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Principal Perceptions of Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship Program and the Effect on Time Usage

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Abstract

Voucher programs are an important, though controversial, part of the education landscape in Ohio. This study explored the experience of Catholic school principals in Ohio whose schools have participated in the EdChoice Scholarship program. This study employed the lens of principal time usage to examine the experiences of Ohio Catholic school principals with EdChoice. The study focused on the direct experiences of principals participating in the program, the principal's role in the supervisory aspects of operating the program at a school, and on the connections between workload and principal perceptions of the EdChoice program. This inductive study was designed as a narrative inquiry, intended to gather data to develop a theory to explain the experience of Catholic school principals with EdChoice. The research questions were explored through semi-structured interviews with eight Catholic school principals and three administrative designees at those schools. The study concluded that no significant and direct administrative burden was created by the program on the study participants, but that secondary effects are present, such as the need for the hiring of a staff member to manage the program and the need for communication with stakeholders. This study also illustrated the need for Catholic school principals to remain aware of and engaged in the legislative process in Ohio, as changes made by the government can have a direct effect on the operation of a school.

Keywords: EdChoice, vouchers, Catholic school principal, principal time usage

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Context of the Problem

In January and February of 2020, the Ohio General Assembly held a series of hearings over ten days at the Statehouse in Columbus. The conference committee on House Bill 9 conducted the hearings as an attempt to reconcile House and Senate bills that would have made drastic changes to the funding structure of the state's EdChoice Scholarship programs, which fund vouchers for students to attend eligible chartered nonpublic schools. The hearings prompted the testimony of dozens of participants from all parts of the state, arguing for and against the proposed changes. Their comments provided deep insight into the emotion and controversy surrounding voucher programs.

On one side, public school representatives spoke passionately about the need to maintain intact public school funding levels. Superintendent Mike Masloski of the Ridgewood Local Schools in West Lafayette spoke about odd juxtaposition of the State's awarding of academic honors to schools in his district while at the same time designating the schools as underperforming according to the EdChoice criteria, thereby qualifying his students to apply for a voucher. He said, "To me it is really simple, EdChoice was established to take taxpayer-voted money for public education and to subsidize financially-strained private schools" (Masloski, 2020, p. 1). Melissa Cropper, the president of the Ohio Federation of Teachers, characterized EdChoice as a misuse of public dollars, citing the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District as an example of unfair distribution of funds. She stated that the district suffered a loss of $7.6 million in voucher deductions in 2019, providing funding for students attending private schools, only 6% of whom had previously been enrolled in the district (Cropper, 2020).

Superintendent Mary Fiala of the Catholic Diocese of Youngstown countered these arguments with her testimony on the value of parental choice, stating that, "One size does not fit all when it comes to children and their education, and no one knows their child better than a parent" (Fiala, 2020, p. 1). She reminded the committee that private school parents also pay taxes to support public education, and that vouchers allow parents to have their money follow their child to provide the educational option that best serves the child's needs. Dan Gravo, the president of the Stark County Catholic Schools, spoke about the importance of voucher programs for the underserved population in the state, who are often unable to afford choice due to prohibitive tuition costs. He explained that vouchers provide "equal opportunity" to families that "empowers [them] to select the educational path that best fits their child's needs" (Gravo, 2020, p. 1).

While the bill under discussion ultimately did not enter into law, the testimony surrounding House Bill 9 in Ohio serves as a microcosm of the debate about school choice in the United States that has existed for decades and continues to intensify. This study explored a portion of this issue as it investigates the experience of Catholic school principals in Ohio with implementing and utilizing the EdChoice program.

Purpose and Significance of Study

Voucher programs are an important, though controversial, part of the education landscape in Ohio. The state funds five voucher programs that allow for private school choice. The most used programs are EdChoice (based on the recipient's residence within the boundaries of an underperforming school district) and Ed Choice Expansion (based on the recipient's income level). In 2017-18, the two EdChoice programs accounted for 66% of all voucher distributions in the state. The other three programs support students with special needs (Autism Scholarship and

Jon Peterson Scholarship) and students who live within the boundaries of the Cleveland Public School District (Cleveland Scholarship) (EdChoice, 2019). These three programs were not the focus of this study.

Many studies have been undertaken to examine the impact of voucher programs throughout the United States, including Ohio, on the students receiving them and on the public school districts affected by them. No studies have examined the experience of the principals of non-public schools who receive students through the voucher programs.

This study explored the experience of Catholic school principals in Ohio whose schools have participated in the EdChoice Scholarship program. A study of this population group is needed, as Catholic schools make up 54% of the chartered non-public schools in the state (Fordham, 2020), representing the largest segment of voucher eligible schools. Additionally, in 2019, 73% of the families participating in the EdChoice Traditional program used their vouchers to attend a Catholic school while 57% of Expansion voucher recipients used their voucher to attend a Catholic school (Catholic Conference of Ohio, 2020).

The role of a Catholic school principal is difficult, as studied by Ozar (2010) and by Nuzzi et al. (2013), who found that the principal's role is likely to demand that he or she directly manage all of the tasks necessary to be a faith leader, an academic leader, a facilities manager, a staff supervisor, and an administrator. Managing a program like EdChoice is likely to fall on the principal's shoulders in a Catholic school, adding more work to this already complex role.

Understanding the experiences of Catholic school principals with the EdChoice voucher program can be accomplished through an examination of principal time usage. Grissom et al. (2015) explained the importance of investigating how principals spend their time during the

school day, a developing field of research. The growing demands on principals, including

increasing compliance regulations from federal, state, and district levels, in addition to their

regular job expectations for building management, student services, and instructional

supervision, require principals to become adept at distributing their time. The researchers found

that better time management strategies allowed principals to spend more time on instructional

support and reduced job-related stress.

This study examined the experiences of participation in Ohio's EdChoice vouchers on

Catholic school principal time usage. The question of how Catholic school principals engage

with the EdChoice program and what effect participation in the program might have on their job

responsibilities has not been examined previously. No research exists to show how Ohio Catholic

school principals have experienced the voucher programs in relation to their direct time usage,

their additional work responsibilities, or their school management strategies.

Principals may also have to consider work generated by secondary effects of accepting

vouchers beyond minutes of direct work. These might include developing structures for

managing the program, working with parents to complete paperwork, navigating internal

tensions between voucher-receiving parents and tuition-paying parents, and potential conflict

with local public school districts upset about the politics of EdChoice. All of these issues fall

under the jurisdiction of a Catholic school principal.

Research Questions

The research questions that were considered in this study are:

1) What has been the principals' experience of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher
   program on their time usage?

1a) How do principals manage the requirements of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program?

2) What is the relationship between how principals use their time and how they feel about their participation in the EdChoice Scholarship voucher program?

The first question sought to understand the direct experience of a principal in managing tasks associated with the EdChoice program. Questions were asked about the time they spend personally on EdChoice participation or on compliance activities and about the organizational strategies they employ to operate the program. Intricately connected with this is question 1a, which looked at the supervisory aspects of operating the EdChoice program at a school. Principals were asked about their indirect tasks, such as managing administrative personnel, engaging with parents, and responding to inquiries both inside and outside of the school community. The second research question focused on the feelings that their responses to the previous questions generated. Is participation in the program worth the work? What are the benefits and challenges derived from program participation?

Understanding the principal experience of Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship and how the program has changed a principal's job responsibilities in their school yielded previously unknown information that has several potential applications. This information may have implications for other Catholic schools, for EdChoice program administrators at the state and local level, and for those responsible for recruiting and training new Catholic school principals. The first implication would be toward developing best practices for schools in working with the EdChoice program. These best practices would be useful to all participating schools, as strategies and lessons learned can improve the implementation of the program throughout the state. This research also could serve as a guide to any school that opts into the program for the first time.

Knowing the experiences of other principals would help those schools to design their plans for optimizing the program. Finally, this study represents the first attempt to explore the experiences of Catholic school principals in Ohio utilizing EdChoice, establishing an understanding of administrative time use. This understanding could lead to conclusions that could improve the job satisfaction of principals, allow those who hire principals to plan for adequate support structures, and encourage those who supervise principals to provide additional training for them. There are many possibilities for further study in this area.

Research Design

This study was conducted utilizing a methodology of narrative inquiry, aimed at gathering data to better understand the experience of principals with Ohio's EdChoice program at Catholic schools in Ohio. The data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with eight Catholic school principals in Ohio whose schools utilize the EdChoice program and three administrative designees, defined as other employees at the school whose job responsibilities include direct work with the EdChoice program. This format followed the definition of narrative inquiry research offered by Savin-Badin and Van Niekerk (2007), who explained that "The idea of narrative inquiry is that stories are collected as a means of understanding experience as lived and told" (p. 459). Narrative inquiry also follows the inductive definition of research supplied by Davies (2007), who explained that the researcher "employs a doctrine of curiosity to gather data relevant to a predetermined subject area, analyzes it, and, on the basis of that analysis, postulates one or more theoretical conclusions" (p. 238).

The participants in this study were selected based on how recently the schools opted into EdChoice, focusing on schools that joined the program during the 2016-17, 2017-18, or 2018-19 academic years. These criteria allowed for the creation of a sample that had either direct

experience with the program or an institutional memory that included a time without the
EdChoice Scholarship and a time with the scholarship. The research questions were explored
through semi-structured interviews using a defined interview protocol (see Appendix B).

Following the collection and analysis of the data, this study attempted to construct a
theory to explain the lived experience of Catholic school principals working with the Ohio
EdChoice Scholarship.

Definition of Terms

This study utilized several concepts whose definitions are critical to understand. The key
terms are:

- Administrative burden or workload – In this study, administrative burden is considered to
  be the work that is done by a Catholic school principal. It can include all aspects of a
  principal's job, including time spent on administrative tasks, academic supervision, or
  managing the facilities, employees, and parents of the school.

- Catholic school – For this study, a Catholic school is one that is affiliated with the Roman
  Catholic Church and under the ownership, operation, and governance of either a parish, a
  diocese, or a religious order, such as the Jesuits or Dominicans.

- EdChoice Scholarship – EdChoice is the shorthand method of referring the State of
  Ohio's voucher program. The state refers to vouchers as "scholarships," and the program
  consists of two varieties: "Traditional" and "Expansion." Traditional EdChoice is the
  older of the two and eligibility is based on residence in an underperforming public school
  district. EdChoice Expansion awards vouchers based on a family's income level.

- Principal time usage or principal time use – The term refers to a growing body of research that examines the activities of school principals during the school day. The research in this area is concerned with understanding what principals do and how they accomplish tasks.

- Voucher – In the school choice context, a voucher is a certificate or letter from a state government that represents a transfer of public funds to a family for education-related expenses of a student over a specified time period. Vouchers are usually awarded through an application process and in adherence to established criteria.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized in a five chapter format. The next chapter reviews the literature around the three intersecting strands of this topic: Catholic education in the United States and in Ohio, school choice and voucher programs, and principal time usage. After examining the current literature in these areas, the chapter clarifies how this study fills a gap in the literature. Chapter 3 explains the design of the research used in this qualitative study as well as information about how this study was conducted. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research conducted through interviews of Catholic school principals and administrative designees. Chapter 5 interprets the results to draw conclusions based on the findings of the research and offers recommendations for future study.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

Introduction

In 1995, the Cleveland City Public School District had the largest by enrollment in the State of Ohio, educating 75,424 students (Nero, 1997). The district was so beset by troubles that it was placed under direct control of the state government by order of a federal district court. The school district faced a budget deficit of $29.5 million, test scores among the lowest in the United States, ongoing issues of segregation, and crumbling buildings (Nero, 1997). The Ohio General Assembly ordered Jim Petro, the Auditor of the State, to perform a thorough evaluation of the district and to produce a report giving recommendations for improvement ("Auditor Calls for Overhaul," 1995). Petro's first comment in his report was, "The Cleveland City School District is in the midst of a financial crisis that is perhaps unprecedented in the history of American education" (Petro 1996, p. 2-1).

Against this backdrop and through a great deal of politicking, the Ohio General Assembly selected the Cleveland City School District as the pilot site for a newly developed educational voucher program (Nero, 1997). Governor George Voinovich, a former Cleveland mayor, signed the voucher program into law on June 30, 1996, as part of the state budget (Lindsay, 1995). The program took effect in the 1996-1997 school year with 1,000 vouchers for students in kindergarten through 3rd grade, and so many applications were received that the program had to hold a lottery to select recipients. The chosen families were able to use their voucher to attend any one of fifty-three chartered nonpublic schools located within the boundaries of the Cleveland Public School District (Nero, 1997). In Ohio, a "chartered nonpublic school" is a private school that applies for and receives a charter from the state board of education. It is possible for a school

to be a "non-chartered, non-tax supported private school," but these schools are not eligible for participation in state funding programs. (Ohio Department of Education, n.d. B).

Susan Zelman, the superintendent of public education in Ohio at the time, and the voucher program were challenged in the state courts on First Amendment questions, as a coalition of Cleveland residents led by Doris Simmons-Harris argued that the program provided public funding directly to religious schools, constituting state support of religion. After a ruling against Ohio in the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, the case was appealed and reached the United States Supreme Court in 2002 (*Zelman v Simmons-Harris*, 2002). In the *Zelman v Simmons-Harris* decision, the United States Supreme Court declared the program to be constitutional and not in violation of the Establishment Clause (Kemerer, 2009). Writing for the majority, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist explained the conditions that allow for the constitutionality of school choice programs:

> …where a government aid program is neutral with respect to religion, and provides assistance directly to a broad class of citizens who, in turn, direct government aid to religious schools wholly as a result of their own genuine and independent private choice, the program is not readily subject to a challenge under the Establishment Clause. (*Zelman*, 2002, p. 2,467)

The Court's decision created a mechanism for the state to provide money directly to parents satisfying eligibility criteria who could then use those funds in the form of a voucher to offset the tuition costs of any chartered nonpublic school, including those with religious affiliation. Because the vouchers were given directly to the family for use as they determined, public money did not directly go toward religious institutions, thereby avoiding entanglement between church and state.

Once the Cleveland Scholarship Program was upheld, other voucher programs were soon developed in the state. The two largest are the EdChoice Scholarship and the EdChoice Expansion Scholarship programs. The EdChoice Scholarship voucher program (referred to locally as "Traditional EdChoice") began in 2006. The program provides scholarships to attend chartered nonpublic schools for certain students enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grades who have been assigned based on their residence to attend "low performing public schools," a designation made by the Ohio Department of Education based on the state's public school report card system. During the 2020-21 school year, the scholarship provided families with a voucher up to $4,650 to attend any participating private elementary school or up to $6,000 to attend a participating private high school, the amount of which is deducted from the state funded portion of the budget of the home public school district. These vouchers represent full tuition payments for families who are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (Ohio Educational Choice Scholarship Program, n.d.).

The EdChoice Expansion Scholarship voucher program (referred to locally as "Expansion" and also as "Ohio Income Based Scholarship") was enacted by the state of Ohio in 2013 as an extension of the original EdChoice program. Expansion awards vouchers to families based on household income rather than the performance of local public schools, with families at or below 200% of the federal poverty level receiving full voucher amounts of $4,650 for elementary schools and $6,000 for high schools. Both voucher programs are capped at a combined 60,000 vouchers (Ohio Income Based Scholarship Program, n.d.). In 2017-18, the two EdChoice programs accounted for 66% of all voucher distributions in the state (EdChoice, 2019).

During the 2019-20 school year, 39,732 students participated in Ohio's EdChoice programs, with 28,197 in Traditional EdChoice and 11,535 in Expansion (Ohio Educational Choice Scholarship Program, n.d. and Ohio Income Based Scholarship Program, n.d.). Of those participating families, 73% chose to use their Traditional vouchers to attend a Catholic school while 57% of Expansion voucher recipients used their voucher to attend a Catholic school (Catholic Conference of Ohio, 2020). In the state, 320 chartered nonpublic schools enrolled students through Traditional EdChoice vouchers and 405 chartered nonpublic schools enrolled students using the Expansion vouchers, with many schools accepting students through both programs (Ohio Educational Choice Scholarship Program, n.d. and Ohio Income Based Scholarship Program, n.d.). This is out of a total of 707 eligible, chartered nonpublic schools in Ohio (Fordham, 2020), of which 381 are Catholic schools (McDonald & Schultz, 2020).

Voucher programs remain an important, albeit controversial, part of the education landscape in Ohio. This study explores the effects of participation in the EdChoice Scholarship Program on the job of the Catholic school principal. How do principals experience the administrative requirements of the EdChoice programs? How do they organize and manage the requirements of the program? Finally, how do principals view the relationship between how they use their time and their school's participation in the EdChoice program?

These questions require a survey of three intersecting strands of research. First, the current status of Catholic schools in American education, particularly in Ohio, and the unique job description of a Catholic school principal is examined. Second, the research into the broader landscape of voucher programs is presented. Finally, the literature around the developing field of principal time usage is shared. These three strands are connected by this study's research

questions, which focus on the relationship between principal time usage and Catholic school participation in Ohio's EdChoice program.

Catholic Schools

Catholic schools represent the largest segment of the private school market in the United States. According to statistics from the Council for American Private Education (2020), in 2015-16, that segment represented 38.8% of all private school students in the United States. While still the largest classification of private school in the country, the percentage of market share held by Catholic schools has fallen significantly since the 1991-92 school year, when Catholic schools represented 53% of private school students (CAPE, 2020). During the 2019-20 school year, public schools educated ten times more students than private schools, with 50.8 million in public schools and 5.8 million in all private schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Nevertheless, because of their quantity, the debate over the use of vouchers for private school tuition has a significant impact on Catholic schools. The Catholic school environment at the national level and in Ohio, including their prevalence, the reasons why families choose to enroll their students, and the schools' management and financial structures, is critical to understand so that the significance of vouchers and the experience of Catholic school principals at schools utilizing vouchers can be properly contextualized.

During the 2019-20 school year, 1,789,363 students were reported in Catholic schools in the United States (McDonald & Schultz, 2020). Seventy percent of that total was composed of students in kindergarten through 8th grade, while the remaining 30% were enrolled in 9th through 12th grades. These students attended one of the 6,289 Catholic schools in the United States, a total composed of 5,092 elementary schools and 1,197 secondary schools (McDonald & Schultz, 2020). Most Catholic schools are located in the Northeast and Midwest regions. New England

and the Mid-Atlantic states account for 27.3% of Catholic schools in 2018-19, with the Midwest representing 36.1%, the West and West Coast 21.9%, and the Southeast 14.7%. Forty percent of Catholic schools are in suburban areas, 30.2% in urban areas, another 9.2% in inner-city areas, and 20.7% in rural settings. Most American Catholic schools (55.4%) utilize a parochial model, in which the school is entity owned and operated by a single Catholic parish. A further 19.3% are owned and operated by a Catholic diocese, which is the governing structure of the Catholic Church over a geographic territory. A smaller percentage (13.7%) are private, or stand-alone, self-governed schools affiliated with the Catholic Church, and the remaining 11.6% are owned and operated by two or more parishes (McDonald & Schultz, 2020). The profile of a typical American Catholic school is one serving students in kindergarten through 8th grade, located in a suburban area of the Midwest, and owned and operated by a Catholic parish.

In the 2019-20 school year, Ohio had 381 Catholic schools (McDonald & Schultz, 2020) divided among six geographic dioceses, as shown in Figure 1 (Catholic Conference of Ohio, 2020). Each diocese operates a centralized office for Catholic education that provides high-level supervision, governance, and support services to the schools within its territory. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has the largest network of Catholic schools, with 112 schools serving 40,596 students in the southwest and western part of the state. It is the fifth largest Catholic school system in the United States, followed closely by the Diocese of Cleveland, which educates 39,250 students in 109 schools in the Cleveland metropolitan area. The Diocese of Columbus serves 16,629 students in fifty-three schools in central and southern Ohio, while the Diocese of Toledo serves 16,443 students at sixty-nine schools in the northwest corner of the state. These dioceses rank as the 28th and 29th largest in the United States, respectively. The smaller Diocese of Youngstown educates 6,721 students at twenty-seven schools in northeastern Ohio, while the

Diocese of Steubenville has an enrollment of 1,676 students at eleven schools on the eastern side

of the state (McDonald & Schultz, 2020).

In Ohio in the 2018-19 school year, the Catholic schools of Ohio were included among a

total of 707 chartered, nonpublic schools in operation (Fordham Institute, 2020). The state's

educational landscape also included 418 non-chartered, non-tax supported schools and nearly

31,000 students who were home schooled (Fordham Institute, 2020). Ohio's Catholic schools

educated approximately 105,000 students (McDonald & Schultz, 2020), about a tenth of all

students in the state. Because of these numbers, a discussion of voucher use for private education

in Ohio necessarily involves Catholic schools.

Figure 1

Catholic Dioceses in Ohio

Note. Catholic Conference of Ohio, 2020.

Choosing Catholic Education

Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities (FADICA) and the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) commissioned a market research study in 2018 to better understand why families choose Catholic education for their children. Through a nationwide public opinion research survey and a series of fourteen focus group interviews conducted in different regions of the United States, the study found three drivers for a family's consideration of enrollment in Catholic school.

The key reasons that parents choose a Catholic education are that it "provides a good balance between academics and religious teachings," it "Creates an environment where everyone is welcome," and it "Places an emphasis on community service/volunteerism" (p. 28). Parents opt for public school mostly because it has no tuition cost, as 41% of respondents cited this as their motivation for public school followed by 27% who said, "it was the best quality school in my area" (p. 21). In a question concerning the perceived favorability of various schools, 75% of respondents held either a "very favorable" or "favorable" view of private schools in general, compared to 71% for public schools, and 63% for Catholic schools.

Among Catholics, the favorability score rose to 73% among those with a low income and 85% among those with mid- to high income. This finding suggests that families identifying with the Catholic religion are more likely to see Catholic schools in a positive light. Sander (2005) found that Catholic religiosity has a strong influence on Catholic school attendance. Families who practice the religion and attend Church services are more likely to use the schools. Additionally, Sanders found that parental age has a significant relationship with Catholic school attendance. Older parents are statistically more likely to send children to a Catholic school, as those parents likely grew up in an era in which more Catholic schools were available.

The Role of the Catholic School Principal

The administrative leadership in a Catholic school is provided by a principal, whose job requires a unique range of skills. Seeking to understand the complexities of the position, Ozar (2010) interviewed leaders in Catholic education. Sr. Mary Paul McCaughey, at the time the superintendent of Catholic schools for the Archdiocese of Chicago, spoke about the challenges that face principals. "The principal's job in a Catholic school has grown and expanded exponentially" (p. 115), she said, listing among the responsibilities of the position entrepreneurial drive, collaboration, stakeholder engagement, growing enrollment, managing the physical plant of the building, and supervising the academics. "The job is consuming," she added (p. 115).

Margaret Curran Ph.D., at the time the principal at Annunciation Catholic Academy in Altamonte Springs, Florida, succinctly summarized the challenging job description, "Principals are expected to keep the school *Catholic* in an increasingly secular environment…while keeping scores high, keeping the budget low, and being careful not to impose [personal] preferences" (p. 124, emphasis in the original). Ozar's conclusion was that the principal's job in a Catholic school has become significantly more complex, exceeding the ability of one person to handle all the tasks necessary to be a faith leader, an academic leader, a facilities manager, and a staff supervisor. She advocated for Catholic colleges and universities to provide support and resources to elementary and high schools.

Durow and Brock (2004) conducted a series of interviews in one Midwestern Catholic diocese to better understand the reasons why principals decide to leave their positions. They found that principals in Catholic schools generally enjoy their work, are motivated by their faith to serve in the Catholic Church and are not driven by compensation. They tend to leave their

positions when opportunities for career advancement arose, when personal needs changed, or when they experienced conflict with the school's governing bodies.

Financing Catholic Education

Most Catholic schools are funded through tuition payments. During the 2019-20 school year, the average Catholic elementary school charged a tuition of $5,178 per student, enough to cover 82.3% of the total cost of education. The average tuition at Catholic high schools was $10,575 per student, reflecting 64.7% of the total cost of education (McDonald & Schultz, 2020). Hunt (2005) stated that schools rely on fundraising and endowments to make up the shortfall, with a growing number of schools building professional development offices. Donations, grants from dioceses and parishes, and a growing reliance on volunteer work also help to close the funding deficit (Marks, 2009). Tuition costs have risen significantly over the past fifty years, coinciding with the increasing personnel costs associated with hiring lay teachers rather than the prior practice of employing religious orders (Hunt, 2005).

Marks (2009) pointed to voucher programs as possible new revenue sources for Catholic schools with the potential to reverse the decades-long decline in enrollment. She explained that attracting voucher students could lead to increases in enrollment while minimizing the impact of tuition on families, helping to close budget gaps in many cases. While accepting vouchers and the expansion of vouchers may seem like a beneficial solution to Catholic school enrollment and financial struggles, Hunt (2005) cautioned that a consequence of accepting publicly funded vouchers could include the loss of the historic independence of Catholic schools from state educational rules and the potential erosion of some aspects of religious liberties needed to move into conformity with state law. In other words, accepting public money could result in Catholic schools becoming more like public schools in their relationship with a state government.

Vouchers

To best understand vouchers, it is necessary to explain the broader landscape of school choice in the United States. School choice takes many forms, including both public and private models. Each of these models is rooted in the concept of allowing families options for education other than a geographically assigned local public school, referred to as traditional public education. Public school choice allows for parental selection of a school within the public system, such as intra-district open enrollment and charter schools (Levin, 2009). Additionally, parents can choose to move their residence and become eligible for attendance in a different school district. Private school choice, that is, selecting a private school using public funding, exists in three forms in the United States today: vouchers, tax credits, and educational savings accounts (EdChoice, 2019). Each of these models has a similar underlying philosophy of allowing students to attend the school of their choice without concern for funding, but each model accomplishes this in different ways. In the 2018-19 school year, according to statistics maintained by the EdChoice organization (not affiliated with Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship program), 482,000 students in the country used one of the above methods for attending a private school.

The most common model in 2018-19 was the tax-credit scholarship, which served about 275,000 students. This strategy allows businesses or individuals to contribute to a third party non-profit entity that raises money in order to fund scholarships. The donor receives a credit toward their state taxes based on the amount they contributed. The scholarship entity distributes this funding to eligible students. Florida has the largest program like this in the country, which awarded 99,453 scholarships through two non-profit organizations to allow students to attend 1,799 participating schools (EdChoice, 2019).

Education savings accounts (ESAs) allow families to exit a public school and receive their students' allocation of state education funding in a special fund with a restricted ability to spend those funds for educational purposes. The model functions in a similar way to a health savings account program. In 2018-19, six states had a form of ESA in place. The largest program in the country is the Gardiner Scholarship Program in Florida, which provided funds for 11,917 students with special needs. Arizona has the largest program open to non-special needs students. In 2018-19, 6,028 students participated in the program, receiving about $5,600 each to use for a narrow range of educational purposes, including private schools (EdChoice, 2019).

Voucher programs are funded through either a line item in the state budget or a deduction from public district budgets and awarded to eligible families through an application process. The programs serve approximately 188,500 students in fourteen states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, with the largest single program in 2018-19 in Indiana. That state's Choice Scholarship Program makes qualifying low- and middle-income students eligible for vouchers to attend private schools. The average voucher is for $4,342, which can be used at any participating school (EdChoice, 2019). The primary difference between vouchers and ESAs are that vouchers may only be used at participating private schools rather than for other educational services, and private school participation is not mandatory nor universal in most states. ESAs, in contrast, have a higher degree of flexibility and allow families to use funds for multiple purposes, even to use a portion for tuition, a portion for tutoring, and a portion for any other education-related expense (Prothero, 2015).

As voucher programs have increased in number in the United States since the 1990s, many studies have been conducted to assess the impact of these programs on various groups, including the students who utilize vouchers and the public schools with students who are eligible

for vouchers. This section of this review examines the essential elements of the market argument that underlies voucher programs and surveys the major studies that have been conducted to examine the effects of vouchers on individual students and on public schools.

The Market Argument for Vouchers

Both public school choice and private school choice models derive from the unique economic value of education. Levin (2009) defines education as a mixed good, meaning that is consists of elements of both a private good and a public good. Education is a private good in that it has the potential to provide benefits to an individual. It is a public good in that it has a positive value to society as a whole. The private good aspect suggests the importance of school choice, allowing families to make the best decision for their own children, who directly benefit from that choice. The public good aspect stresses the necessity of public funding for education and the economic importance of government support for education. It is this tension between individual and public benefit inherent in the mixed good of education that provides the context for the voucher debate.

Friedman (1962) drew upon this tension to draw a distinction between government funding and government administration in education. He stated that, as a public good, government should provide funding for education. But, as a private good, government should not unfairly influence the administration of education. Friedman proposed a voucher system as a solution to this dilemma. He wrote:

Government, preferably local governmental units, would give each child, through his parents, a specified sum to be used solely in paying for his general education; the parents

would be free to spend this sum at a school of their own choice, provided it met certain

minimum standards laid down by the appropriate governmental unit. (p. 14)

Parents would then be free to choose the school that they prefer for the education of their

children, free from school district boundaries or the burden of tuition. Market forces and

competition between schools would be fundamental to the success of any school in this system.

Essentially, the consumer would vote with their feet for the schools that are the most successful.

Following the basic premise of capitalism, in order to survive, other schools would need to

compete, thereby elevating the overall educational quality in the system. School choice will

ensure that all schools raise their levels of achievement to survive in a competitive marketplace

of education. Under this argument, the "[g]overnment would serve its proper function of

improving the operation of the invisible hand without substituting the dead hand of bureaucracy"

(p. 14).

A Private Good

The perspective of education serving as a private good encapsulates the research that

investigates the individual and societal benefits that derive from the establishment of voucher

programs. Most of these studies look at one of two measures of student impact, namely,

achievement and attainment. Achievement describes student performance on standardized

testing. This measure is compares student performance between subgroups, between students in

public and private schools, and among the same cohort of students before and after using a

voucher. The second measure is attainment, which includes societal goods such as high school

graduation, college acceptance, and college completion.

Achievement. Egalite and Wolf (2016) compiled a meta-analysis of thirteen studies that looked at the test scores of students who participated in private school choice programs. They found that five studies showed positive gains for all students, five showed positive gains for some subgroups, two were neutral, and one showed a negative impact. The studies that showed positive gains for all students were conducted by Rouse (1998), Greene et al. (1998), and Greene (2001). Egalite and Wolf report gains in subgroups of the participants in five studies. Howell (2002) found improved test scores for African-American participants in a privately funded scholarship program in Dayton. Wolf (2010) found improved reading scores for some sub-groups of participants in the District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program.

Similarly, an earlier study examined the Parents Advancing Choice in Education (PACE) program in Dayton, Ohio, which was a privately funded scholarship program that allowed low-income families to send their children to private school. West et al. (2001) found several examples of student achievement in this program. They found that, after two years of attendance, African American students in private schools showed increased scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Their reading scores improved by eight national percentile points, their combined reading and math scores improved by seven points, and math scores increased by a statistically insignificant five points. The researchers found no significant difference in scores between non-African American students in private school and in public school.

The negative study referenced by Egalite and Wolf was written by Abdulkadiroglu et al. (2018), who examined the Louisiana Scholarship Program participants in 2013. Participants in this program were selected by lottery from a group that met certain income requirements and whose local public school received a grade of "C" or lower on the state's rating system. The researchers found that student test scores fell in math by 0.41 standard deviations and by 0.08

standard deviations for reading. The likelihood of students' failure in math, reading, science, and social studies increased by 24 to 50%. The researchers attributed these results to design flaws in the Louisiana program. Private schools that participate in the program seem to do so as a last resort before closure, as they have seen significant enrollment declines and have lower tuition than neighboring private schools that do not participate in the voucher program.

Attainment. Attainment studies examine the evidence for benefits derived from student and school participation in voucher programs, such as high school graduation, college acceptance, and college completion. Wolf et al. (2013) tracked a cohort of students who used the District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program to attend a private school. The researchers chose students from 2004 and 2005, the first years that the scholarship began, and followed them over a four year period, comparing them to a control group of students who did not receive the scholarship. They found that 82% of the students on scholarship graduated from high school compared to 70% of the control group students. This suggests that participation in a voucher program may make students more likely to graduate from high school.

Looking further into the future of voucher participants, Chingos et al. (2019) studied high school graduation rates and college completion for students participating in the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, the Milwaukee Parental Choice program, and the District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program. The researchers found that participants in private school choice programs in Florida and Milwaukee were more likely than their non-participating peers to enroll in college and more likely to attain a bachelor's degree.

In Florida, students who began participating in the program in elementary school were six percentage points more likely to attend college, while students who joined the program in high school were ten percentage points more likely to enroll in college. The researcher's results

for Milwaukee showed a similar pattern. Students in the program were four to six percentage points more likely to enroll in college, though this result was found to be statistically insignificant. College completion rates were one to three percentage points higher, but this also is not significant. The study of students in Washington, D.C., yielded no significant difference in either college attendance or completion rates between participating and non-participating students. While participation in voucher programs correlates the likelihood of college attendance and graduation, it is not conclusive.

A great deal of research has examined whether the use of voucher programs can stimulate benefits for participants. Several studies have shown improvements in test scores, high school graduation rates, and college graduation rates. Though effects have been seen, there are usually other explanatory factors that prevent decisive conclusions, as might be expected in the complex study of schools.

A Public Good

The perspective that education functions as a public good argues that vouchers promote competition between school systems, leading to greater innovation and student achievement. Much of the research in this area has focused on the effects of competition. Another area of research has looked at whether the threat of implementation of a voucher program influences public school districts. This is particularly relevant in Ohio, as the Traditional EdChoice Scholarship program is based on the performance of public schools on the state's report card. Sustained poor performance results in students becoming eligible for vouchers paid through deductions from the state-funded portion of the public district's budget (Ohio Educational Choice Scholarship Program, n.d).

Competition. The most recent study on the effect of voucher systems on students was conducted by Figlio et al. (2020). The researchers examined data from the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program and found that the growth of the program has correlated with positive trends in public school student outcomes, leading the researchers to conclude that increased competition from private school choice encouraged positive gains in public schools. The gains that were noted included behavioral improvements, such as a decrease in absences and disciplinary suspensions, as well as academic gains. The researchers concluded that an increase of 10% in participation in the voucher program translated into a reduction in behavioral issues of between 0.6% and 0.9% and an increase in test scores between 0.3% and 0.7% of a standard deviation. Although these are not large gains, the data suggests that the presence of competition does result in a positive benefit to students remaining in public school.

Greene and Winters (2003) also examined the effect of Florida's A+ Program for students attending public schools that repeatedly fail the state's accountability exam, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). By assessing FCAT and Stanford-9 math test data, voucher eligibility and demographic information, Greene and Winters found that a competitive effect does exist, where the pressure stemming from student eligibility to receive a voucher caused failing schools to make significant academic gains, as much as an increase of 9.3 scale score points.

The same researchers also conducted a study that found a neutral effect on school achievement based on competition. Greene and Winters (2006) examined the effect of the Opportunity Scholarship voucher program in the District of Columbia on achievement. The authors hypothesized that public schools that were geographically closer to voucher-accepting private schools would show greater academic achievement through test scores due to the impact

of nearby competition. Greene and Winters found that no such effect existed, which he attributed to the fact that the voucher funding did not derive from the public school district but rather through the federal government. The public school did not feel any direct consequence of competition, so there was no incentive to improve.

Threat Effect of Voucher Policy. The threat effect of vouchers has also been examined in research, as studies have looked at whether improvements in public schools are correlated to warnings that students in those schools may become eligible for voucher programs. In two related staff reports for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Chakrabarti (2007; 2008) found that public school performance does improve with the threat from the state to make a school's students eligible for vouchers. Chakrabarti characterizes the 1990 voucher program in Milwaukee as a "voucher shock program" (p. 2), meaning a system in which students suddenly became eligible for vouchers due to government action. He contrasts this with Florida's "threat of voucher program" (p. 1), which provides a warning to schools that enrolled students would be eligible for vouchers if no improvement occurs within a set time period. Chakrabarti found that these models produce different results, with the threat of voucher model producing greater and more sustained improvement over time.

Chiang (2009) confirmed the existence of the incentives that are produced by the threat of voucher eligibility. In a study of math scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), from elementary schools in 2002, Chiang found that the potential for a traditional public school to have students eligible for vouchers based on school performance does provide a strong motivation for schools to improve. She found that, when the threat occurs, schools respond by increasing spending on curricular improvements, which would have been unlikely

had the threat not existed. Chiang cautioned that some improvement data could be affected by other aspects of the school environment unrelated to testing.

Private Good and Public Good Studies in Ohio

Both the perspective of education as a private good and the perspective of it as a public good have been examined in studies of Ohio's voucher programs. The private good aspect was examined by Figlio and Karbownik's (2016) study of data from the Ohio EdChoice program to determine the profile of the students most likely to utilize vouchers to transfer to a private school from a public school. They concluded that, in general, students who are categorized as high-achieving and who are from comparatively wealthier families are more likely to use the voucher as opposed to remaining in their local public school. The researchers cite issues in the structure of the Ohio law and the eligibility criteria as reasons for this result, particularly as most students eligible for the vouchers are African American, economically disadvantaged, and academically low performing.

The same study also looked at the student achievement, comparing voucher students with non-voucher students. Through a propensity score matching approach that identified comparative pairs of students, one of whom participated in the voucher program and one with similar academic and demographic metrics who did not, they compared test score data between these groups over a three year period from 2007-08 to 2009-10 and found that that math and reading test scores were lower among participating students than among non-participating students.

Ohio's Traditional EdChoice program uses the threat effect described above to place schools deemed subpar on a list, making the students at those schools eligible for vouchers paid for by public district funds (Ohio Educational Choice Scholarship Program, n.d). Carr's (2011)

study of this program identified and described the "voucher threat effect" (p. 272), defined as the improvement of traditional public school performance due to the possibility of being added to the EdChoice eligibility list and also the "stigma effect," describing the labeling of a school as "failing" and eligible for students to receive vouchers.

Carr found that this threat resulted in a statistically significant increase of 4th grade reading scores on the state reading assessment, which he said helped an additional 2,150 students become proficient who otherwise would not have been categorized as such. This test was the only subject area test to show a significant improvement due to the voucher threat effect. Carr explained this by describing "bubble students," a term used for the students who are equally likely to pass or fail proficiency exams. He theorized that these students are less likely to utilize vouchers in comparison to high performing and low performing students, prompting traditional public schools to focus their resources at retaining those students.

The highest and lowest performing students showed the greatest gains in their test performance. Among students in the lowest performance categories, Carr found the voucher threat to have a moderate impact on 6th grade test results, which he said resulted in a reduction of between 3,800 and 6,000 students on in this category. He analyzed the students in the highest performance group and found that, at voucher threatened schools, the number of students scoring in this category increased on three of the exams, with the exception of 6th grade math, meaning that between 2,200 and 5,300 additional students entered this category. He concluded that schools are prioritizing the highest and lowest performers rather than the "bubble students" due to Ohio's school grading system and the stigma effect. Carr also suggested the possibility that schools prioritized retaining enrollment over avoiding inclusion on the failing schools list, and so

direct their resources to the student groups more likely to utilize the vouchers, a recommendation for future research.

In an analysis prepared for the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, Forster (2008) examined the effects of Ohio's EdChoice voucher program on academic outcomes at public schools categorized by the state as underperforming, making students eligible for EdChoice vouchers. To conduct his study, Forster assessed state testing data in reading and math for students in grades 3 through 8 from the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years, comparing the year before vouchers were enacted to the year that they took effect in the state. The study calculated the difference in test scores for cohorts of students moving between grade levels during these two years.

The analysis found what the author termed the "voucher effect" that showed increased scores between each year of testing. These score changes were statistically significant at a p-value of less than 0.05 for reading tests given for students moving between 6th and 7th grades, with a scale score increase of 2 points. Forster found that math test scores improved five scale score points on math tests for students moving between 4th and 5th grades with a p-value of 0.007, and an improvement of five scale score points in math for students moving between 6th and 7th grades with a p-value of 0.001. No grade levels reported a statistically significant decrease in test scores from one year to the next. From this data, Forster concluded that making schools voucher eligible had no negative effects on the academic outcomes of public schools and several significant positive effects. He concluded that voucher eligibility can improve the quality of public education.

In summary, elements of both the private good and public good aspects of vouchers can be located in Ohio's EdChoice structures. Because of how the law was constructed, the

EdChoice program generally benefits higher achieving students from comparatively wealthier families and those students do not necessarily obtain higher test scores in private schools. The EdChoice program does create a "threat effect" that has been shown to improve the performance of students in public schools that are in danger of being added to the voucher eligibility list, creating a market argument that competition between schools sparks improved performance.

The Voucher Decision at Catholic Schools

The choice for a private school to accept students paying tuition through a voucher comes with pros and cons, as Massucci and Ilg (2003) discuss in a qualitative review of Catholic high schools and dioceses exploring voucher participation. Among the benefits are the ability to accept more students, including those who otherwise might not be able to pay tuition, allowing schools to maximize revenue from each classroom. Sharing education costs with a voucher program also has the potential to offset the need to increase tuition each year, and the additional funding source can be used to expand the school budget, pay teachers at a higher rate, and purchase additional equipment such as technology that might not be affordable otherwise.

Massucci and Ilg explain that there are drawbacks to accepting vouchers, as "No one gives you something for nothing" (p. 358). The authors raise the question that, in accepting money from a state government, schools risk the limitation of the operational independence they have traditionally enjoyed in curriculum and policy. The participants in the study questioned whether schools would become subject to the same hiring laws, curriculum, standards, and admissions policies as public schools. They pointed out potential changes to accountability and accreditation requirements, as well as potential challenges to including religious instruction into the school day. Essentially, this review questioned whether publicly funded vouchers could have the effect of blurring the lines between Catholic and public schools.

DeAngelis et al. (2018) further examined the question of whether greater regulation of private school choice programs decreases the likelihood that private schools choose to participate. Their hypothesis was that a higher barrier to entry would lead to fewer schools opting into the program due to increased burden of participation. The researchers conducted a survey of 3,080 private school leaders in Florida and tested their response to three hypothetical regulations: open-enrollment mandates, meaning that all students who qualify for a scholarship had to be accepted at the private school; requirements for state standardized testing; and the unavailability of parent co-payments, meaning that the voucher amount represented the full amount of money a family would pay.

After analyzing their survey results, the researchers found that greater regulation generally reduces the participation of private schools. The test of open-enrollment requirements produced the largest negative result, showing a decrease in respondents choosing "certain to participate" in the program between 17.4 to 21 percentage points when compared to the control group. The requirement for state standardized testing showed a decrease in respondents "certain to participate" of 11.6 to 13.7 percentage points, which the researchers characterized as a moderate effect. None of the responses to the co-payment scenario were statistically significant at any level. Although the survey size was small, with only an 11% response rate, it does demonstrate the thought process of administrators when they weigh the costs against the benefits of voucher program participation.

The availability of vouchers creates trade-offs for private schools. In Catholic schools, the additional income and potential increase in enrollment must be balanced against the increased regulation and involvement of the state government in operations. While researchers have established these parameters, there is no actual empirical evidence that exists to show what

constitutes the increased administrative burden. What has been the experience of Catholic school principals after they accept vouchers in their schools in comparison to the workload before accepting them? Have other, unanticipated responsibilities been added onto the principal's role as an indirect result of participation in voucher programs? No research exists to show how Ohio Catholic school principals have experienced the voucher programs in relation to their direct time usage, their additional work responsibilities, or their school management strategies.

Principal Time Usage

When a Catholic school does accept the greater regulatory burden of vouchers, it is possible that a significant amount of the weight of that burden is likely to fall on the school principal due to the structure of Catholic school management. Nuzzi et al. (2013) described the Catholic school principal as "both the chief executive officer (CEO) and the chief operating officer (COO), ultimately responsible for all of the formal and informal educational activities of the school" (p. 1). This multifaceted role creates a heavy workload, such that the researchers concluded that new structures are needed to modify the role of the principal into something more manageable for one person.

Reaching a similar conclusion, Fraser and Brock (2006) surveyed principals in two Catholic dioceses in New South Wales, Australia. In this study, the principals affirmed their desire to work within their faith tradition and found satisfaction in the job of a school administrator. The researchers also investigated causes of dissatisfaction. Among the reasons given were stress, the growing administrative demands of the position due to regulation and reporting, and the lack of support personnel. Many of the study participants reported their feeling that the job had become too complex and demanding for one person and that they disliked how those demands prevented them from serving as instructional leaders in the school.

Understanding how principals use time and how their activities during the day affect the overall operation of the school is an important and growing area of research. Principals have a critical role, but, as Grissom et al. (2015) studied, the demands on a public school principal's time are growing. These demands include the increasing burden deriving from federal, state, and district level regulation and accountability in addition to their regular expectations for building management, student services, and instructional management. These tasks require principals to become adept at distributing their time. The researchers found that better time management strategies allowed principals to spend more time on instructional support and reduced job-related stress.

Time Usage and Student Achievement

The history of studies of principal time usage describes the myriad tasks and responsibilities of the school principal. How principal time usage translates to student performance is not fully understood, although most studies point to a positive relationship between principal involvement in instruction and student achievement under certain parameters. Most of the research that has been conducted in this area has been focused on public school principals, and of those, a large portion of the studies have been conducted in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Understanding how principals are using their time is important for understanding school effectiveness. Robinson et al. (2008) conducted a meta-analysis study that determined that "the closer educational leaders get to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to have a positive impact on students' outcomes" (p. 664). In particular, their analysis found that instructional leadership, defined as a focus on learning objectives, has three to four times the impact of transformational leadership, defined as a focus on teamwork and relationship building.

This conclusion is an extension of the work of Marzano et al. (2005), who conducted their own meta-analysis that determined that showed that principals can have a significant impact on student achievement, finding an average correlation of 0.25 between principal leadership behavior and student achievement. Marzano et al. (2005) identified twenty-one distinct responsibilities of a principal and calculated the correlation between each of those duties and student achievement. They found situational awareness, understanding the politics and relational patterns of a school, had the largest correlation at 0.33, followed by flexibility at 0.28, and discipline, outreach, and monitoring/evaluating, all at 0.28. They concluded that effective principals must build a leadership team that focuses on the "right work" that has the greatest possible positive impact on student achievement. They did not discuss the day to day administrative and compliance tasks that principals are often required to perform, supporting the assertion made by Camburn et al. (2010) that many educational theorists do not fully understand the complexity of the principal position.

Camburn et al. (2010) found that public school principals spend most of their time on personnel, building operation, and finance issues. These three areas of the job accounted for 26.4% of their time, while instructional leadership made up 18.53% of time usage. Their conclusion is that principals spend the majority of the day on non-instructional activities, such as management tasks and attending to student needs, representing a structural deficiency in schools. Principals spend significantly less time in the classrooms and working with teachers than is often indicated by professional development experts.

While student achievement may improve with increased principal time and instructional support, it is often the case that other duties impede the principal from devoting enough time to that school need. Other studies have been conducted to explore what principals actually do each

day. Horng et al. (2010) identified six categories of principal time usage: administration, organization management, day-to-day instruction, instructional program, internal relations, and external relations. They asked sixty-five principals in Miami-Dade County Public Schools to participate in time use observations. The researchers found that 27.46% of principal's time was spent on administrative tasks, more than any other category, while 15% was spent on relationships inside the school and 5% on external relationships. Principals in the study spent 5.88% of their time on day-to-day instructional tasks. The researchers then examined whether a relationship existed between the way that principals use their time and student performance on state standardized tests. They found that the lowest performing schools had principals who spent the most time on administrative tasks while schools with principals who spent more time on day-to-day instruction had better performance rankings.

Grissom et al. (2013) conducted in person observations of principals to determine how principals used their time during a day. These observations were conducted over three years among 100 principals in urban schools in Miami-Dade County Public Schools and involved a full day of shadowing by trained observers. They found that 12.7% of principal time was spent on activities related to instruction, but this did not have a significant relationship to student achievement at a school. Certain instructional related activities such as teacher coaching, accounting for 0.5% of principal time usage, did improve student outcomes, while other activities, such as classroom walkthroughs, had negative impacts on achievement. Similar to the conclusion of Marzano et al. (2005), principal time usage is effective in improving student achievement, but only if it is spent on impactful practices connected with relationship building, such as coaching, rather than compliance-based activities, such as classroom walk throughs.

Sebastian et al. (2017) investigated how principal time use might be predicted. The researchers studied detailed logs of how principals within an urban public school district spent their day. They found that principals have long workdays and workweeks, averaging 7.4 hours of activity a day and fifty hour weeks. In looking for predictive patterns in a principal's work, they found that the season of the year or academic semester did not have a predictive value in most areas of the job, nor did the day of the week. There were patterns based on the time of day, with student issues and instructional activities occurring during school hours, parent and community issues happening at the start and end of the day, and principal professional development happening after the end of the school day. They also found that principals spend 60% of their time working alone or with the people in their own school, rather than people outside of their school, such as other school administrators or community members.

Regulatory Burden on Public School Principals

Camburn et al. (2010) found that public school principals spend the majority of their time on operational or administrative duties. This is not a new phenomenon, as Kafka's (2009) research found that concerns about the amount of time principals spent on non-instructional activities existed as far back as 1863. She cites Pierce (1935) in reporting that the superintendent of schools in New York City in 1873 sought innovative ways to remove administrative duties from the principal to provide more time for teacher support. Kafka also found that responsibilities for federal entitlement programs and curriculum programs began to increase in the 1960s and 1970s. That began a steady rise in non-instructional responsibilities, further accelerated by the increased reporting requirements under No Child Left Behind in 2002.

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) included government regulations, reporting requirements, enforcing policies, accountability, community relations, and the ability to have

direct access to the principal via email as contributing factors to the additional workload of principals. His survey of more than 1,600 principals in Virginia found that 52% of the respondents reported spending "much more time" on paperwork and email compared to their experience five years prior. Nearly 60% of the respondents stated that the increase in reporting requirements from "broadened accountability" (p. 54) was the most significant change to the principal's role in the past five years.

Studying the difficulties of hiring high school administrators, Yerkes and Guaglianone (1998) cited the "'mountains' of paperwork" (p. 10) required by state and local mandates as a key deterrent to finding new principals. Boyland (2011) surveyed elementary school principals in Indiana to find links between stress levels and job requirements. She found that the majority of respondents listed "task overload" as their primary cause of stress, a term she defined as having too much to accomplish in too little time. The greatest sources of stress were reported to be paperwork, state reports, deadlines, and other managerial duties. The survey sample included 113 veteran principals who had worked for five or more years in their positions. Within that group, 70% reported increased stress from previous years due to accountability and reporting requirements.

Considering Ozar's (2010) reporting on the heavy burden of responsibilities shouldered by Catholic school principals and the data that shows increased stress due to regulatory compliance on public school principals, it is possible to surmise that Catholic school principals in Ohio may balk at the perceived requirements of vouchers. They may see the experience of their public school peers as evidence that with increased government interaction comes a greater demand on their time and greater administrative responsibilities. Catholic school principals may need to balance those demands with the complexities of the role described earlier in this chapter.

They may also have to consider work generated by secondary effects of accepting vouchers beyond minutes of direct work. These might include developing structures for managing the program, working with parents to complete paperwork, navigating internal tensions between voucher-receiving parents and tuition-paying parents, and potential conflict with local public school districts upset about the politics of EdChoice. All of these issues fall under the jurisdiction of a Catholic school principal.

Data Collection Methods

One of the most challenging part of studying principal time usage is selecting the method of data collection. It is not easy to ensure data accuracy in the activities that principals perform during a day and in the amount of time spent on each.

Camburn et al. (2010) summarized the positive and negative aspects of several methods, including daily logs, observations, and experience sampling instruments. Direct, in person observations have been the most common method of determining principal time usage in past studies cited by the researchers, including Peterson (1977) and Kmetz and Willower (1982). This method involved spending extended periods of time with individual principals and tracking their daily activities. While providing accurate information, this methodology is time consuming and expensive to conduct. The researchers reference the conclusion of Camburn and Barnes (2004) that the observers are outsiders to the school community who are not aware of the context and culture of the school they are in, which can significantly bias their findings.

Camburn et al. (2010) continued their review of methodology by discussing one time self-report surveys. This method involves sending written or electronic surveys to principals and asking them to reflect on past behaviors. While less expensive and less time-consuming, this

method suffers from a lack of accuracy, as principals may not recall their time usage properly. The researchers cite an effective use of one time surveys by Hallinger and Murphy, who assessed the validity of principal survey reports by comparing their responses to survey reports made by teachers.

The researchers also discussed experience sampling methods (ESM), defined as a method that measures principal activity, feelings, and behaviors as they happen during the course of a day. Participants are asked to respond to a prompt such as a timer or alert to report on their activities at that particular moment multiple times a day for a period of days. This method eliminates the recall challenges associated with one-time surveys but runs the risk of interpreting false patterns in a series of discreet observations. Camburn et al. (2010) also reviewed the use of daily logs or journals completed by the research participants to record their activities and compared their accuracy with ESMs, finding the daily log to be similar in accuracy but much easier to facilitate.

Spillane and Zuberi (2009) studied the use of a leadership daily practice log (LDP) to gather data on the leadership behavior of principals. This tool is designed to gather improved data on leadership in a large sampling of schools. The LDP method expands upon the ESM by including the behaviors of other individuals within a school who have leadership responsibilities, including full-time teachers who pick up additional duties. Participants were asked to record a single instance of the targeted behavior during each hour of a study day, which ran from 7:00 am until 5:00 pm. The participants used a log form on paper that asked closed-ended questions about the qualities of these instances, including the purpose, topic, and timing. The researchers also prepared a guidance manual for study participants to further standardize the responses they

collected. Overall, Spillane and Zuberi concluded that the use of the LDP method improved upon the ESM structure.

Table 1 summarizes the primary methods that have been used, as described in detail above. As principal time usage is a developing field of study, there is no consensus on the best methodology to use for study. Each method has both advantages and disadvantages, and researchers must determine which strategy best matches the desired purpose of their study. No principal time use study has yet to be conducted in a Catholic school or any other type of private school. An inductive study that generates experiential data from Catholic school administrators would make a new contribution to the body of knowledge in this field.

Table 1

Research Methods Used in Time Usage Studies

Method	Pros	Cons	Usage
Daily Logs	Accuracy Cost effective Gives direct evidence	Time consuming Require prioritization Validity concerns	Better for recording frequency of behavior
Observations	Accuracy Real time collection Improved validity	Time consuming Costly Out of context	Understanding the distribution activities in a day. Studies of a single location
One-time surveys	Cost effective Need less time	Tend to encourage generality Recall errors	General information across a wider range of locations
ESM	Random sampling methodology Accuracy Reduces recall errors	Can improperly estimate time spent on various activities	Studies of behavior, mood, and feelings in the moment
LDP	Better represents collaboration with others	Requires training	Collecting data on a large sample of schools

Conclusion

Because the disposition of principals can influence the way that programs are interpreted and implemented, how principals respond to any additional responsibilities, either direct or indirect, coming from the requirements of EdChoice will affect the experience of vouchers within a school community. There is a gap in the literature at the intersection between voucher programs and principal time usage, particularly in the context of a Catholic school. This study sought to examine the effect of the decision to participate in Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship Program on Catholic school principal time usage. No previous studies have examined voucher programs from the point of view of the receiving school administrator. The exploration of the program on the principal's job responsibilities will help to develop a fuller understanding of the program, information that could be useful to other schools considering participation in EdChoice.

Chapter 3 - Research Design

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of Catholic school principals with Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship voucher program through a qualitative exploration of principal time usage. The research questions that are considered in this study are:

1) What has been the principals' experience of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program on their time usage?

   1a) How do principals manage the requirements of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program?

2) What is the relationship between how principals use their time and how they feel about their participation in the EdChoice Scholarship voucher program?

The question of how Catholic school principals engage with the EdChoice voucher program and what effect participation in the program might have on their job responsibilities has not been studied previously. This study examines the effect of participation in Ohio's EdChoice vouchers on Catholic school principal time usage.

Research Design

The design of this inductive study is a narrative inquiry, intended to gather data to develop a theory to explain the experience of Catholic school principals with Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship voucher program. Primarily through interviews, this study gained a better understanding of the benefits and challenges to the principal's job caused by participation in the program.

The narrative inquiry format allowed me to develop an understanding of the reality of the implementation of the EdChoice program through the experiences of people directly involved in the work to utilize it. This method of investigation follows the research structure described by Savin-Badin and Van Niekerk (2007), who explained that "The idea of narrative inquiry is that stories are collected as a means of understanding experience as lived and told" (p. 459). In so doing, the storyteller allows the researcher to look into their experience and create meaning from it. The stories told by the participants in this study provided information about the firsthand experience of the EdChoice program. It allowed me to explore the reality of the program as understood by those leading schools that benefit from it.

This method of gathering time usage information through interview protocols cannot be found in the literature on principal time usage. Most of the studies in this area within the past twenty years gather data through either direct observation, journals completed by participants, or periodic surveys (Camburn et al., 2010). May et al. (2012) conducted a longitudinal study of principal activities and student performance using daily activities logs compiled by the participants during week-long data collection periods. Similarly, Sebastian et al. (2018) studied the allocation of principal time among several activity categories using end of day activity logs. López et al. (2011) used a different approach to examine the daily activities of twelve school administrators in Chile. The researchers used an experience sampling methodology programed on a smartphone. The device would emit a "beep" sound seven times each day, prompting the participant to enter data about his/her activity at that time. The log process was followed by semi-structured interviews with each participant.

The above mentioned studies generally utilized a deductive approach to research, defined by Davies (2007) as one in which the researcher "begins from a theoretical position and sets out

to test it by gathering and analyzing data" (p. 233). The researchers in most time use studies are beginning their work with a hypothesis in mind, usually that an activity has a negative impact on an aspect of the principal's job, and then tests it. This study, in contrast, did not begin with a hypothesis as I undertook an exploration of the experience of Catholic school principals with implementing, managing, and maintaining Ohio's EdChoice program. The study instead used an inductive strategy, which Davies (2007) defines as one in which the researcher "employs a doctrine of curiosity to gather data relevant to a predetermined subject area, analyzes it, and, on the basis of that analysis, postulates one or more theoretical conclusions" (p. 238). I began my study with no foregone conclusions and an open mind. After data collection and analysis, I attempted to construct a theory to explain the lived experience of working with the scholarship program.

This inductive approach was necessary for this particular study because no other studies in the literature on principal time usage have focused on American Catholic school principals and none have examined time usage in relationship to participation in voucher programs. Because this in a new line of inquiry, no previous hypotheses exist. The inductive approach lets the data take the lead and shape the theory, rather than beginning from an unanchored assumption.

Participants and Sampling

The participants for this study were eight Catholic school principals in the state of Ohio and three school administrative designees, who were included in this study to provide additional details about the administrative burden of voucher participation. The principals served at schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the Diocese of Cleveland, the Diocese of Columbus, the Diocese of Toledo, and the Diocese of Youngstown. Three school administrative designees,

identified through a snowball methodology, were interviewed to both extend and validate the findings of this study. Principals from the Diocese of Steubenville were excluded from participation in this study. The diocese is simply too small, as it has a total student population of less than 2,000 and complicated issues of rural poverty.

The principals selected for this study were principals at schools that have, within the past five years, begun accepting EdChoice vouchers from the state of Ohio. The schools reflected the geographic variation of the state, representing the distinct cultural, economic, and demographic regions of central, southwest, northwest, and northeastern Ohio. The principals also represented schools in urban, rural, and suburban communities and showed a range of Catholic school administrative experience. The study was inclusive of both high schools and elementary schools and included schools with both large enrollments and small enrollments.

The principals targeted in this study were identified through an analysis of the list of schools accepting EdChoice vouchers during the 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 school years. The provider lists for these school years were obtained from the Ohio Department of Education (Ohio Department of Education, n.d. C). The lists were then combined in an Excel spreadsheet. The results were filtered to eliminate non-Catholic schools and then analyzed to identify schools that appeared for the first time as a provider in one of the targeted school years. The school list for the 2019-20 school year was not considered due to the complexity created by the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the truncated school year, as all schools were closed by order of Governor Mike DeWine on March 13, 2020. The assumption was made that the pressure and uncertainty of the future of non-public schools created by the pandemic could skew the responses to the interview.

The above analysis of the provider lists yielded a total of nineteen schools that met the criteria. Once the schools were identified, the principals were advised of this study through a solicitation email, with a corresponding copy sent to the superintendent of the diocese in an effort to establish trust and to facilitate an introduction. This solicitation email is contained in Appendix A. Interview times were arranged through email communication and included the completion of the Informed Consent Form found in Appendix D. A total of eight principals responded to the invitation to participate, a response rate of 42%. No response was received from the other schools, despite sending two requests and direct prompting from the diocesan superintendent.

During the interviews, participating principals were asked if anyone on their school staff provided them with significant aid or assistance in managing the requirements of EdChoice. From the affirmative responses, three people were selected and sent invitations to participate in the study. These individuals are referred to as "administrative designees" (AD) in this study. All three are employees of the schools whose work responsibilities include direct management of the EdChoice Scholarship program. At School C, the individual interviewed serves as the school's secretary, with her primary duties involving tuition and financial management. At School D, two individuals who work together in the admissions office were interviewed. Their responses were treated as if they came from one person, since they share the task of managing the EdChoice application process and because their interview comments formed one narrative. At School F, the school's administrative assistant responsible for EdChoice and other financial matters was interviewed. The solicitation email was identical to the message in Appendix A, and a corresponding copy was sent to the school principal to facilitate cooperation and engagement.

Data Sources and Collection

This study considered only schools that began accepting EdChoice vouchers within the past five years. The reasoning is that the pre-acceptance and post-acceptance workload assessment would be fresher in either the principal's mind or in the institutional memory of the school. It is possible that the current principal was not present at the school when the acceptance decision was made, but he or she would be likely to be able to recall stories or discussions about that decision learned from others at the school. This participation restriction allowed me to better study the presented research questions, which seek to understand how participation in the EdChoice program affects the role of the principal. Principals who had either no experience with the program due to non-participation in EdChoice or principals who have never worked in a school environment without the EdChoice program would not be able to provide the comparative insight that would lead to conclusions to this study's research questions.

Table 2 provides a summary of the descriptors for principal participants in this study. Specific identifying information of each participant has been coded to allow for anonymity. The gender of each principal is listed, though this variable was not significant to the results of the study. The total number of years that each individual has held their position of principal that the current school is listed, as well as the total number of years that each person has held the position of principal at any Catholic school.

Table 2

Descriptors of Participating Principals

Principal	Gender	Years in current role	Other experience
A	Female	2	0

B	Female	3	3
C	Female	2	5
D	Male	4	22
E	Female	6	6
F	Female	9	0
G	Female	9	0
H	Female	1	0

Table 3 provides a summary of the descriptors for the schools that were included in this study. As in Table 2, specific identifying information about each school has been coded to protect anonymity. There is correspondence between the school name code and the principal name code. For example, principal "A" serves at school "A." The grade range served by each school is given along with the type of community served by the school; either urban, suburban, or rural. The enrollment at the time of each interview is given as well as the percentage of students who receive either an EdChoice Traditional or an EdChoice Expansion scholarship. The final column lists the year in which the school began accepting the EdChoice scholarship from the State of Ohio. One school did not fully meet the criteria discussed above. School E does not currently accept EdChoice. However, within the past five years, the school both began and ended its participation in the program. Though it does not strictly meet the criteria of the study, the uniqueness of those circumstances and the fact that the same principal was present at the school though those decisions suggested an intriguing narrative possibility.

Table 3

Descriptors of Participating Schools

School	Grades	Location	Enrollment	% EdChoice	Year Started
A	PK-8	Suburban	245	4	2019
B	PK-8	Rural	111	5	2017
C	PK-8	Suburban	380	7	2019
D	9-12	Rural	520	7	2019
E	PK-8	Suburban	350	0	*
F	K-8	Urban	350	18	2019
G	PK-8	Suburban	315	29	2016
H	K-8	Urban	258	16	2017

* - School no longer participates in EdChoice.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not possible to conduct interviews in a face-to-face format, as schools across Ohio restricted visitor access. Instead, the Zoom videoconferencing service was utilized. All participants were asked to set aside 1½ hours of time for this discussion. The principal interviews used the interview protocol found in Appendix B.

Interview Protocols

To begin, each principal was asked a series of questions about the statistical descriptors of themselves and their school. This information provided details about the school's location, enrollment, history with the EdChoice program, current EdChoice utilization, and the principal's own administrative experience in Ohio or in other states. These details provided a context for the principal's experience of EdChoice.

Following the collection of this data, each principal was asked questions related to his or her experience of the EdChoice scholarship. Each question connected to one of this study's three research questions. The interview protocol was piloted with two principals who were not participants in the study to provide feedback on the sequence, clarity, and for the potential response quality. The final interview protocol for principals is contained in Appendix B.

Sample questions for principals included the following:

1. How has your position as principal changed from before the decision to accept the scholarship to after?

2. What factors led your school to decide to accept the EdChoice voucher? What motivated the decision? What was the process for making the decision?

3. Who completes the required paperwork for the scholarship? Was any additional hiring necessary for this process?

4. What are the challenges that you perceive that come with accepting the scholarship, if any?

5. Has your experience of the EdChoice program changed how you feel about your role as principal?

Additional questions beyond the scope of the protocol were occasionally asked to provide clarity, to probe a response, or to extract additional information. These questions were determined during the course of the interview based on the quality of the response given by the principal to the question posed. In explaining effective qualitative data gathering, Davies (2007) stated, "A high quality interview should go beyond the asking of semi-structured questions and seek to engage the interviewee in free-flowing conversation" (p. 192). The researcher made

every attempt to engage the interview subjects in this type of dialogue to encourage honesty and transparency while maintaining fidelity to the interview protocol.

The response to question two above led to the identification of three school administrative designees were asked to participate in an interview to validate and to expand the data collected from the principals. The interviews were conducted using the same format as the principal interviews. The interview protocol for administrative designees is given in Appendix B. Sample questions from the protocol include:

1. How has your position an administrative designee changed from before the decision to accept the scholarship to after?

2. What are the challenges that you perceive for you or for the school have come with accepting the scholarship, if any?

3. Describe your typical activities during a school day. How much time in a typical week do you spend on state-required administrative activities?

Following this protocol, the administrative designees were asked to comment on any changes they have observed about their school's principal related to EdChoice, particularly in regard to his or her behavior, attitude, demeanor, and enthusiasm toward his or her work. As with the principal interviews, additional, unscripted questions were asked as needed in order to yield additional clarity, explanation, or context. These questions were determined during the course of the interview and differed between subjects.

Data Analysis

All video and audio of each interview for this study were recorded through the Zoom service's "record" feature. The video and audio were then electronically sent to the Scribie

website, a professional transcription service. The identity of the participants was kept confidential throughout this process, as the name of the participant was replaced with a randomly generated number. The participant was not asked for either their name or the name of their school during the recorded portion of the interview. The written transcript of the interview was then compared to a playback of the Zoom file to ensure accuracy. Minor errors in the transcription were corrected.

Member checking was then conducted. The transcript of each interview was shared with the subject to validate the accuracy of his or her comments and to allow the opportunity to provide any needed clarifications. The transcripts were then loaded into Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis program, to allow for easy coding and analysis. The collected data was used to search for any patterns in the responses. These patterns were used to construct a theory to explain the experiences of the participants, which is discussed in Chapter 5.

This study utilized a narrative inquiry approach, in which "it is the task of the researcher to encompass both the lived experience of the subject being interviewed and the way in which it interacts with the external world" (Davies, 2007, p. 239). This definition was used to derive the initial coding structure. Saldaña (2016) termed this process "first cycle coding" (p. 68) and described it as the initial phase of deriving meaning from data. His "descriptive coding" (p.102) process was employed as a first cycle method for this study. This method "summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (p. 102). All of the transcripts were coded based on the themes and topics identified by the principals, including their reflections on how EdChoice has impacted their time usage, strategies used to manage the regulatory requirements of the voucher program, and how their experience of the workload affected their feelings about their school's participation in the EdChoice program.

The first cycle coding review of the interview transcripts yielded three broad categories. The first was "Time Investment," which included data relating to how much time a principal devoted to various aspects of the EdChoice Program. The second category was "Management," which was used to tag any data related to strategies, procedures, training, or communication related to EdChoice. The final broad topic was "Feelings and Time Usage," which tagged comments related to the principal's impressions of EdChoice and their own job satisfaction.

Once this initial first cycle coding was completed, a deeper analysis of the data was conducted to determine what Saldaña (2016) called, "second cycle coding." This stage of coding grouped similar comments in each first cycle code together and further organized the data into patterns. Saldaña's (2016) methodology of focused coding was used to develop the second cycle codes for this study. Focused coding "searches for the most frequent or significant codes to develop the most salient categories in the data corpus" (p. 240). In Dedoose, second cycle codes are termed child codes.

For this study, several first cycle codes were extended into child codes. Under "Time Investment," the following child codes were added: "Strategies," "Delegated," "ACR," and "Workload." This final category was given a weighting system to reflect the quality of the response, with one representing a comment reflecting a minimal change to workload and five representing a large change to workload. Under "Management," the following child codes were used: "Paperwork," "Procedure," "Pushback," and "Training and Communication." The first cycle code of "Feelings and Time Usage" was divided into the child codes of "Benefits," "Challenges," and "Future Plans." Table 4 provides greater explanation of each child code.

Table 4

Second Cycle Descriptive Coding Structure

Code	Description
Strategies	Organizational methods, personnel management, task completion methods
Delegated	If EdChoice work was assigned to another person, details about that individual
ACR	Comments related to Ohio's Administrative Cost Reimbursement program
Workload	Rated response relating to feelings of administrative burden
Paperwork	Descriptions of EdChoice activities involving paper correspondence
Procedure	Routine organizational structures or processes used to manage EdChoice
Pushback	Time impact of defending the program from external or internal challenges
Training and Communication	Comments related to time spent in training and engaging with communication about EdChoice
Benefits	Feelings about the positive effects of the EdChoice Program

Challenges	Perceptions of impediments or difficulties
	in managing EdChoice
Future Plans	Comments related to a principal's vision of
	future utilization of EdChoice

Finally, after assigning second cycle codes to excerpts from the interview data, the coding categories were assigned to groups related to the research questions. The groupings were determined by using Dedoose's Qualitative Charts Code Application tool. This function allowed for the frequency of each code to be determined, permitting the researcher to gauge the relative magnitude of each child. This process allowed for the construction of responses to each of the three research questions using the most commonly occurring codes. These findings are presented in Chapter 4.

Diagram 1 below shows this arrangement for Research Question 1: What has been the principals' experience of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program on their time usage?

Diagram 1

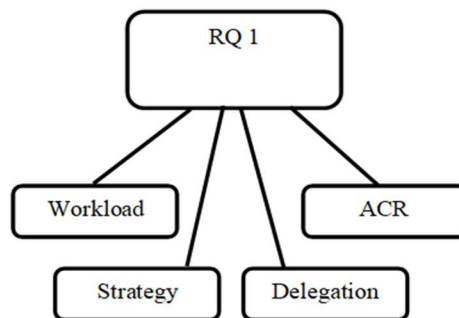*Coding for Research Question 1*

Diagram 2 below shows this arrangement for Research Question 1a: How do principals manage the requirements of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program?

Diagram 2

Coding for Research Question 1a

```
            ┌──────────┐
            │  RQ 1a   │
            └──────────┘
           /    |    |    \
    ┌──────────┐   |   ┌──────────┐
    │Paperwork │   |   │ Training │
    └──────────┘   |   └──────────┘
        ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐
        │Procedure │  │ Pushback │
        └──────────┘  └──────────┘
```
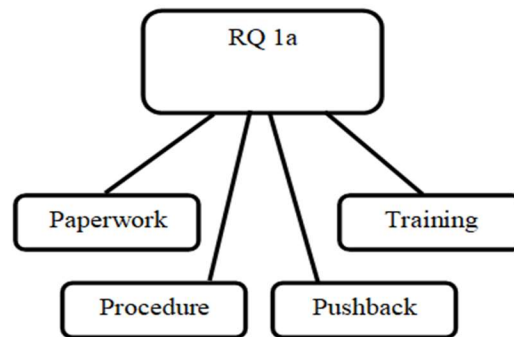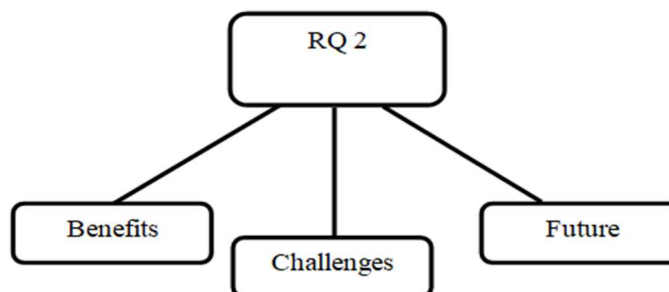
Diagram 3 below shows this arrangement for Research Question 2: What is the relationship between how principals use their time and how they feel about their participation in the EdChoice Scholarship voucher program?

Diagram 3

Coding for Research Question 2

```
            ┌──────────┐
            │   RQ 2   │
            └──────────┘
           /    |    |    \
    ┌──────────┐  |  ┌──────────┐
    │ Benefits │  |  │  Future  │
    └──────────┘  |  └──────────┘
        ┌──────────┐
        │Challenges│
        └──────────┘
```

Finally, the interviews from the three school administrative designees were coded using the same framework described above. The administrative designees were identified through a snowball methodology during the principal interviews. If a principal spoke at length about the assistance that he or she received from a particular individual, I asked for that person's contact information. Since each principal in the study spoke about receiving support with EdChoice from

another person, the individuals who were spoken about the most were interviewed. These interviews served both to validate and to extend the findings of this study as discussed below. Chapter 4 includes discussions of the administrative designee interviews at the end of the data presentation for each research question.

Three administrative designees also were interviewed via Zoom. The interview protocol used for these interviews closely paralleled the protocol used for the principals and is contained in Appendix B. The transcripts of the interviews were similarly obtained through Scribie and coded in Dedoose using the same coding scheme explained above. The results of these interviews were used to extend the findings and to increase my understanding of the experience of utilizing the EdChoice program.

Positionality

I currently serve as the superintendent of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, a role that can contribute potential bias to my work as a researcher. In my professional capacity, I work to support school choice in Ohio, actively supporting efforts to preserve and improve school choice measures in the state and working with schools to improve their utilization of state support. I also work directly with school principals on a daily basis and with the other state superintendents frequently.

In my research, I have taken every possible precaution to not let my beliefs or my work activities influence my questions or lead respondents in any direction. I have kept my own opinions separate from my interactions with interview subjects, allowing their responses to establish the tone and direction of the interviews. While my professional role was known to the participants, as there are only six people with diocesan superintendent positions in the state of Ohio, I was careful to reinforce the confidentiality of the interview process, the protocols in

place to secure the interview recordings and transcripts, and my desire to be a neutral observer of their experiences.

Additionally, I took steps to ensure that the study participants understood that they were engaging in this study through their own free choice. They could exit the study at any point before, during, or after the interview process without any consequence. The email solicitation sent to all participants and contained in Appendix A explained this freedom. I also reiterated it at the outset of the interview and also explained their subject's confidentiality.

Validity and Credibility

To ensure greater validity and reliability of the data gathered from the school principals, this study included triangulating interviews with school administrative designees. Because of their role, these individuals often provide a wealth of information, and their experiences were used to corroborate the responses of the school principal.

Additionally, member checking was utilized for the interviews. The participants were asked to review the transcript and add any information or edit what they have shared to ensure that the interview had recorded their thoughts and feelings accurately.

Limitations

There are several limitations of the sample that would make it difficult to fully understand this topic. The first limitation is that this study can only explore the experiences of a small number of principals. With nearly 400 Catholic schools in the State of Ohio, it is not possible to interview all principals. A larger study could encompass all the schools and contrast the experience with principals at schools that do accept the scholarship with those that do not. Time constraints and physical limitations make this a difficult task.

Additionally, this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic changed the process of data collection in this study from direct, in-person interviews to Zoom meetings, removing my firsthand observation of the setting and context of the principals' schools. While this did not affect the data gathered, it did change the warmth of the interview and could have influenced the comfort and openness of the subjects. Additionally, COVID-19 has caused disruptions to the normal processes that schools experience with EdChoice. For example, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has worked remotely throughout the pandemic, meaning that staff members are available primarily through email. The ODE has also modified deadlines and accepted digital submission of paperwork rather than a hard copy. While these conditions could have impacted the views of principals on the program, they generally are not major enough to have created a significant disruption. They might have led to the distortion of the subjects' recall of their feelings about past experiences.

An additional limitation is that the principals responding to the interview request may not have a full understanding of the EdChoice process. It is possible that the scholarship is managed by another individual in the school or by individuals at the diocesan central office. The EdChoice process can be viewed as complicated by people who are not trained in it, particularly as it is a political process and subject to change with legislative action. The lack of experience could have been a limiting factor of this study.

Another limitation could be found in the quality of responses given by the principal and by the administrative designees. It is possible that the given responses were not entirely honest, complete, or candid. That condition might have been motivated by a desire not to complain or project negativity or, conversely, a desire not to be overly enthusiastic. Respondents may also

have been driven by their fear of how they would be perceived in the findings of this study, even though participants were assured of complete anonymity.

Conclusion

Overall, this study design allows for an inductive examination of the relationship between the use of EdChoice vouchers and principal time usage in Catholic schools. The interview format permitted an unconstrained investigation, giving principals the opportunity to speak freely and not pre-supposing any conclusions or assumptions. The perspective of the administrative designees, while not a central focus of this study, provided context and detail that helped to complete the understanding of the experience of administrative burden. The analysis of the interview transcripts led to the formation of theories that do not currently exist about voucher programs and contributed to a new area of study, namely the experience of the Catholic school administrator with the EdChoice program.

Chapter 4 – Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of Catholic school principals with Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship voucher program through a qualitative exploration of principal time usage. The research questions considered in this study were:

1) What has been the principals' experience of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program on their time usage?

    1a) How do principals manage the requirements of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program?

2)   What is the relationship between how principals use their time and how they feel about their participation in the EdChoice Scholarship voucher program?

These questions were explored through semi-structured interviews with eight Catholic school principals from Ohio. The interview protocol, found in Appendix B, elicited stories and reflections on the principals' experience with the EdChoice program and allowed for the construction of a narrative inquiry study, following the definition given by Savin-Badin and Van Niekerk (2007), who explained that, "The idea of narrative inquiry is that stories are collected as a means of understanding experience as lived and told" (p. 459). During the interview process, three administrative designees were identified as providing support to the principal, and these three individuals were separately interviewed to validate, corroborate, and extend the findings from the principals. The descriptors of each participating school and each participating principal are summarized in Tables 2 and 3 in Chapter 3.

The interviews were recorded through Zoom and transcribed by the Scribie service. The transcripts were loaded into Dedoose and coded by the topics of the response. Following the methodology described by Saldaña (2016), the first cycle coding yielded three broad categories. The first was "Time Investment," which included data relating to how much time a principal devoted to various aspects of the EdChoice Program. The second category was "Management," which was used to tag any data related to strategies, procedures, training, or communication related to EdChoice. The final broad topic was "Feelings and Time Usage," which tagged comments related to the principal's impressions of EdChoice and their own job satisfaction.

The resulting excerpts were coded again to complete Saldaña's (2016) process of second cycle coding, organizing the data into repeated topics and themes. The second cycle codes were then analyzed using Dedoose's Qualitative Charts Code Application function, which quantifies the number of times each particular code was used. These results were then sorted by frequency, and the most frequently occurring codes were used to construct the responses to each research question. The findings of this process are discussed in detail below. The findings are then assessed and discussed in Chapter 5.

Findings

Following the coding of the interviews conducted for this study, Dedoose's Qualitative Charts Code Application function identified the most frequently occurring codes. Studying the pattern in the recurrence of these codes allowed for connection of several codes with each of this study's three research questions. As discussed in Chapter 3, each research question could be answered by several codes. Table 5 displays the resulting alignment between questions and codes and the frequency of each code.

Table 5

Research Questions and Corresponding Codes

Question	Corresponding Codes	Frequency - Principals	Frequency – Admin Designee
Question 1	Workload	23	11
	Strategy	8	0
	Delegation	18	0
	ACR	10	0
Question 1a	Procedures	5	3
	Paperwork	16	0
	Training and Communication	22	8
	Pushback	25	0
Question 2	Benefits	37	4
	Challenges	32	13
	Future Plans	5	0

The findings associated with each of the questions and codes above are explained in greater detail below. The discussion of the significance of these findings is presented in Chapter 5.

Research Question 1

This study's first research question was: What has been the principals' experience of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program on their time usage? The answer to this research question involved an exploration of the time that a principal personally spent working on activities related to the EdChoice Scholarship. While describing the workload that they experienced, the interview subjects discussed their organizational strategies, the importance of delegation to managing the program, and their feelings about Ohio's Administrative Cost Reimbursement program. All of the principals in the study with active EdChoice programs stated that participation in EdChoice did not directly increase the administrative burden that they felt on themselves. Instead, it increased the work that was required of the school by the state, but this could be managed by a clear work plan, good organization, and competent people acting in support roles.

Workload

During their interviews, principals spoke about their perceptions of the workload of EdChoice twenty-three times. Their responses were weighted based on the intensity of their feeling of burden, with a score of one representing no feeling of burden and a score of five representing an unreasonable amount of additional work. The mean score in this ranking was a 2.73, representing the perception that EdChoice required some additional work that was tolerable and not excessive.

"It's just paperwork," explained Principal F, meaning that she regarded the EdChoice as part of the routine work of an administrator. Principal D spoke to the seasonality of the workload, "It's definitely more work at some parts of the year, but it's not so inordinate that we can't manage it." Principal C said, "There are times of year when we're annoyed, like re-

registration time, but we don't complain about the program. It's just getting information from people… and it's just part of my job." She continued, "I don't think, to be honest, that EdChoice takes up a ton of time, and I love that it still gives our kids an opportunity to be here."

Principal F discussed workload more than any other topic and more than any other principal, returning to the subject eight times. Prior to making the decision to accept the EdChoice program at her school, she had been concerned about the amount of work required to become an eligible provider school. She had struggled finding answers to questions and recalled, "It took literally hours, and it was painful, calling other principals, calling some principals who had done it for previous years." She explained that her solution came from hiring an administrative designee who was familiar with EdChoice, explaining, "She had that system down, so that was one of the reasons I hired her for the job." Her response signaled that the principals who successfully manage the workload for EdChoice do so by developing management strategies.

Strategies

Principals described organizational strategies that they utilize to manage EdChoice, with no school handling the process in the same way. The methods used ranged from systems of file folders to electronic organization. Principal H described the system that she utilizes in her school to ensure compliance with EdChoice requirements:

> We have to be meticulous. We have a file for every single student, not just like their normal file that a school would have, but we also have a scholarship file, totally separate. They are color coded by what type of scholarship they have, what year they came in, and have the checklist on the front. So, we have both stickers on the front of each file for

every year with a checklist of who took it in, what went to the state. It's interesting

because we're in 2021, but it's a very hand-written process to double-check our online

data system.

Principal C used her email account to electronically organize information about EdChoice.

"We're a big Google school," she said, "so I have an EdChoice file in my Gmail that I'll keep

with the most recent updates so that I can look at them and say, 'Okay, what are we doing with

this one?' or 'How do we do this?' That helps us keep up with everything."

The common factor between each of these systems is that they are designed to facilitate

understanding and communication between the principal and his or her staff members who are

engaged with EdChoice. This link is essential, as no strategy was mentioned more frequently

than delegation. Each of the eight principals interviewed commented on the importance of

having someone help them with the demands of EdChoice. Principal F described a

knowledgeable EdChoice designee as, "the secret weapon to really maximizing the scholarship."

There was no correlation between school enrollment size and the availability of support

for managing the program. Even the smallest school in this study had a delegated individual who

managed the program's paperwork. The high school in the study utilized the two members of its

admissions office staff to manage EdChoice, three schools have administrative designees with

EdChoice as a primary part of their duties, one school managed the program with a secretary

with other primary duties, one school utilized a dedicated tuition accounts manager, and the last

school was part of a network of elementary schools with a dedicated scholarship manager. The

principal of School E, which had the program previously but withdrew from it, explained that

management of the program would necessitate hiring someone. Explaining what she would need

to do if she restarted EdChoice, Principal E said, "Well, somebody besides myself would have to

do that. So, we would look at giving that role to somebody else. We would have to pay a stipend to them to do that, or add it to their job description, but add something else to it."

Principals spoke about the EdChoice time burden on the individuals tasked with managing the program. Principal D said, "It's not overly cumbersome, but it's certainly a lot more paperwork that they had in the past, and they have to keep up with all the changes." Principal F estimated her designee spends about five hours a week on EdChoice related work. She elaborated, "She [her designee] is very attentive to email, she's on her email every day. She checks the state site [Ohio Department of Education] every single day because we have kids who are waiting on a response to their application." Principal G said that she "is charged about fifteen hours a week" by her parish for her tuition bookkeeper's time, and that "a lot of that time is EdChoice related." Principal G said, referring to her assistant, "She doesn't complain about it. She knows EdChoice has deadlines, and she meets her deadlines. We still have to push a few families."

Administrative Cost Reimbursement

Ohio offers an Administrative Cost Reimbursement (ACR) program that provides compensation to non-public schools for time spent complying with state mandates and regulations, within certain parameters. Time spent on completing EdChoice requirements can be counted toward total ACR hours. Four of the interviewed principals did not know that it was possible to include EdChoice in their ACR totals. Principal E said, "I didn't even know that was a thing." The other principals were aware of the option but did not feel that it was useful. Principal F explained, "We're already at the max, but it's good to know you can record it." Principal G implied that recording this time was not worth the effort, "No, I don't think the hours

we log in ACR is sufficient to be able to provide for the students. When you think of all that needs to be done, I don't think the ACR minutes equate to a fair amount."

Administrative Designee Perspective

For this study, three administrative designees were interviewed to validate, corroborate, and extend the findings from the principals. The first research question, which examined the amount of time spent by the principals on aspects of their school's participation in EdChoice, revealed that principals do not perceive it to be a significant administrative burden and that they delegate the management and compliance tasks of EdChoice to administrative designees. Those designees were asked a similar interview protocol.

Regarding workload, the administrative designees presented a different picture than their principals. The same weighting system was applied to the responses of the administrative designees based on the intensity of their feeling of burden, with a score of one representing no feeling of burden and a score of five representing an unreasonable amount of additional work. The mean score in this ranking for the administrative designees was 4.1, significantly higher than the principal's score of 2.73. The comments shared by the designees elucidate the difference in this ranking.

Administrative Designee 3 (AD 3) from School F said, "This [EdChoice] is time consuming. I can't tell you how many days I spend on this. There is no way that a principal can do this [EdChoice] on top of their own job. Of course, they know what is going on, but they cannot keep up with these things by themselves." She further added, "This [EdChoice] is 70% of my job. It's a lot. It's a hassle with all the paperwork, so you have to have that person who's doing these things [managing the workflow]." Administrative Designee 2 (AD 2) from School D

agreed, explaining, "I'd say, definitely two to three phone calls per family, and then however many email reminders and then actually receiving and processing the paperwork. It probably ends up being a full day per student, all said and done."

Administrative Designee 1 (AD 1), who was the most experienced with EdChoice of the three participants, had a more nuanced view. She explained that "My duties have changed a little bit [since accepting EdChoice] and we switched some duties down to other people and shifted duties to make room for the EdChoice, but it's pretty much the same." She continued to discuss the seasonality of EdChoice:

> The busy times start probably beginning of February through the closing of their cycle when they open and close their windows through the Ohio Department of Education. And then reporting the attendance, that's a monthly thing, so you just do that. But I think it's been a good addition to our work stream because it's brought us new students and new families and they've all been pretty happy here.

Conclusion

Overall, the EdChoice program does not seem to pose a significant administrative burden directly on school principals. Each has developed organizational strategies, and each rely on an employee to perform the work needed to manage the requirements of the program. Their administrative designees shoulder most of the work and have mixed feelings about doing so. The subsequent research questions probed the principal's experience with the supervisory aspects of operating the program and then examined the benefits and challenges in working with EdChoice.

Research Question 1a

The next research question addressed in this study was: How do principals manage the requirements of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program? This question is connected to the first but focused on a different aspect of the principal's job. While Research Question 1 explored how the program impacted the workload of the principal directly and personally, Research Question 1a investigated the supervisory aspects of the EdChoice program that would impact the principal acting in their role as a site manager. Similar to the methodology used above, the responses were analyzed using Dedoose's Qualitative Charts Code Application function to identify the most frequently occurring ideas. The resulting responses to this question addressed managing paperwork from participating families, procedures for helping families with the program requirements, finding training about the EdChoice program, and handling pushback to EdChoice from within a school community and from outside sources.

Paperwork

Many of the interviewed principals explained that obtaining the required EdChoice paperwork from families required a great deal of time. This topic was mentioned sixteen times during the principal interviews. Although the responsibility is usually delegated, the principals are still made aware of the applications in progress as it has a direct impact on the school budget. Two aspects of paperwork were mentioned by the principals. Principal H said:

> Getting it done [applying for EdChoice] for the first time is just a little complicated. It gets tricky. You need the entire utility bill, the whole thing, all the way down to the end, not just the address and the name, all of it there. Or if it's a lease agreement, it needs to be notarized, not just the signed document. So, it gets complicated if you haven't done it before and you don't know what that proof of residency means or what that all entails.

Principal A explained, "one of the most difficult parts is obtaining some information from people. I remember asking and asking and asking again and again." However, once a family is in the system, the burden to renew that family decreases. Principal H said, "But once it's done once, it's usually pretty simple."

Receiving the actual EdChoice funds from the State of Ohio is another source of difficulty relating to paperwork. Voucher funds are sent by physical check to parents, who then must sign the funds over to the schools. Principal C said, "The biggest thing is always getting the parents to sign the check. That was always the challenge… we still have one or two families that we always need to chase after." Principal H shared the concern for this step of the process but had developed a solution:

> I have a stack of checks sitting right here next to my desk, and we have to wait for the parents to come and sign them, and then I can go deposit them on their behalf. This year, we gave them a POA [power of attorney document] and they sign it once and then we could take all their checks and go to process them. It's made a huge difference.

Principal C said, "I really wish EdChoice would go like Peterson [the Jon Peterson Scholarship for students with special needs] does, where we don't have to have the parents sign the checks." Most principals expressed a desire to see EdChoice move toward a completely paperless system, better utilizing the program's website and using a more direct transfer of funds.

Procedures

Principals have also had to develop procedures for walking first-time families through the EdChoice application requirements. Some of those procedures are required, while others were developed locally. Although not a significant burden, as this theme was discussed only eight

times, it still is an aspect of managing the program that principals need to consider. Principal B commented, "I have to pretty much hold their hand and lead them through the application process. I'll have to have them in here in the office and just talk them through it." This statement reflects the need for a principal to be a communicator with families to help interpret the state's program to the end user.

Principal H elaborated on this procedure, "When a new parent contacts us, either me or our secretary talks to them. We're all very familiar with the documents and actually if a student and parent are coming to take a tour of the school for the first time, we'll tell them to bring those documents with them in case they decide to enroll right then." She continued, "I think most parents are shocked or taken aback or delighted more than anything, and so the questions don't really follow. It's just wait, okay, so what do you need from me to make that happen?"

School F has added an interview process to meet and talk with new families coming into the school who wish to utilize EdChoice. Principal F explained: "It's a half an hour process, the kids are first, the parents are next, because I need to know, 'why do you want to come to [School F]? What's your reason behind coming? And this is what we do here at this school, and I just tell them all this kind of other stuff." She explained that she saw the extra work required to meet with new families as "difficult to schedule" but necessary "so a new family is comfortable." In this process, questions and concerns are addressed and parents are put at ease about sharing their personal financial information with the Ohio Department of Education. Though it requires a significant time investment, Principal F believed it to be an investment in the family that ensured their comfort at the school. No other principals described a similar procedure.

Training and Communication

Training and communication were frequently mentioned by the participants, a theme that captured learning the rules and regulations of EdChoice, the experience of the program website, and methods of having questions answered. This topic was addressed thirty times across all of the interviews. Although it was mentioned, the tone of the discussion was not entirely negative. Principals commented on the time investment but also felt supported by the state when needs surfaced.

When she first began working at an EdChoice participating school, Principal C recalled the experience as "the blind leading the blind. I was really thrown into the EdChoice role." Principal G explained that she learned about the program by "doing the classes. Going to the meetings, doing the classes, talking with other principals." Principal D said, "Everything I knew, I learned as I went. I just learned as we went along." Principal H explained, "I would love to say that I've spent a lot of time educating myself in all the changes for EdChoice, but I have not. Other people educate me, and I'm very grateful for that, they know what they're doing, and I follow directions really well." Principal A recalled, "As far as training, I spent a lot of time on the phone with our support people and worked through it. I did attend one seminar with our business manager, but she ended up going by herself." Utilizing information on the program website and collaborate relationships with colleagues are important means of maintaining a successful EdChoice program in a school.

Keeping current on changes to EdChoice policies and procedures also required time and attention from the principals. Principal G described her management strategy as, "we have our own little networking of principals that we work together and ask questions and text each other

like, 'Did you hear this?' 'What is this? This changed!' and just trying to help each other keep up with all the info."

Many principals expressed appreciation for the Ohio Department of Education. Principal H said, "Luckily, ODE is very helpful. They know everything." One principal described forming a personal relationship with an employee at ODE, "I had established a pretty good relationship with an individual at ODE who, when I needed to have an answer, I knew I could reach out to him and he's very, very responsive. He's kind of our unofficial liaison."

Diocesan central offices also play a part in supporting principals with questions or keeping them up to date on changes to the program guidelines. Principal A said, "Our superintendent tells us first… we get emails from him and from the state telling us about some of the guideline changes, so that's how I hear about it." Principal B said, "So there was a real helpful person at the…diocese, she's a federal program specialist. And she helped me get through a lot of those first. She helped me maneuver it."

The frequency with which aspects of training and communication were mentioned shows the relative importance of this aspect of program management. That the responses were generally positive suggests that principals are satisfied with the strategies that have been developed, and the range of supportive sources shows that information is obtained from four critical sources, namely the EdChoice website, principal colleagues, the Ohio Department of Education, and the diocesan central offices.

Pushback

Principals do spend time defending their school's participation in the EdChoice program. During the interviews, principals spoke of two sets of challenges, one stemming from the other

parents at their school and the other from external sources such as local public school districts. The principals who spoke about these concerns described them as time-consuming and stress-inducing, though the issues did diminish with time and relationship-building. This topic emerged twenty-five times during the interviews.

Several principals spoke about a negative perception of families who receive the EdChoice Scholarship that views these families as somehow different. Principal D said:

In the beginning, there were people who were saying – unfortunately – we don't want these poor kids coming here, and that was the stigma. But that quickly dissipated. I did an information night, so I invited all of our people and kind of went through the whole thing. And then I think that really assuaged people's fears, like, oh, this is not what I thought it was.

Principal F said related a similar perception, "There's a mindset in this community…They [others in the community] called it the 'voucher system.' So, I did my best to say, 'We're not calling it voucher because there's a stigma that goes along with the word voucher. This is a scholarship. It's an earned scholarship.'" Principal C recalled a conversation with a new parent at her school. "They pulled me aside," she said, "and asked, 'Do those EdChoice kids get in a lot of trouble? Do they make a lot of trouble for you?' A lot of re-education was needed for those parents." As the principal of the school, they are tasked with responding to such comments, which they characterized as "disappointing" and as requiring a great deal of patience.

Principals also spoke about encountering pushback regarding tuition amounts, particularly from parents who are able to pay the full cost. Principal C described a negative interaction with a family angered by these tuition differences. She said, "One parent said to me,

'You know, I make sacrifices to send my kid to this school and I never know how my restaurant is going to do, and here's this family whose wife gets paid under the table for what she does and gets to go for free.'" The principal continued the story to describe the hostility devolving into a fist-fight between the restaurant owner and the family he scrutinized.

While the above example is extreme, parent conversations like that were a primary cause of School E's withdrawal from participation in EdChoice. Principal E spoke about this, "At some point, the conversation became, 'Well, wait a second, I'm making sacrifices to pay tuition, and these folks here are, just based on where they live, getting to come to school for free.' So, it was an uncomfortable conversation that our pastor wasn't willing to take on." Her school ultimately decided to withdraw from the EdChoice program partially to end those negative questions.

Principal G encountered similar pushback from a teacher on her staff when her school began accepting EdChoice students. She recalled, "I had a comment early on from a teacher who said, 'Well, if I wanted to go teach in that type of school, then I would go teach in that type of school,'" explaining that "that type of school" was a coded way of referring to a school serving communities with lower socio-economic levels. Principal G continued to describe other negative comments, "So if it was a family doesn't fit into what our [local] demographic would be, staff were saying behind my back, 'Why would she take this student? They don't go to this church!' and 'Oh, she took that family, they must be an EdChoice family.'" Again, these labels were attached to students perceived as being from outside the cultural and economic mainstream of the school. Principal G described these encounters with her staff as "disheartening" and "difficult," but articulated how they have decreased over time as she has been able to explain the benefits to students that EdChoice provides.

Besides managing negative perceptions internally, several principals spoke about negative interactions with officials from public school districts. Principal A said, "I think it's been this way since the beginning, where people are going to fight it [having EdChoice]. The districts that are losing students don't want this." Principal C said, "The public schools are worried because there is a perception that 'The Catholic schools are taking our money,' and that we're going to 'take all of the kids in the public schools.' It's gotten better since the last list [the 2019 list of EdChoice Traditional eligible schools]." Both principals shared comments that indicated that their local public school districts viewed the students and the funding provided through EdChoice as "theirs," and perceived the Catholic schools as taking these resources from them. They attributed that to misunderstanding the program, and both discussed their efforts to repair their school's relationships with the districts.

While EdChoice does not cause a direct administrative burden on school principals, aspects related to the management of the program can require significant time and cause stress. The responses gathered through the interview process showed that principals dealt with communication challenges, such as explaining the program and its requirements to families, including the application and payment of the scholarship. They also discussed the processes used to train staff and find answers to questions as well as to stay current with policy and rule changes. Perhaps the most difficult challenge discussed by the principals in this study was their efforts to handle pushback and negative perceptions from stakeholders, including other school parents and local public districts. While not a direct time cost, these factors may contribute to feelings of job dissatisfaction or increased stress levels among principals.

Administrative Designee Perspective

The administrative designees did not share many of the same perceptions as the principals. Their comments in response to this research question focused on their experiences with learning the processes and procedures for EdChoice and on the communication with the Ohio Department of Education. AD 1, the support person with the most experience with the EdChoice program, was generally positive in her view of these areas. Recalling the training she received for EdChoice, she said:

> I talked frequently with a Catholic school principal in our diocese who had been doing it a couple of years who I would sit with sometimes some diocesan meetings. He was a really nice gentleman who really helped me along the way. I would sometimes call him two times a day. I got to know when he went out to recess, when he did this so not to bother him when he couldn't come to the phone, but he really helped me.

While primarily self-taught, she did find the Ohio Department of Education to be supportive and responsive to questions. She explained, "You can email your contact at ODE and they're really good about getting back to you…They have a lot of good documents on their website too explaining things, except for their website's gotten a little confusing because they have all those different years too, so then you have to make sure you're reading the documents for the right year. But, yeah, they have a lot out there."

In contrast, AD 2's experiences with training and with ODE are less positive. Regarding her experience learning about EdChoice, she said, "I'm learning through self-teaching about the program. The ODE has some resources online, but I would say they're – I mean, politely – they're kind of vague. It's a lot of reading between the lines and not fully understanding." She also explained that communication from the Ohio Department of Education is not clear. She said,

"When eligibility requirements change or program rules are modified, it is left to the designees to communicate them with the parents, who often do not understand." AD 3 expressed a similar concern, "There is no way to make it easier unless the parents really understand it… and submit everything on time. [EdChoice] Expansion is really, really tough on a school to really manage our tuition. We never know if they [the applicant family] will be approved."

The administrative designees did not mention any experiences of pushback or negative comments from community members. Their concerns related more to day to day tasks and clerical functions, as might be expected due to the delegated structure discussed in Research Question 1.

Conclusion

Overall, the principals interviewed for this study described added job responsibilities due to the managerial and supervisory aspects of EdChoice. Creating procedures for ensuring applications are complete and funding is received, providing training to staff, and staying current on EdChoice rules and regulations occupied some time. Those tasks also occupied the delegated administrative designees as well. While these areas represent more tasks to complete, the added administrative burden did not seem to be overwhelming. Principals did express higher levels of stress due to defending the EdChoice program from incorrect perceptions and stereotypes within their parent community, their staff, and in their interactions with their local public school districts. The impact of these experiences on the principals' opinion of the EdChoice program is explored in the next research question of this study.

Research Question 2

The final research question examined in this study was, what is the relationship between how principals use their time and how they feel about their participation in the EdChoice

Scholarship voucher program? This question was intended to probe the principal's view of his or her school's participation in the EdChoice program in light of the time allocated to activities examined in Research Question 1 and Research Question 1a. Reflecting on the time that they spent on the program personally and the time they spent on the program as site managers, the interviewed principals responded with an analysis of the benefits of EdChoice to their school and on the challenges they faced from the program. All principals were asked about their future plans for utilizing the program at their school.

Benefits

Principals were asked to share their perceptions of the benefits of the EdChoice program for their school. Dedoose's Qualitative Charts Code Application function showed that the principals made thirty-seven comments that related to the benefits of the program. Each principal, including Principal E from the school that ended its participation in the program, identified benefits to utilizing EdChoice. The most common response from the interviewees related to increasing the diversity of the student population of their school. Principal F explained:

> I see it [EdChoice] an equalizer for our community. We are now a school that anyone can come to, know they're getting a solid Catholic education and their finances don't play a part in that decision. I see that as a fabulous, fabulous benefit to not only or staff, but to our entire community. And really it shows the call we have to be disciples of Christ for everybody.

She continued to say that the program has brought the school "fabulous diversity. And that's a great thing. It's good for the staff, it's good for the students. It's good for everybody all around."

Principal D's comments agreed, and he explained a component of his school's decision making process for accepting EdChoice, "We were looking to increase diversity in whatever way

we could, whether it was a socioeconomic diversity, racial or ethnic diversity, so we felt it [accepting EdChoice] was a good opportunity and true to our mission. We want to educate everybody. So, we thought it was a good find, it was a win-win. The parent got the voucher, we were able to supplement that and it's an opportunity for a student that normally wouldn't have it." The principals saw the EdChoice program as a way to provide all families with the opportunity to choose to send their children to a Catholic school without encountering financial barriers that might otherwise make enrollment impossible.

Principal A reflected on the impact of a Catholic education on EdChoice recipients. She said, "It [Catholic education] really does change lives. A lot of great kids went on to colleges and they'll make a difference because of what this meant for them. They wouldn't have had that opportunity without this scholarship available."

Principal C described the benefit of the program for one student in particular. She said, "I have one girl who lives with her grandparents and she's on EdChoice and that's how she's here, and we look at her home life, that's not consistent at all. That's not a good home life, and the fact that we can provide the scholarship for her and help her in any way we can, for me, that's a blessing that we can do that." Principal F told a similar story, "I hear that [families] are wanting to come here because they feel like their kids have fallen through the cracks or are not getting the assistance that they need at their own school, wherever they're coming from – public school, another Catholic school, wherever – they can come here."

Principal D summarized the conclusions of the principals interviewed in this study. Weighing the benefits of the program against the costs of it to the school, he said, "I think EdChoice has been a pretty solid program. It's been relatively easy to navigate and to manage, so kudos to the state for creating something that, while it's a little bureaucratic, it's easy to navigate

through the system and it's a great opportunity for these families. I wish they'd promote it more from the state level."

Challenges

The decision to accept the EdChoice Scholarship is not without its challenges. The principals discussed their frustrations with the program, making thirty-two comments related to the challenges they encounter with the program. Principal F expressed displeasure with the requirement that EdChoice students participate in state testing. She said, "Not this year, but in years past the testing thing was becoming a problem. You'd have to pull out the kids, and others would ask, 'Why are those kids leaving?' So that's an identifiable thing that you don't want to have." She described an additional challenge in the responsibility of handling sensitive information:

> I know that it is a huge struggle for us to have to be responsible for parent financial information because if something goes wrong, then it's on us. So that's a very difficult piece because a lot of the parents who are using these scholarships don't have a savviness with the computer. They don't know scanning documents. Some of them don't even have stamps for envelopes to be able to mail stuff in, so we provide them with that.

While these challenges are generally accepted as part of the costs of participation in the program, other challenges provoke stronger feelings.

Several principals spoke about challenges related to the amount of money provided to the school by the EdChoice scholarship. Principal D said, "I wish we had more money to be able to help more families. If the EdChoice Scholarship amount were higher, it would make a big difference. The only reason that our [participant] numbers are so low with the number of students we take is because, right now, we have to have the financial dollars to be able to offset the

difference, and that's what we're working on. The fundraising is hard." Principal D, who serves

at a high school, was commenting on the difference between the voucher amount of $6,000 and

his school's tuition rate of $11,000 per student. Making up the financial difference requires

diligent fundraising. When multiplied by the number of EdChoice students, that goal can see

insurmountable. If the voucher amount were to be increased, it would decrease the pressure on

the development staff.

Principal C shared a concern about the income guidelines that are included in the

EdChoice Expansion program. She shared a story about a family whose income narrowly

exceeded the maximum to qualify for EdChoice. She said, "The parent told me, 'You're not

going to believe this, but we missed the cut off by $2,000.' EdChoice didn't look at her medical

bills, only their income. I wish EdChoice would do something to account for a chronic illness in

a family." Principal C explained that this would be a "slippery slope" but said that some

flexibility in the application, or at least greater consideration for a family's struggles, would

improve the participation in the program.

Principals also expressed a significant worry that the program might suddenly end due to

legislative action. Principal G stated, "The big question lurking is always, 'What would happen if

this went away? What would happen if they [the state] took it all away?' And I'd say, 'Well, we

would be in a lot of trouble, like many schools would be." Principal F echoed that same fear,

"My question is, 'What is the sustainability of all this?' This is obviously a larger question for

our government and not so much for the people implementing this program, but where is this

money coming from? At what point does the well run dry, and then what do we do with those

families?" Principal E, at the school that ended its participation in the program, cited this

uncertainty as another reason why the school stopped accepting EdChoice. The fact that so much

funding hinges on the continued support of the governor and legislature of Ohio causes concern among principals when envisioning their long term financial plans.

Future Plans

Each principal was asked about their desire to see participation in the EdChoice program grow in their schools in future years. Despite the challenges they perceived, all of the principals in this study expressed a commitment to continue accepting EdChoice. Principal E, whose school removed itself from the program, is considering a return to provider status. The principals are most motivated by the ability to meet the needs of their parent populations. Principal G explained, "In the past three to four years, I see the increase across the board for EdChoice. I still see it helping our families here in our parish, but I've also seen that slow increase of students coming to us from other areas. I think that's going to continue."

Principal C was more cautious, "If you ask my assistant, she's going to say she wants to see it grow. For me, I have mixed feelings if it grows. I think that's fantastic, but I'm also happy where the program is at now because I can offer any family to the opportunity for a quality Catholic education." Principal D expressed a desire to continue accepting EdChoice but was similarly cautious, "If the money's [continued state funding] not an impediment, then the absolute answer would be yes. But we just have to be smart about how we're balancing what we can afford and what we have available."

Administrative Designee Perspective

The administrative designees interviewed for this study were also asked about benefits and challenges that the perceive with the EdChoice program. AD 1 and AD 3 both cited benefits, while AD 2 did not list any. The financial benefit to the parents was pointed out by AD 3, "For parents, of course it's worth it. Are you kidding? You're getting free money, free tuition, and

your kids learn in a really great school…It's opened different doors for us [as a school] and brought up our enrollment." AD 1 had a similar perception, and said, "Oh, it [EdChoice] is an absolute benefit to our school. There's probably at least thirty students who wouldn't be here at all if we didn't have the EdChoice. Yeah, and then there are others who would be struggling to pay or trying to find other alternatives to get in other financial aid places. So, yeah, it's been a huge benefit here."

When asked about challenges that come with participation in the program, AD 2 spoke at great length about this. She made ten separate references to challenges during her interview, the most comments about any one subject made by one individual in this study. She said, "One of the biggest hurdles with EdChoice is just making sure that the parents understand that it's not our school awarding this, it's the State of Ohio. We need to process this paperwork for [them], but then the ODE is going to let you know if you're awarded or not based on their criteria." This lack of understanding can place administrative designees in difficult positions, being asked to interpret the program's decisions to parents who may not have a clear understanding of the structure and regulations of it. AD 2 further explained, "I just think finding ways to make [EdChoice] work for both our financials internally and then communicating that to parents has been a big struggle."

AD 2 did share her thoughts on how to improve the program. She said, "Something I'm just not understanding is why the burden is on the school to do all this. For FAFSA, no one would ever ask the school to fill out FAFSA for them. So, I don't understand why the burden is on the school for this." Reshaping the program as a program "where the scholarship option should just follow the student" would make the program easier to manage, communicate, and

understand, according to AD 2, who added, "I think it should follow the student and any kid in a public school should have the option to apply."

Conclusion

Overall, the perceptions of the principals were generally positive. The opportunity to offer enrollment in their schools to students who otherwise might not be able to afford it was valued by the principals. The challenges they perceive were largely financial and largely concerned decisions made by the state government. There is a desire to see the voucher amount increase and also a worry that funding might one day cease, which could potentially leave the school in a damaging position. Administrative designees saw similar benefits for families, though they, too had experiences that caused them to be critical of the operation of the program. All of the principals agreed that the program provides benefits to families that outweigh the challenges.

Summary of Findings

The research questions for this study were answered through an analysis of the responses to an interview protocol given by eight Catholic school principals in Ohio and three administrative designees who focus on tasks related to the EdChoice program.

The first research question examined the amount of time that principals directly put into completing the requirements of participation in the EdChoice program, referred to as the administrative burden. The study found that principals do not feel overly burdened by the workload of the program. Instead, they have developed strategies to accomplish the tasks, the most common of which is delegating the work to an administrative designee. The administrative designees shared that they feel much more burdened by the work needed to comply with EdChoice program requirements. Both groups of interview subjects agreed that the compensation

provided through Ohio's Administrative Cost Reimbursement (ACR) program did not feel sufficient for the work put into the program.

Closely connected with the first research question was question 1a, which examined the quality and character of time that principals put into the management of the EdChoice program. Rather than looking at direct time spent on aspects of this program, this question focused on consequences of participation, or management work created as a result of school participation. The principals discussed topics such as the need to create procedures for ensuring completion of program requirements from participating families, the methods of providing training to staff, and the strategies utilized for staying current on changes to the program. While these tasks were tolerable with appropriate structuring, the principals expressed difficulty with managing the perception of the EdChoice program within their school communities and from their local public school districts. Focused relationship building was needed to respond to those challenges. The administrative designees did not report a great deal of experience with the pushback described by the principals, but instead talked about generally positive experiences of working with the Ohio Department of Education and of forming collaborative structures to problem-solve answers to questions that arose during the EdChoice process.

The final research question examined the impact of the experiences described in the previous questions on the principals' feelings toward offering the EdChoice scholarship at their schools. Overall, the principals were satisfied by their participation and recognized the benefits available to participating students, who might otherwise not be able to consider the option of Catholic school. The primary challenges that principals noted to the future success of the program involve decisions that are made by Ohio's state government. These included the need to increase the amount of money provided by the voucher, particularly at the high school level, and

the tenuousness of the existence of the program. As it exists, the program could theoretically be abolished by an action of the legislature, leaving the schools in a disadvantageous position. Administrative designees shared their own experiences of the challenges of the program but did recognize the benefits afforded to families. Overall, all participants in the study stated that the benefits and opportunities provided by EdChoice outweigh the challenges, and all plan to continue offering the program to their school communities.

The above findings are further discussed in Chapter 5. The implications for both policy and practice are explored, as well as recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This study sought to extend the literature on principal time usage by investigating the experience of Catholic school principals in Ohio who have utilized the state's EdChoice Scholarship voucher program. Grissom et al. (2015) explained the importance of investigating how principals spend their time during the school day, as the demands on principal's time continue to grow. Although not a definitive conclusion, Robinson et al. (2008) and Marzano et al. (2005) found a correlation between greater principal attention on activities related to teaching and learning and greater academic gains for students. However, Cambane et al. (2010) and Horng et al. (2010) determined that principals tend to spend the majority of their working time on tasks related to administration. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) explained that these administrative demands have increased due to reporting requirements for accountability purposes.

Most of the literature related to principal time usage focuses on public school principals. This study chose to examine Catholic school principals, a job with a similar title but also significant differences. Nuzzi et al. (2013) described the Catholic school principal as "both the chief executive officer (CEO) and the chief operating officer (COO), ultimately responsible for all of the formal and informal educational activities of the school" (p. 1). Ozar (2010) found that the role had become more complex over time, exceeding the ability of one person to handle all the tasks necessary to be a faith leader, an academic leader, a facilities manager, and a staff supervisor. Catholic schools tend to have fewer financial resources available than their public school counterparts (Marks, 2009), making the hiring of additional administrative personnel challenging in some situations.

In Ohio, the state provides five voucher programs to eligible students for use in enrollment at a chartered non-public school. Taken together, the programs form an important part of the educational landscape in the state, with the two EdChoice Scholarship Programs representing 66% of all voucher distributions in Ohio (EdChoice, 2019). Catholic schools comprise 54% of the chartered non-public schools in the state (Fordham, 2020), constituting the largest segment of voucher eligible schools. In 2019, 73% of the families participating in the EdChoice Traditional program used their vouchers to attend a Catholic school while 57% of Expansion voucher recipients used their voucher to attend a Catholic school (Catholic Conference of Ohio, 2020).

Many studies have been undertaken to examine the effects of voucher programs throughout the United States, including Ohio, on the students receiving them and on the public school districts affected by them. No studies have examined the experience of the principals of private schools who receive students through the voucher programs. Given the heavy workload of a Catholic school principal, the significance of principal time spent on instructional supervision, and the unique voucher program permitted in Ohio, this study was developed to examine the following research questions:

1) What has been the principals' experience of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program on their time usage?

   1a) How do principals manage the requirements of the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship voucher program?

2) What is the relationship between how principals use their time and how they feel about their participation in the EdChoice Scholarship voucher program?

The first question examines the direct experience of a principal in managing tasks associated with the EdChoice program, such as compliance reporting and paperwork. Question 1a is connected to the first and investigates the principal's role in the supervisory aspects of operating the EdChoice program at a school, referring to tasks that are more indirect than in the first question, including engagement with stakeholders and supervision of personnel. The final research question focuses on the feelings that their responses to the previous questions generate and asks principals whether their participation in EdChoice is worthwhile for their school and to assess the challenges and benefits of the program.

Because no other studies have examined this particular subject, an inductive study was designed, aimed at constructing a narrative inquiry of the experience of Catholic school principals with the EdChoice Scholarship program on their use of time. Eight Catholic school principals were selected from the data set of Catholic schools that have decided to accept the EdChoice Scholarship during the previous four years. Three administrative designees, who were identified by the principals, were also interviewed for their perspectives. The data collected from the interviews was coded and is discussed in this chapter in order to describe the experience of Catholic school principals of participation in EdChoice on their time usage.

Discussion

Research Question 1 addressed the direct impact on principal time usage of participation in the EdChoice program, defined in this study as administrative burden or workload, referring to the range, characteristics, and quantity of work that is done by a Catholic school principal. When asked about the impact of participation in EdChoice on their workload, the principals did not feel it was significantly heavy or burdensome. Their responses were weighted on a scale from 1 to 5, with one representing no additional burden and 5 representing an extreme burden. Their

responses averaged 2.73 representing a moderate increase in work. "It's just paperwork," commented Principal F, and Principal C said, "I don't think… EdChoice takes up a ton of time, and I love that it still gives our kids an opportunity to be here."

Participation in EdChoice does not seem to be a direct burden on the principals. Although it follows the assertion by DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) that compliance activities are increasing for principals and Ozar's (2010) observation that the workload of a Catholic school principal is growing, it does not appear to be a significant discomfort for the principals included in this study. DeAngelis et al. (2018) had suggested that greater regulation would reduce the participation of private schools in school choice programs. While that was the case in their experiment with principals in Florida, a similar conclusion was not found in this study.

Further questioning explored how principals manage the requirements, and several strategies appear to be commonly used, the most frequent of which is delegation. The school principals did not feel a direct burden from EdChoice because most of the compliance paperwork is assigned to an administrative assistant or other staff member as part of their duties. Principal F described a knowledgeable EdChoice designee as, "the secret weapon to really maximizing the scholarship."

Principals were aware of the responsibilities of EdChoice and of the tasks that had to be completed by their administrative designees and viewed them as part of the cost of participation in the EdChoice program. In contrast, the administrative designees interviewed in this study rated the administrative burden of the program as a 4.1 on the same scale described above. Administrative Designee 3 from School F said, "This [EdChoice] is time consuming. I can't tell you how many days I spend on this. There is no way that a principal can do this [EdChoice] on top of their own job. Of course, they know what is going on, but they cannot keep up with these

things by themselves." She further added, "This [EdChoice] is 70% of my job. It's a lot. It's a hassle with all the paperwork, so you have to have that person who's doing these things [managing the workflow]."

Since principals did not seem to be directly burdened by participation in EdChoice, Research Question 1a explored other, indirect costs charged to the principals' time. The principals spoke about the secondary effects created by being the school's spokesperson for EdChoice. In this role, principals are tasked with acting as the public face of the program in their community. The principals interviewed for this study shared that this role could encompass interactions with parents, including retrieving forms to complete applications, signing scholarship checks, and explaining the process and procedure to new families. No principal expressed that these responsibilities were burdensome.

Instead, the principals spoke twenty-five times about defending their school's participation in the program from detractors, a group that could include other parents, staff members, and local public school officials. The principals described challenges related to incomplete understandings of the program, such as parents who found it unfair that some students received the full payment of tuition while they still had to pay. Principal E described this as a primary cause for her school's withdrawal from the program, "At some point, the conversation became, 'Well, wait a second, I'm making sacrifices to pay tuition, and these folks here are, just based on where they live, getting to come to school for free.' So, it was an uncomfortable conversation that our pastor wasn't willing to take on."

The principals also described a stigma associated with accepting EdChoice, as if the term "EdChoice" was synonymous with poverty, misbehavior, or students who did not fit the school's norm. Principal C recalled a conversation with a new parent at her school. "They pulled me

aside," she said, "and asked, 'Do those EdChoice kids get in a lot of trouble? Do they make a lot of trouble for you?' A lot of re-education was needed for those parents." Principal G had similar conversations with her staff, "So if it was a family doesn't fit into what our [local] demographic would be, staff were saying behind my back, 'Why would she take this student? They don't go to this church!' and 'Oh, she took that family, they must be an EdChoice family.'"

In their study of principal time usage, Horng et al. (2010) identified six broad categories of principal time usage: administration, organization management, day-to-day instruction, instructional program, internal relations, and external relations. The above scenarios fit their description of internal relations, defined in part as interactions with parents and with the staff, comprising 15% of a principal's time usage. Ozar (2010) would argue that these types of relations are the responsibility of the school principal and would likely increase the percentage of principal time spent on internal relationships.

Principals must also develop strategies for connecting EdChoice with the external relations described by Horng et al. (2010) that includes engagement with the district to obtain resources. In their study, this area of work accounted for 5% of principal's time usage. The principals spoke about encountering this area of responsibility in discussions with local public school districts. Several principals shared comments that indicated that their local public school districts viewed the students and the funding provide through EdChoice as "theirs," perceiving a loss of enrollment and funding caused by the Catholic school. Principals who commented on this also explained the work that was required to correct misperceptions and restore a positive relationship with the districts.

The principals explained that this relationship building requires their time, though none could be specific on the exact quantity of time that these relationships took. It is clear that the

percentages described by Horng et al. (2010) from their study of public school principals could potentially be a low estimate for Catholic school principals in this study. If the hypothesis proposed by the researchers, which correlates less time spent on instructional activities with lower student academic performance, is correct, than it is possible that a similar correlation may exist with this study's participants. Establishing that link is beyond the scope of this study.

The final research question examined the existence of a connection between the principals' feelings about his or her school's participation in EdChoice and the factors they described in the first two research questions. Reflecting on the time that they spent on the program personally and the time they spent on the program as site managers, the interviewed principals were asked to assess the benefits and challenges of program participation as well as their future plans for the program at their schools. A direct connection between the principal's responses and their feelings about the program could not be established.

Although time usage did not appear to influence the feelings that principals have toward the EdChoice program, more general impressions of the program were discussed. The principals felt that the benefits of the EdChoice program made it a worthwhile investment of time and resources for their schools. Among the benefits mentioned were the increase in school diversity as a result of lowering the financial barrier to entry created by tuition. The principals support Friedman's (1962) market argument for vouchers, which supports giving parents the ability to freely choose between a variety of school options and allowing market forces and competition to influence the school landscape. Principal F explained, "I see it [EdChoice] an equalizer for our community. We are now a school that anyone can come to, know they're getting a solid Catholic education and their finances don't play a part in that decision."

Others discussed the impact of a Catholic education on the lives of EdChoice participants, recalling stories of students who were able to enter a Catholic school that was able to better provide for their needs than their previous school. Although they did not provide statistical evidence of improved student performance, the principals' anecdotal comments echo some of the arguments made in support of vouchers as a private good, with individualized benefits to program participants. Egalite and Wolf (2016), West et al. (2011), Wolf et al. (2013), and Chingos et al. (2019) discussed studies that showed improvements in test scores, high school graduation rates, and college acceptance rates among students receiving vouchers. Some of the responses of principals in this study seemed to align with the findings in the literature, although it is left to a future study to assess the statistical measures that would connect the experience of students in the EdChoice program with the achievement and attainment studies.

In their comments, the principals also discussed the challenges of the EdChoice program. The most common theme in their responses is the worry about the future sustainability of the program. EdChoice exists as an act of the legislature, and as such, it can be modified or ended through legislative action. The principals expressed a desire to see more funding provided to schools through EdChoice, a simplified application process, and a way to make the program a permanent part of the education landscape in Ohio. These feelings were expressed by Principal G who stated, "The big question lurking is always, 'What would happen if this went away? What would happen if they [the state] took it all away?' And I'd say, 'Well, we would be in a lot of trouble, like many schools would be." Principal F shared the same concern, "My question is, 'What is the sustainability of all this?... At what point does the well run dry, and then what do we do with those families?"

These comments speak to the central concern of voucher programs and the inescapable bond of education and government. Many states have a form of private school choice, but many do not. The reasons are often political, and in the states that do have a private school choice mechanism, these vary based on legislative action (EdChoice, 2019). Levin's (2009) description of the unique role of education in society as both a private good and a public good surfaces in this discussion. States have addressed this tension in varying ways, with some stressing the importance of allowing families to freely choose their child's educational setting, while others emphasize the importance of the public benefit of education as a reason for public education. Friedman's (1962) market argument is visible in this tension, as he explained that the government should fund education as it is a public good. But, because it is also a private good, government should not unfairly influence the administration or methodology of education. The principals in this study seem to be saying just that but adding a dimension of anxiety about the future, perhaps reacting to the fact that EdChoice remains a lively annual debate in Ohio. They also are affirming the conclusions of Massucci and Ilg (2003), who found that participation in voucher programs involve pros and cons that must be weighed by each school in making the decision to accept vouchers. Their statement that, "No one gives you something for nothing" (p. 358) resonates with the findings of this study.

This study was not able to develop a clear theory that links EdChoice participation with increased burdens on principal time usage. As an inductive study, this study did not set out to prove or disprove a hypothesis, but rather to develop an understanding of the Catholic school principal experience of the EdChoice program, in other words, to understand the perspective of the service provider rather than the student or the public district. Certain conclusions do emerge from this. Principals appear not to experience a burden because they have developed strategies

for managing the program, the most common and most important of which is delegation. The administrative designees to whom this work is passed do experience stress, largely caused by the rules of the program and the need to work with families through a time-consuming application process. Principals do experience an increase in secondary work related to EdChoice, including explaining the program to parents, navigating internal tensions between school community members, and working with public school districts who may be opposed to the program. Despite those stressors, the principals interviewed recognized benefits to accepting EdChoice and all expressed an interest in continuing to offer the program into the future. This study is a first foray into understanding the principals' perspective of the EdChoice program.

It is important to note that this study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this unprecedented time in history was not the focus of this study, it unavoidably served as a backdrop to all principal and staff interviews. Those conversations occurred in April, May, and June 2021 as a challenging school year was nearing its end. All of the participating schools had students in the classrooms and strict COVID-19 protocols in place, such as masking, rigid social distancing, and health checks. Many public school districts were not open for in-person education at this time, and so many non-public schools had faced a year of scrutiny over their decisions. It is entirely possible that this backdrop impacted the data in this study. It would only be human nature for the stress and pressure of the COVID-19 year to have impacted the feelings of the principals in this study; for example, many might have felt that any stressor related to EdChoice was minor relative to their current experiences. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the pandemic also forced the interviews to be conducted via Zoom rather than in-person. This necessary condition limited the warmth of the interview and the ability to build a rapport with the interview subject. If this study were to be repeated, these factors would likely not be present.

Implications for Practice

This study focused on the experiences of Catholic school principals in the state of Ohio. However, it is likely that the implications of the findings would be applicable to principals of any non-public school, including other religiously affiliated schools and independent, non-religious schools. Few, if any, of the findings or implications are directly connected to the condition of being a Catholic school, making them more broadly relevant. All are eligible for EdChoice, and there are commonalities between the receivers of EdChoice that are distinct from public schools.

If a chartered non-public school in Ohio were to consider participation in the EdChoice program, the school must budget for an additional person to help with the management of the applications and reporting required by the state. Every school in this study had such an employee, regardless of the enrollment, setting, or quantity of participating students. The findings suggest that this individual does not necessarily need to be a secretary or that he or she be dedicated to EdChoice management on a full-time basis. All of the administrative designees had other duties, but the expense of the individual appears to be a key consideration for schools in the program and the appropriate allocation must be included in the school budget. The consistent finding is that the program requirements are too much to manage for a principal alone.

Overall, the principals interviewed for this study described added job responsibilities due to the managerial and supervisory aspects of EdChoice. Creating procedures for ensuring applications are complete and funding is received, providing training to staff, and staying current on EdChoice rules and regulations occupied some time. Those tasks also occupied the delegated administrative designees as well. While these areas represent more tasks to complete, the added administrative burden did not seem to be overwhelming.

Principals did express higher levels of stress due to defending the EdChoice program from incorrect perceptions and stereotypes within their parent community, their staff, and in their interactions with their local public school districts. Schools that are considering participation in the EdChoice program would do well to invest time and resources into building the case for the program and ensuring that a right understanding of its purpose, qualifications, and intent is communicated. Conversation with other school administrators and sharing experiences would help principals to prepare for managing objections.

Implications for Policy

Several principals commented on the stress presented by the lack of certainty with the EdChoice program. As a political creation, it is subject to change driven by the will of the state government. If the legislature or the governor were to become less supportive of EdChoice, the program could be fundamentally changed or even eliminated. This lack of permanence speaks to the importance of the need for principals to be attuned to developments in the state government to a degree that colleagues in other states may not need to be. It also signals the importance of advocacy, as principals must participate in efforts to preserve and strengthen EdChoice.

During the course of conducting this study, Ohio passed a new biennial budget that took effect on July 1, 2021. This new budget contains many changes to the EdChoice program, some of which alleviate some of the conflict points mentioned by the principals in this study and all of which illustrate the idea that this program is subject to legislative modification. The changes made for 2021 through 2023 include:

- Direct funding of EdChoice scholarships from the state, rather than using the previous method of deductions from the state portion of public school district budgets.

- Improvements to the application process and enhancements to the notification

  procedures to applicant parents, which should expedite the process and improve

  the timeline.

- Increasing the maximum scholarship amounts for both EdChoice scholarships to

  \$5,500 for students in kindergarten through 8th grade and \$7,500 for high school

  students. These amounts are no longer be stagnant. Instead, they will be tied to

  increases in the statewide average base cost for pupil for public school students.

- Eliminates the cap of 60,000 students who may be awarded EdChoice

  scholarships each year. (Ohio Legislative Service Commission, 2021).

The items highlighted in the list above are not the only changes made to the program by the new

state budget, but they do directly address many of the comments made by the principals who

participated in this study.

While these changes would likely be viewed as favorable by the Catholic school

principals, questions remain as to the timing and process by which they will be implemented.

Principals will need to maintain their engagement with the state government in order to know

how best to proceed. They must also continue to monitor the political process to track future

legislative action that may could change these modifications either positively or negatively.

Principals must also ensure that they are communicating these changes to their school

stakeholders to avoid misunderstandings or misconceptions of the program.

Future Study

This study was not able to conclude that the principal time usage acted as a deterrent for

other schools to opt into EdChoice. Several further studies of the Catholic school EdChoice

experience would benefit the field. Another study within the area of principal time usage could

contrast the job duties of principals at schools that do participate in EdChoice with those that do not. Time and administrative burden may be a factor, but other factors may also be at play. Future studies might move beyond time usage and attempt to determine the other variables that could affect the decision to participate in the program. Perhaps there are other drivers of the decision that have not been considered here that would produce important recommendations for policy that could improve the program.

This study could also be expanded to examine the experience of Catholic school principals in Ohio with those in other states to further deepen the understanding of how participation in school choice programs impacts the job of the principals. Interesting conclusions could be drawn from comparing Ohio to principals in states such as Indiana, which has a similar voucher program, or Florida or Arizona, which have other school choice vehicles. That study could be carried forward another step by comparing those perspectives with Catholic school principals in non-school choice states, of which there are many.

Additionally, future studies could explore the experience of Catholic school principals on all of their interaction points with the state government. As noted in this study, EdChoice is only one of several funding streams provided by the government, including other voucher programs, administrative cost reimbursement (ACR), student transportation requirements, and auxiliary services funding. A comparison between the level of state support allocated to chartered non-public schools in Ohio and support from other states presents several opportunities for study. Contrasting the time usage of principals in Ohio with those in other states would help to develop a better understanding of how the principal role can change based on engagement with the state.

Conclusion

This study attempted to explore the experience of Catholic school principals in Ohio of the impact of participation in the state's voucher program on their time usage. The study concluded that no significant and direct administrative burden was created by the program on the study participants, but secondary effects are present, such as the need for the hiring of a staff member to manage the program and the need for communication with stakeholders. This study also illustrated the need for Catholic school principals to remain aware of and engaged in the legislative process in Ohio, as changes made by the government can have a direct effect on the operation of a school. While the parent, student, and public school experiences of vouchers have been well-documented, the exploration of the experience of the Catholic school principals with school choice programs offers many intriguing possibilities for future exploration.

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Appendix A

Letter and Email of Solicitation

The following email was sent to each principal who met the qualifications of this study, with a corresponding copy sent to his or her superintendent as a means of demonstrating support and encouraging engagement with the researcher.

Dear [Name],

You have been identified as a potential participant in a study titled, "Principal Perceptions of Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship Program and its Effect on Time Usage," which is being completed by Adam J. Dufault as a doctoral dissertation at Seton Hall University.

The study will examine the effect of the decision to accept Ohio's EdChoice vouchers on Catholic school principal time usage and theorize its impact on voucher participation decisions. This qualitative and inductive inquiry will be aimed at gathering data to better understand the experience of principals with Ohio's EdChoice program at Catholic schools in five Ohio dioceses. No research regarding this topic currently exists, so this study could serve as an initial attempt to develop understanding of this situation.

You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are a principal or a school secretary at a Catholic school within the territory of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the Diocese of Cleveland, the Diocese of Columbus, Diocese of Toledo, or the Diocese of Youngstown. Your school has opted into the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship Program during the 2016-17, 2017-18, or 2018-19 school years.

Your participation in this research study will include your participation in one 60- or 90-minute interview with the primary investigator. The interview will consist of either 5 or 9 open-

ended questions that will be recorded via Zoom and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript and make corrections. The study will also collect general data about your school, including the enrollment, history of participation in the EdChoice Scholarship program, and your administrative experience in Ohio or in other states.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please respond to this email. An interview time between February 15, 2021 and June 2021 will then be scheduled.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Adam J. Dufault

Primary Investigator

Phone: █████████

Email: ██████████████████████

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Context Questions: This set of questions was asked of each participating school principal at the beginning of the interview in order to provide comparative descriptions of each school.

1. Location of the school: urban, rural, suburban.

2. Year the school began accepting the EdChoice voucher.

3. Number of students utilizing EdChoice Traditional and EdChoice Expansion in each year of acceptance at the school.

4. School enrollment the year before and the year after vouchers.

5. School budget deficit the year before and the year after vouchers.

6. State Administrative Cost Reimbursement (ACR) amounts the year before and the year after vouchers.

7. Year of experience as a Catholic school principal.

8. Has the principal had administrative experience in other states?

Questions for Interviews with School Principals

1. How has your position as principal changed from before the decision to accept the scholarship to after?

2. What factors led you to decide to accept the EdChoice voucher? What motivated the decision? What was the process for making the decision?

3. Who completes the required paperwork for the scholarship? Was any additional hiring necessary for this process?

4. What are the challenges that you perceive that come with accepting the scholarship, if any?

5. Describe your typical activities during a school day. How much time in a typical week do you spend on state-required administrative activities? How much time do you spent on instructional supervision?

6. What do you think about your school's ACR payment amount? Does it cover the time used for EdChoice participation?

7. Describe whatever training you may have received prior to making the decision to accept the EdChoice scholarship.

8. Has your experience of the EdChoice program changed how you feel about your role as principal?

9. How would you compare your feelings about your position as a principal before accepting EdChoice and after accepting EdChoice?

Questions for Interviews with School Administrative Designees

1. How has your position as school secretary changed from before the decision to accept the scholarship to after?

2. Who completes the required paperwork for the EdChoice Scholarship? Was any additional hiring necessary for this process?

3. What are the challenges that you perceive for you or for the school have come with accepting the scholarship, if any?

4. Describe your typical activities during a school day. How much time in a typical week do you spend on state-required administrative activities?

5. Describe whatever training you may have received on state voucher programs prior to accepting the EdChoice scholarship.

Appendix C

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
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February 12th, 2021

Adam Dufault
Seton Hall University

Re: 2021-180

Dear Adam,

The Research Ethics Committee of the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved your research proposal entitled, "Principal Perceptions of Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship Program and its Effect on Time Usage" as resubmitted. This memo serves as official notice of the aforementioned study's approval as exempt. If your study has a consent form or letter of solicitation, they are included in this mailing for your use.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol, informed consent form or study team must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

You will receive a communication from the Institutional Review Board at least 1 month prior to your expiration date requesting that you submit an Annual Progress Report to keep the study active, or a Final Review of Human Subjects Research form to close the study. In all future correspondence with the Institutional Review Board, please reference the ID# listed above.

Sincerely,

Mara Podvey

Mara C. Podvey, PhD, OTR
Associate Professor
Co-Chair, Institutional Review Board

Phyllis Hansell

Phyllis Hansell, EdD, RN, DNAP, FAAN
Professor
Co-Chair, Institutional Review Board

Office of the Institutional Review Board
Presidents Hall · 400 South Orange Avenue · South Orange, New Jersey 07079 · Tel: 973.275.4654 · Fax 973.275.2978 · *www.shu.edu*
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SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

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Informed Consent Form

Title of Research Study:
Principal Perceptions of Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship Program and its Effect on Time Usage

Principal Investigator:
Adam J. Dufault, Doctoral Student at Seton Hall University

Department Affiliation:
Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy of the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University.

Sponsor:
This research is supported by the Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy of the College of Education and Human Services at Seton Hall University.

Brief summary about this research study:
The following summary of this research study is to help you decide whether or not you want to participate in the study. You have the right to ask questions at any time.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of the decision to accept Ohio's EdChoice vouchers on Catholic school principal time usage and theorize its impact on voucher participation decisions. This qualitative and inductive inquiry will be aimed at gathering data to better understand the experience of principals with Ohio's EdChoice program at Catholic schools in three Ohio dioceses. No research regarding this topic currently exists, so this study could serve as an initial attempt to develop understanding of this situation.

You will be asked to participate in one 90-minute (for school principals) or 60-minute (for school secretaries) interview conducted via Zoom.

We expect that you will be in this research study for only the duration of your interview.

There are no foreseeable or anticipated risks for participation in this study. All identifiable information about each participant and his/her school will be kept confidential.

The participants in this study will not receive any direct benefits. What will be gained is an improved understanding of how participation in the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship Program impacts the time usage of Catholic school principals.

Purpose of the research study:

You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are a principal or a school secretary at a Catholic school within the territory of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the Diocese of Toledo, or the Diocese of Youngstown. Your school has opted into the Ohio EdChoice Scholarship Program during the 2016-17, 2017-18, or 2018-19 school years.

Your participation in this research study is expected to be for 60 to 90 minutes.

You will be one of 15 people who are expected to participate in this research study, including 4 principals from 3 Catholic dioceses and 1 school secretary from each diocese.

What you will be asked to do:

Your participation in this research study will include:

- Participation in one 60- or 90-minute interview with the primary investigator.

- The interview will consist of either 5 or 9 open-ended questions that will be recorded via Zoom and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript and make corrections.

- The study will also collect general data about your school, including the enrollment, history of participation in the EdChoice Scholarship program, and your administrative experience in Ohio or in other states.

Your rights to participate, say no or withdraw:

Participation in research is voluntary. You can decide to participate or not to participate. You can choose to participate in the research study now and then decide to leave the research at any time. Your choice will not be held against you.

The person in charge of the research study can remove you from the research study without your approval. Possible reasons for removal include missing the interview or non-compliance with the study procedures.

Potential benefits:

There may be no direct benefit to you from this study. You may obtain personal satisfaction from knowing that you are participating in a project that contributes to new information.

Potential risks:

The risks associated with this study are minimal in nature. Your participation in this research may include a risk to privacy due to the recording of the Zoom call, which will capture your

image and your voice. The recording will only be used for transcription purposes. All identifying information about you and your school will be kept confidential.

Confidentiality and privacy:

Efforts will be made to limit the use or disclosure of your personal information. This information may include the research study documents or other source documents used for the purpose of conducting the study. These documents may include interview transcripts and general school data, such as enrollment figures. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that oversee research safety may inspect and copy your information. This includes the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board who oversees the safe and ethical conduct of research at this institution.

Data sharing:

Data collected from this study will not be shared with anyone outside of the study team.

Cost and compensation:

You will not be responsible for any of the costs or expenses associated with your participation in this study.

There is no payment for your time to participate in this study.

Conflict of interest disclosure:

The principal investigator and members of the study team have no financial conflicts of interest to report.

Contact information:

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this research project, you can contact the principal investigator, Adam J. Dufault, at adam.dufault@student.shu.edu or (773) 301-7763; the faculty advisor, Dr. David Reid, at david.reid@shu.edu or (973) 275-2324; or the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board ("IRB") at irb@shu.edu or (973) 761-9334.

Optional Elements:

Video recordings conducted via Zoom will be performed as part of the research study. Prior to starting the recording, the researcher will replace the name of the subject with the unique identification number assigned to that person. All interview and electronic data will be kept on a password protected laptop that requires 2-factor authorization. Data files will be labeled with pseudonyms and unique ID numbers to ensure privacy protection. The key that links participant information with pseudonyms and unique ID numbers will be kept only on paper and in the locked file cabinet. All data and information will be stored in a locked file cabinet until the researcher's graduation. The data will not be retained

following graduation. All documents will be professionally shredded and electronic files deleted.

Please indicate your permission to participate in these activities by placing your initials next to each activity.

I agree   I disagree

The researcher may record my video interview. In understand this is done to help with data collection and analysis. The researcher will not share these recordings with anyone outside of the study team.

_____   _____

I hereby consent to participate in this research study.

_____   _____
Signature of participant   Date

_____
Printed name of participant

_____   _____
Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

_____
Printed name of person obtaining consent

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