meaning held within the respondent, but from their ability to convey situated experiential realities (Holstein & Gubrium). The proposed study will include active interviewing as a form of interpretive practice involving respondent and interviewer as the articulate ongoing interpretive structures, resources and orientations with “practical reasoning” (Grafinkel, 1967). The active interview serves those being studied as it transforms the subject behind the respondent from a repository of opinions and reasons or a “wellspring” of emotions into a productive source of knowledge. It is the internal translation of knowledge and emotions that develop the values that guide decision making.

Interview Process

Individual subjects are personally contacted to set up a one-hour session to conduct the interview. The necessity of continuing, follow-up and additional sessions is determined at the close of each interview. Desirably, the interview takes place at the principal’s school as to avail the study of artifacts in proximity of the interview. In deference to informed consent, a brief overview of the interview and a general description of the purpose of the study are presented. The subject is advised of topics and assured of how the research will take in account all ethical considerations including the privacy and sharing of the data (Fontana & Frey). During this time, the relative theories, hypothesis and arguments are not to be discussed as to avoid leading the respondent in a certain direction. Each interview is audio- taped to capture the participant’s response and dialogue. As a participant-observer in the respondent’s place of work, a separate set of notes will be constructed by me as to capture the setting, gestures, and other empirical materials (Fontana & Frey) that will not be evident on the recording. To realize an efficient relationship during the interview, establishing a rapport with the respondent is important. Oakley (1981) points out that in interviewing there is no intimacy without reciprocity. Shifting

positions without influencing answers allows for the development of a closer relationship. Hertz (1997) states that interviewers must be reflexive where the interviewer needs to have an ongoing (active) conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment.

The proposed study requires an in depth understanding of each respondent's background. Understanding the mechanics of interviewing is not the only consideration; the research must also understand the respondent's world and forces that might stimulate or retard responses (Kahn & Cannel, 1957). It is necessary to initiate each interview with a structured approach, asking prepared questions to provide detail of each principal's background. The information is critical to the study as it may be referenced later as a clarifying position to discussions. In addition to the audio record, a prepared personal information sheet is utilized to serve not only as a prompt but also as a record of the respondents' background and credentials.

Backward Mapping

The choice to utilize a more semi-structured technique for interviews will invite the respondent to participate in a dialogue by answering open-end questions regarding their decisions. The three types of decisions outlined earlier (student growth, safety and personnel issues) align with common principal experiences and practices. Hypothetical scenarios are presented to the respondents as to how they decided to address the dilemma. After the scenarios are presented, the principal participant provides an initial response. My role in the interview is to encourage the principal to work back through their rationale and push for the detail that ultimately motivated the principal to decide in the manner he or she chose.

To prompt the principal to be reflective, statements will be followed with comments, such as:

“Can you tell me a little more about your decision?”

“What were the critical considerations in making this decision?”

“Why did you choose this direction?”

“What motivated you to make this decision?”

“How do you know it was a good decision?”

By providing additional prompts, in the role of the researcher, I will press for “hidden” data to reveal the root causes and influencers that motivate principals making decision and why they did so.

As a means for checking accuracy and seeking clarity, a member check is suggested (Segall, 2002). Participating principals will be offered copies of the transcript of their interview to edit inaccuracies, delete information, or make clarifying points. Following the completion of the member checks, the data will be assembled and ready for analysis.

Initial Interview Protocol

Part A-Demographics

- IA. How many years have you been employed in the public school setting?
- 2A. How many years of experience do you have as a school administrator? Please provide a breakdown of each position held and the number of years in that position.

Part B- Background

- IB. Could you provide for me information regarding your background? Please include details particular to your education and training?
- 2B. Of these, does any experience stand out as being more influential or profound than the others? Please discuss.
- 3B. Did any of your background experiences influence your decision to become a principal? If so, how? If not, what did?

I am now going to ask you some questions that are related to your role as a principal.

Part C – Seminal Incident

- 1D. Reflect on a situation or incident which is unique to your role as a principal. Your choices could be, but are not limited to: teacher discipline, student expulsion, principled value-based decision, taking an unpopular stand with the staff, a parent, or central office. Tell me about the decision and why you chose the direction you took.

This concludes the interview. Is there anything you would like to add that you believe would be helpful to my research?

At a future date, you will have an opportunity to review the transcription of this interview. At that time you will also have the opportunity to make any corrections.

Finally, I will share with you my analysis of data I have collected. You will have an opportunity to make comments on my analysis.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview.

CHAPTER IV PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the data collected to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes by a set of administrators as they make decisions. Following a presentation of the demographic background of the principal subjects, I will address the prominent themes that emerged in the study. The third section will present and analyze data on additional influences on principal decision making, answering the remaining research questions posed for this project.

Research Procedures

Subjects-Selection Considerations

Interviews were conducted with 25 individual principals from 23 individual districts. Demographic data acquired in the interviews is shown in Tables 1 – 5:

The original conceptual framework of the study, decided to invite principal-subjects to participate in the study, with similar years of experience in public school education (See Table 1) with the researcher, also a practicing principal (18 years). The individual and collective experiences would provide a framed backdrop of experience as principal background data was collected.

Table 1. Experience in Education

Range of Experience	Number in Category
35-44 Years	2
30-34 Years	4
25-29 Years	1
15-24 Years	12
8-14 Years	6
Less than 8 Years	-

Similar reasoning was considered and applied in relation the number of years principal subjects had as practicing principals. (See Table 2) It was also anticipated that the data analysis could reveal a correlation between experience as a building principal and the moral choices he/she exercised in making decisions.

Table 2. Experience as a Building Administrator

Range of Experience	Number in Category
25-30 Years	2
20-24 Years	2
15-19 Years	4
10-14 Years	8
5-9 Years	7
Less than 9 Years	2

The original conceptual framework of the study called for inviting primarily secondary principals (high school and middle school) to participate in the project. Although there are a number of common decision opportunities, there are decisions made at the secondary level that are rarely considered in elementary buildings. A breakdown of specific building assignment of the subjects interviewed is found in Table 3.

Table 3. Breakdown of Administrators Participating in the Study

Administrative Position	Number Participating
Total Number of Administrators Interviewed	25
High School Principals Interviewed	12
Middle School Principals Interviewed	8
Central Office Administrators (former MS Principal)	1
Assistant Middle School Principals Interviewed	2
Retired Elementary Principals Interviewed	1
Assistant High School Principals Interviewed	1

Each of the principal-subjects interviewed had completed advanced degrees beyond a Bachelors Degree (See Table 4). The study considers this data as possibly contributing to the moral considerations principal draw from while making decisions.

Table 4. Principal Education

Graduate Degree	Number in Category
Masters Level	18
Ed. Specialist	5
Ph.D	2

This descriptive study's design primarily focused on suburban secondary schools as the setting where the research would be based. 80% of the total number of settings was in suburban secondary schools. (See Table 5) The conceptual framework considered like decisions in like locations. Near the end of the data collection, it was decided to include alternative demographic settings. The choice would provide evidence of the exclusiveness of the nature and degree of principals' decisions in relation to the differing demographic settings.

Table 5. School Demographics

School Location	Number in Category
Suburban School	21
Rural High School (U.S. – Mexican Border)	1
Urban High School	2
Inner City High School	1

Sorting the Data

With the transcriptions in hand, I dedicated a significant amount of time to rereading the interviews. The initial review of the transcripts were dedicated to identifying statements which were selected and highlighted that may have relevance to defining and describing principals' moral codes. As with the succeeding reviews, a separate note page was attached to each interview transcription to capture ideas, alignments or new perspectives. Subsequent readings identified statements relating to the theoretical framework established for the study. Additional highlights were made and notes attached to statements made in the interviews which align with other studies regarding principals' training, roles, background and decision making.

The highlighted statements in the interviews began to reveal a frequency of responses. After several readings, the following emerged that would capture and classify the responses of the principals.

Prominent Themes

- I. Principals as Moral Individuals/Caretakers
- II. Family Background and Influence/ Religion (as part of the family experiences)
- III. Personal and Professional Morality-Herbert Simon
- IV. Personal and Professional Morality – Immanuel Kant
- V. Personal and Professional Morality – Henri Bergson
- VI. Overlapping Moralities
- VII. Mentors, Shared Decision Making

A final step was needed to organize the data collected in the interviews. Following the steps outlined in Chapter III, I coded each highlighted statement within each interview. The codes reflect the specific interview and the particular statement made during the interview. With the codes in place, I chose to align each statement under the heading of the emergent themes already identified. A spreadsheet was constructed placing all relevant codes under each theme. The spreadsheet provided a guide for retrieving statements. Separate documents were created to collect each of the actual (highlighted) statements from each interview. The statements were organized in a manner that would allow me to present cogent data to support additional analysis.

Data Analysis

Theme #1: Principals as Moral Individuals/Caretakers

As the purpose of this study is to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes by a set of administrators as they make decisions, it is appropriate to define the

environment in which the decisions are made. The work of a principal is complex, characterized by ongoing moral dilemmas, tragic events and challenges that often fall outside the scope of academics. Christa, a high school principal characterized her first year:

My first year was a doozy. We had three bomb threats, two intruders and different lockdowns...significant medical situations, two sexual predators...Channel 4 teacher investigations... one from a previous principal, one a current teacher. A lot... all in my first year. .. If I can make it through this I can make it through anything.

Aside to the technical processes the principal oversees, the position calls for instances of judgment, where favorable paths of action are reasoned beyond the less favorable. MacDonald (2002) explains morality... as a personal set of rules that modifies our behavior. It is doing good instead of harm and sets some virtuous standards of conduct or moral codes (Barnard, 1937).

What principals do (decide) falls outside the bounds of technical rationality, and there are important dimensions to their work which cannot be reduced to technique. At times a principal's decision must choose between competing values of goodness (Greenfield, 1985). Many principal decisions are value laden. The meaning people give to events is shaped by their goals, values, feelings, existing knowledge and past experiences (Leithwood & Duke). To be successful in his/her craft, principals make priorities, choices and decisions that are based their own moral fiber. Audrey, a former middle and elementary principal posits, "...in order to be a good leader, you must know yourself...you must be grounded in your own morality because the shoe doesn't fit everyone the same way."

In the course of this study, principals responded to their calling to education and leadership positions as a means to support the lives of the students and staff they encountered. They are moral individuals. Principal translate their morality through the role of caretaker and judicious decision makers. In short, principal are purveyors of what is right, just and good for

humanity. It is through their actions that they demonstrate their personal morality in a professional setting. Al is a principal at Jenison Middle School. Several principals' responses were similar to Al's to the question ...how did you end up an educator?

A: Yes...I wanted to help kids. And to me getting my degree at Albion and social studies teaching...when I got out, I couldn't necessarily find a social studies job ... I wanted to help kids. I was inspired by professor at Albion, to work with kids...

D: Were there certain things of value you wanted to pass along to the kids from your own personal experience? When you talked to kids what were some of things you wanted to share with them?

A: Certainly...I think treating each other with respect, caring about others, looking out for kids that are less fortunate. Stick up for kids that are bullied or picked on. Not so much those were my experiences, but as I went through high school, I was often in that role as a peace maker. I hung with all kinds of student... the troubled kids...the athletes...the musicians...and obvious through my degrees and the therapy I had to go through to get my degrees that was often the role in my own family. By going to school I wanted to do something that would help humanity or society, so teaching and counseling seemed like a good fit.

Principals have their own insights into parameters and will weigh many decisions accordingly. Jerry, a long time middle school principal shares his experience with proposals that are "...what is best for kids":

A lot times when we make decisions are we making it for administrative convenience...Lots of decisions we make is for our convenience or the teachers....Still, 95-99% of these teachers are caring professionals and they do it for kids...and when I can get it down to a kid level the sacrifice and the give and take is most effective. The teachers work in teams. If the teachers cannot make a decision, I will make it and tell them why. ...

My folks had a belief that if given the chance the person will do the right thing. I have been taught, people will do the right thing if given the opportunity... and that means to me...given more information...more opportunity...and they will do the right thing. Most of the time....

For the most part, the principals in this study spoke to the efficacy of public education. Frequently they would comment on how it provided the principals the opportunity to fulfill the

expectation of attending college and eventually succeeding in life. They spoke of the sense of giving back and providing the same experiences to the students they encounter each day. Yet a few of the principals traveled the parochial trail to college. And how did this experience translate into moral development? Frank, a principal in a large school summed it up best by stating, “It was a world of compliance...you did because...that was kind of what we lived with. Frank’s morality emerged in a radical dimension, he reflects,

A lot of kids in my generation boomeranged off of that and enjoyed not being under someone’s thumb in my early 20’s... It was a pretty interesting time for me at that age. I earned money for myself and supported myself...it has something to do with who I am as an educator today. I was a solid student... I had a high grade point . But today, I can picture these kids...I cannot remember all their names but the faces remain...and they were not like me. What happened to those kids? I don’t know.... a lot of them went to the automobile factories. Those kids are still in our halls today. We cannot do what we used to do because we will leave them out of a productive society. So I guess those kind of reflections has raised my sensitivity to what we do and how we do it. On doing what is right....

For Clarence, his personal morality was instilled when he was young:

From my mother’s point of view...you always do what is right. And she is the one that ultimately pushed me in terms of an education...I had an opportunity... my mother told me to do what is right... and doing the right thing is not always expedient. It takes effort and time.

There are occasions when the principal and staff do not agree with what is best for kids.

As there are principals, there are staff members who believe morality is based strictly on set rules which determine rightness or wrongness of a circumstance. In other words, “It is right here in black and white.” There are also occasions, however, where one could make a case for both sides as presented. Here is where principals often find themselves in an area they define as, “The world of shades of gray.” Tim, a high school principal was negotiating a case that he believes was an example of working in the gray area. He was having a difficult time imposing his personal and professional morality upon a decision that was not supported by a staff member.

“How am I going to get the teacher to do the right thing who did not want to do the right thing?

Can I bring her to the water and make her drink?” Tim tells the story,

We have a policy that if a student is sick and miss a class; he/she have a certain amount of time to make up the work. Something like two days for every day they miss...something like that....it is more complicated but that is the general rule...a student had an illness that gave him temporary paralysis...out of school for two weeks...intensive care. He had two days to make up for every day he missed but did not get his work in Spanish class completed (in the allotted time). So (the teacher) refused to let him take one of the tests he missed.(She stuck to her guns and continues to do so.) I say to her, you are a parent too. This could happen to you and to me. You have to realize, the right thing to do is let him take the test. You have to allow this to happen. This is wrong to punish this kid who had temporary paralysis... She says, “Rules are rules...it’s in black and white. And if you talk to me about this one more time, I am bringing a union rep in.” I told her I would encourage her to do that as I would be interested to see what opinion the union has on the situation....

Tim believes in what is right and best for this student is to provide more time. He acknowledges the policy but finds the other remedies to the circumstance. In his view, the policy does not support the student’s circumstance.

As a practicing principal, I was not surprised that compensation was not a motivator for entering the principalship. Many spoke of investing in human capital whether it was in their staff and students or themselves. Reasoning for career choices reflect their personal morality and as a means to make a difference.

Kathleen: (leaving the business world)...I decided I wasn’t making enough of a difference in the world and so I decided to be a teacher. It was frustrating to me...this was before the days of ENRON...and if I was one of the accountants on the ENRON case and broken the case and it would have been different, ...did not believe what I did in my job was meaningful enough in my job like I could find a magnitude...enough errors... in the grand scheme of things, companies make millions of dollars and you find a thousand dollar error...no one cares. I didn’t think what I did made any difference and so I wanted to make more of a difference in the world and so teaching helped the next generation.

When asked, “What does a difference mean?” Her response was typical of most principals, “I guess I wanted to feel like I was helping to shape the future...I wasn’t doing this in my first career. It is a personal aspiration that I have.”

To Christa, becoming a principal was an inevitable choice, "...it's not about the money...it should be a about your inner calling."

It is apparent in these principals' words; they acknowledge an intrinsic motivation that seeks to enrich students' lives. A principal relates to a need to balance the playing field for the students who may come from troubled backgrounds or have various disabilities. Courtney, another middle school principal speaks to her need to "champion" special education students. Courtney in fact, turned away from opportunities to move into central office, with her reasoning, "There are bunch of kids that are getting kicked out this district because they won't go to Harvard. A couple of jobs (central office) have come up and ...I don't want it...it's too far away from the kids."

In the course of the interviews, the principals were asked how they communicate their personal and professional morality. Also, how do they accomplish this without offending or being cited for imposing their beliefs upon the people that work for them? A common response was through modeling. Coincidentally, professional expectations may be translated in more of an overt means. Ben, a high school principal, responds to a question that inquires if any of his values are brought into how he manages his staff:

I think I probably do, subconsciously, in terms of what I see as good outcomes...expectations for the staff... that I would like to see how teachers carry themselves... how they dress and how is their work ethic.... I am somewhat...I get to be a little bit more dismayed as the younger teachers come into school dressed less professionally and don't quite have that work ethic or the appreciation for the job they have. I sometimes struggle with that based on my upbringing work.

Even though it is a part of the evaluation process, I don't try to force my values on anybody... I try to model that part of me more than anything else...my style is not be confrontational or anything like that. I am more of a person that would like to show you why something would be good for you or for the school or for your kids instead of walking up and telling you, "You need to dress differently".

Kathleen consistently models her professional morals. One could say she wears them on her sleeve, as many principals do. The professional (moral) expectations for her staff are clear Kathleen speaking to her “true colors”:

I come out on a strong “gold” so part of my personality is this there is this right and this wrong...but I don’t know what came first if I was raised that way or born that way ...that is definitely part of my personality.

Regarding application to school issues...

Well I think at a couple of levels, I think in terms of expecting on a basic level. People need to make deadlines, work hard...I guess be like me. I expect my teachers to be competent and be able to do their job and meet the standards I have set for them. But on a bigger level I try to keep in my mind what is best for kids, I know we say that all the time, but I do use it as a filter for the decisions we are going to make. And it may make people unhappy but is it best for kids? ...even if creates an uncomfortable situation...., in terms of my integrity...I am not going to lie about things, I am going to be open and honest in my building. It is the way I run things in my relationships...I wouldn’t do anything unethical in this district but I would have to quit if I got forced in the corner where I thought my boss expected me to do something totally unethical.

Mary, middle school principal, considers her role as not the only person they could turn to when issues are apparent....it does not have to be her. She confides,

I don’t accept the status quo...that how it is, is not necessarily how it should be or how it would have to be...definitely when posed with a problem that is personal or professional, to look outward...to pattern behavior on. I believe in modeling and to seek appropriate modeling. And that is what I try to instill upon my staff.

Middle school principal Ken speaks directly to the role his personal and professional moralities play in leading his building...establishing expectations and having a shared morality...what is good for kids,

...life is about being a quality person...it is not about how much money you make...

You have rules to follow because it is the right thing to do... religious or not, you have that real intrinsic feeling that you do is what is right and there are things you cannot do either. It doesn’t matter if anyone is watching or anyone is going to find out it is driven into you especially from different priests (laughs) YOU OBEY. I think that the lighter

side of all that is you feel rewarded when you can model that behavior for others and have to start to emulate that.

One thing that I want to them to know that is important; I am an ethical and a moral person. I am here to do what is best for kids...that will always be my primary goal.

Principals hold themselves accountable for the decisions they make. It is an ongoing reflection on whether they made the right decision. Collective responsibility, “where the buck stops”...“it’s often a lonely position”...is statements of insight how principals mediate. But to remain moral personally and professionally the questions are...”should I have done this or should I have done that?” Principal Tim states, “It does not matter how moral you are...or how secure you place yourself in this world...How many times have you laid in bed at night and thought why you chose or decided to do things in a certain way.” Doubts linger. Principal Tom remembers decisions that he reversed because the original one wasn’t right...he states, “I could live with the bad decision...I’d call the parents, apologize and change it. If I suspended their kids...I can un-suspend them too.”

Principals see themselves as moral individuals. From their personal and professional morals, principals project expectations on their staff and students. Morals are the filter by which principals assess behavior and performance as well as the attitudes that drives these actions. Tom aligns desired educational outcomes with a value system. “I don’t think you can be concerned with education unless you have a set of values. I think of right and wrong, what’s gray and where you need to be.”

Giving Care for Students

Virtually every principal submitted that taking care of staff is a primary duty of a principal. Their care giving extends to the children they welcome each day. Supporting Gilligan’s (1974) assertion that a woman’s value, way of knowing and moral decision making

are guided by the ethic of caring. An interesting outcome of the selection process of subjects to be interviewed, the principals of the most at-risk (poverty, inner city or urban schools) schools in the study were female principals. (See Table 6 for Gender Break down) Each one of these principals referred to themselves as surrogate mothers. Catherine relates:

They are my kids from 7:00 a.m. to 2:10 p.m. I have to think about it that way. I do our orientations, I tell the parents, "They are mine."...we must come to our buildings with this conviction, the service and how we treat people...drives our decisions.

Christa was raised in a dysfunctional home (alcohol abuse). As the oldest of five children in her family, she assumed the role as parent in absence of her own mother:

I think I have always had that mothering instinct for younger siblings knowing that I was the only one that was going to take care of them. I think it shaped me...through my upbringing that I feel I need to take care of other people...that led me to become a teacher...I could never put myself first... I take care of my teachers, I take care of my kids, and I take care of the needs of anyone that walks into this office...

Christa learned however, that caring is only one part of the equation. There was a time where she felt that if took care of the physical and emotional needs, everything else would take care of itself,

...the culture of the building is really good. This high school is a warm friendly place to be...a sense of caring. But we are a failing school...our scores are not where they should be...achievement wise, it is awful...I cared about the warm-fuzzy kind of stuff like that but it has become very crystal clear to me the last few years, about the scores...and the significance of students leaving without the aptitude of not being able to make it in the world...if you interviewed them, I would say about 50-50 percent of the kids say she really cares about them...there is another 50% that would probably say, "She is a hard-ass....she doesn't let us do anything!"

Here we see a shift or extension of morality. It is of good morals to be concerned with how students perform is a reflection of their learning as preparation for the next step in their lives. For principals like Christa, education policy and the resulting accountability has to be acknowledged sooner or later. Similar circumstances will be revisited later in the chapter.

Table 6. Principal Gender Breakdown

Gender	Number in Category
Male Principals	16
Female Principals	9

Working with Families

Parents send their best kids to school. Yet the families cannot always provide the support for the children. At times, schools lend a hand for basic necessities through drives and fund raisers. Permission for these initiatives needs to pass across the principal's desk and receive the necessary blessing. Holiday drives often adopt families and provide clothing, food and sometimes arrange shelter. But outside those more visible events, principals meet with parents and their children to help overcome some of the challenges families face. Mary, a middle school principal, dedicated meetings with a mom once a month to help her understand the difficulty her boy was experiencing in a change of lifestyles due to a recent divorce.

I will take you back to a situation with a boy and his mom. Newly divorced mother who had just moved into our neighborhood from a more affluent neighborhood in Canton and brought her son with her...she felt she was doing absolutely the best she could but all this boy saw was that he was going from a 3000 square foot home to a 1000 square foot ranch... he was very disturbed ...acting out because of the situation...he was used to a life that provided for travel hockey, nice new homes and vacations...he was angry.. And she said I have put a roof over his head and food on the table and he has medical insurance and yet he felt his life was so much inferior .I did find the family a good counselor to continue on. But to understand she was doing all those things for him but in his age group that is so narcissistic and tried to help her understand his perspective and where he was coming from.

The study paid a visit to an inner city high school. At Dennison High, students came to school with all the social issues a school could experience. Poverty surrounds the school. The neighborhood, once characteristic of a prestigious middle class location in the city, now is represented by vacant buildings and lots. The high school building itself is an architectural gem with ornate carvings and figures along the pillars of the school. Yet the building sits in the midst

of what the principal calls “huge hypocrisy. She states, “Take a look when you leave...there is church on all these corners and a bar on the other corner. The challenges of the neighborhood find their way to my door each day.” When asked what a goal for the school is, she relates to the neighborhood a vision of village,

I want it to be like an African village...a village with values... I want children to be safe here. I want them to know their roles here and grow here. So they can take the love and safety they get here...the self-efficacy they get here and take out into their community. So it is no longer ok to walk down the streets and take a piece of paper and throw it on the ground. So it's not that it ok, and it's not normal to have a church on every corner and a liquor store right across the street. I want them to know that here is a village and everyone has a role and everybody

A kindred perspective of giving care was important to establishing relationships with those the principals encountered in their role. Principals believe it is within these relationships that the environment of safety and authentic concern is translated to the stakeholders.

Giving Care – Taking Care of the Staff

Classroom walls don't insulate principals and teachers from life's perils, disappointments and tragedies. Offensive statements made by parents, students or even staff members can terrorize a teacher to the point of not being effective in the class room or possibly leaving the profession. Principal Courtney recalls the graffiti on the wall outside of school, “we had to clean it up...the teacher never saw the language. I remember seeing a teacher sitting down and crying one time, a guy, after some kids wrote that about him outside. He was so destroyed because of all the energy he puts into the kids. And thinking until this point he didn't ever have to hear from me, “I see you made the wall.... I have to protect the people who work here.”

In addition to the economy that caused hardships on staff families, students and their families, health concerns of staff and their families are evident all school year. The principal states, “Each year presents concerns for the physical and emotional needs for the people in the

building. One school year, I had a death of a popular student, a son of a teacher taking his own life and a teacher diagnosed with cancer...we have plans for these moments but they are difficult even though you think you are prepared.” But what can you do when central office does not acknowledge the principal’s sense that a teacher is not doing well, health-wise? Principal Charles related a situation where a senior teacher’s performance was suspect. He went to bat for the teacher but the district had other ideas.

Next thing you know... I had spent over a year compiling a file that is full of reprimands only to put him on disability. And then last year, this was two years ago...he died. Many strokes, diabetes, and when the notice came out from HR, I was livid. Because they had me go through all that pain and sorrow ... I could hardly look at his wife in her face at the funeral...it was so sad. Because I had been this bad person, you know. Reprimanding him, riding his ass, you know how awful he was, and how bad for kids. Making it all about discipline, incorrigibility, Insubordination...and it wasn’t that...he was sick.

As Charles presented the sad story, he became emotional at times. It was apparent he felt deeply about compromising his own values. The wrongness of the decision did not permit Charles to support his staff member as he thought he needed. The worst moment was facing the teacher’s family. Charles had known the teacher’s spouse through most his career. He knew he could not change the circumstance, but his moral platform caved to the district’s careless decision. He continued to write reprimands.

As moral individuals, the principals are clear about their concern for their staff. “They are...my professional family...my team...one of us”...is how principals refer to their staff. What purpose in the education of young people does this concern play? The notion is not too far from a rational view as the principals believe a healthy and at least content staff is a productive staff. Protecting teachers from harm or at least staving off the distraction is an assumed role of principals. As principal Jeff remarks, “And I think there is no substitute for credibility with the teachers and those knowing you are there, you know what is going on.”

Inner City schools have their own challenges and tensions. Sharon is a principal of large high school, with a population of predominantly African American students. She had to a situation as quickly as it happened.

I had a teacher (Caucasian) who allegedly pushed and shoved a student. This teacher had a baby on the way... The race card was dealt... The police had come to arrest him. I had to truly use common sense to make sure it was not something that was cultural because with the children that look just like me... And so I had to make sure it was not a matter of culture because sometimes our biases and prejudices come up. And the police wanted to take him to jail... he was a white male who had pushed a black child....who was being bad... But to me that was a decision and a test of integrity for my staff. I tried to be fair.

Sharon was at risk. Yet her morality (being fair) in the midst of significant tensions pushed her decisions through the situation to support her staff member. She knew she could lose credibility with all the staff if she did not support the teacher. Her decision was not supported by the police officers. The students gathered and watched her carefully. But Sharon felt the students knew what she was about and continued to handle the situation.

Safe School Buildings

“Before we even consider curriculum, attendance policies, Friday night’s game or MEAP scores, it upon principals to provide a safe secure environment for students to learn.”

Paraphrased from the responses of several principals, the statement represents their number one priority in overseeing their schools. The vulnerability of public places, accentuated by the Columbine High School shooting and the attacks on 9-11, has heightened the attention to security in and around schools. Terms that were not even part the education discourse 15 years ago have now been included as standard operating procedures for schools. Lockdown and intruder drills are mandated and practiced throughout the school year. Several principals in this study have acknowledged conducting a lockdown for a security reason.

Yet the principals spoke to safety in broader, caring terms. Principal Carl clarifies how he sees the larger landscape of safety, “Safety...as far as not only the safety of our students not only in a physical way but more importantly in an emotional way...” Principal Jeff reflects what the parent of his students expect from him in terms of safety,

What I think what every parent wants is...you know I have never had one parent come in and ask about MEAP scores...are ours are good, they can look them up. But parents want to know when they send their children to school they are being cared for.

Principals feel the weight of the responsibility for safety. Central office has the same expectations but is also sensitive to overreact during events. Somewhere in the midst of the decisions made during a crisis, principals know that the fallout from too many drills sends a message to parents that schools are not safe places. Such a situation faced Principal Christa in her first year as a principal. It was reported to her that a gunman was across the street from her high school. The information given to her was not accurate. Central office received a more accurate accounting of where the gunman was located. The information was not what Christa had been told. Her hand was slapped...

...and without thinking or acting, I ran for the P.A. ...I didn't even know if our principal was in the building or not...I just knew that I had information...the kids were in danger...I ran to the P.A.... I locked the building down....the staff was happy....central office was not. I didn't have good information...

Principals often begin with a worst case scenario in crisis situation. It is exactly how Christa reacted. She had poor information but it wasn't a time to “check it out.” To fulfill her duty to protect the students and staff in her building, she reacted accordingly. Christa's number one priority became a political hot potato for the district. Still she reflects, “I would do it again...”

Principal Ben's intuition and experience provided him guidance in recommending school would go on as usual despite a threat that a bomb would go off the next morning.

Although he said he would take the Superintendent's lead on the decision, Ben's judgment call was put in place. After several searches and reviewing possible suspects, the students came to school the next day subject to searches of all bags, backpacks and purses. It wasn't until the students began arriving that Ben realized he would have a unique challenge...the students were bringing bags of food in for a holiday food drive.

Theme #2: Personal/Professional Moral Development as Influenced by Family, Religion and Education

The development of principals' personal and professional morality is influenced by life's experiences and relevant professional development. To support the overarching purpose this study which is to attempt to describe, and explain the personal and professional moral codes of a set of school administrators as they make decisions, it is appropriate to examine specific and collective influential aspects of principals' background(s). Without exception, the principals participating in this study believe, in varying degrees, that their personal morality is attributed to influence of family experiences and expectations. The implications of family values and how they play out in the real world is addressed by Bergson,

...domestic virtues (*in considering one's own moral development*) are indeed bound with civic virtues, for the simple reason that family and society, originally undifferentiated, have remained closely connected. (p.33)

In the course of this study, half of the principals identified a belief in God or a superior being as a guide to becoming a moral person. In the sorting of the influential aspects of their lives, however religion was not placed in the center of their moral core. Principals saw religion as supporting the core, not as a source from which moral codes originate. The study reveals that principals attribute much of their personal moral growth to family influence. To be clear, the

principal stories as transcribed are accountings of typical and atypical family dynamics. The data collection reveals a personal reconnaissance of how each principal saw his or her moral codes develop in their own circumstance, not in relation to others' experience.

Principals see themselves as moral individuals. Principals speak of their family and background as if telling a good story. Some of the stories are reflective of stereotypical images of a happy and productive family. Other recollections speak of crisis, tragedy, and dysfunction. No matter the history, principals recant the details of their upbringing with sincerity and candidness. Through their collective insistence, the experiences were critical to the shaping of their moral codes.

Principals see themselves as moral individuals acting on a system of rules that modifies their behavior in social situations. It is doing well instead of harm and sets some virtuous standards of conduct or moral codes. It is a set of ethics or that guides one's behavior (MacDonald, 2002).

Principals also see a direct correlation between of their experiences as defining themselves as individuals of dignity and having compassion for mankind. It's the essence of who they are. In the literature we find two pieces that affirm their personal development. Fiche which verifies the context of this discussion...

Fiche who derives moral duties from two premises. . . one's obligation to respect one's own dignity as a free being and one's obligation always so to act as not to violate the equal freedom of other men, (p. 360). Fichte states that, "the kind of philosophy which one adopts depends on the sort of man one is ... for a philosophical system is not a lifeless piece of human nature that one might take or discard... but it is animated by the soul of the man who has it."(Fichte, p.434).

Secondly, I cite the Cusick's assertion from his study on the education of seven eminent Americans, a collective study in a Passion for Learning. (2005). Acknowledging the

contributions of Fichte, Cusick states, “It is not school but life where the knowledge one learns in youth is turned into action, and knowledge and action combine into the person one is.”

In contemplating Fichte and Cusick’s premises, this chapter will continue with a collection of reflections by practicing principals regarding the origination of the values they bring to their roles.

Translation of Moral Obligation - Family, Religion, Education and Work

The development of personal morality passes through several stages as outlined in the chapter presentation of Piaget and Kohlberg’s work. The center of moral development originates in the family. Parenting practices include specific goal-directed behavior through which parents perform their parental duties (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Hayek’s assertion situates moral development, “Learning how to behave is more the source than the result of insight, reason and understanding. Man is not born wise, rational and good but taught to become so. It is not our intellect that created our morals, rather human interactions governed by reason and those capacities associated with it.” (1988)

Translated Family Values/Religion

Principals identify family as the source of their moral development. In many stories, recollection of family experiences is how principals define themselves. Expectations were clear. Authority and rules were defined. Principal Jerry paints the broad picture of his upbringing.

My grandparents lived with us. At the time that was an accepted...they raised a family and the son, my dad, was supposed to take care of them so my dad had them stay with us. I had a grandmother there, she was influential when I was young... ..so all the things were tied in, you know, being honest, doing the right thing and treating others like you would have yourself and being truthful, helping other people less fortunate than you. My mom was always helping out somebody...she was doing whatever she could. That was big focus.

Kathleen's background mirrors Jerry's experience but also acknowledges how she believes others see her.

You know...I was always (laughing) had a bossy personality...I follow the rules...I expect others to do the same...I guess I have a strong sense of right and wrong because morals and ethics is the way I was raised and the Church falls along the lines with all of that. But maybe it is part of my own personal sense of what is right and wrong...which I am sure it was shaped by my family.

Principal Carl recalls influence from each of his parents. Each had their own distinct approach in providing him guidance:

My dad was a huge influence on my life...both positive and negative. Working for him, I saw a side of him that was absolutely amazing. His ease with people, his focus, his energy, his drive was absolutely incredible. The cost for that unfortunately was the fact that he was often at work, so the home side was that it was that was that we did not get to spend a whole lot of time together... My mom...very traditional, very supportive. Helped my dad, made the coffee, started the car in the wintertime for him.

Principal Clarence's interview was perplexing at times. Stories were not always consistent, yet were interesting nevertheless. In the end discussion of a particular topic, Clarence summarizes by sharing a bit of wisdom. In the following exchange, Clarence speaks to the transference of his own family values to his building and staff.

D: If you reflect back on your family... was religion a part of your family at all?

C: Yeah.

D: Can you speak to that little bit...if you feel comfortable...what faith you practiced?

C: I was Episcopal. I attended the Episcopal Church.

D: What was important to your family... was there any connection in terms of what the church taught and what your parents wanted.

C: Nope.

D: So what was important to your parents?

C: I think from my mother's point of view...you always do what is right. And she is the one that ultimately pushed me in terms of an education... Ah, what I said, my mother told to us do what is right not always what is expedient....

Regarding how these family values transfer to his professional life, Clarence was emphatic:

C: One piece of a good school is that you create a family with your teachers. You have a feeling for the people you work with...Your business is people...that is your first job....the second job is curriculum.

Mary reflects on her upbringing as an only child. She was raised in a family with a history of devout Catholic teachings. Raised in Detroit, she witnessed and listened to adult discussions of tension of the late 60's into the early 70's. Family, religion and stewardship are highlights of her youth that shaped Ann as a future teacher and administrator:

My parents were both born and raised Catholic and so religion was an important part of our lives. My father's oldest brother was a priest... My father's side has definitely that Catholic religion bent. There is also that heavy educational component to it, so...any gathering usually had discussion along those lines... I was born in 1965, growing up in Detroit with my parents until 1971-72 ...all the racial violence, there has always been a lot of discussion about...I don't want to say politics in terms of republican versus democrat, but ultimately the humanitarian side...race relations and topics of that nature. Definitely going back to the city doing volunteer work, going down to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen...definitely shaped my childhood.

Principal Ben's nuclear family was close. Born and raised in the north, his parents set the expectations. Like with other principals' upbringing, responsibility was accompanied by expectations.

I probably acted more of fear of not wanting to disappoint my parents. We were expected to be honest, respectful of adults and other people and there was a sense of doing the right thing in terms of not lying ... just like that normal...we weren't overly religious but we attended church in a lot of those help other people, be a good person were the expectations ...

Frank recalls a strict household; expectations were clear. His parent chose to send him to a parochial school for his elementary education. Combining the family rules and Catholic education experience made a profound impression on Frank.

I was the oldest of four brothers...raised in a Polish-Catholic family. ...my mother's parent were a part of our family, they lived three blocks from us for most of my youth. So there was eight of us...knowing my parents and background that it was judgment of parochial versus a public school. I think it was the attachment to the religion. That was an integral part of our upbringing. My parents were very devout and I think the fact that there was a Catholic school available...I was sure to attend... That is real sound grounding you got through the nuns through eighth grade...That was a world of compliance. You did, because...because I said, because he said. That was kind of what we lived with...

Principal Tim was raised in a close; professional family..."intact" was how he summed it up. He remembers the life lessons which he transfers to his role as a principal today.

I grew up in a relatively small town, not so small any more... My mom was a professor, my dad, an auto executive. One of things I saw as a kid growing up, my parents were always there for me...no matter what. Intact family. They were always at my events. They found a way to be there. A lot of structure...they made make priorities...carries over to how I work today. I am an independent thinker...not doing what the group tells you what to do...I trusted my parents judgment..., even I knew what they thought...my dad would say, "Nothing good happens after midnight." He was totally correct...the key here was that family time is important.... Even today, my wife and I vacation with her parents and my parents with the kids. The family was always at the center of what we did and continues to be.

Principal Tom's childhood was also structured, based on values like character and respect.

D: Where did this come from, Tom?

T: I think that came from my dad. We worked in the inner city of Detroit and I think the belief of goodness in all people irrespective of race, gender and I think when I watched my dad work it was a common courtesy to all people...not to form opinions not forming judgments...as I worked with my dad I saw some of the same things. Really I kind of inherited it...

Principal Ken remembers a larger scope of expectations that originates from his family.

The thing I remember most about my parents is that is very important to be a quality person ...life is about being a quality person...it is not about how much money you make...which I think what influenced me going to work in a school system because you don't make any money doing this. Also that you should always be pushing yourself (to improve) and that is why I have always taken classes...because I feel like I am floundering if I am not learning something...

You have rules to follow because it is the right thing to do. Whether they are religious or not, you have that real intrinsic feeling that you do is what is right and there are things you cannot do either. Doesn't matter if anyone is watching or anyone is going to find out it is driven into you especially from different priests (laughs) YOU OBEY...

An atypical story comes from Principal Marty. As an adult he reflects on what his parents were trying to teach him but realizes it was his own resistance that would cause him to re-evaluate his approach to life.

They were strict but part if was me...I am the one that messed up...I didn't have discipline in high school to be successful...I became more engaged in things I shouldn't have got into at the time... My dad was strict...but again this is my fault not his...I wish he was more strict. I wish he would have said, "you don't have a choice...you are going to play." The overall expectation was be a good person, follow the rules, get an education, and be able to support you and leave...

Education

Principals' family values of education are not unique. Most principals' parents did not attend college. The majority of these parents were middle, working class, many in the skilled trades and determined to send their children to school. College was a non-negotiable.

Principal Jeff recalls the need to continue onto college was not made in overt statements by his parents but from those around him that valued education, "...So I decided to go into education. So, I had some real good teachers... my parents stressed education a lot.

A few of the principals interviewed were raised among a family of educators. Charles' extended family always spoke of issues in education,

My family is a family of educators, my grandpa was a Superintendent, my grandma was a principal...my father was a principal...my mother was a teacher. My uncle was the

Superintendent of Saginaw. I have had a lot of educators in my family ... so I went to Central Michigan to become a teacher,.. you know the one phone you have in your house...in the kitchen and people call and you hear about issues and heard my mom and dad talking about school related things quite often so...I was pretty much raised with the ideals of public education.

Mary's parents, too, were school teachers. Like Charles she grew up becoming familiar with the timeless issues that teachers and administrators face each day. Her orientation took place long before she went to college. Ann tells an interesting story of switching schools when she was young.

I am an only child of two school teachers. Both of my parents came out of the parochial school system. My mother took the route of a high school and ultimately became a college teacher. My father worked in the parochial school setting at DeLasalle... First grade, for about a half a year. It was not a very good experience...I started at parochial schools...at St. Joan of Arc on the east side. ...I was a very eager learner, wanting to go to school everyday... and I started telling stories how the nuns locked a kid in the closet...they pulled me at half break...The educational aspect certainly leads itself toward the community service aspect of how view my role in my adult life.

Principal Audrey's parents, like most of the principals' fathers and mother, did not attend college. She did, however, make it clear her father valued learning and found alternative means for himself,

But father was a real self learner...World War II vet...kind of guy that was always reading National Geographic, amateur archeologist, had a lot of interest in learning. My parents were very selective on the TV we watched. Some years we did not have a TV, instead they valued education. All five of us went on and got a college education which made them very proud. But when I went to college, I went to Calvin.

An exception to the typical family background was that of Janie, the high school principal in a Texas town just north of the Mexican border. Although raised in a migrant family, moving from state to state, there was one constant in their mobile life. Janie's parents knew education would free their children from the cycle of migrant children becoming migrant parents.

Yes...I was actually born and partially raised in my early years in California, I was born there but my parents were originally from here (Texas) but I was a product of migrants... I got my early years...as a migrant I was getting education in California and Texas at the

same time... So a little bit of both... because my parents have instilled in us... that education is the way to go... because what else are you going to have? ... that because of the economic situation they were in with their family, they did not have the opportunity to graduate from high school, much less going to college, and they definitely wanted to make sure their children were not going to be in the same shoes of living day-to-day, paycheck to paycheck.

Securing a solid education definitely was part of my personal initiatives... my parents sacrificed so much... did so much to make sure education was a priority... I have to be a good statistic.

During the interview with Principal Carl, he related several times to the unique impressions he had of his father. The expectation to attend college was an assumption although he cannot recall the reasoning of his parents:

My dad wanted me to go into business with them. I chose not to which caused some friction there... however every day I think I use the things I learned from him. So education... it was odd... it was something although my parent did not have it... they always said I was going to go to college. And as early as I remember, I don't know why they said that... I don't know where it came from. But that became ingrained in my head to go to school.

In his discussion regarding his Polish Catholic upbringing, Principal Frank applies his description of K-8 education "world of compliance" to another significant expectation... "thou shall attend college."

Of course... talking about education... my father did not have a high school diploma, my mother did. But college was this ill-defined sort of Holy Grail...

Knowing my parents and background that it was judgment of parochial versus a public school. I think it was the attachment to the religion. That was an integral part of our upbringing. My parents were very devout and I think the fact that there was a Catholic school available... sealed my fate.

Parent Modeling-Work Ethic

Principals also consider themselves to be hard workers. Work ethic in relation to reaching of personal and professional goals is a primary disposition principals owe to their

parents. Principal Henry recalls, My parents instilled a real work ethic in us and of course...my mother's favorite saying was, "First things, first...."

Principals put in long hours. High school principals lace many, 12 hour days together with evening events to affect a comprehensive program. To be able meet demands, Principal Mike concludes, "You cannot be afraid to work..." Principal Jerry recalls what made the biggest impression on him from his parents:

I think the work ethic...they had...my folks expected us to do our chores and be...you had everything from paperboy delivery to working with the neighbors and so on. Even when I got home from school...you had to get done what you got done. There was a time to work and a time to play. Work was certainly a priority...

The bar was high in Kathleen's house as she was growing. School, work ethic, high expectations respect and religion joined in contributing to her personal development,

I came from a middle class, well-off enough, socio-economic family. Good work ethic. My family expected me to work hard ... We were always taught to do our best...there was no doubt about that and we were...good work ethic...treated each other well and again if I got in trouble at school and would get in more trouble at home....respect the teachers, the classic good kid.

Principal Courtney recalls the expectation to work. Her father made it clear, I remember being told, "OK, 16th birthday is coming up...you can have your cake when you tell me where you work...so it was expected that we would get a job...it wasn't harsh, it just was what it was...and one the other things Dad was...

Principal Carl's work ethic was modeled by his father, Work ethic...so I think what was...most profound was working for him on the loading docks...watching that servant leadership style, high accountability, high expectations, work hard, play hard...my dad was a snowmobiler, a hunter, a fisherman...all these different eclectic things and my mom never to held me back when I would say I would like to do this....

Principal Tom is known to burn he midnight oil...in his office. His responsibilities as high school principal do not end when everyone has made it home. He stays late, covers the details, returns calls, answers email, meets with parents, finishes evaluations, plans graduation, works on the master schedule, rarely taking time for lunch during the day and managing a quick

dinner at night. Secondary principals are not unlike Tom. It is virtually a 24/7 job with finding time to sleep as the only necessity. How does Tom see his work ethic?

The value of working... I began to work when I was 12 years old. Spent my summer working... earning. My mom and dad both grew up in the depression, so not having things was something they experienced...quite honestly, my dad was a workaholic...I think I have inherited that. He worked seven days a week probably a good 60-80 hours per week...And when I was working with him, we would get up at three or four in the morning to go to work, get home at 9:30 at night. So I think those values carried over, working hard to achieve. And you get what you put in.

Bergson's statement frames the relationship between work, society and the individual seemingly captures principals' commitment and work ethic:

It is society (school community) that draws up for the individual (principal) the program of his daily routine. It is impossible to live a family life, follow a profession, attend to the thousand and one cares of the day, do one's shopping, go for a stroll, or even stay at home without obeying rules and submitting to obligations. A road has been marked out by society (school community). It lies before us and always done automatically (*organizational moral code*), obedience to duty. (p. 19)

Theme #3 Organizational/Professional Morality – Simon

To describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes considered by principals as they make decisions, it is appropriate to consider the organizational environment where decisions are made. In the midst of this environment, expectations and parameters are laid out often with a limited range of choice available to make decisions.

Reflecting on principals' personal and professional morality provides cause to revisit Chester Barnard's (1937) assertion ...that as one assumes a high rank in an organization, one takes on a set of moral codes in addition to personal moral codes....and that one cannot divorce his professional conduct from his private morals. Barnard further argued that in order to exercise administrative office, one has had to combine personal morality with several professional codes. How does one satisfy his/her own integrity when the organization imposes its own morality?

The work of Herbert Simon (1957) brings to the study a perspective on efficient organizations. For the purposes of this study, Simon defines principals' place in the organization as well the overarching responsibilities to the organization. In Simon's view, principals would be considered middle-managers, situated in the hierarchy of authority to support the goals of the district.

Before one can understand (principal) decision making, one might conceptualize the relationship of Simon's view relative to schools structure. Organizational hierarchy of school systems establishes districts' chain of command as presented by Simon. In effect, Simon's assertions on executive decision making are relevant to school settings. The specific influence on decision making according to Simon is relative to how:

1. Labor is divided into tasks.
2. The organization establishes standard practices.
3. The organization transmits decisions downward, establish system of authority.
4. The organization provides channels of communication running in all directions through which information for decision making flows.
5. The organizations trains and indoctrinates its members. (p.104)

Principals' placement in the organizational structures of schools finds them at the crossroads of district policies and codes and the settings and people that are impacted by the organization codes. The codes are established with little room for interpretation in what Simon would refer to as "Bounded Rationality". In his book, Simon (1957) describes the characteristics of a closed system that rationalizes the establishment of discrete procedures to achieve organizational goals. In the purest sense, Simon defines organizational morality. In particular, Simon states that the decision the organization makes for the individual ordinarily:

1. Specifies his functions, that is, the general scope and nature of its duties (see Kant);
2. Allocates authority, that is, who in the organization is to have the power to make decisions for individuals;

3. Sets the limits on choices. (Simon, p.8)

In the purest sense in an educational organization, Simon's three criteria are characteristic of American schools and school districts. Principals are middle managers. Their position is specialized, taking the form of a vertical division of labor (p.9), absolutely essential to achieve coordination of their cooperating staff. Centralizing the authority (in school buildings) governs activities for all members (teachers) of the organization (school district).

In this view, Charles, middle school principal, reflects on process, procedures, and support of organizational morality by adhering to the established district code:

It was funny, he slammed his hand down on the table ..., "no, we are not going the medical route...it is not a disability, we have to go to the discipline route." And I thought, ok, I know how to do that I have done it before and they want me to do it again. We will start documenting everything...writing reprimands, put on a plan of improvement and put timeline in place and when those aren't met we will put down more discipline and that is plan and eventually we will go to the board...

Barnard (1937) points out that "the decisions that an individual makes as a member of an organization are quite distinct from his personal decisions." Personal choices may determine whether an individual joins a particular organization, and continue to be made in his or her extra-organizational private life. But, as a member of an organization, that individual makes decisions not in relationship to personal needs and results, but in an impersonal sense as part of the organizational intent, purpose, and effect. Organizational inducements, rewards, and sanctions are all designed to form, strengthen, and maintain the identification of the organization. To Principal Ben, complying with the organizational code is accepting the position as it is designed...expectations must be met:

What you have to understand that we have, as educators, responsibilities and this is part of your job. That is why every other week when you get that paycheck; responsibility is reflected in the pay you get. And if you are not performing your responsibility then you are not doing your job.

Lines of communication are set in the organization for deployment of goals. There is a system of hierarchy – decisions reached in the high ranks of the organization will have no effect upon operative employees unless they are communicated downward as with all the decisions in the organization (Simon, p.10)

Administrator efficiency is achieved by members of the organization in determined hierarchy of authority to preserve unity of command. Administrative efficiency is achieved by keeping to a minimum the layers of the organization through which a decision must pass before being acted upon. (Simon p.40)

Principal Kathleen shares how she imposes the code on her staff. Although she models the behavior, the results have to match the expectations of the district:

Well I think at a couple of levels, I think in terms of expecting on a basic level. People need to make deadlines, work hard...I guess be like me. I expect my teachers to be competent and be able to do their job and meet the standards I have set for them...we are all aware of what rolls down from above. Our administrators is expected to meet the bar that is set high...our staff needs to reach that high as well...

Ultimately it is the principal who must communicate the ideals of the district. In several cases it is how principals see their professional morality aligned with the district. Principal Al comments on setting building parameters:

...what I found in my eleven years...and watching others like you...I feel the building administrator sets the norms about what is acceptable in the school. If principals are lax about certain things...the staff will be lax about things....

Decisions can be complex mixtures of facts and values. Information about facts, especially empirically proven facts or facts derived from specialized experience, is more easily transmitted in the exercise of authority than are the expressions of values. Given the inevitable limits on rational decision making, what other techniques or behavioral processes can a person or organization bring to bear to achieve approximately the best result? Simon writes:

The human being striving for rationality and restricted within the limits of his knowledge has developed some working procedures that partially overcome these difficulties. These procedures consist in assuming that he can isolate from the rest of the world a closed system containing a limited number of variables and a limited range of consequences.

Simon is primarily interested in seeking identification of the individual employee with the organizational goals, much less with personal values. ...

The individual is limited by his values and those conceptions of purpose which influence him in making decisions. If his loyalty to the organization is high – his decisions may reflect high acceptance of the objectives set (buy-in to the organizational morality). If his loyalty is lacking, personal motives may interfere with efficiency. (p.40)

Mike, high school principal supports the edicts of the district as means for fulfilling his role in the chain of command from central office to the buildings. But Mike extends the organization to include the community:

...I feel felt very strongly that this is what it said in our handbook, it called for in black and white that this is the rule...that handbook is thought out and there are rules there. And provide a sense of what is acceptable and not acceptable, and tries to fill the kind of atmosphere in the school approved by the majority...staff, students, and parents and the community... Whether it is a right or wrong decision, or whether that is in the best the interest of the ...if it helping the kid....helping the organization...it is a priority...

Principals speak in terms of loyalty to their district, a critical element to a bounded rationality. Generally these statements were made with a sense of pride, particularly when results match the district goals. Principals rely on central office and the foundation that it holds, for support in difficult decisions.

Principal Carl, recalls a situation where a student protest (result of a central office decision) rippled back to central office. High level administrators not only re-established the parameters but met with the students as well:

Ultimately I was helped along in that decision Looking back the central office decision was appropriate.... Looking back it set a very good tone... everyone was satisfied... it was clear to the kids, if you want to do this...fine... we gave them room to be out of their classes first and second hour to do their thing... but as soon as third hour popped...it was our choice not to... consequences would be handed out.

Principals are often faced with complex decisions. In the situation described by Carl, there were further implications. The protest was a significant event. Carl realized the issue the students were protesting was secondary to a bigger issue. As an organization, how was the district going to respond to students' choice to turn their backs on the code of conduct set forth and approved by the Board. The real issue is if the protest was not dealt with in an authoritative fashion, the students would not consider the tactic as a high risk. Policy needed to be upheld. In this case, the organizational structures and protocols kept the district in charge.

Principal Mike related a similar story which had political implications. It was a case where the starting quarterback which was the son of the Transportation Director; got into a fight off campus. The back-up quarterback was the son of a school board member. The school decision, according to code of conduct, could not be made until the court process was complete. As athletic director and assistant principal, Mike was not receiving much guidance from his principal who was influenced by the Superintendent's desire to get back at the Transportation Director with whom he was feuding with at the time. The popular stand from the central office was to remove the student from his position on the team and turn over the reins to the back-up. Mike was faced with a political dilemma.

...so it was a very complex, difficult situation. I think deep down you got to follow the rules...along with the Superintendent members of the community were out to get the Transportation Director. To me they were getting to him through his kid...and I felt that was troublesome...and the Superintendent wanted to take away his letter...he cannot wear his varsity jacket...my argument was then we should change the rule...my position... follow the policies that are written...not interpreted different because personal vendettas...the more you allow politics or something to weigh into the decision the more uncomfortable and dirty it feels.

The complex nature of school decisions bring elements to the table that Simon recognizes: personal values. As was asserted earlier, Simon sees personal agendas as

contaminating the decision making process. Simon concedes, “Unfortunately problems do not come to administrators carefully wrapped in bundles with value elements and the factual elements neatly sorted....” (p.5). Every decision involves element of two kinds, “factual” and “value.” Factual propositions are statements about the observable world and the way it operates – tested by true and false—whether what they say about the world actually occurs or whether it does not. Simon adds

...decisions are sometimes more than factual propositions. To be sure they are descriptive of a future state of affairs...and this description can be true or false in strictly empirical sense...in addition there is a imperative quality...where future state of affairs is selected in preference to another and direct behavior toward the chosen alternative...they have a an ethical (value added) as well as factual content. (p.46)

Simon asserts that decisions that can be correct or incorrect are able to resolves itself. He questions of what is ethical terms such as, “ought”, “good” and “preferable” have purely empirical meaning. Simon states that a critical premise of his work is that ethical terms are not completely reducible to factual terms. (p.46) A phrase that is repeated by those who claim to have a stake in student outcomes is, “...if it is good for kids.” It is the rally call and filter that receives more attention than a district’s mission statement. Yet, when asked to define, “what is good for kids”, the answer varies in each setting and in each individual’s set of values. Principals will voice similar claims that their actions are to the good of students. It is up to the principal however to filter through adult requests as being good for the students, or good for the adults making the request.

Applying Simon’s assertion, an ethical statement regarding what is best for kids is not easily reduced to empirical terms. Pressing further, principals ultimately judge the goodness or badness of the proposal based on their own values. At times it is the principal’s role to interpret and extend the organizational code where it leaves off and enters into the community. Principal

Sharon relates her support for what is good for students as it relates to their particular community and the challenge spring break brings to the ethical influences on the students.

And some of those lessons we try target and tie it with their values (discipline) code and that we know about trust, loyalty and respect and build on those principles we have. We are getting ready now...we tie it in with ...well spring break is coming and South Padre is an hour away ... you know the influences that come from our community...drugs, sex you know the things that are out there ...the issues that in our community that come into our school. We try to educate the students about making the right choices.

Principals position themselves to always consider the right thing to do. At times it is reactive and other times it is proactive. The intertwining of the principals' personal and professional morals and the deliberate nature of organization goals creates space for this study. The study positions itself between the factual tensions and ethical decisions. As seen in the complex situation in which Mike found himself, although the facts eventually pointed him in the right direction, his personal ethics came into play when the organization decided to change the rules to suit individual preferences. The Superintendent reduced his compliance with the organizational code and told Dan what he "ought to" do...remove the starting quarterback and place the School Board member's son in his place. In the end, Mike stayed with the policy as written and remained loyal to the organizational code. The starting quarterback was determined innocent until proven guilty of a crime. He kept his starting role.

Mike's acceptance and enforcement of the organization's code was second nature for him. In reference to comments during the interview Mike emphatically states, "The Marine Corps taught me a lot about rules." Armed forces have known to rebuild individuals to the prescription of what a good soldier can predictably do and accomplish. Simon's view of an efficient organization does not vary to any significant degree from the armed services code. It is what Simon calls Organization Identification.

Organization Identification is the process whereby the individual substitutes organizational objectives for his own aims. The value – indices determine his organizational decisions. Through identification, organized society imposes upon the individual the scheme of social values in place of his personal motives. (Simon, p.218)

To compromise one's personal code to align with the organization can take a personal toll on principals. Principals contributing to this study related their family values often took a second seat to the organizational goals. Principal Carl states the job can consume your life. Dedication to the organization means diverting personal time, attention and priorities to school and not family. It is a moral dilemma for principals. It is not spoken but a reality of replacing personal moral codes with the expectations of the organizational code.

Let's talk non-instructional leadership things... at the high school as opposed to the middle school level...you having done all three, you know that... I mean so much of your day...I have a Board hearing tonight...Saturday I did a homecoming dance until midnight... Friday homecoming game, homecoming parade... five Fridays in a row I was at football games...I do not want a tissue... I don't want to start crying here. But it wears away at you... It slowly wears you down and your ability to be as creative and dynamic as you want to be an instructional leader.

An anecdotal situation found an Athletic Director having to choose between attending a community meeting to discuss the new athletic field or attend his first child's kindergarten meeting. The message was clear he was to be at the meeting; the goals of the district won out.

Catherine is a principal at an inner city high school. She has also been an administrator at different levels and emphatically compares her position as to other principal positions:

And I am not saying anything about elementary principals or middle school principals... but senior high principals have a different beast that they are carrying around. You have so many after school activities, so many other things that send you in so many different directions. And you know weekends and things of that nature... so it then you have the sports thing... So you know it is interesting in of itself. But a supportive husband and really supportive family is critical...I have even suggested that secondary principals be afforded counseling to sort out the work load and conflicting school and personal responsibilities.

Tim, principal of a large high school (2000+), acknowledges organization codes and his own that conflict at times. He also acknowledged that he is comforted by its detail. He related a situation where a student missed a considerable amount of school and a teacher's insistence the student completely the missed assignments within the allotted time frame.

This wasn't someone who was out with the flu. There were significant injuries that occurred here...the teacher was calling on the make-up policy that outlines the limits of when make-up work can be accepted. The situation did not fit the policy...I asked her to do the right thing...she refused.... I was asking the teacher to overlook the policy...it didn't make sense...she refused.... I eventually turned to "parent appeal" process that will bring this teacher face to face with the student's parent. In essence I used another policy to counteract another...

Tim weighs the decisions he makes very seriously. There are non-negotiable policy in terms of weapons that are, "...Cut and dried for me...you have know it is for the greater good...I have no problem going to the wall...and an expulsion takes place."

Similar to Carl's story, Tim feels the high school principal job can "box you in." You have to remain loyal to the organization and that inherently has issues, particularly on a personal side.

The loneliness.... When you have to make so many difficult decisions... it come back to you only. Not that I cannot consult others like my assistants, but it is my name that I sign ...where the buck stops. Levels stress has changed me in a negative way. There is a personal cost. I am quieter...more reflective... my wife has noticed. Give you an example. I am at my son's 5th grade moving up ceremony and I get a call from the Superintendent. I wanted to kick myself. I took it. She said, certain things are sacred...I said I know but I couldn't tell my boss that is how I feel. It angers me that I did that ...I let my job get in the way of my family.

And you know what...if I called the Superintendent at any time...he would pick up the call...a tough position to be in.

Tim is speaking to the compromising of his personal morality for the organizational morality. Like many principals faced with similar dilemmas, there is no easy answer...duty to what or whom. Tim's story brings credence to Barnard's earlier assertion:

Resignation or withdrawal is often a solution which circumstances legitimately permit. Then the result is maintenance of personal integrity. When resignation or withdrawal is itself highly immoral, as is sometimes the case, there is potential tragedy". (p. 274)

Principals speak to the organization code as if to say, "You can't be with them and you can't live without them." Organizational structures set policy, devise the hierarchy, and establishes authority and the lines of communication. Efficiency and compliance make it work. To repeat Mike's assertion, if you invite politics in...it gets messy.

The principals, along with Simon, acknowledge that ethics find their way into many decisions. At times the organization's code will align and support the values considered in a circumstance. At times they are at odds. The interpretation of goals in the organization is limited. An efficient organization will demand unity of command. A central office does as well. Yet, as principals waiver at times from the expectations of district, there are times they do not. These instances, though referenced here, will be addressed in a succeeding narrative in this chapter.

What became evident in the interviews is that, in assuming their role as middle managers in a district, many principals support and develops their own organizational morality in their buildings. This often translated as the environment or culture of the building. Essentially the principal integrates the expectations of the district with his/her own set of expectations and ways of doing business. At times there is conflict with another faction, such as the teacher's union that monitors the structures and processes put in place. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, principals consider themselves as the overseer of their team sometimes referred to as their family at school.

Principal Carl speaks to two levels of comfort, one with himself, one with the overall safety and security of the building:

And there is also building an overarching culture within your school. So when I say benefit, I am saying that does it help teachers teach and kids learn? And are the kids safe? I mean those are the big overarching things we have.

I would hope you would see people that are comfortable working with me...assistant principals, teachers, secretaries, custodians, building engineer. I worked hard at building those relationships. It is basically the only thing I know how to do. So I wouldn't call it work ...it is part of something...part of who I think I am and that's it.

Emotional safety and risk-taking by both my staff and my kids because innovation is really where it is going to be at.

Principals bring their own morality to the surface in several ways. The most common is through their Assistant Principals, staff meetings, individual conversations, email, school activities (assemblies) and events...even professional development can be a part of instilling values. Principals utilize PTO/PTA meetings, athletic events, websites, email, newsletters, parent teacher conference and open house as vehicles for sharing the expectations of staff and students. The selection of professional development activities provides insight to where the principal would like take the staff.

Principal Ben extends the district expectations to include various standards of professionalism. These expectations are facilitated frequently at staff meetings, Ben believes he is commuting the moral code for the building

What you have to understand that we have educators, responsibilities and what is part of your job.....hold people accountable if they aren't doing what they should be doing...outcomes...expectations for kids and staff that I would like to see how they carry themselves...how they dress and how is their work ethic in terms of tardiness and some of those things. I get to be a little bit more dismayed as the younger teachers come into dressed, less professionally and don't quite have that work ethic or the appreciation for the job they have.

As principal of an inner city school, Sharon accepts students from the neighborhood which she believes lacks the structure and discipline to be a safe and nurturing place for students. It

bears repeating her vision as it is an appropriate example of a principal creating the moral fabric of her building.

I want to be a village. I want it to be like an African village (reference to a community with specific values). I want children to be safe here. I want them to know their roles here and grow here. So they can take the love and safety they get here...the self-efficacy they get here and take out into their community. In this environment I can create the access the resources they need to learn. It was my first step in my plan.

Fred, who was a principal of 34 years, see establishing an environment as primary responsibility, "But you as principal create that school...you create the atmosphere, the trust...those things that allow teachers to be creative and do good things for kids."

In her opening comments to her staff each year, Catherine sets the tone and the expectations for the building. Catherine is not unlike many principals who consider the first staff meeting the most important for the entire school year.

... I start out every school year, like we all do, with our first staff meeting...before I get into all the rules, the protocols, the housekeeping stuff...I have a conversation with staff about what my thoughts are about the coming year...what we need to celebrate from the previous year...what our challenges are from the previous year...I am constantly trying to get them to understand we have to develop relationships. I am 100% behind, rigor, relevance and relationships...more relevance and relationships.

Where deficiencies in decision making processes are identified, Simon emphasized the importance of training. The training is designed to influence decisions from the inside out. The purpose is for the organization's members to reach satisfactory decisions themselves. Simon credits training procedures as an alternative to the exercise of authority or advice as means of control over subordinate's decisions. (Simon, p. 15) Principals find themselves on both ends of training. One of course is the organization's investment in them as effective managers and instructional leaders. The principal also extends his/her knowledge by providing training to staff to assist in meeting the goals in the building. Principal Ken connects his college internship and first position with his training goals:

But I thought I could run the building... setting the culture, expectations and processes as a team. They (district) actually led me to think that way... And the district tapped me and started to train me as a principal at Otis. They also sent me to emerging leaders at Michigan State University.

Theme #4 Kant- Duty/Moral Imperative

To define and describe the personal and profession morals of principals as they make decisions it becomes necessary to understand alignment of organizational code. Kindred to Simon's "bounded rationality" it is the principals' interpretation of what is expected of them that defines their compliance. The "interpretation" is the distinction between adhering to the organization morality and what Immanuel Kant refers to as one's "duty". For some, the alignment is natural ... central office speaks, I listen, I do what I am told to do...it my duty as administrator to support the mission statement of the school district." Yet the actual decision to comply and be dutiful must be substantiated by an individual, in this case a principal.

It is necessary to distinguish between a person's morality, a moral system and ethics. To talk about a person's morality to talk about his acts and his behavior...it is talk about the moral righteousness and wrongness. To talk about moral systems is to talk about the principles according to which one judges whether a person's act or behavior is right or wrong. To talk about ethics is to talk about the validity and justification of these principles." (Hartnick, p.70)

The second theoretical relationship that helps describe and explain personal and professional moral codes examines the postulates established by Kant and his discourse on "Duty" and the Moral Imperative (Sullivan, 1994). The context of each of these terms help us better understand the morality behind principal decisions. The following data acquired through the interviews, will provide alignment with duty and the moral imperative.

To Kant, morality is not something subjective but determined by reason (logic)...
Motives of act – decision for the moral value of the act. (p.71) It is essential to understand that

the motives, rationalization, the intellectual process preceding the act, becomes the moral decision ... regardless of the results.

Morality of the Act...Not the Result.

The application of Kant's morality surfaces on a daily basis for principals. Mike, a high school principal of a large suburban high school speaks to the ultimate resolve when making a decision that may align with the organization but more so for the student:

Sometimes I feel trapped by a policy that says five days suspension for fighting... you investigate the case, you also look sometimes, case by case...So we make a decision that they are only going to get three days. And that is going against the policy but it seems appropriate and it is certainly something I can live with... Whether it is a right or wrong decision, or whether that is in the best the interest of the...if it is helping the kid....helping the organization in the long run...is it a priority...

Mike accepts the outcome of the decision...even if he has doubts whether it was a good decision or not as it did not align with the policy. But he feels good about the process and logic he used to make the decision. In accordance with Kant, Mike has done his duty. There is a hard and fast rule that helps administrators at times when deciding discipline; you have to be fair and consistent. At face value, this practice promotes uniformity, logic and doing one's duty. Yet it is also a rule that can defy logic as all the circumstances do not match with every offense. Fairness and consistency assume like cases handled in like manners. From their experience, principals state that every situation is not that clean and there is always a different "spin" on each case. These circumstances call for an alternative view to be presented in relation to the works of Henri Bergson.

The events at Columbine High School remains at the forefront and has substantiated principals' daily check lists regarding school safety. A principal can argue that a situation had safety implications and feel confident he/she will have support. In fact, it is risky to publicly

downplay instances that may have had safety implications. Principals are cautious since the moral thing to do is always take the safe route and stand their ground. There have been instances when students are known to have a weapon in their possession. State law is very specific on how Boards of Education are to respond to the type and size of weapons in possession as well the local Board policy that specifies how principals will respond to each situation. Fred, a principal for 34 years, observed a situation that did not involve one his students but involved how school personnel respond inappropriately to situations. “Here... I watched the situation...K or first grade...a small kid...had a bullet on a keychain and zero tolerance weapons policy and was handed a significant suspension.”

Principals Fred and Mike were compelled by duty to follow policy. The rightness or the wrongness of these proceedings did not matter, keeping with prescribed processes and procedures (fair and consistent) did. The act of treating like situations in the same way, according to Kant’s philosophy defines a moral principal. A morally good character still must depend on intentions regarding what one SHOULD do ...The only morally good intention is always to do one’s duty. (Sullivan, p.31) Fred’s experience also acknowledges the situations like the one described above that fall under the “shades of gray”,

It is not right for a five year old. He doesn’t even understand what is happening to him and that to me is a wrong. ... And that is an example... of a small example...of what was wrong. It was in the days when Cubs Scouts would come and check in their knives before school and come after school to pick them up. I used to have a whole drawer full of knives. Today , there is a good chance these Cub Scouts would receive significant discipline...It’s a matter of timing. I could get away with that (in my time)...you can’t get away with that...So you have to put the timing in there, the timing is something that says to you...you know what you have to do “at the time” is not always right. Good decisions may be made in the circumstance at the time and may not be appropriate at another.

By and large, most principals are not loose cannons. Their nature is to comply, to do their duty. Principals understand the importance of policy and procedures as designed to respond

to the operations of a school district. Principals consider the overarching policies as guides to their own decisions and the corresponding duty that follows. Principal Jeff shares how he extends duty beyond the policy manual to his role in hiring teaching staff:

I think we owe it to the kids. Administrators must secure the best teachers we can hire. I think probably the most important things I can do are getting and keep the best teachers possible... And I will say I have several mediocre teachers here that were here when I got here and that weighs heavy on me sometimes... But I made a decision... I take the duty to heart...I am hiring the best person to teach in this position. It comes down to the kids about integrity and doing the right thing even when it is not easy.

Ben takes on a broader obligation to his community:

...to think that the decisions that I end up making are made so students can have a safe, nurturing and productive environment where teachers feel supported, they have the materials they need and that they are entering the classroom to do their job and help the kids with what they need to do. And for me to do...make the decisions regarding what type of classes or programs will give kids that comprehensive experience.

Extending the responsibility of hiring qualified staff, Principal Charles states it is important to hire effective teachers but it is often a challenge to a meet one's duty to create master schedule that places teachers in courses that are good for students. It can be difficult:

Duty to do what is told even though the outcome was not good...The standard and the norm and the expectations are so much more today... I felt like I really needed to have this teacher to move on... but my hands were tied... I was moving him into an elective teaching area from social studies because I didn't feel he was giving the kids what the needed in social studies.

In the same vein, Principal Christa relates to duty in terms of how students view her:

I know I have a big impact on kids' lives...I think I have always had that mothering instinct for younger siblings knowing that I was the only one that was going to take care of them. I think it shaped me...through my upbringing, I feel I am obligated take care of other people.

For several principals, it was important to share (model) how they complied with duty with their assistant principals, staff and students as well. At times the proclamation is implied. At other times it is more direct. Principals respect the diverse perspectives their assistant

principals bring to office. Principals extend their professional and personal moralities in the form of expectations to their assistant principals. It becomes the duty of the assistant principal. Principal Kathleen provides an example on how she imposes duty based on her own duty to be the instructional leaders of the building:

It is my job to be a coach and give evaluations...and to share that duty. One of the principal assumed roles is the duty of providing for an education for students...I feel one of my responsibilities to help my assistant principal to be a strong instructional leader...it is important we are on the same page so we have done joint observations together...and giving feedback. I guess that is first and foremost that we agree what a vision of good instruction looks like. It only makes sense for us to be consistent.

Sullivan (1994) support's Kathleen's assertion that duty is a matter of acting out of reason and not desire. (p.32) Reason infers "sense making" or logic. To Kant, morality is not something subjective but determined by reason (Hartnick, p. 71) Reason is best actualized when using empirical support. Value statements do not support logical conclusions. Decision-based emotion, tradition and popular choice, are not a response to duty. Logic is. Audrey who spent most of her career as a middle and elementary principal relates to her use of logic as a family trait:

Because my dad was Dutch, he always spoke his mind... quietly, matter of fact...logically...I think that combination of having that Dutch background and four brothers...everything in my house was based on logic. And it is the mental exercise I use when making decisions... In my first year as a principal, a teacher came up to me and challenged my thinking when I suggesting changes in the way business was done for years. She said, "you have to honor our history...you have to honor stuff..." I asked. "What did that have to do with data and logic???"

A former Principal and central office administrator, Audrey adds, that her thinking did not always fit with her co-workers. She was leading a team of female teachers in Westwood,

...they were a bit on the emotional side. , I asked myself..."what are you doing with all these women? They were driving me nuts...trying to rationalize decision without a trace of logic...but ... although we are in the people business...I feel bad...because when you

try run an organization...and if it comes down to being nice and like or take the logical route...you have to go with the logic

Henry, high school principal states that there are circumstances and expectations that translate into duty for staff:

...for kids. That is why we are here. So when you don't come in on conference period until 7:45 and there is a parent that wanted to meet with you...you are not here to meet with her...that is a problem.

Henry also imposes some of his own morality on this staff. He believes when he and his staff walk into school, they are prepared to provide a solid effort for the students.

I guess my mantra is I treat people the way they would want to be treated...For me family comes first and they know that. And they come in with a family issue..."I got to go home... this or that..." I tell them, "Go." ...my philosophy if you are not whole, physically, mentally or spiritually, you cannot do your job here. You have to take care of those matters in your life in order to do the best job here. Because when people come in here,...I need them to be 100%, their best game all the time...and they know that...

Janie is a principal of a rural high school, situated less than a few miles north of the Mexican border. For Janie, her duty is not only tied to district policy, but she also feels akin to the students that attend her school. She emphatically states, "I was one of them." One of them refers to the migrant population that comprises a large percentage of the student population. The families are poor and mobile. The nature of the migratory experience only prepares the next generation to emulate their parents' livelihood. Still Janie relates that her duty translates to the students in her building that they need to be aware of the needs of others, to extend aide and assistance to others. She was quite proud of sharing how her students lead a shoe drive for the victims in Haiti.

I have some the articles here on what the students do here (Janie produces several examples of students' projects, posters, newspaper clippings are referencing the "Shoes of Haiti" project led by her and the staff.) The idea was to help less fortunate.

It was interesting as Janie acknowledges the economic challenges of her own students but also pressed her students to become involved in even more deprived situations. Her duty was to model for her students that their world is an extended community beyond La Hosa's boundaries, "I think beyond the walls of their education and community...they have to be citizens of the world....and civic values have to come in to play."

Immanuel Kant's Deontological Ethics establishes the moral obligation of performing one's duty. Supporting duty as a universal norm for moral acceptability is what Kant refers to as the Categorical Imperative, or simply acting as moral law demands... a demand that one should act out of respect for moral law...a demand that one should or ought to act in this or that way. (Hartnick, p.84) The operative term in these definitions is "ought" or obligation to respond to one's duty. The desire to respect moral law requires adhering to what is imperative. There are absolutes, a duty to comply. There is no gray area under the categorical imperative. Because what is moral or follows moral law, it ought to be done or regarded as such. Audrey offers an example of moral law in her upbringing:

...my dad ran a store...to him, stealing is stealing. You are stealing a penny...you stole and you are to make that right, restitution... It did not matter if you were hungry or needed warm clothes...stealing is not right.

Marty, a middle school assistant principal learned the ropes as a disciplinarian while deliberating decisions based on moral law and thinking. As with most new administrators, to be fair and consistent and follow the policy, whether it is appropriate or not, is at times the only option:

...I remember having a conversation with the other AP that was here at the time. We have been given...Jim the principal here sat down with the rule book and said, "when kids do these things, these are consequences....if they do this, they get this...if they do that...they get that..." The AP was already a year here before me...this was her second year, my first. She was an administrator a long time before that but her second year here.

And she pretty much went by what was given that day before school started. It was imperative that I do the same.

Marty's story describes the expectation for most administrator is in relation to supporting the code of conduct. Paton makes the connection between this essential school process to the categorical imperative, "...to judge... actions by the same universal standards which apply to the actions of others is an essential condition of morality. " (Hartnick p.73)

Good Will

A central theme of Kant's theory is the recognition of good will. Good will reflects intentions or the motivation behind a response or an action. Hartnick, again, quoting Kant,

Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will. A good will is good not because of what is performed or effects, not by its aptness or the attainment of some proposed acts but simply by virtue of the volition... even if the act achieves nothing, there remains good willt is not the consequence of the act that has moral values but answers the question what it was that was willed and why one willed it.

The essence of Kant's remarks regarding good will is one that some principals assume is the intention of their staff in regard to compliance with administrative decisions. The assumption that staff demonstrates their intention to do what is morally correct, is the basis of productive principal/staff relationships. To assume otherwise creates tension.

Dennis, a principal of a large school, assumes good will when staff approaches him. The stance was essential when he assumed the principalship of the building. He feels that it was critical for establishing workable relationships and aligning their intentions with his.

I say to my staff...let me communicate my expectations...I know this pattern exists and you want me to jump it...it is hard for me to jump on the history when I haven't had a chance to understand it... I am not familiar with your expectations (organization code-staff code). Instead of taking their route, I ask them that if I can do things a little differently...I would like to assume **GOODWILL** ... that is how I operate, as I assume goodwill. It is tough for me to assume good will when my first or second interactions with folks have is to jump on them about something. I want to establish that **GOOD WILL** in these relationships.

Good will is part of Dennis' belief system. He states, "I feel is that I always assume good intentions from the beginning (Kant)."

Summary of Kant's Philosophy

Kant argues that person's intentions, those "inner actions" that precede and cause our physical movements as their effects. To act in an ethically worth fashion, we must have what Kant described as "submissive disposition" and a "moral attitude that motivates us to act "from duty"... "out of respect for"... and "for the sake of" moral law.

For the purposes of this study, the application of Kant's argument places the "principal" as the independent agent in the above statement; one could define and describe school administrator morality as it relates to duty. In fact, several principals refer to their chosen vocation as a "calling to duty" in their educator role. The good principal must have the moral strength and courage to constrain himself to act dutifully. Principals comply with what the job demands.

Theme #5 Personal and Professional Morality-Bergson

To describe and explain the personal and professional morality of principals, the theories of four scholars are referenced to create a grounded understanding on how decisions are made. Barnard set the context of the study by stating that one cannot divorce his/her personal morality within the expectations of an organization code. Simon tells us that administrative behavior (decisions) should be made in the context of what is good for the organization. To a degree, Kant aligns with Simon as he speaks to an individual making choices to fulfill one's duty to an organization's greater good. Kant defines one's duty to that of having good intentions even if the result from acting on one's duty has undesirable results. The connection with Simon portrays

an individual supporting the organization from a duty standpoint, where the desire to conform originates from an individual, not by authority. To serve the organization, Kant seemingly would endorse a “blind duty”, where good will and loyalty are the primary motivation of individual decisions.

In schools we see where Simon’s perspective has been influential. Simon’s description of an effective organization relies primarily on its structures, processes, levels of authority and communication. All of these features are present in school districts. Simon’s perspective defines efficiency with the goals of the organization originating from the top and deployed through the ranks. In this vein, Barnard’s argument of an organizational morality is cultivated and its purpose is solely to guide the organization in achieving its goals. In schools, Simon’s argument for efficiency makes sense. Policies are clear, authority is defined and decisions are deployed through an administrative chain of command. School district structures as aligned with Simon’s efficiencies present limited decision choices for school administrators. Earlier in this chapter, several scenarios were presented to describe and explain principal decisions in the view of Simon.

Chapter V continues with an alternate yet similar perspective for describing and explaining principals’ decision. Kant’s view turns the focus away from the top of the organization (workplace, religion, schools) to the individual executive. The response in a professional sense, by the individual, is how one complies with his or her duty in the workplace. As loyalty to organization denotes a Simon perspective, the intentions or duty defines what the individual “ought to do.” Kant’s perspective aligns with Simon as one’s duty is to adhere to the organization’s direction albeit with limited choices and personal preference. Where it differs, in the Kant’s view, is when the decision to honor his or her duty becomes a moral (imperative)

choice. It is the right thing to do because the organization says, “I should...” In essence, it is how administrators exercise their professional morality. Kant’s perspective helps us align the professional morality principals bring to place in the organization. A third theoretical perspective offered by Henri Bergson completes the framework on which this study is based.

Henri Bergson discussions on the differences between Closed and Open Morality provides the theoretical backdrop to describe and explain the professional and the personal morality of school principals as they make decisions. Bergson’s argument extends the impersonal and obligatory duties defined by Simon and Kant. Yet Bergson finds these contributing arguments fall short in understanding the scope of closed versus open morality.

One could assert, as he develops the rationale for defining morality, Bergson assimilates his argument into one that aligns to Simon. He argues that nature has made species to evolve in such a way that the individuals cannot exist on their own and must rely on the community for its support...”the obligation we find in the depths of our consciousness and which as etymology of the word binds us to the other members of society.” (Bergson, p. 83) Bergson is identifying the survival of the “community” as the primary motivation for individual choices (decisions). It can be asserted that Bergson is submitting that the community in this respect aligns with Simon’s later emphasis on the organization. Bergson applies his argument in a social sense, providing an analogy in relating community to the roles assumed by bees in the construction, maintenance and defense of a hive. From a social perspective, the foundation of Bergson’s argument is supported by Simon. In this view, social organizations adopt the goals of the hive. From this point, Bergson established his argument.

From Simon’s foundation, Bergson’s Theory of Moral Obligation extends the development of human behavior by defining “closed” morality as the acquisition of knowledge

that results in traditions, institutions and customs. These are precepts which are supported by rules, regulations, right and wrong (Simon, p.69). Closed morality aligns with Kant's definition of moral imperative, to do ones' duty to support what is identified as moral law (customs, traditions). It is at this juncture Bergson finds the application of the "imperative" not applicable to all circumstances. Closed morality identifies the duties one must exercise to support one's own community, without regard for other communities.

Bergson submits an extended view of morality which includes more than the greater good of the organization or one's obligation to the community. Bergson argues that Open Morality is not based on compliance or cohesion but more so on the personal, creative and emotional states of mind that concerns humans with a deeper, more personal morality.

This chapter continues with describing and explaining personal and professional morals through the theoretical assertions established by Bergson as an extension of the Simon and Kant perspective. As part of their contribution to this study, principals represent their organizational and professional morality (duty) in their recollections. A third theme has emerged from the study that places Bergson's argument in the center of principal decisions. In the end, Barnard's assertions resurfaces in regards to his assertion that personal and professional morals are mitigating considerations when decisions are made.

Decisions-Closed Morality

Consideration of "closed morality" establishes Bergson's acknowledgement of Kant's argument. Principals perform their responsibilities and duties as expectations that contribute to a broad moral perspective of providing an equitable and sound education to the children in the district. From a closed morality stance, it is suggested that principals perform their duties not only because there is an assumption of efficiency (Simon) but also because it brings the choice

back to what is best for the student. In short, principals project (and believe) that they are doing their job. They also believe that in the process they are doing something good for society.

Simon's structures and protocols and Kant's assertions on duty, provide a linear understanding of to whom one reports for guidance and direction. School districts represent their own morality. Principals certainly can align their responsibilities with their place in an authoritative pyramid and the duties they are inclined or "ought" to do. In reality, principals see their place in a school as much larger. Tom, a long time principal of a large suburban high school, provides his perspective on who he is accountable to on a daily basis:

...administration is one the most difficult jobs I have ever done...it is a tough job...you have so many groups that you are accountable to. It is not just your Superintendent...it's your teachers... students...support staff...the community...the BOE... and in a sense you are accountable to yourself...

Tom's comments are a direct example of Bergson's description of moral obligation to the greater community. In schools, the lines of communication and authority are defined. But in a larger perspective, the system includes many subsystems and cultures. These independent yet overlapping interests (Cusick, 1983) have to be massaged with leadership to not only appear in support of the district's goals but also maintain the morality of the school community without compromising the principal's morality.

Although the influence of politics in maintaining a closed morality of a district is not a variable of study in this project, it is an inevitable factor in decision making. Bergson may consider the factions to be the inflexible order of the phenomena of life (p.12). When principals speak to these situations, it is often with an exhaustive tone. Working the politics and, at times, conflicting moralities wear on principals. The time dedicated to extraordinary problems come in the midst of sustaining the operations of a school and the morality it represents. Earlier in the chapter, Principal Mike spoke to one of his most difficult times as an administrator and the

politics of negotiating the pressure from the community, the school board and even his own superintendent. He eventually left the district.

As in Mike's circumstance, Mary's experiences as a principal illustrates a situation where different levels of decision makers were of different opinion on how a serious student discipline situation should be resolved.

We had a situation where...last week of school...eighth grade science...we have lab table, two student tables. I have two students, male and female sitting next to each other who intimately explore each other during the final exam underneath the table...

You have to realize this is the end of the year...the teacher hearing the rumors finally reports the situation to be true 48 hours after the offense...at the end of the school day. ...terrible timing. At first I thought it was farfetched...I was not going to investigate it...but I did.

Mary, an experienced middle school principal, was made aware of a possible serious student issue. The offense took place during the last week in a classroom with a teacher present. The teacher, however, did not witness the overt familiarity between the two students were involved. Rumors eventually became more aligned. A sense of obligation led Mary to take the next difficult course of action. "Waiting..." Mary stated, "...would contaminate the facts." She quickly mobilized her staff and began to interview students.

So I quickly got the police liaison officer in there, got the kids down there within the nth degree before the bell...course this is one of those you don't end your day at four o'clock...you are there to five or six o'clock...it turned out to be true.

Mary's reflection on the events substantiated her professional morality to persevere and bring the issue to justice. She wrote the case up (expulsion procedures) and sent it on to central office. Despite a Board that could not immediately come to consensus, justice eventually prevailed and the students were expelled. The hearing featured conflicting personal morals on the Board, one who was a representative of another school district.

Mary's personal and professional morality came to bear in this circumstance. She maintained a firm stands on the district's policy despite challenges from the Board that ironically interpreted the policy as if it didn't exist. Bergson would consider Mary's commitment as a verdict of her conscience, one that is given by her social self...acting in the respect and well being of her students. (p.17)

Teacher evaluation is an example of a process where morality (closed) is measured as a support to district values as well as the achievement of individual students. Assessing a teacher's performance is a role principals consider one their most important responsibilities. The implications of how teachers interact with students have a direct impact on district goals and individual aspirations. Principal Jeff speaks to his duty to assess teacher effectiveness:

I have not renewed five probationary teachers. And that is tough part of the role. These were good people...they weren't evil. They weren't purposely trying to hurt anybody that kind of situation... they weren't at a level that I wanted here... I based that decision on would I want my son to have that teacher.

Jeff buys into the (closed) organizational code to serve the community. To do so, he makes decisions that fulfill his duty to bring the best to his students. Jeff also bring to bear a consideration that principals will often reference in making a decision on whether to keep a teacher: would they want this person teaching their children? In essence, he considers this aspect of his position a moral imperative from a district stand point but also from a personal set of standards as well. The example provided by Jeff illuminates Barnard's view that one cannot divorce his/her professional morality from his/her personal judgment.

I think we owe to the kids. We owe it to them we have the best teachers we can get. I think probably the most important thing I can do is to get and keep the best teachers possible ... I take the duty to heart...I am hiring the best person to teach in this position...it comes down to the kids... about integrity and doing the right thing even when it is not easy.

In the near future teachers will be evaluated every year. The thinking behind the legislation is not a concern for principals. It is the time to set aside to make it happen. Most principals find it difficult now (demands of the role) to get into classrooms as often as they would like. But the recent Race to the Top legislation has principals questioning the quality they can dedicate to each evaluation. Principal Tim is now facing evaluating 135 teachers each year. “There is no way. I don’t know what system we will come up with. I am just completing one for this year (last week of school).

D: What do you see that new policy threaten in what you want to get done?

T: Maybe the creativity in teachers. Who is choosing the material to cover? It will be hard to be accessible to students, parents. I had 23 evaluations this year. I am finishing up my last one today. Funding will lead to cutting back on an administrator....more to evaluate; less people to do it. I am worrying about my effectiveness...

Principal Charles assumes a similar stance. Even if other circumstances play into a situation, he starts with the student perspective. For him it is what kids deserve in terms of effective instruction.

D: So, if I could speculate here...you initially have a concern about a teacher’s performance.... And so you are thinking at that point in time about the kids and what they are not getting...

C: The average...a lot of worksheets...a lot of sit and get...not acceptable...

School principals are responsible for the effectiveness efficiency of school building. Accomplished through a sense of duty, principals make decisions that result in the alignment of their professional morality with district goals.

Professional morality is also represented in tangible forms. Customs, traditions, rite of passage, and symbols are a reflection of what a community (school system) has chosen to represent their local morality. These symbols are often tangible objects represented in pictures, proclamations, banners, newspaper articles, flags, events, fight songs and mascots. Many of

these symbols were referenced in the lobbies of school buildings or in the principal's office. Individuals who have displayed extraordinary achievement are honored as heroes or role models for the community. What is important to a community can be qualified by what community embraces as valuable. Athletics and music programs are prominent in most suburban districts. Having a safe place for students go to school is common as well. Recall Principal Jeff's comment,: "Parents don't ask me about MEAP scores, they just want me to take care of their kids."

Principals exercise their professional morality by leading programs and drives that not only support the community's ideals but promote healthy social lives for children. The outreach can extend to needs on a local or even on a global scale. Principal Janie's school is situated close to the Mexican border. As established earlier, the students of her high school are predominantly from migrant families, are poor and must contend with the negative influence the region brings. Janie speaks proudly of her students' charitable efforts including a shoe drive for the victims of earthquake in Haiti. To support a community endorsement for character education, she has instituted a 30 minute advisory time in their daily school schedule. When asked whether the program was a state initiative, Janie clarifies,

That is a local program...but the program that the district has adopted is the safe and drug free program... counselors have come in and have worked out for us calendars and lessons.

Back in the days we just tried to make students make proper choices. Today we are more to the point ...trying to also help them understand how the brain functions and how we do the things.... we do and RIGHT and WRONG...some of those lessons we try target and tie it with their values (discipline) code ... that we know about trust, loyalty and respect and build on those principles we have.

We are getting ready now...and we tie it in with as part of community morality...values to blend with educational goals ...well spring break is coming and South Padre is an hour away and you know the influences that come from our community...drugs, sex you know

the things that are out there that ...these are issues that in our community that come into our school. We try to build community morality.

Closed morality represents the means by how one supports the organization, or, in the case of schools, the greater community. Commitment to district goals and processes is represented in following one's duty or professional morality. Open morality provides another focus that is on the individual (student).

Decisions- Open Morality

To be able to describe and explain the personal and professional morality of principals as they make decisions, it is essential to consider Bergson's description and application of Open Morality. An open morality is concerned with situations where compliance, logic and duty do not satisfy principals' professional and personal morality. Open morality calls for other considerations than the policy book or code of conduct. In other words, a moral dilemma is created. Open morality generates contemplation involving creativity and progress (resulting from moral dilemma). It is not concerned with obedience and cohesion. Bergson refers to the morality as open because it includes everyone, universal and with a focus of peace. The source of open morality, according to Bergson, is creative emotions.

Bergson's extension of Kant's moral philosophy stems from the fact that in society there are many and unique obligations. A day in the life of a principal would affirm this statement.

Recalling Principal Al's reflection,

...you know as well as I do the decision we face every day, you never, you know... we have assistant principals mull them over with and Superintendents we can check and central office in terms of policy but quite often you are making it on the fly...it's the nature of the position... it boils down to good judgment...

What is it that makes principal decisions difficult and complex at times? The answer is a good number of these decisions are not defined in the policy manual, handbook or aligned to

district goals. Where does the principal turn to when the rule book is silent on a circumstance is not evident? If the answers were always evident, Principal Frank states, “We wouldn’t need administrators.” Marty, an assistant high school principal rebuked a colleague who insisted on following the student code of conduct for every offense. “Monkeys can do that...where is the value in my contributions to discipline cases”. In Frank and Marty’s words there is a suggestion that another dimension of decision making comes to bear in the role. (The) difference lies in social vs. human implications. (Bergson, p.35) Social issues are considered in black and white, while human implications take on a more personal perspective. For some principals, it is the challenge, the problem solving and puzzles to resolve, that attracted them to the position. Whereas natural obligation is a pressure or propulsive force, complete and perfect morality has an appeal. (p. 34) When principals work from an open morality standpoint, it positions them to consider by choice or circumstance to go beyond obligation or duty to the district. Many principal decisions are cut and dried. When all is running well for the district, the building, staff, the students, decisions are easy. The challenge surfaces when there is a conflict between professional obligations and personal morality. It can be a time when principals take a unique stand and often feel alone in their position. Bergson recognizes these circumstances,

Between the closed and open soul there is the soul that is in the process of opening. In a word, between the static and dynamic, there is to be observed in morality too, a time of transition...

We have the purely static morality that might be called infra-intellectual and the purely dynamic, supra-intellectual. Nature intended the one and the other is a product of man’s genius. The former constitutes a conglomeration of habits which are in man...The latter is inspiration, intuition, emotion, susceptible of analysis and ideas that furnish intellectual notations of it and branch out in infinite details. Stopping in between is considered contemplation. (p.64)

Contemplation is a term that captures the difference between duty and personal morality.

At times they align. When they do not, principals rely on their wisdom, creativity and

intelligence to make the decisions. Bergson summarizes the assertion, “What is simple for our understanding is not necessarily so for our will. What logic might suggest, experience may override.” (p.53)

Principal Mary considers her cognitive abilities her best asset, “I would have to say the biggest thing I probably bring to my job is that I bring a creative background of problem solving. The other is the number of resources I can bring to the district. Principals need to extend into the community. We have explored the works of Ruby Payne (researcher on developing middle class values and teaching strategies for students of poverty) and addressing the differences between generational poverty and “new-found” or circumstantial poverty?

There are districts that recognize and value principal intuition and experience. Central office in Principal Jeff’s district writes the flexibility into their code,

Because when it gets to discipline, you have a relationship and if they know you are there for kids, we can be compassionate but firm. We are going to follow...we have a lot discretion in our discipline book. It is not black and white that says, “If you do this it will be one day...this shall be three days.” There are some guidelines in what we use but we have a lot discretion.

Principal Ben’s handling of the bomb scare was discussed earlier in relation to how the decisions were made during the crisis. Ben explained his knowledge of which students would make the threat and which ones would not,

If for a minute I felt that there was someone out there...we didn’t have incidents or people who had any...even are short list of pranksters or people that were suspended. There wasn’t anyone that we thought were near that level. I would have thought that if somebody had truly planted explosives in the building... Ben was certain the threat was not real.

Ben’s familiarity with his students (statistics of threats versus carrying them out was minimal), provided insight to where the risks were and the students that may have been upset with the school did not have these tendencies. An experienced administrator thinking beyond

the rule book, Ben was grateful his superintendent gave him the latitude. But, he did confide, his wife was not as supportive.

D: There had to be a few conflicting ideas in your head though???

B: There was you know. My wife was on the other side of the fence, you know and normally she did not involved in school things and try not to come home and complain about all things that go in school during the day but she saw the email, she knew what was going on and she had two kids going to that building everyday...she has a lot life insurance on me but the kids...she believed we shouldn't have had school tomorrow.

Principal Frank is emphatic about the how the role of the principal extends beyond the organization, a set of responsibilities and dutiful expectations. He sees those in the position as smart, insightful and compassionate, a characteristic Bergson recognizes. Frank explains his understanding of his role with students.

Why do we get paid what we get paid? We get paid for our intelligence and our empathy. I hope intelligence yes ... empathy not so often. Gee whiz! Troubled kids come to us not because they signed up at nine years old... they didn't sign up a card that says "I want to be a troublemaker." ...They come from chaotic circumstances and environments that are not of their making. Some of them are going to be non-productive citizens...A whole lot of them (will be productive) if we use the things we know (intelligence) that are out there...the research, the methods, the strategies, the experience, we can turn kids around...sure we can.

Going Against the Grain

Concern for the individual places many principals in the Bergson camp of Open Morality. Principals generally have more information on situations than anyone else close to a situation. An ongoing challenge for principals is that they cannot always explain their unique perspective on various cases for confidentiality reasons. Often the result is an assumption that the principal is incompetent, narrow minded and/or playing favorites. (To have personal morals means you eventually take it on the chin from the outside.) In conducting the study, Principals cite several instances when they showed resistance to policy because of their concern for the developmental

considerations of students. As Frank states, “One size does not fit all.” Policy relative to strict consequences in discipline decisions are prime examples where principals assign consequences that make sense given other considerations about the child. Principal Charles was most concerned with permanent assignments of discipline,

C: Expulsion hearings are the epitome of that dilemma. Because when I have taken a student...and I have taken over the 11 years I have been a principal...5 or 6 kids for expulsion. When you take a kid for expulsion...that just flies in the face of what we are all about. I feel like every time I have not felt like...I want to get this kid but yet the circumstance always, sometime serious circumstances dictate the necessity for expulsion. I can think of a 6th grade girl we had who lit our bathroom on fire.

D: Sixth grader?

C: Yea, put a fire in the bathroom...you know the law. Anything dealing with weapons, arson, rape...180 days mandatory expulsion. We took her to the Board, one of the Board member is an attorney and heard our case and agreed to expel her and the Superintendent said we are expelling her for 90 days. The Assistant Superintendent and I looked at each other and ...OK... that is what they are going to do.

A real struggle though ... an interesting case I had was I had taken a kid for expulsion and I felt like I was on trial with the Board. They had given me a pretty rough go because they wanted more evidence of the intervention. We hadn't done enough to try to help the kid...

Charles was angry over the decision. He didn't believe there was malicious intent on the student's part. He felt he needed to be an advocate for a child that made a poor choice.

I know that when the Board puts that kid out of school that it is more than likely, not a death sentence, but that kid's education is going to be severely, severely impacted. And she may never recover from that.

Several principals speak to working in areas that are shades of gray. Situations where black and white don't work; different situations call for different contemplation. Principal Jeff recounts circumstances that conflicted with his personal morality as a long-time principal,

I read in the paper from time to time as we all do....Kindergartener suspended for bringing in a bread knife...all these extreme examples. And I think it comes down to people afraid of making decisions or being disempowered to having any authority to

make decisions by some hierarchal chain where they're always worried that their immediate boss or the Superintendent is not going to cut them off at the knees... Fred is a retired principal after 34 years working with young students, mainly elementary.

He says he has a pretty good handle on what is developmentally appropriate for students for learning and discipline. Intuitively, Fred offers a countering view on discipline codes,

It is a matter of timing too....I could get away with things you couldn't possibly choose to do now....I used to have a drawer full of knives. Cub Scouts would forget they left them in their pocket and show up at school with them. I would keep them until I saw the parent. Today, I would be sending each one of them to the Board.

For Principal Catherine, the decisions she finds most difficult fall in the gray area.

...for me it is discipline...because there are shades of gray... The code of student conduct, can point out theory, but practice is different... And I found that in discipline there truly is no...it is rare when it... "boom" (slaps the desk), right on. There is always some kind of factor, or some kind of element that enters in that makes you say, "Hmmm".

...we practice progressive discipline... we understand that we are dealing with young people who are in the growth process. There are some things that you shouldn't do. ...cut and dry...kids bring a gun or knife to school...and you know the history of that young person... and when you talk about rules and laws, hey, I know that ...for example I had a young man bring a knife to school and he literally did not bring it to school for any harm or purpose. But the law says it is automatic. Those are tough. But we must remember, some of children all over this nation have tremendous challenges to get to our buildings in the morning...challenges that some of us could not endure.

Marty is a high school administrator who reflects on circumstance that he dealt with under the attendance policy. His wisdom aligns with other principals that look below the surface on issues and a standard response is not always appropriate.

...we changed the attendance policy...we felt it was just punitive and needed more flexibility to help students. So when the student missed more than 10 days and he didn't have any medical reason to cover that, then they wouldn't get credit for the class. I understood the need for the policy. The school that I came from before did not have a policy....they missed school all the time. I understood the need for it. But while the policy existed, I will go back to that gray area...there were certain circumstances for certain kids that I hated looking at them and go, I understand your circumstances but there is nothing I can do...of course, there is something I can do...I am human being, you are a human being, I have the structure...can I do something to help the kid...

Academic Achievement

It would be a safe assumption that principals would provide some degree of instructional leadership if they ascribed to Simon's, Kant's or Bergson's teaching. From a Simon perspective the curriculum and corresponding assessments would be mandated. There would be little room for interpretation on how to deliver instruction. Those viewing curriculum and assessment as a given in the K-12 continuum would comply with mandates as a form of doing their duty, no matter the cost. Principals with a student's views on curriculum and instruction would seek the best outcomes that schools can support for students to achieve. Generally, principals have accepted state testing as a necessary evil. In the beginning ages of accountability, principals had another view. Principal Fred's recollection and assessment of the MEAP:

MEAP is not designed for instructional purposes... It may be today, but...let give you an example. When I was president of MEMPSA...at that time, we had a MEAP test in reading that was ultimately called the Roman Empire. And the Roman Empire was totally inappropriate for our fourth grade students. We did readability (study)...principals were incensed. Our study concluded it was a test that was at a 7-8th grade level, for fourth graders...content was irrelevant...when the test came back it wasn't a good test. We raised the issue with the State...no remedy...that is a disservice to the kids in Michigan.

Fred considers the MEAP to be not always in the best interests of students. Principal Mike, however accepts the MEAP and the MME as,"...any number of obligations...it is a matter of habit to obey them. The comments by Fred and Mike reflect a Kant postulate: the duty is perform your job, the results are not as important.

State testing for all its original intentions of accountability, how would the principals assess its impact and value? As the topic was presented to the principals for their personal assessment, I anticipated negative responses. Their responses indicated a deeper obligation to students. Principals endorsed the MEAP as a means for improvement, and meeting higher

standards even in the areas where their students are proficient. Principal Ken states his thoughts on accountability,

The intent of NCLB... I would be doing even if it didn't exist. It is why we want them to get an education...we want them to be succeeding in getting a job someday. That is what it really boils down to... Yes, there are some days when the State has messed up and you have to do something (like yesterday-retest an entire grade) and you have to spend that time. And I feel that in a way that is a disservice to the students and a there's not many ways around it though. It is the realities of the job.

Most principals consider themselves innovators as opposed to reactors. Their professional morality concentrates on improving systems and processes that fosters student achievement, safety and an overall healthy school experience. A. principal with personal morality believes students deserve nothing less.

Earlier in the chapter Principal Audrey shared a position that is endorsed by principals; they generally do not accept the status quo. Principals exercise their personal and professional obligation by maintaining standards, leading change and staying active in professional organizations. Staying active also means principals not supporting changes that they see as not being to their students' advantage. In 2004, the Michigan Association of High School Principals under the directorship of Jim Ballard, supported a change in the high stakes test given annually to high school juniors. The proposal eventually passed to substitute the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) and ACT for the existing test. Ballard's efforts were not overwhelmingly supported by the state's principals. Their argument was that the curriculum to which their schools aligned their instruction was the Michigan Core Curriculum Frameworks. The proposed ACT is not aligned. The lack of alignment laid issues for the principals. Districts had dedicated extensive work to align the core benchmarks to the state assessment. The contesting principals demonstrated their obligation to the students by supporting previous work to align curriculum and instruction and to provide students a better opportunity to succeed on the test. In the end,

Lansing made the change. High schools were challenged with making adjustments in their curriculum to align with the assessment to give their students a fair chance of succeeding on the MME/ACT.

After the switch to the MME/ACT, most principals worked with their curriculum offices to re-align curriculum with the test. Sharon, principal of an inner city high school, took personal stand on the issue. Her district required the Michigan Framework. Sharon insisted on alignment for no other reason than to have her students have a better chance to succeed on MME/ACT.

D: You have this curriculum and it is not aligned with how the students are assessed. Is that a central office decision or something that you inherited because it has been in place a long time?

S: It has been a central office decision, but as of September, I want to go record and say it will be my decision...because at the end of the day, as long as I can show growth then I am willing to put everything on the line to educate these children...

D: So what I am hearing you say, correct me if I am wrong...you have a better handle on what you need than central office? So you will not adhere to the edicts or the directives because that is not going to get them where they need to go?

S: I will adhere to the policy...as it relates to scheduling... things of nature. However, when it comes down to saving my own behind...we will build our curriculum based on those ACT college readiness standards. And there will be stronger accountability from this chair with the teachers in the classroom.

D: What I am hearing you say is that you are putting your career on the line by doing something that you feel as building principal, you are taking the building in a direction that is better for the kids.

S: Yes.

Sharon admits to a bit of self-preservation but it is not the issue. She is damning her duty for the sake of student achievement. Sharon's stance would align with Bergson's argument that when... duties that society defines, in principle, are duties toward humanity but under exceptional circumstances, regrettably unavoidable, they are for the time being inapplicable (Bergson, p.32). Sharon resists her obligations and moves in another direction. Her professional

morality, like other principals, is supported by a courageous decision to contest the misalignment of curriculum. In this case, one could assert that personal morality enabled the application of Sharon's professional morality.

Bergson's argument that acknowledges Kant's claims toward duty by using the illustration of maintaining and defending one's society is actualized in the roles principals assume. Principals are the "headmasters" of their buildings. Through them, policy is interpreted and deployed among the staff and students. The familiar adage, "the buck stop here" provides principals leverage to protect their building from outside interference. But within the confines of his/her domain, a myriad of choices are made to keep moving ahead. Institutional goals are acknowledged and the principals' duty is to support those goals. At this time, interpersonal relationships call on the principals' knowledge and wisdom to solve issues. It is at this juncture principals extend their Kant-like perspective, duty, to an Open Morality that considers individuals before policy.

Principals see themselves as moral individuals. Their role includes instructional leadership, caretaker, and at times, as paternal/maternal substitutes. It is what Bergson would refer to as the differences between social and human implications. (p.35) It is not unlike principals to extend their compassion and concern for education beyond their building. Principal Tom, a long time high school principal provides a perspective where preservation of society does not only apply to his building, his students and community.

I think we can look at in isolation as my building, my school, my kids but I think NCLB it has put an expectation on education everywhere. To me it is important, that my building is doing well but all buildings need to do well. Whether is a classroom in South Lyon or a classroom in Benton Harbor, there is an expectation that kids need to perform at a certain level anywhere.

And how has No Child Left Behind caused principals anxiety? Tom responds,

... a lot of people are critical of NCLB...I am not one of them. To me it sets an expectation that all kids are going to learn regardless the name of the school, the community, the resources...you know sometimes we make it a little easier depending on resources. As administrators we need to be thoughtful and caring for all kids' not just ones in our building.

Throughout the dialogue with principals, rarely did they refer to students as “my kids”...what I heard were statements that included what best for “all kids.” Principals appear to be proud individuals. They are not only committed to the “cause” or doing the things they “ought” to do, but also direct their attention to the betterment of all societies, many times when others are not watching.

Theme #6 – Overlapping Moralities – Areas of Shades of Gray

This study's construct is situated in the midst of a social environment where behaviors are as predictable as they are unpredictable, as complex as they are simple, and occasionally directed as they are afforded personal discretion. To describe and explain the personal and professional morals of principals while making decisions in these complex settings, we must acknowledge the varying levels of influence, perspective and authority. In the midst of these decisions are overlapping moralities. Within any of the theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter, the principal finds him/herself immersed in a social kaleidoscope comprised of varying priorities, politics, personal agendas and local traditions.

To some extent, principals welcome the “non-negotiable” that flow down from central office. These decisions would include calendar, testing, snow days and budget. Directives free principals from personal choice. When the organization defines authority and parameters (Simon), conflict within the system is negligible. As one principal states, “Rules are rules and we need to follow them...” Although many decisions are automatic, the majority of principals' time is dedicated to negotiating “areas of shades of gray.”

Areas of shades of gray fall between policy and principals' personal and professional morals. Bergson considers this situation thinking as contemplation. The following scenarios reflect situations when principals contemplate difficult decisions. As Barnard (1957) has stated, the circumstances are examples of conflicting moralities, pulling the principal in different directions. In the end, principals stay true to their own professional and personal codes, at times with considerable risk.

Personal Morality vs. Organizational Morality

Principals new to a district or building usually have on their short list the need to understand the priorities, the decision making expectations and overall culture of their new surroundings. School issues happen regardless of a principal's tenure. Principals stepping into a new position will face the same decisions a senior principal has for many years. The first few years provides a learning curve for new principals. Their first task is to become familiar with the expectations of the district (morality). In order for novice principals to succeed, they need to be grounded in policy. The development of individual personal and professional morality is contingent on many fluid factors. Experience, in and out of the district, the formality of district structures and processes, autonomy, experience and personal make up are variables of influence. The majority of principal subjects in this study are established administrators in their districts. Most consider themselves independent thinkers and rely on their intelligence, creativity and experience to make decisions. Instances that challenge one's personal morality with the organization's morality were most commonly discussed by the principals. The circumstances are generally unique but involve similar thinking to resolve issues.

To challenge central office, a principal must be grounded in his/her own beliefs. It is also to the advantage of the principal to have demonstrated the ability to solve previous concerns.

Otherwise, the decision becomes a directive. Principals tend to look at decisions from a “what’s right” for their students, staff and buildings. The following reflections illustrate the point.

Principal Jeff contests the formality of “Simon-like” decisions in the defense of what he sees is as a young student’s choice:

Well, I read in the paper from time to time as we all do....Kindergartener suspended for bringing in a bread knife...all these extreme examples. And I think it comes down to people afraid of making decisions or being disempowered to having any authority to make decisions by some hierarchal chain where they are always worried that their immediate boss or Superintendent is going to cut them off at the knees...

Jeff, like several principals in this study, has established himself in the community as successful and respected. He worked his way through the system and enjoys a good relationship with his Superintendent. When Jeff argues cases for students, he is acting from his personal and professional morals. He can make statements regarding superintendents as he also possesses a bit of political clout and the risk of being “called out” is less. A principal new to a district may not be as vocal as Jeff.

Conversely, we take a look at Principal Mike’s ordeal in his early years (conflict between the Superintendent and Transportation Director whose son was the starting quarterback) when he was the assistant principal/athletic director and football coach in a small district. His story relates a dilemma, caught between the undefined morality of his district and personal agendas by members of the Board of Education and the Superintendent. The small district has administrative staff holding multiple positions. In Mike’s case, he was also the athletic director at the time and head football coach.

...there was a school board (member) whose son was the second quarterback to the son of the Transportation Director. The starting quarterback got into a fight off campus. The board member felt the starting quarterback should not play which did not align with our policy. It was handled by law enforcement and the court system. Our handbook was clear. In a situation like this, administration must wait until the court makes a decision before we move forward with a school decision. I intended to follow the policy. The

principal at that time didn't take a strong position one way or the other. My position was to follow what the rules are and my immediate supervisor was caught as well but decided not to decide. There were many people including the Superintendent who felt we got to get this kid out...I sure his motivation was to get back at the Transportation Director who he was having a feud with. So it was a very complex, difficult situation...I think everybody thought deep down you got to follow your own rules. At the same time if the envelope was pushed I know would have been supported by the Superintendent...It was very complex situation...personality...politics...history that was all in that one case...

In the end, Mike believed the long standing policy was his best argument, one with which he could live. The pressure exerted on him by others was for personal reasons.

Following his recollection in the story, Mike confides he eventually left the school district. "It was a terrible time in my career...the most difficult decision I had to face...but I stayed with the policy in the midst of all the personal agendas."

The difficulty of Mike's experience was not only a case of conflicting moralities, but, moralities that were ignored or shifted to meet one's personal benefit. The added dimension of his principal remaining neutral illuminates how situations can paralyze individuals due to their confusion or the desire to save their position. Mike's principal at the time was doing his duty by remaining loyal to the Superintendent despite the wrongness of the situation. From a Simon and Kant view, his principal took the correct stand. In the scope of a Bergson view, justice and fairness looks beyond the "rules" and calls for an intelligent decision, one could defend in a moral sense. Mike's expected story is not unique.

Earlier in the chapter, the scenario of Principal Charles was discussed; he was expected to continuously reprimand an employee for poor performance when, in reality, the employee was challenged by experiencing mini strokes. "And the employee's medical condition got worse; it became hard from a personal, humanistic stand point to keep badgering this person, this teacher. I must have written 15 reprimands in a two year period."

In Charles's own reflection, the district came to its sense too late as the teacher eventually passed away due to the illness. Duty called and Charles answered under protest. He was the point person in upholding the organization's expectations. Still he had to fulfill one other expectation that principals usually take when a teacher passes away. It was Charles who had to extend condolences to the family he had known for years.

A situation that has similar implication is offered by Principal Kathleen. She had become aware of a teacher who violated a standard of the moral code of conduct. Within the expectations of the district and her own personal and professional code, Kathleen felt not only obligated to investigate on behalf of the district but from her sense of what is right and wrong. In Kathleen's book the teacher's behavior was wrong. The complicating factor is she felt central office was "pooh-poohing" the situation, "I thought I was the only one who was taking this seriously...and it was frustrating." Kathleen felt some of her superiors were not willing to have a conflict and to look the other way on something that was not only against policy but illegal and morally and ethically a problem.

Elected members of a Board of Education are sworn into office to uphold the policies of the school district. Yet local boards will change as different attitudes emerge. The change in perspective creates inconsistent interpretation of policy. Principals working from the policies prefer a consistent adherence and interpretation of policy as they are written. When there is change on the Board, there are no guarantees.

Principal Mary recalls a serious student matter that called for a referral to the Board for further consideration. She recalls the make-up of the Board:

We have some extremely conservative people as well as some extremely liberal people. At that point of time, there was only 6 of them present, the 7th had not been sworn and appointed to the Board (yet) there was a locked vote 3 – 3. So ultimately, they sworn the seventh person and that's swung where they gave a modified vote where it became a 180

day suspension with possible appeal for reinstatement at 90 days. That was a lengthy process...especially where there are two Board members who felt that the students needed at most a five, maybe a 10 day suspension. That is a tremendous difference in terms of a consequence...

One Board member, an assistant principal in another district, offered his opinion on the appropriate consequence that caused a greater concern for Mary. She was shocked at the defense to his opinion:

“Kids that have sexual intercourse in the hallways in my high school are not expelled.” And I explained to him, that may be the case in his district but I didn’t want to work in a district and hold that standard to (this district).

These are uncomfortable circumstances for principals. It is a challenge to maintain and represent the school district’s morality as represented in policy and procedures as it is challenged by personal agendas of individuals outside the district. It is even more difficult when the individuals whose responsibility is to uphold policy, interpret or ignore policy all together.

There are times, however, principals challenge policy. Many times it is within the interpretation of policy that causes issues. It would be a principal’s argument that policy does (not) address every circumstance and that central office uses policy to support as Principal Tim would say, “A bad argument.” The objections generally fall within two areas, building and personnel.

Principal Tom offers this advice to his assistant principals, “You need to pick your battles. I don’t always agree with central office...but I try to enlighten them about all the outcomes of their decision. Principal Courtney says experience will tell when there are times to fight and there are times so let it go. Courtney offers a perspective that other have as well:

I think there comes a point where principals have to decide where they are standing, the building or central office. And I think that is hard. And may change because some of the stuff is situational but there comes a time especially when you are dealing with what we dealing with the union. But there comes a time when a decision what is more important...your building or central office. And at the same...you need to get that across

to central office. These are the people you live with every day... You are between a rock and a hard place. The buck stops with you in the building but rolls downhill from central office (laugh).

Tim refers to the instances when you take issues on the behalf of your staff as “defining moments.” These are critical junctures in terms of establishing leadership and a culture in a building. However, it can be tenuous as principals may be asked to back down and support central office. It is a lose-lose situation for the principal. Push the issue at central office, a reprimand is likely. Support central office and the staff will not trust the leadership of the principal.

Principal Dennis reflects on going against the morality of the district, sometimes you have to take the route a principal believes is the right road:

There has been a time or two... I have ignored that and gone another way knowing full well I have to go back and re-do it, but I was willing to take that on because at the time it was in the best interest to do something different and not follow the rule book. I think individual situations warrant doing something different.

A principal recalls a meeting of all administration at the start of the school year when new cuts at the elementary level would result in fewer art, physical education and music classes. A new elementary principal took a stand on behalf of her staff and parents and said she could not support the newly established cuts. Her own child was in her school and as a mother she could not support the decision.. A look of disbelief came over the rest of the principals as this young person was contesting a district decision. As the central office administrators discretely tried to communicate that they were counting on her support, she dug in more. After the meeting, the collective principals agreed that was not a battle that should have been taken on at that time, if ever. Apparently the outspoken principal felt this was way beyond her first week on the job. She resigned after her first year.

Principals will stand on cases that they believe they can make in regards to what is good for kids. According to Simon, what is “good” cannot be assigned an empirical value so a debate on the topic is natural. Principals, however, have this debate frequently with central office. Some principals such as Principal Mike feel “they are trapped by policy,” whereas it is difficult to exercise leadership in a building when the parameters are narrow. Another principal spoke of grants that he applied for that would bring innovative technology and serve as a model for other buildings. The grants were not supported by central office for reasons of “equity.” The principal’s conclusion is that if the grant resulted in success, other buildings would seek the same technology. Equity, in this case, may have masked a financial decision.

Principal Fred feels we are in it for kids and they deserve our best argument. At the same time, Fred also believes it takes courage as well:

Sometimes you have to take a stand. We have a Superintendent who does not follow the crowd...someone who is willing to work against the popular vote. The person has to have the strength to represent the kids in their building and what they need instructionally ...is not always easy.

Principals acknowledge that circumstances exist where policy supports principals’ judgment in hiring. Policy, at time, conflicts with who they would like on their staff. Mike remembers early in his career when one his best teachers had to be let go:

Very early on in my first year as a principal, we had a teacher who was excellent, awesome. Turned out on his background check he was involved in some sort of trouble...when he was about 19...it was supposed to be expunged ...it was out of state. When the issue turned up the district said he has to go. I wanted to keep him. It was devastating to me. They let him go.

Reflecting on a long career, Principal Jerry felt the pressure of dismissing a teacher not only from central office but having to face the community and the political influence the teacher had established.

...there was a teacher... a good teacher...excellent teacher; outstanding...her classroom management was just deplorable. And it happened to be in the band program. And of course you have a lot of kids...and you have a lot of parents... and so parents are not happy...gets back to the Superintendent and so...the easiest thing...you know we evaluate them and help them improve to a point. But in the end I couldn't save her.

Local politics become a mitigating factor in principal's decisions.

Despite having an advantage of leaning on district policy, outside groups exempt themselves from school rules and regulations because they have no stake in the morality of a district or school building. For example similar to Mike's scenario of being caught between the Board and central office, Principal Jeff shares a story where community initiatives conflicted with specific school policies. The policy that was challenged is the dress code for Jeff's school. In Harbortown, there are pom pon and cheerleading squads as part of the school team as well as a community team. As with the school-based squads, the coach of the community team told the girls to wear their uniforms on game day. It happens that many of the girls violated the school dress code. Steve met with the coaches:

We made an agreement that the following year they were going to wear sweat pants to school (instead of the short skirts). Well everyone followed it except for one of the community teams went out and bought new uniforms ... Well it got very political because the pompon coach that happened to be my PTO president. The head of the community group was very influential...

A similar scenario took place in another district where it was established that the dress code would remain in place for the end of the year dance. As the tickets were sold by volunteer parents, a couple of the mothers decided to encourage students to wear what would be considered inappropriate dress. The principal got wind of the ploy and made a general announcement the day of the dance that despite what they may have heard, the dress code would be in place. The principal recalls, "The mother thought she could undermine the policy with strength in numbers...I did not want to send a bunch student home to change...but I would."

The presence of organized labor naturally increases the opportunity for moral conflict. Unions have their own interests. Whereas a school district will place value on what is best for students, members of an association will but not at the sake of contract language. Within the context of any contract, language may be interpreted differently depending upon perceived utility. In certain situations, “entitlements” become a moral issue. In a principal’s view, entitlement may be a teacher keeping his/her job despite poor performance by his/her students. The tenure law has protected less than effective teachers. The amount of time a principal dedicates to attempt to remove a poor teacher becomes a moral issue with principal. It is time that could be dedicated to something more beneficial to the students and staff.

As a group, most principals acknowledged the presence of a union morality in their buildings. A few principals cited some decisions that impacted working conditions or a teacher’s status as examples when the moralities are at odds. In making decisions, these principals referred to the union as a passing consideration. As Mike states, “...and then there is the union...generally decisions do not come close to violating the contract... we deal with it (union claims) and move on.”

Principals in this study do not see contract issues as something on which they would like to spend. A strategy is to be proactive, have open communication and “head them off at the pass.” Principal Al recalls an event that had an impact on his staff. A theft had occurred, one staff member from another, and he felt getting the word the staff would save a degree of anxiety that would spread through the building.

Unions...I called a staff meeting for the next day, which was smart because before the union could get a hold of it and spin it, I was able to get my staff...I basically told them a theft had occurred...

The union had its own predicament. They needed to represent the offender and Al knew he needed to represent the victim. The teacher eventually resigned and faced legal issues regarding the theft.

I decided to be very transparent what had happened, very open. It is very consistent with my style. A couple days of pain...it was worth it. It was interesting the union doing their job, the job is represent the person (offender). The victim was pretty animate, "You know, he went in my purse and stole my stuff. It is what is...of course I am going to press charges against him..." She needed to go no further, I supported her. I think that people looked at that and saw that was the right thing to do.

The irony of the union supporting a person that offended another member of the staff with Al made decisions in a strange and morally complex situation. For Al, his personal morality to do the right thing for the victim is another example of a defining moment when staff measure a principal's fortitude and priorities.

Other principal stories referencing union presence were set in the context of a decision-making circumstance. Principals cited a recollection of scenarios as having contract implications from the union standpoint.

Unions provide principals a filter in terms of "picking one's battle." The question becomes, is the fight that goes along with the issue worth the time and effort? What is the principal sacrificing when he/she jumps head first into a problem that will certainly get the union's attention? Principal Kathleen considers it an ethical dilemma.

I was taking an inordinate amount of time and it is getting to the point this year where I almost have an ethical dilemma where it is now starting (from this person) to take away from other things I should be giving time to. And that is becoming spending too much time with this teacher and I am going to have to spend more time reflecting on this going into next year,

One could argue Principal Mike has a similar dilemma in deciding how much time he should invest in the dismissal of a teacher. Considering the union role and tenure law, the process may consume too much time and energy that can be spent elsewhere:

...there are some teachers that I have to work with that I much rather say, "You are out of here...this isn't working out." But it is also a decision that I have to make that I am going to invest that time...that effort to get them out. So how work through the union? What are ...these make for especially tough decisions...

Principals Clarence and Jerry were both active in the union in their careers. Jerry used his perspective as building representative to help him understand union priorities. Clarence was the president of his district's administrator association. The position was not something his central office had come to appreciate. Clarence was also active in the state's principal association. In the case cited below, Clarence was asked to testify in Lansing for due process law. He sent two administrators in his place. Following the testimony, Clarence walked into his director's office to discuss curriculum:

I walked into my director's office...we were going to teach outer space through the arts (proposal for Houston). My director looked at it and said, "You are not a popular person in this district today. (Why?) You guys went up and testified about due process. I said he was correct. He responded that I was not going to get anything out of there (central office). I said this is a proposal for kids and you are going to take away a proposal for kids? He took it down to the Superintendent and got the signature.

Wherever there is a shared interest of school decision, conflicting moralities are most likely to surface. Principals often find themselves in the middle of several conflicting moralities, mediating perspectives while maintaining a sense of control. These competing moralities are found within and outside the school walls. Among these competing entities are teacher and support staff associations. Dealing with unions is viewed by principals as "what comes with the territory." Although many decisions are guided by a principal's personal and professional morals, principals fall back to policy when conflicts are difficult to resolve.

Additional Considerations on Describing and Explaining Principal Decisions

Chapter IV has provided a summary of the major themes that became evident during the course of this study. The data presented in this chapter can be considered the most relevant

indicants that support the purpose of the study which is to describe and explain the personal and professional morals of principals as they make decisions. The preceding analysis aligned principal decisions with the view of Simon, Kant and Bergson. Each theorist has provided a lens to morality-based decision making. From these perspectives, principal decisions from the field were aligned with one or more of the arguments.

In completing the discussion on decision making, it would be appropriate to revisit the review of literature and acknowledge two areas of research that were references by the principals in the study. 1) The second area cited in the literature was that of shared decision making. Each of these topics is represented by the principals' acknowledgment of the influence each plays on decisions. 2) Mentors or identified persons who were influential to the principals in the study surfaced on several occasions. The discussion developed in relation to principals' choice to aspire to the role

1) Shared Decision Making

As a counter to organizational structures that resemble the shape of a pyramid, shared decision making is viewed as the reciprocal to the traditional top down management philosophy promoted by the likes of Hebert Simon. Shared decision making brought the line workers to the forefront in designing tasks and making decisions that impacted the work they performed. A stepsister of the Quality movement in Japan, the concept of team decisions made it across the ocean to American businesses. In the late 80's and early 90's, the practice was mandated for Michigan Schools and remains an expectation today.

There are varying degrees of shared decision making. In one extreme, teams not only make decisions on processes, they also taking responsibility for deployment and results of given

task or procedure. At the other end, the parameter only allows for input into the decision but the responsibility for the decision remains in the organization's hands.

Michigan schools have site-based teams. Some teams are represented by staff and administration, while others districts also invite members of the community, parent and business leaders to the decision table. There is variance in each district as to the level of decision making that takes place considering the authority of the principal. There are principals that enjoy the collaboration with their staff. There are others that lead or make the decisions to their liking.

Principal Charles has experienced success in sharing decisions in his building. He cites the last NCA visit to his building.

I am very collaborative with my staff. The last NCA go around with my staff, some of the Oakland County people said it was one of the most collaborative buildings they had ever seen.

So a lot of our decision making is group decision making. I am not afraid to make a decision. I find that when teachers feel empowered and they feel like their opinion matters the decision are more likely to be...if it is a new plan we are implementing more people are more likely to implement it and follow through on it or acceptance is the norm rather than the exception. It is interesting because at some meetings over the years, the staff will say, "you just need to make the decision." And I am fine with that. I am very good with that. And sometimes when I am out in left field not thinking straight and make a decision and I will get five emails that say this should be a little more collaborative.

Shared decision making models that are defined well result in fewer issues. If the parameters are not clear, participants not knowing if they are being asked for input or sharing the decision, individuals will voice objection, "I thought this was a shared decision...they didn't go with what I suggested...different model, same result." Charles's district developed a five step decision making model..

We were going to try to be more collaborative. I may be to one of the few people that refer to it anymore. There was the level one decision which is the principal's decision, there is not going to be any discussion, we need to do this. To a level five, I am out of this; I am no different than anyone else. It is a totally collaborative decision. I will have teachers say at a meeting, "...where are we on this in terms of decision making?" I might

say, “It is about a two...” A response might be, “We think it should be a four.” I would invite the staff to have a discussion with me. So is that framework to guide people’s thinking.

Principal Carl also prefers a collaborative model to make decisions. In order to be an effective instructional leader, Carl realizes he must be transformational in his leadership as well.

(Marks & Printy)

....now that “right” decision may have to be changed after a week or two but you know this idea of making....I think it is important to get buy-in from the people I work with. You know there are people that I really value their opinion and their ideas... It is the right decision for the people that it affects will benefit and that will not undermine the overall culture of program or school by the decision making.

Principal Tim calls this “leading them to the water”. In each case, staff is encouraged to share the decisions and come along for the ride.

Teams may be at the administrative level as well. Principal Henry utilizes his assistant principals as his team in handling major discipline decisions.

When it comes to discipline or expulsion, we do a very team-focused process... we go through a pretty thorough (investigation)... putting our heads together and make a joint decision on what we are going to do.

Henry adds a second decision scenario when the suggestions to change the high school schedule from the current block schedule. Henry supports the principles of shared decision making to invite to the table the individuals who will be most impacted by the decision:

So decision wise...another thing you want to consider is involve all the stakeholders. You have to listen and get their feedback. And I think we have done a good job with that. And I will use the scheduling as a model. We did have the community forum and we listened and we listened to kids...

Was there a downside in the plan? Henry’s candid answer speaks to the overlapping moralities that cause a difficult time with some shared decisions.

And we talked to the School Board and got everyone’s feedback on that. But there comes a point too where everybody wants something just for them... But you know in our position we have to meet everyone’s’ needs and be everyone’s’ caretaker. So, collecting and listening (to gather data) is very important.

Principal Jerry's school is comprised of teams of teachers. The teams have extensive latitude to set schedules and plan learning projects for students. The format is characteristic of a Middle School Model that is designed to meet the needs of that particular age group. Jerry also uses teams in the hiring process. Most of the team's hiring decisions are good ones. When the decision resulted the hiring of a poor candidate, he returns to the team.

We have a team... what always bothered me is that if someone I hired in an interview with a team of people. ...and anytime we had someone that struggled or did not succeed, I go back to the team and ask what did we miss. What did we miss? We go over our evaluation questions, their answers, the process. We went back on this one case, and there were red flags all over the place. We overlooked it...

Principals may be reluctant to share the playing field or extend the sharing part to a small degree. Kathleen is aware of her need to extend her decision making responsibilities...to a point.

I think something else that I have become aware of ... is that even though I take a lot of input from people in my building in making decision, I still make most of the decisions...I try to share and have some distributive leadership...I think at times and I do process this... I think I come across as I am making this decision because it is my decision and so I want to be careful about that so don't give the wrong message...

Site-based shared decision making models have been required in Michigan for over two decades. Principals have experienced varied degrees of success with teams. In the age of accountability, do site-based decisions make a positive difference? Certainly the generation of ideas and group buy-in is a plus. However, when more people are brought to the table to make decisions, the process slows down. In the hectic world of principals, time is a valued commodity. Are these teams a support or an anchor? Principals more familiar with a top-down authority structure may find the process inefficient. Principals that value people for their intellect and creativity would support Bergson's focus on the human element as well as the survival of the community. Certainly this discussion could be expanded in further research.

2) Mentors

The literature is fairly generous in offering studies on mentors and mentors programs. The review accompanying this project highlights a few. In the context of this study, mentors are referenced as individuals that support the personal and professional morality of individual principals. Principal mentors are discussed by those participating in the study from two perspectives. The most common reference is to the one or two individuals in their upbringing, training or personal life who contributed to the decision to pursue the principal role. Besides the career guidance, principals consider their mentors as a contributing source to their personal morality. Principal Al, while reflecting on his road to being a principal, connected with an individual that cultivated Al's desire to help people.

I wanted to something that would help humanity or society, so teaching and counseling seemed like a good fit. At _____, I connect with a guy by name of Bob G, who was very much a humanist, he is a doctor of psychology and I really learned and trained under him and my beliefs came about through working with my direct supervisor, so I credit him, so he was my first professional mentor, kind of looked out for me. Thinking about high school, as I look back, I had a couple of mentors... Jim really challenged me to be my best in terms of helping others and being in a helping profession...and there was Tom H I was working with at-risk kids, Joe N who was the principal...took notice of me. Joe was a mentor and really liked working for him and I really respected him. I have had some outstanding mentors...people that have guided me along the way.

Assistant Principal Keith began his career in the business world. Before earning a degree, Keith was a guest teacher at a private school and come to enjoy students and teaching. Securing a teaching certificate, Keith worked as a core subject teacher. In his own word, "I was impressed with the way principals went about leading the building". He pursued his administration degree, and selected two principals to serve under as an intern. Within six years, Keith was appointed assistant principal. He attributes his growth as an administrator to his current principal. "I have been fortunate to have the mentors I have had...I really appreciate when they share their experiences with me." Keith reflects, "As a kid, I learned to be

responsible, to have character, and work hard. It is ironic; my mentors told me those attributes are inclusive of a successful principal.”

At an early stage in his career, Principal Dennis was comfortable taking the lead in groups, projects, and his fraternity. He did not shy away from those challenges. In fact, he enjoyed them.

...probably the principal and AD I had at Chesterton had a good influence on seeing what the leadership entailed and helping find out what I wanted to do. If I didn’t have a good experience with those two, it may not have been so clear, so early.

A second conception of mentors offered by the principals is not inspiring or leading but as “someone I can pick up the phone and call...when decisions get difficult.” Principals value the opportunity to seek advice from other principals. Jeff submits, “...and if I wavered a little bit I would call one of my colleagues, it would usually be J_____and would say what do you think here?” Principal Charles provides insight into why it is necessary to have a valued few you principals can consult.

You have to have people around you that you can call when you need to make a tough decision. You call and say, “Hey, I got this situation, what do you think?” Often times you cannot do that with your AP...you cannot do it with your teachers. You don’t want to talk it over with your wife!! So you got to have that colleague out to talk about what you are dealing with. Luckily, I have three really solid and stable middle school principals ...we are as close as close can be in making decisions and policy. I mean our buildings are pretty damn similar. Our philosophies are similar. We are not the same people, obviously. The way we think is very similar. That helps each of our organizations.

Principal Mary references a Gallup Survey and the question that was asked, “Do you have a best friend at work?

Mine is D_____ who is our Director of Secondary Education. call him up and say, “D_____ I made this decision.” I also asked, “Did I blow this?” He would give me honest feedback. It doesn’t necessarily end up on your performance review. I have a very strong social network with the other principals. I have been in the district now 21 years, I know the people who are there, I know who I can talk to, and I know who I can trust to have some very deep down nitty-gritty, nasty discussions with about and who you could go out with and have a drink with. I wonder how much that helps people out.

Principal Frank turns to his “cabinet” when difficult decisions are on the table. The cabinet is comprised of his assistant principals, each offering diverse ideas and perspectives.

I value those people...a very important sounding board...I rely on their advice. It is just a great diverse group, it is a wonderful sound board, cabinet. People that I can turn to and close the door and say stupid things and never say again because although it was good in my brain, when it was out loud...I get ideas from them and to rely on them. “It’s lonely.”

When all is said and done in a building, the principal stands alone in making the decisions that drive the educational process. To counter the isolation, principals turn to their contemporary mentors for advice. In his study on the education of seven eminent Americans, Cusick (2005) concluded one attribute of these successful individuals, in that they surround themselves with “like-mind” people. Principals consider themselves to be moral individuals. Still they seek affirmation when moralities overlap and exceptional factors regarding a decision are present. Principals consider these affiliations as their version of shared decision making.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study is to attempt to describe and explain the personal and professional moral codes of a set of school administrators as they make decisions. To understand the scope of personal and professional morality and decision making, I turned to the literature to identify the theories which would serve as the intellectual foundation of the study. In Chapter II, I summarized the relevant works of Herbert Simon's *Organizational Behavior*; Immanuel Kant's *Categorical Imperative* and *Deontological Ethics*; Henri Bergson's extension of Kant's work, specifically, *Open and Closed Morality*. The works of these three scholars served as the primary lenses to the study. Alignment of these theories provided an intellectual guide to the research that followed. The premises of the study called for a second tier of relevant research regarding moral development and decision making models. This second tier extended the discussion to moral development in individuals and moral decision making. A third tier of the review of literature focusing on principal training, roles, family structures and educational policy to support the suppositions as relative topics to the purpose of the study. Chapter four presented how I gathered, sorted, presented and examined the data from interviews. In this chapter, I summarize where tendencies, patterns and conflicts that emerged in the study. I formed conclusions on which theoretical foundation aligned with the assumed roles of the principal subjects selected for the study.

Revisiting the Research Questions

Reflections on Research Question #1

What does research reveal about theories on morality and decision making? Related questions addressed conceptual models for decision making, and to what degree do these theories and models apply to principal decision making?

To study the implications of organizational morality, the researcher has chosen the work of a Hebert Simon (1957). Simon provides a theoretical lens into the underpinnings of organizational behavior. Simon's work speaks to organizational expectations and efficiencies relative to how decision making supports the organization's goals. Simon isolates decisions in terms what is good for the organization. Organizational theory provides a relative framework to research studying principal decisions.

Two additional theorists provide another critical link to the researcher's attempt to describe, and explain the personal and professional moral codes of a set of school administrators as they make decisions. Eighteenth century German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, and French philosopher, Henri Bergson, the latter who was influential especially in the first half of the 20th century, provide differentiated approaches to morality. It is from these works, along with Simon, I align my collective research.

Immanuel Kant's theory of the *Categorical Imperative* and *Deontological Ethics* establishes the moral obligation of performing one's duty. Kant's theory focuses on deontological or duty-based ethics. It judges the nature of actions and the will of agents rather than goals achieved. The inputs and intentions are critical, not the result. Deontological ethics are concerned with what people do, not with the consequences of their actions. It is from the Categorical Imperative that all other moral obligations are generated and by which all moral obligations can be tested. Kant also stated that the moral means and ends can be applied to the

categorical imperative; that rational beings can pursue certain “ends” (results) by using the appropriate “means” (actions).

A second theorist extends Kant’s theory. Henri Bergson’s theory of *Moral Obligation* acknowledges but also extends Kant’s structured reasoning to explain “exceptional” occasions where the lines of duty and obligation cannot be followed to meet moral obligations. Bergson convinced many thinkers that immediate experience and intuition are more significant than rationalism and science for understanding reality. Bergson considers the appearance of novelty as a result of pure undetermined creation, instead of as the predetermined result of mechanistic forces. His philosophy emphasizes pure mobility, unforeseeable novelty, creativity and freedom; thus, one can characterize his system as a process philosophy.

Reflections on Research Question #2

**What are the skill sets that define the context of principal decision making?
Additional questions dealt with the common pathways to the principalship,
university preparation programs, formal experiences and mentoring.**

Aligned with the literature, the data gathered from principals regarding roles and responsibilities cited skills such as organization, problem solving, prioritizing tasks, the ability to manage stress an outcome overlapping moralities), being open-minded and be able to communicate their vision as critical. McGough (2003) characterized principals skill sets as either “technical skills” or “soft skills”. Affective characteristics deemed by principals as essential include, passion, ethical thinking and practice, as well as possessing a strong work ethic. Professional morality was an outcome of accepting various roles within the school districts. Principals spoke to the organizational expectations and the “non-negotiable” as guides in their decision making. The data also suggests that principals set the tone and culture for their building, in other words, a professional morality that spans the operation of the school.

The literature speaks to multiple pathways for aspiring administrators. Each of the principals progressed in their formal training through universities. 18 earned Masters level degrees, five principals earned an Ed.S while two subjects earned their PhD in Educational Administration.

With the exception of a small minority, principals participating in this study followed a more traditional pathway to the position. Typical to the sample, principals were generally successful teachers, assumed leadership roles as members of the faculty (department, school improvement, North Central chairs) and broke into the secondary administration ranks as assistant principals. More prevalent at the secondary level, assistant principals honed their skills in generally brief terms (less than five years) as disciplinarians or curriculum leaders in the building.

Approximately half of the principals interviewed considered mentors as being a key influence in their aspirations to become a principal. Nearly the same number of principals stated they retained these relationships or make connections with “like-minded” (Cusick, 2005) individuals who shared the same values and approaches to problem solving.

Reflecting on Research Question #3

How do principals’ personal and professional morals influence principal decision making? Considering particular dilemmas, specific additional questions focused on family structures and impact of religion principals resolving those dilemmas.

Following an inductive approach toward understanding the personal and professional moral codes influencing principal decisions, principal responses in this study and rationale for making decisions were aligned with the three theoretical models substantiated by Simon, Kant, and Bergson. An alternative conception developed in the course of analyzing the research. As the principals described their thinking (moral representations), the difference between Simon’s

conception of bounded rationality and Kant's conception of the use of logic in performing one's duty (moral imperative) was not always apparent. One could make a case for principal decisions as aligned with each of the theoretical positions of Simon and or aligned to both Simon and Kant. As chapter four illustrates, there are decisions that principals make that are relative to the good of the organization (Simon). The research also reflects principal decisions directly attributed to duty, good will, and moral imperatives (Kant). Yet the data also indicates an alignment of purpose (Simon) and logic (Kant). Principal responses such as, "It was the only thing...." "It was the right thing"..."it made sense....a logical thing to do"..."it was good for the district...." "I am loyal to the district...it is my duty to follow the expectations of central office..." signify cohesion as well as tension between the two perspectives.

In assessing Kant's assertions regarding duty, a similarity with Simon's "bounded rationality" provided for some contemplation. Loyalty and duty are complementary concepts found in each theory. Focusing on what is good for the organization absent of personal aspirations generally pointed in the same direction the goals of the organization.

But there is a conflict as well. Kant establishes that good intentions (of NCLB) are a product of "good will" (Hartnick, p. 76) Considering Kant's assertion (good will), Simon on the other hand argue the points citing two kinds of decisions one having "factual" elements and another "value" elements. Factual elements may be judged to be "true" or "false" in an empirical sense. Yet decisions are often made in terms of preferences. This begs the question, "What is good will? Other Kant phrases that conflict with Simon's view are phrases such as..."ought to behave..." and "should behave." These phrases are value judgments not completely reducible to factual terms (Simon, p. 46). In considering the complexity of school problems facing the principal, there are always the moral questions, is it "good enough" or the

more frequent phrase, “what’s good for kids”. The gaps between Simon’s and Kant’s alignment cause internal conflicts with principals’ personal and professional moralities. The gap is the first degree of working between policy intentions and the gray areas that are uncovered as decisions are made.

Bergson in one respect is also in agreement with Kant. Many principal decisions are Kant-like as they imply “duty”. Here and with the data gathered, Bergson’s description of “Closed” morality aligns with Kant. It is Bergson’s presentation of “Open” morality that, when applied, distinguishes an individual’s personal morality formed by intelligence, creativity, intuition, and in some case, love. In reflecting on the data, Bergson’s discussion of “Open” morality illuminates the decisions that challenge dutiful thinking by bringing human emotions into the process. The data suggests that the nature of principals’ roles and decisions related to an “Open” morality approach is common in making many decisions.

In each interview, principals clearly speak to their obligations to and expectations of their district (Simon/Barnard). Concurrently principals spoke to the roles that define their duties (Kant). However, to varying degrees, principals reflected on their personal morality when obligations and decision fell between the moralities. Principals often referred to this as decision areas in “shades of gray” when principals utilize a “supra-intellectual” (Bergson, p.64) approach for making decisions.

To a significant degree, the data indicates that principals attest to their upbringing as influencing the acquisition of these skills. Each of the principals attributed their parents and family expectations as characteristics of their approach to their roles. The data indicates that the development of personal morality in principals is also attributed to family and community values. Just over half of the principals in the study aligned religion with their family values. Of

these principals, only one subject aligned a direct relationship with God to decisions made on a daily basis.

Summary of Considerations for Research Question #3

It is necessary to restate that the research conducted in this study, was conducted by a practicing school principal. Considering this potentially mitigating factor, an opportunity for bias exists in conducting the interviews and the analysis that followed. It should also be noted that every effort was made to remain objective in the collection and analysis of the data.

Another important consideration is that the analysis afforded in this report on the study is based on the interpretation of principals' statements as to the tendency to with which theorists their thinking aligns. Certainly principals are faced with situational dilemmas that may require a spontaneous decision that may be along the lines of Simon, or a contemplated exercise utilizing Kant or Bergson. There are times when principals may make decisions that are in alignment with a combination of theoretical rationales.

Over half (13) of the principals interviewed represented an alliance with Bergson's discussion on Moral Obligation - Open and Closed theory. The responses of these 13 principals were presented with reflection and justification. In nearly every seminal event, principals expressed a moral obligation to do what was best in the situation, even to the point of not following policy protocols.

The remaining principals were divided between Simon and Kant. Despite aforementioned relationship between the two theories that emerged in the course of the study, I determined which principals primarily align their decisions from a Simon perspective. Responses in this vein spoke to the good of the district (organizational morality) and community as well as the need to

adhere to all policies and rules. There was deviation with each principal, but the descriptions offered were more concrete and reflected a focus on following the rules.

Principals adopting a responsibility to the duties of the position were categorized as aligned with Kant's theory. Principals who frequently spoke of moral imperatives, duty to students' community, and the acknowledgment of good intentions and good will were aligned with this theory. The duty to support the policies and procedures of the organization (district) provided for a dual alignment with Simon as well. Experience may be a factor in this category; three of the five principals had a combined total of 84 years experience.

Finally, in each of the situations that fell in between policy (gray areas) or had unique considerations, the principals provided rationale although no principal ascribed to one theorist exclusively.

With a degree of confidence, the data provided by the principal-subjects provided insight to describe and explain principals' personal and profession morals. The study also provides insight as to how principals negotiate personal beliefs around district expectations. The dynamic tension is evident within each of the encounters with the principal-subjects.

As the research continued, it became apparent that the sampling choices were a factor in the data that materialized. With a few exceptions, the sampling strategy resulted in the selection of suburban principals as subjects for the research. Original thinking was to select a homogeneous set of principals, leading buildings with similar demographics and similar achievement scores.

Midway through the research, it was decided to differentiate the sampling by including urban, if not inner city, principals and/or principals that lead buildings with a high instance of

poverty. The number of such principals interviewed was not significant. Only four of the twenty-five subjects met these sampling criteria. Yet the responses were significantly different.

The following considerations are offered as a result of differentiating the research:

- A. The personal and professional moralities are consistent in high poverty schools but significantly different from suburban schools. The needs, the setting, and brutal realities facing the students in these schools cause their principals to tend to morality that reflect caring, structure, safety and establishing relationships prior to achievement goals.
- B. Sampling strategies affected the data.
- C. The conclusion of this study is limited to the “set” of principals selected for the research.

Autonomy

Autonomy surfaced as a significant consideration by principals as to degree they would need to negotiate between their personal and professional morality and the district morality. Varying degrees of “freedom” to choose a course of action were unique to each principal. For some, high a degree of autonomy allowed for personal morality to guide their work. On the other end of the spectrum, principals were subject to formal structures of communication and decision making parameters. Marty confides, “My principal has a definite view on discipline... Whatever the code says, that is what they got. For a while I did just that...but a monkey can do (read and follow the handbook).

Principals extended the discussion of organizational morality by relating how they would extend this concept to their own buildings. Despite having a desire for autonomy, principals apply “Simon”-like structures and processes in relation to their own staff. Often referring to “the culture of the building,” principals reflected that it was their role to set the tone and provide a structure for decision making. A topic for additional research extends the implication of how

principals' personal and professional morality is imposed upon the rank and file and what are the outcomes as a result.

Reflections on Research Question #4

How have recent policy decisions, specifically The No Child Left Behind Act, made an impacted on principal decision making? To what extent does policy conflict with one's moral code?

Education policy decisions in the end become principal decisions. Principals look no further than the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to find the measures of success against which their performance will be weighed. The performance is not only considered at a local level. The threads of NCLB extend to State level policy which holds the principal responsible for Adequate Yearly Progress. Cited in the law, progressions of corrective measures which include up to removing the principal from his/her role. To be fair, only a minority face such consequences as being removed. Yet, principals fully understand and experience the weight of this responsibility. As the accountability rules have changed, the unity of analysis of State testing has been reduced to the measure of the growth of individual students (Cusick, 2004). Principals of high-achieving, not so high achieving schools and everywhere in between are accountable to their communities and central office for the improvement rates of their students.

An argument can be made that policy such as NCLB and subsequent State level policies shape organizational morality for a school district. Achievement scores are a measure of success and a report card for districts' viability and buildings' effectiveness. A corresponding argument can be made that policy has a bearing on the personal morality of principals. The question that remains is how? The question may be appropriately considered using the theoretical framework of Simon, Kant, and Bergson to applying principal response to policy.

Simon and Educational Decisions

Schools and school districts are inherently aligned in hierarchical structures that are by design, meant to support policy. Policy decisions filter down through the State, to the Intermediate District and finally to the local level. The hierarchy supports the allocation of authority, specifically to the individuals (Superintendents and Principals) who in the organization have the power to make decisions to guide the actions of others (Simon, p. 8). Local school districts, with guidance of elected boards of education centralize the functions of decisions so that a general plan of operation will govern the activities. (p.10)

Principals find themselves as middle managers in the school hierarchy. They are part of the communication chain charged with deploying policy and contributing to district goals. From their place in the organization, principals become pivotal in supporting the organizational morality. The exception is when a principal substitute the organizational objectives for his/her own values which may or may not confuse the organizational goals (p.218). A general conclusion from the study is that principals do not exercise much latitude (goal setting) in this vein rather they follow the lead of the district. The consequences of non-compliance are specific.

Kant and Educational Decisions

The tenets of No Child Left Behind are apparent by virtue of its title. The alignment of NCLB reflects Kant's assertions emphasizing the importance of every human being (Sullivan, p.32). Although revisions are currently proposed, reacting to what has been determined to be an unrealistic goal for every child proficient to be by the year 2014, the policy maintains its original purpose. An extension of Elementary and Secondary Education Act of the mid 60's, NCLB is billed as necessary when considering the future welfare of education.

Hartnick offers that the imposition of policy is set in place as a means of working toward the common good (of the country). (p.71) What NCLB also imposes is stated in Kant's terms as a duty on the entire educational system to provide rigorous learning for all students. NCLB becomes, for principals, what Kant calls the "Categorical Imperative...a demand that one should act in this way or that way... (Kant, p. 84) Paton extends the understanding of the Categorical Imperative in terms of accountability "...to judge our own actions by the same universal standards which apply to the actions of there are an essential condition of morality." (p. 73) Sullivan's definition of Kant's Categorical Imperative aligns with NCLB's imposition on school organizations:

The Categorical Imperative is a purely formal and therefore universal norm for the moral acceptability of possible policies. Such policies, like the laws of natural justice is the public forum, have substantive content, for they refer to general kinds of actions that any agent (school districts), including those with generally described positions or roles (principals) (p.32)

One could align Kant's assertions on duty with the implementation of NCLB. But Kant makes it clear, duty is about intentions or good will, not necessarily the results. (Sullivan, p.31). In a relative sense, NCLB does not always resulted having the best interest of every human being. These circumstances are what generate criticism for Kant's assertions. As referenced in Chapter 1's Introduction, and by the testimony of principals, accountability testing can be problematic. The stresses on children can be dramatic at times. Kant would argue that the intent was good; therefore duty was achieved. For principals that ascribe to dutiful practice therein lies a conflict of purpose between NCLB and the emotional well-being of a child.

Bergson and Educational Decisions

Within the virtues of the Bergson theory is the axiom of moral obligation. Moral obligation places the individual at the center of life's experiences, episodes and challenges. But to understand the seed of moral obligation, Bergson submits an analogy.

Why did we obey....in our eyes, their (parents and teachers) authority came from them than from their status in relation to us. They occupied a certain station; that was the source of the command, which had it issued from some other quarter, would not have possessed the same weight. In other words parent and teachers seemed to act by proxy. We did not fully realize this, but behind our parents and our teachers we had an inkling of some enormous or rather some shadowy thing (moral obligation) that exerted pressure on us through them. Later we would say it was society...we would compare it to an organism whose cells, united by imperceptible links, fall into their respective places in a highly developed hierarchy (*bureaucracy*) and for the greatest good of the whole, naturally submit to discipline that may demand sacrifice on their part. This however can only be a comparison for an organism subject to inexorable laws (*educational policies*) is one thing and a society composed of free wills is another. (Bergson, p. 9).

Bergson utilizes the reference to society, much like a colony of bees, to illustrate his assertions. In essence, it is one's relationship with society and his/her obligation to maintain society that is the moral basis in Bergson's theory.

Society also guides the daily routines of the individual. It is impossible to live a family life, follow a profession, attend to the thousand and one cares of the day, do one's shopping, go for a stroll or even stay at home without obeying rules and submitting to obligations. A road has been marked out by society. It lies before us and always done automatically, obedience to duty. (p. 19)

Applying Bergson's statement of societies to school settings and administrators, schools provides a pattern of expectations, responsibilities, and policies that carry a myriad of obligations. Structures and processes outlined by the policies guide the principal's day. The automatic response to the daily routines and expectations are how Bergson aligns his work with Kant's obedience to duty. This is what Bergson referred to as closed morality or moral obligation.

Yet, in the midst of the conversations, principals often spoke of deviations from prescribed morality while making decisions. It is also where the principal subjects considered this working between obligations or working between policy. The area of dissonance has no guide, a rule book or protocol when principals find themselves in situations they refer to as “working in the many shades of gray”. Bergson reflects on these authentic moments or what he calls the inflexible order of the phenomena of life. (p. 12)

For the principals that find themselves working between the policies and following their own personal and professional morality, Bergson advances the discussion of duty and closed mindedness:

Between the closed and open soul there is the soul that is in the process of opening. In a word, between the static and dynamic, there is to be observed in morality too, a time of transition.

We have the purely static morality that might be called infra-intellectual and the purely dynamic, supra-intellectual. Nature intended the one and the other is a product of man’s genius. The former constitutes a conglomeration of habits which are in man...The latter is inspiration, intuition, emotion, susceptible of analysis and ideas that furnish intellectual notations of it and branch out in infinite details. Stopping in between is to consider contemplation. (p. 64)

Principals are at the center of the decision making process in schools. Prescribed responses to organizational morality places principals in position of duty, or a static, unwavering means of approaching decisions. The dynamic, supra-intellectual considerations occur when there is mismatch between the organization’s morality and the personal and professional morality of the principal. Dynamic contemplation is practiced to negotiate the inevitable shades of gray. The study has revealed that principals practice dynamic contemplation with policies related to , personnel matters, testing, attendance, grading, and student discipline. Static decision models exist, but, in reality, these issues are resolved by principals with a supra-intellectual approach; experienced principals comprehend these policies from a humanist view in addition to supporting

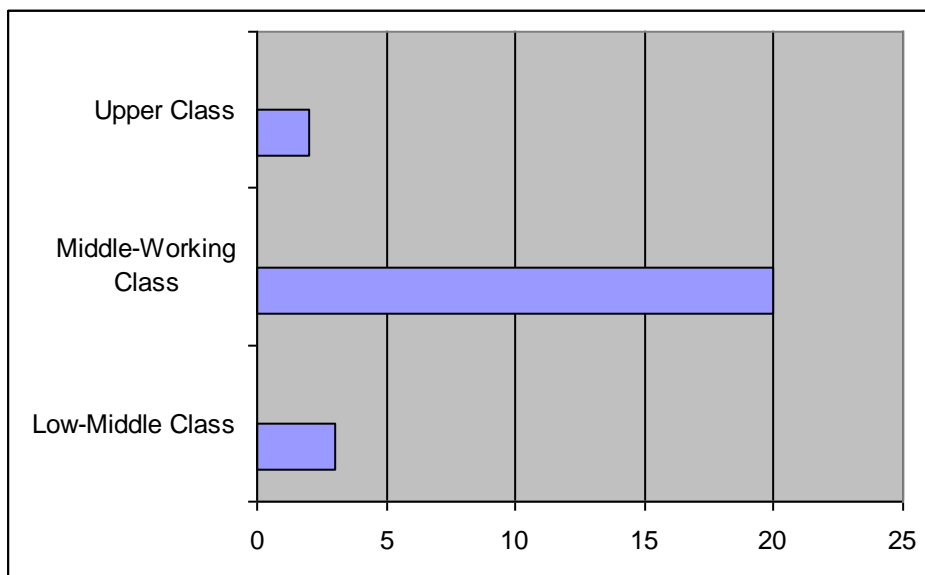
the mission of the organization view. Generally speaking, principals will challenge policy when they believe more harm than good will result from a decision.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to describe and explain the personal and professional morality of principals as they make decisions. Data collection allows for a conclusion that affirms how principals see themselves as moral individuals. Principals bring to their role a personal moral compass that in the course of their responsibility aligns with not only supports but also rationalizes their professional morality.

Principal moral codes are representations of their personal development. Experiences include family background, social class, religion, and a history of an inherited belief in the value and virtue of schooling, school rules, school processes and school structures.

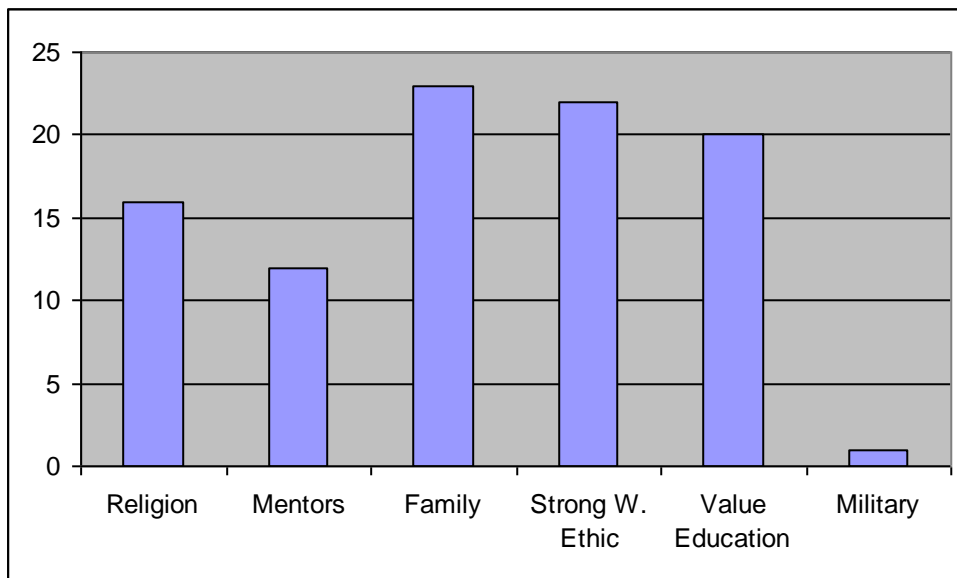
Figure 2- Social class breakdown. For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this dissertation.



With the exception of three principals, principals contributing to this study come from modest, working class families. They personally identify with the institution of schooling.

Individual stories as told by the principals speak to the influences of a principal's background to the roles they play and the decisions they make.

Figure 3 - Frequency of principal responses as the critical influences in their personal background.



Principal comments reflect the middle class values (work hard, value of education, fairness) they bring to their roles. An example is offered in recalling Principal Ben's comments regarding his parents' desire to provide a well-rounded experience for him and his siblings as they grew up, which mirrors his own desire for his students at his high school to receive a comprehensive experience. Background influence is found in Tom's, Jeff's, Kathleen's and Jerry's assumption of a tremendous work ethic attributable to their family expectations. An unrelenting value of education within the family unit translates well to the roles principals assume. In the case of this study, virtually all principals reflect on their families' value of education. The data indicates that principals chose to aspire to administrative positions to "make a difference" (to students). As they reflect on their background, principal stories emerge from settings that are the same as much they are different. Each background brings forward the

morality of righteousness, concern for humanity and society (Bergson) and a desire to affect the future (make a difference).

Although they are reflective in their work, principals generally do not have second thoughts while making decisions. In their role, they believe that it is important to be fair. This causes them to consider every angle and every consideration a decision may need. As moral individuals, principals want to always make the “right” decision. Working within a complementary personal and professional morality allows principals to sustain the organization, serve the community, and appreciate the results of their labors.

The study indicates that the inherent make-up of principal morality is a personal identification with the institution of school. The study concludes that principal personal and professional morality mesh to bring consistency and predictability. Principals rely and thrive on consistency. Their relationship with the school organization supports consistency and predictability. The data also suggests that, even when principals consider unique circumstances regarding student situations, they come down on the side of the organization. As a result, their personal morality maintains its place alongside their professional morality.

The study implies principal commitment and endurance. Principals are unwavering in their complex roles (Greenfield 1985), accountable to their institutions as well as being accountable to themselves. None of the principal-subjects relate distaste for the position or wanting to leave. It can be concluded that they believe their role is difficult and they are the best person at the time to fulfill it. Principals find themselves operating in the midst of increasing rules, regulations and overlapping interests and moralities Barnard (1937), causing them to contemplate (Bergson) options and outcomes for and of their decisions. Principal Tom responds to the questions regarding how his responsibilities have changed dramatically over the years.

D: Let's go back to the beginning of your career. Both you and I know what is expected of us as administrators. But from your own experience as a teacher, can you tell about the expectations as compared to now. How have things changed?

T: Dramatically....180 degrees. Back then, you were given your text book, your room, you closed the door and you determined what you felt the content should.

When I first taught, I tried to supplement it to apply, to enrich, to enhance. But it was pretty much the norm, the author dictated the curriculum. Over the years that has changed with the expectations from the state. The textbook becomes a tool as opposed to being the bible of the course. And I think kids today are getting a much better education than ever before. I think the expectations that are place on not only administrators, the teachers...have raised the bar and education is far better than we have ever seen before.

D: So what were you evaluated on back then?

T: How well you kept the rules, how well you kept the students in order and when an administrator came in, you were teaching. The quality of teaching wasn't as important as the fact that you were teaching. What kids learned and what they didn't learn wasn't part of the evaluation. The fact that you were busy and instructing kids was what mattered.

D: It is safe to say that the expectations on administrators were different then they are today.

T: Yep, a whole lot different. But I also think there were a bunch of conscientious teachers who thought they were doing their best and in considerations of the norms of that time period, many did wonderful jobs. In terms of what was presented to them and their interpretations what the expectations were.

The principal-subjects participating in this study realize the unique position they hold in their schools. The position is supported by a good salary although at no point where wages discussed or offered as a point of comparison or measure of worth. Honest and forthright in their responses, principals' confidence in their decision making skills are tied to their own personal security (personal morality) and their ability to work within the system. The match of personal and professional morality is an effective relationship. Most of the principals reflected a good relationship with their Superintendents and central office administrators. As field administrators, the principals also reflect their superiors' value of their judgment and wisdom (Bergson).

One of the concluding statements for this study affirms principals as moral individuals. Each bring to his/her role a personal morality, fostered and shaped in background experiences with family, religion, social class, work ethic and an appreciation for education. As they considered their careers, principals noted that the influence of their background led them to the institution of schooling which provided a synchronicity of personal and professional values.

As the study progressed from gathering to analysis of data, theoretical perspectives were selected to make sense of principals' relationships with the organization. As these perspectives have been described to help explain principal decisions, the data provided patterns of association by the principals with the theorists based on their description of their rationale for making decisions. As referenced previously, the principals' reasoning align with all three theorists. This data substantiates Bernard's view of the existence of overlapping personal and professional morality. The succeeding part of this conclusion restates each of the theorists' perspectives and provides examples of how some of the principals aligned their thinking.

Decisions Focused on Organization-Simon

Simon provides a conception of an organizational model as a "bounded rationality" of how decisions are made. In review, Simon argues that all decisions flow through formal structures of authority and communication. The classic top-down model aligns with most hierarchical structure of most organizations, including schools. Within these structures, rules and roles are specifically assigned and organizational goals are supported. The context of this model denotes an organizational morality that calls for strict compliance. According to Marty:

Our curriculum is aligned, K-12...there is a binder for each grade level and a passing guide for the staff. We have common assessments...the expectation is that all core classes administer these exams...we use data to pinpoint weak areas. We have calendar when all is to be done...Central office makes expectations clear.

Principal Courtney clarifies: “Weapons...there isn’t a choice.”

Principal Keith agrees:

I know my place (in the organization). The principal sets the tone for the building...he must translate the high expectations of the district to the staff.

While Simon’s depiction of formal process and structures creates an organizational morality that originates at the top of organization, the remaining two theorists’ moral perspective originates from individuals within the organization. According to Kant and Bergson, morality is defined in the response to organization expectations.

Decisions: Good Will and Duty-Kant

Kant argues the adherence to the moral imperative or strict duty to comply with societal (and organization) expectations. It is also conferred within this argument that good intentions or good will is more important than the outcomes of fulfilling one’s duty. Henry clarifies what his role was in terms of duty to the district:

I am the principal here. And these are my responsibilities and what I have to do. You are a teacher, you are a custodian, you are a food service worker, you are a para-educator...you all have responsibilities that what put together in a whole is what makes this operation run. And what everybody does and handles the responsibilities as they should make the operation much more effective...and effective for what? For kids...that is why we are here. So when you don’t come in on conference period until 7:45 and there is a parent that wanted to meet with you...you are not here to meet with them...that is a problem.

Principal Kathleen on duty and bringing her assistant principal along to her way of evaluating instruction:

It is my job to be a coach and give evaluations...and to share that **duty** with my assistant principal and get him to be a strong instructional leader...it is important we are on the same page so we have done joint observations together...and giving feedback there. I guess that is first and foremost that we agree what a vision of good instruction looks like. He gets a sense that I am stickler for following the rules, sure....I am sure I made it a point to stress that...

There are times duty calls for administrative action including the duty of reporting and processing discipline. Principal Catherine reflects when her duty compelled her to work through a policy but her knowledge regarding her student created a conflict to her sense of duty.

And so when you run into those situations when you are dealing with discipline, you know background, you know the history of the child, you know that the child just came from a different lifestyle, you know that child had “this” type of guidance and I am not saying kids are not responsible for making decisions but the context about how they learn, has a lot to do with the decisions. And so you know we have a behavior specialist working with the kids and you just about get over that hump....and something happens...Yeow!! And so those are the most difficult for me.

Decisions: Closed and Open Morality - Bergson

Bergson, in his discussion of closed morality, aligns with Kant on the point that duty is often necessary to sustain the society. Bergson, however, is critical of Kant as morality is not only doing one’s duty but also involves considering other possibilities and choices for making moral decisions. In discussing Open Morality, Bergson enters the argument that contemplation, characterized by human creativity, wisdom, intelligence and love provide a broader context to moral decisions. Here is where Bergson separates himself from the linear top-down (directives) and the automatic bottom-up compliance (duty) with society’s (organizational) expectations.

The following principals are examples of Bergson decisions:

Principal Christa:

I was second guessed by central office,...I just knew that I had information...the kids were in danger... They can throw me under the (bridge) river but I stuck by my guns and yeah, in my heart I believe I did the right thing. And I would do it again. The kids mattered most.

Principal Frank discussing the role of the principal as not being what it used to be:

We cannot do what we used to do because...we leave them out of productive society. So I guess those kind of reflections has raised my sensitivity to what we do and how we do it.

Principal Marty on extending himself beyond the handbook:

I try to have a conversation with students. I try to build relationships with kids because I may not make a difference that time but I may make a difference down the road with them because I built that relationship with them...I want to have that foundation. I think dealing with discipline as long as I have...two years there and four here, I can make better inroads with kids by doing it that way. I wanted to be able to build relationships with kids and cannot do that by going with the handbook.

The data suggest that principals tend to predominantly align their decision making to one of the three theorists. How do years of experience influence this alignment? **Figure 4**, shown on the following page illustrates the findings:

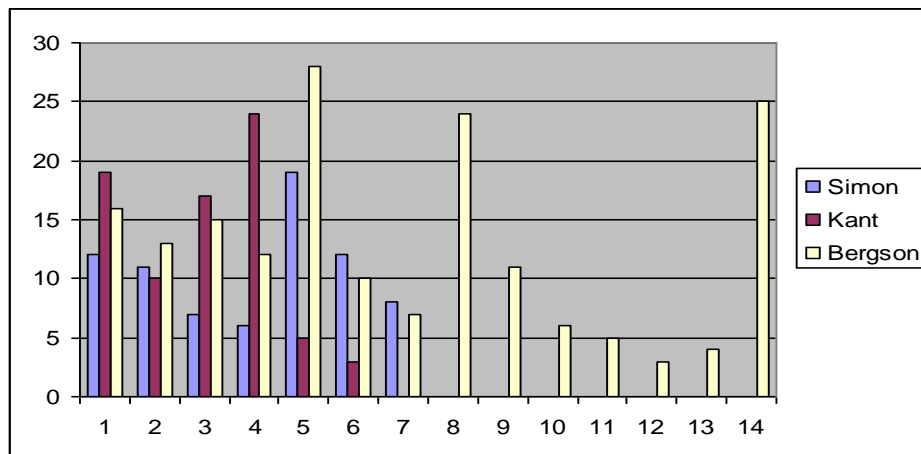


Figure 4 – Relationship between years of experience and practice relative to Simon, Kant or Bergson.

The results indicate a correlation between years of experience and particular theorists. From the posted data, one could conclude that there is a slight relationship with few than s than 10 years experience aligns with Simon. The chart also suggests that principals with ten years or greater experience are in alignment with Bergson (contemplating decisions). It is also appropriate to note that 20% of the principals aligned with Bergson have six year of experience or less. Intuitively, the data makes sense. Principals with less experience will tend to follow the procedural guide more frequently. As the principal gains experience (10 years) there is less

dependency on the rule book and more personal contemplation on decisions. Principals are more skilled at this point and have more resources to solve issues.

An alternative measure to determine correlations examined the relationship between highest degree obtained and alignment with a particular theorist. **Figure 5** displays the findings.

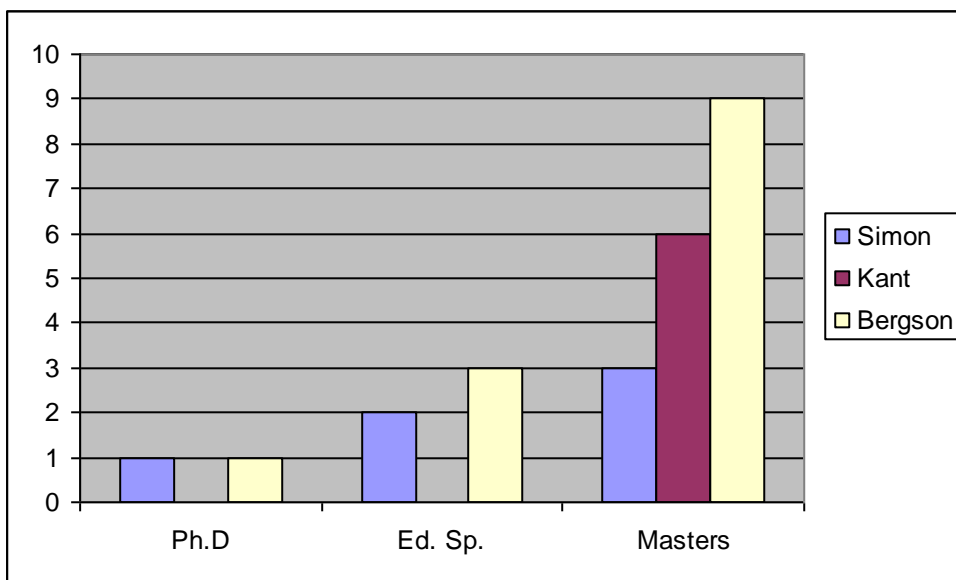


Figure 5- Advanced Degrees and Theorist Alignment

At the masters level we see a correlation that aligns with the entire sample where the majority of the principals align their thinking with the Bergson perspective. The tendency is maintained for those who have an Ed. Specialist degree, with no alignment with Kant. The two principals with Ph.d's are split between Simon and Bergson. Extending the sample may provide additional data at the PhD. level.

Decision in the Areas of Shades of Gray

Each of the three perspectives and accompanying examples provide a basis for describing and explaining morals as principals make decisions. See **Figure 6** on the following page. Setting: Overlapping Moralities.

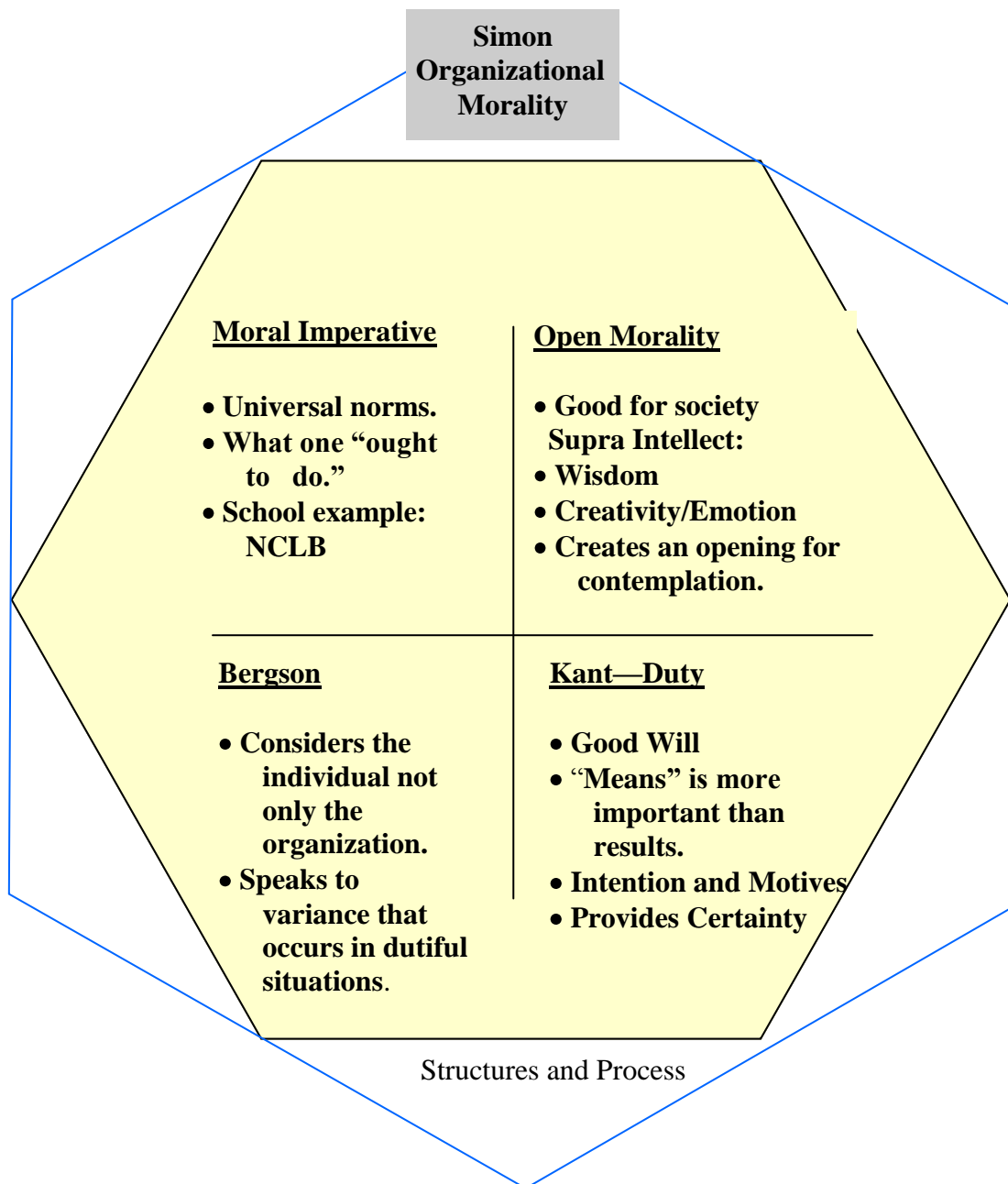


Figure 6 – Overlapping Moralities; Organization, Personal and Professional

In the first set of situations we see decisions that are made for the principal. Guidelines and administrative manuals (Simon) direct principals' decisions. In the second set of decision we see Henry, Kathleen, and Catherine acting on behalf of their duty to the organization. Bergson, however, assumes an alternative view. Decision made by principals Christa, Frank, and Marty place students at the center of moral decision. Bergson acknowledges the human element not only as a focus in the decision but the thinking that is behind the decision making. In essence, Bergson extends the consideration of the individual not only the organization as a reason for making a moral decision.

Principals concede that there are times in wise to fall back on district expectations (Simon) as well as “doing their duty” (Kant) in response to district policy and formal processes. It is decisions that fall in between these lines where principals spend most of their time (Bergson).

Principals speak of “areas of shades of gray” reflecting a larger space in which to consider decision options. Shades of gray occur when a single, right answer is difficult to identify. A principal with over three decades of making decisions provides the insight to times where there are “shades of gray.”

...we as principals are politicians...we have to play the groups too. There are certain times you know what is right and you cannot deviate from and at times you might say there are some gray areas to be considered.... And when you have gray areas, that is the time where you sit back...you say what is your filter...and you observe...or you sit back and say you don't have enough information to know what is right...and you go out and find it.

For many principals, jumping over the hurdles and new targets has become an annual challenge. Yet, principals understand that what they do sets them apart from any



Figure 7- Principal Decision Chart

other role in a school. The progression of decisions through the overlapping moralities is illustrated on **Figure 7**. Yet, principal decisions support and codify the districts morality. The origination of a local district's community' values are translated to an elected Board of Education. The local Board develops policy representing morals of the district residents which in turn is given to the central office who translates policy to administrative guideline supporting district morality. Various codes (conduct, behavior, protocols, communication and authority) are assigned by central office administrators to the building level, to affect upholding the organizational goals. Ultimately, principals perform duties that support district policy while mitigating his/her own personal morality. The graphic illustrates the contained alignment of district and principal morality. For the principals this accomplished by the sorting, balancing, problem solving, defending, and reporting of issues. The practice brings principals personal

satisfaction and a sense of autonomy. Principal Ken provides a snapshot of how his work is assigned by the district.

I would say 75% of it is articulated by what I want. And 25% what the district wants. I am in a district where the Superintendent expects the principals to run the building. And we call the shots.... But having that kind of lee-way, anything that I want to do, I can do it. I just have to find the money for it. That has been the real positive notion of the job. You have a lot pride when the program you implement works.

Principals understand the significance of the role they play in their schools. They are looked upon in their school community as leaders and a source for guidance and authority. Principals represent what the “ideal” should be in a school. Principals will state that their status is based on as to how they represent themselves in the course of their position. The origination of this profile is attributed to the values they learned at home. The majority of the principals in this study came from hard working, modest backgrounds, where upward mobility and a ferocious belief in the power of education are common themes in their upbringing. From these experiences, principals’ moralities are established, with each possessing a foundation upon which administrative (moral) decisions are made.

At the same time, principals realize they are in a position to wield influence on their constituents and communities. Valuing their history as a means toward achieving their own success, principals speak to their stories as a formula for personal success. From their singular position in a school, principals model the moral behavior they expect from their staff and students.

In direct contrast to Simon’s critical arguments, we revisit Greenfield’s (1985) assessment of the role of the principal.

What principals do (decide) falls outside the bounds of technical rationality and there are important dimensions to their work which cannot be reduced to technique. At times a principal’s decision must choose between competing values of goodness.

“A principal’s job is one the hardest ones I know...” states long time Principal Tom. A principal’s work stretches beyond the structures and processes of a school district. The variance that lies in the human condition creates endless issues and circumstances. Despite a consistent argument for form and structure, Simon acknowledges the difficulties social phenomena presents.

Social phenomena are probably more complex than the data with which natural sciences are concerned. Consequently the task of discovering regularities underlying social phenomena might be expected to be more difficult. (p. 250)

Principals’ jobs are difficult and complex. There is no schedule, timetable, or formula for principal decisions. Decisions are automatic (defined). Duty defines decisions in alignment with the organization. When circumstances are not defined, a principal contemplates a decision through the screens of their personal morality. (See Chart 10)

As the principals related their personal stories, there needs to be an acknowledgement that these events did not occur in isolation from the other events of the school day. This study did not set out to measure frequency of moral decisions. Nor did the study consider the frequent occasions when several complex issues are calling for attention. The magnitude of individual issues can consume large amounts of principals’ energy and time. Poor decisions even about a small matter can flow over into other areas. Schools are dense and busy. Perceived administrative ineptness spreads fast among staff and parents. The equation becomes more complex when overlapping interests weigh in on the decision or force the issue of another decision on another set of considerations. It is principals’ personal morality that sustains them in difficult times. Principal Dennis has several years as an assistant principal before becoming a building principal. He is discovering the demands of the principal position explain how his personal moral fabric guides him in complex issues.

Let's be honest, I haven't had much to fall back on. Either I make it for myself or someone will make it for me. I try to keep a perspective on what we are doing here and who our customers are. And it's these kids. And having that focus helps with the conflicting perspectives. A big piece of it is working with kids. They make it so that I can enjoy my role. That is how I manage it. If I get bogged down, I go walk in the hallway or down to lunch.

Like other administrators, Dennis falls back on personal moral fiber to negotiate issues. His unwavering commitment is to the students. In difficult times, Dennis purposely seeks their company to recharge his batteries. Having refocused his day, he returns to his office to manage the next set of overlapping interests.

Within principal stories, the study finds individuals that are not enamored with themselves their role to guide students and staffs solve problems and preserve the mission of their buildings. There is little complaining, mostly because there is no one who will listen. Principal Tim spoke of the isolation and loneliness of the position.

Principals appreciate but do not seek recognition or ranking among their peers. There is no institutional advantage in doing so. Principals rely on their peers. Al, Courtney, Charles, Christa, Kathleen, Henry, Ken and Jerry spoke of the importance of mentors or the people they call on when they want to verify their moral stand on an issue. Most principals do not seek a big payoff, care about merit pay or ascension into heaven (central office). As representatives of their personal morality principals consider themselves straight shooters. It speaks to their efficiency and that they have little time to play games. At the end of the day, they generally are satisfied if they gave a good effort and did the right thing for kids.

The ever-present vale of accountability hangs over the principal as being responsible for the performance of his/her staff and students. One of the study's questions was do policy (NCLB) and state testing (MME/MEAP) and the accompanying rules and regulations complicate the position? In essence, the response from principals is that they support accountability. All

will agree that administration processes are cumbersome and can cause disruption to school days and unnerve students. Yet, principals are generally in favor of improvement as it relates to what is good for students. As principals and teachers regard state testing an organizational expectation (from the State to the schools) and under the watchful eye of regulators, the duty is fulfilled. In many instances, principals see accountability as support to students, to bring the “best education we can give the kids.” Principals acknowledge accountability brings their own morality to the forefront.

Principal Reflection

A collective assessment of the discussions with principals concludes that they relate their stories from a reflective posture. It was not only the recanting of episodes; their recollections contained a measure of justification. In other words, their reflection takes on a personal dimension. Principals are accountable to many constituents; it is also clear they are accountable to themselves. Principal Tom provides an example.

There are times where I have suspended students and I don't sleep well at night. It tells me that something is wrong and didn't make a good decision. I remember when I was an AP...I knew I didn't make a good decision and told the principal I don't feel good about it. And he said to me, “ if you can suspend a kid, you can un-suspend him too... I do the same thing now...” I suspend a kid and I think about it at night. And when I know I am uneasy, I know it was not a good decision. I call them back and reduce the number of days based on that I know I did not make a good decision. I do think you are accountable to yourself.

Like Tom, Mike realizes the implications of every decision he makes. The implications can extend into the school, the district and the community. Online communication provides instantaneous response to any decision. Accordingly, each decision has to be a good decision.

Mike reflects:

I have to look at myself in the mirror every morning and you know, feel that I am doing the right thing or I can't live with myself...I agonize over decisions more than

others...So I torture myself that way. There are some principals are better at saying..."Case closed and that is what we are doing." I am reflective.

Principals can ill-afford to be inefficient. The breadth of the number and types of decisions they make in a day leaves little time for reflection. Principals will say they have to make time to reflect on decisions. Al has been a principal for 12 years. Reflection is a critical part of maintaining accountability for himself.

It boils down to good judgment, being consistent with previous calls.I keep alog. I started being trained in residential where we have daily log. Since I have been principal, I keep it on the computer, to write my thoughts basically, a footprint of what I did today, this will be on it...and it is not for...basically it is for remembering...also for reflecting that keeps being consistent.

This study set out to describe and explain the personal and professional morals by principals as they make decisions. To meet this purpose, it was necessary to delve into the personal and professional dimensions of a set of principals. It can be asserted that principals perform in a world of complex issues, priorities, conflict, varied interests and unforeseen circumstances.

To a significant degree, district structures and processes define principals' roles. Principals often rely on the support of the organization in making decisions. In response to expectations, principals are compliant by performing in a dutiful fashion in their role.

But principals' decisions are not always predictable, in black and white, or always fall in "according to the rules." As Simon stated, social phenomena can be problematic. Managing schools also equates to managing social phenomena or the human elements that influence principals' decisions.

Principals apply their personal and professional morality when events, issues and policies are considered from the human perspective. In the principals' world these are decisions regarding staff and students. Successful principals utilize what Bergson calls the "Supra

Intellectual” cognitive abilities where intelligence, wisdom, creativity, and emotion are vital in decisions concerning an individual.

The Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to describe and explain the personal and professional morality of principals as they make decisions. The study takes a close look at principals as products of their background. With a few exceptions, these subjects came from working class backgrounds. Their modest upbringings led to a belief in the power of education to improve one’s fiscal and social status. Principals believe they have a responsibility to be exemplary role models. They have committed their personal and professional morality to ensure what is “right” for students in the midst of complex and overlapping moralities. Principals believe it is the schools’ role to do the “right thing.” Adherence to school procedures places the principals in a unique position of believing in, personally benefiting from, and then exemplifying the institution that they lead. In effect, school morals (organization) and the principals’ personal morals are in sync.

Although their job is complex, principals generally come down on the side of the district. What conflicts they cite relative to students, are not all that wrenching. The study does indicate that trying decision often involve adults, within and outside the institution. On side of the organization, districts respect principals’ field knowledge and expertise. Principals are rewarded with autonomy which they enjoy and are with which they are productive.

In reality, principals and the organization they support are on the same page. In the analysis of the data generated by this study, principals routinely make decisions to support district codes.

To conclude the study, it would be appropriate to return to the initial premise from where the study was initiated: that is, reflecting on the assertions of Chester Barnard (1936). Barnard speaks to placement of an executive from the lower to higher rank not as a measure of responsibility but one by the condition of moral complexity. Moral complexity mean as one assumes higher ranks; one also takes on the moral codes of the organization. These codes are set as systems of objective authority, codes of official conduct or for the good of the organization. (p.273) As one takes on organizational codes it is difficult to separate from one's private morals. Herein lays the focus for this study as school principals negotiate the demands of their position and the personal moral codes they bring to the building each day. For principals, it is not a matter of responsibility as much as it is a matter of moral complexity.

Barnard's assertions were relative to the choices principals face. The district code, situated in the midst of policy and guidelines, provides direction for principals who are expected to uphold expectations. The study refers to the works of Herbert Simon's Administrative Behavior as a source of reason to understand organizational structures. The study reveals that principals accept their role in the organization and often depend on its structures to manage moral complexities.

The principals participating in this study consider themselves to be moral individuals. Their professional lives are complete with decisions that frequently cause rendering responses filtered through a personal morality established early on in family background. He/she wades through options, at times through a closed, limiting choice morality. At other times, moral decisions have space which Bergson calls contemplation. Yet Barnard posits the reality of overlapping moralities, personal and professional. An overarching view of this study supports

Barnard's view. In reality, the principals combine the ideas of Bergson and the ideas of Simon as they make decisions. Every decision affects the big picture, the district and its own morality.

Principals are proud individuals. They speak of this pride in their comments regarding their personal history and life successes. Principals see themselves as models for students, staff, and colleagues, thus affecting a successful organization. They enjoy their status in the community as principals and see themselves as an important piece. Their work is one of service. Principals want the students in their schools to enjoy the same rewards schooling provided for them. In actuality, there is little difference between personal elements raised by Bergson and the professional elements raised by Simon. They both seek efficiency and positive outcomes. In fact, principals often respond to issues when forces attempt to alienate the association. The strength of the combined Simon/Bergson approach provides principals the rationale to maintain consistency.

The principals in this study spoke of issues that are problematic. At these times, contemplation provides space for an administrator to seek appropriate outcomes that considers an individual's needs. The occasion is just that, where policy and rules have not considered each circumstance. It is the principals' charge to resolve all issues, common and the uncommon. Even when contemplation is exercised, the decision supports the mission of the district.

Principals consider themselves moral individuals. This personal assessment is substantiated from an inner confidence backed by a personal set of moral codes. A set of codes, as Barnard states, "...cannot be divorced from the organization codes" when fulfilling the role. In fact, a principal that is effective in his/her decision making provides reason to believe there is no division between the two.

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