

EXAMINING THE DECISIONAL ETHIC OF TEXTBOOK ADOPTION IN CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS: A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY

by

Cecil John Phillips

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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APPROVED BY:

James A. Swezey, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Judy Sandlin, Ph.D., Committee Member

Howard Wilburn, Ed.D., Committee Member

Scott Watson, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Advanced Programs

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this collective case study is to examine the decisional ethic Christian school administrators employ when evaluating textbooks for adoption in Christian schools. The study affirms the truism that Christian schools ought to be decidedly Christian and focuses upon textbook adoption practices in Christian schools. A multisite, qualitative research design is employed to examine current practice of textbook adoption among a purposive sample of secondary schools within the Southeast region of the Association of Christian Schools International. The research questions address such administrative leadership factors as organizational values and learning objectives, textbook content criteria and features, and the decision-making processes employed in the textbook adoption task. This study examines the decisional ethic of the Christian school administrators by means of personal interviews, site visits, and other data gathering techniques. I incorporate two research-based data analysis methodologies involving within-case and across-case analysis and Analytical Hierarchical Processing as a decision-making model. The study found that textbook adoption is an ongoing, graded process across all academic fields. Administrators rely upon teachers and vertically-aligned adoption committees to inform this task. Administrators are also concerned with curricula alignment of textbooks with the organization's core values and learning objectives. Moreover, some administrators consult with peers outside of their current context to learn what textbooks are trending in other academic environments and geographic regions. This adoption factor, defined herein as lateral alignment, was not observed in the academic literature and may prove to be an addition to the field of research in the area of textbook adoption.

Keywords: textbook selection, textbook adoption, curricula alignment, vertical alignment, horizontal alignment, education leadership.

Copyright

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Dedication

I dedicate and this dissertation to the one who for many years has consistently encouraged and enabled me to realize this objective. This milestone would not have been accomplished had it not been for your continual patience and understanding, your ongoing personal sacrifices, and your ever-present encouragement and loving support. I dedicate this project to the love of my life, Janie Phillips.

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This collective case study examining the decisional ethic of administrators in the area of adoption of textbooks for use in Christian schools simply would not have come to fruition without the encouragement, substantive support, and efforts of many collaborators.

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List of Abbreviations

ACE: Accelerated Christian Education

ACSI: Association of Christian Schools International

AHP: Analytic Hierarchy Process

AP: Advanced Placement

CAPE: Council for American Private Education

EMBO: European Molecular Biology Organization

IFL: Integration of Faith and Learning

IRB: Institutional Review Board

MCDA: Multi-criteria Decisional Analysis

NCSE: National Center for Science Education

USDOE: United States Department of Education

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I came to this project with at least two presuppositions. First, being the son of a biblical scholar who had authored over 55 books, Bible commentaries, and collegiate textbooks, I presupposed that Author as a categorical element of textbook adoption would be an important factor in course development and textbook adoption. Second, having graduated from a university that is one of the predominant publishers of textbooks for use in Christian schools, I believed that the affiliation with and reputation of Christian publishers would be the primary consideration for administrators in the decision-making process. The research in textbook adoption in Christian schools, however, on both points suggests otherwise. The research participants did not even raise Authors as a category for consideration while Publisher, as a criterion for textbook adoption, rated very low in the final analysis of the current research study. I cite these personal (former) presuppositions to inform the reader of two research principles. First, I hope to enhance the credibility of the research by revealing personal biases. Second, I hope to advance the research findings to the end that the reader's expectations might likewise be enlightened by virtue of this study concerning the decisional ethic of textbook adoption in Christian schools.

Overview

The academic theory that motivated the current study was based upon a series of research studies by W. F. Cox and others (Cox, 1985; Cox, 2004; Cox, Hameloth & Talbot, 2007; Cox & Haney, 2002) that focused on the effect of textbooks then in use in Christian schools. Cox posited the premise that Christian education ought to be distinctly Christian, and that adopting secular textbooks in Christian schools undermines the effect of Christian education in the life of

the student (Cox et al., 2007). The research project focuses on the decision-making processes Christian school administrators employ when adopting textbooks for use in Christian schools.

This chapter will focus upon the background of textbook adoption in the U.S. generally and how adoption in the public sector differs from that in private, faith-based schools. The problem that presents is the absence of academic research in the area of textbook adoption in Christian schools. How administrators select textbooks, their priorities and concerns, and the actual decision-making processes are not known. The purpose of this study is to examine the decisional ethic, defined as the criteria and process, of Christian school administrators (or others), when reviewing and adopting textbooks for use in Christian schools. This study is significant because textbooks hold a highly important pedagogical and authoritative position both in the curricula and to the students. I will provide the foundational research questions that govern this study. Some terminology may be specialized to some readers. I will define a few terms that have specific or contextual meaning. A brief discussion of limitations is followed by a summary of the chapter.

Background

A prominent feature of Western civilization is universal and compulsory education for all children (Guttek, 1995). While a majority of parents follow the societal norm of sending their children to the local public schools, some elect to forego public education by engaging in one of the many private school alternatives available in the U.S. (United States Department of Education, USDOE, 2013). The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) reported that approximately 5,268,000 (or 10%) of all students in the U.S. attended private schools in the 2011-12 school term (CAPE, 2014). A small percentage of families educate their children at home given the alternatives to public education such as private or home schools are not feasible

for all families. Only 1.5 million nationally of over 49.175 million students are homeschooled (Bielick, 2008). Therefore, about 97% of all parents in the U.S. commit the education of their children to others in either the public or private schools. (USDOE, 2009).

The inherent right of parents to educate their children is extended by proxy to the school. This transfer of authority, however, does not come without a cost. When schools present ethical situations and philosophies inconsistent with or even contrary to the morals taught in the home, today's child may be forced to distinguish between authority figures and conflicting epistemological systems. For those families with strong faith-based belief systems, the secularism often mandated within the public sector can potentially escalate into a crisis of faith (Cox, Hameloth, & Talbot, 2007).

The latter half of the 20th century witnessed an exodus of students from the public schools and the founding of many private and Christian day schools (Carper & Layman, 1996; Kienel, 1998). The Christian school movement provides a historical context for research concerning textbook adoption in Christian schools. Laats (2010) proposed that the societal and cultural changes of the 1960s spurred the Christian school movement forward. Among the most significant of these factors included a series of Supreme Court decisions affecting both racial desegregation and prayer in schools. The case of *Brown v. Board of Education* 347 U.S. 483 (1955) was the landmark ruling that abolished racial segregation in schools. This ruling was followed by cases addressing fair admission of African-American children into Caucasian schools in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* 391 U.S. 430 (1968) and mandated bussing in *Washington v. Seattle School District No. 1* 458 U.S. 457 (1982) (Essex, 2012). Carper and Layman (1996) observed that the rapid expansion of both predominately White and Black private schools the 1970s and 1980s directly followed school desegregation.

This wave of cultural change was followed by another surge of high-court rulings that overwhelmed many Christians. Carper and Layman (1996) suggested that many people of faith felt disenfranchised by their government when the Supreme Court banned school-sponsored prayer in *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962) and school-sponsored reading of the Bible the following year in *School District of Abington Township v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963) and *Murray v. Curlett*, 232 Md. 368 (1963) (Essex, 2012). Addressing the rapid growth of Christian schools in the U.S., Carper and Layman (1996) concluded, “The growth of these schools testifies to a profound disillusionment with public education” (p. 117).

The collective impact of desegregation, forced bussing of students to affect racial integration in schools, and the perception that God had been evicted from the public square was exacerbated by adoption of the new Biological Sciences Curriculum Studies textbook series that heavily emphasized Darwinian evolution in the public schools (Laats, 2010). Additionally, such emphases as new math and sex education, when considered collectively in view of the aforementioned changes, created a perfect storm of cultural upheaval motivating Fundamentalists and Evangelicals to abandon the public schools and start their own private day schools in record numbers from the 1960s forward (Laats, 2010).

Bell (1996) asserted the cultural transition of the 1960s continues today with the presentation of immorality as the new societal norm. The moral secularism taught in public schools presents an axiological contradiction to both the parents and the child. In the interest of resolving this values tension, many of those opting out of the public education do so in hopes of presenting a worldview in closer alignment with the values of the home (Bielick, 2008). The schools and the teachers stand in place of the parents in fulfilling the divine mandate upon the parents to raise their children, as the Bible states, “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”

(Ephesians 6:4b, King James Version). This verse is only one of many that present a biblical belief in parental accountability in child rearing. Representative samples of other Bible passages that support this viewpoint include: Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 4:9 and 6:2; Psalm 127:3; Proverbs 6:20-23, and Proverbs 22:6 (See Appendix A List of Scripture Citations).

Coinciding with the rapid rise in Christian education came the need for Christian curricula. Carper and Laymen (1996) cited the emergence of dozens of denominational and philosophical frameworks such as: Evangelical, Fundamentalist, Charismatic, Reformed, as well as non-Christian traditions. In addressing textbooks used in Christian schools, both Carper and Laymen (1996) and Laats (2010) cited the three primary publishers of Christian materials as Bob Jones University Press, A Becca (associated with Pensacola Christian College) and Accelerated Christian Education (ACE). The latter is a complete K-12 curricula that is applicable in both private and homeschool settings (Laats, 2010).

The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) does not regulate the credentials of teachers in private schools. Nevertheless, the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), the focus of the current study, does monitor the credentials of its faculty members. A limited survey of 175 ACSI schools in the Eastern Virginia region found 59.4% of faculty and administrators had bachelor's degrees while 33.1% (over half of the participants) had obtained master's degrees (Finn, Swezey, & Warren, 2010). Additionally, Finn et al. (2010) reported that 74% of the participants held some form of a State and/or ACSI-credentialed teaching certificate. These findings are consistent with academic and teaching credentials within the ACSI schools nationally.

Second only to the influence of the teacher in the classroom is the authority of the textbook (European Molecular Biology Organization Reports, EMBO, 2011; Plut & Pesic,

2003). While primary and secondary teachers are credentialed by the State, they are not expected to be experts in every discipline they may be required to teach. For expertise and pedagogical authority, schools must rely upon textbooks (Haight-Keenan, 2012). Textbooks serve as an important teaching and learning implement in the course curriculum (Mitchell, 2010). Because textbooks are often presented to students as authoritative, the selection and endorsement of textbooks by the school is of paramount importance (Cox & Haney, 2002; Cox et al., 2007; Haight-Keenan, 2012).

Throughout the 20th century, public school textbook adoption in the U.S. evolved from a centralized or state-level system to localized models (Watt, 2009). State and local textbook adoption is often controlled by many predetermined factors such as cost and publisher lobbying (Allen & Preiss, 1990); whereas, private school adoption is concerned with content and alignment with the faith values of the institution (Cox et al., 2007). Cox et al. (2007) further warned that utilizing secular textbooks in the Christian school may send a mixed message to students. If a Christian school teacher advised the class to disregard portions of a text not corresponding with a Biblical worldview, some students might wonder which authority represents the truth -- the teacher or the textbook. Children who are raised in Evangelical homes by parents who adhere to the same principles as those articulated in the ACSI (2012) statement of faith (see Appendix B ACSI Statement of Faith), are taught by their parents and in their churches that they should believe in the Bible and adhere to biblical values. The school presents a textbook as an authoritative source of knowledge that exposes children to an opposing philosophy to that taught in the home. Hence Cox et al. (2007) posited such teaching models send mixed messages that might contribute to the rejection of the faith commitment of some of those who seemingly abandoned the faith shortly after graduating from Christian day schools.

Some instructional models might intentionally incorporate secular texts into the curriculum as a learning device. Such exposure with intentionality presents an altogether different learning construct. The research project will seek to identify whether such a presentation and method of discernment between faith and secular concepts is a factor in textbook adoption.

Cox and Haney (2002) observed that school administrators often lack the specialized training, resources, and time needed to conduct textbook adoption studies. Unrelated textbook adoption literature confirmed this premise (Farr, Tulley, & Powell, 1987; Reck, 2012). Many adopt textbooks from trusted publishers; that is, those publishers that generally comport with their denominational or other faith perspectives (Laats, 2010). School administrators following a conservative doctrinal tradition might feel that anything published by distinctly conservative organizations such as Bob Jones University Press or A Becca, for example, are acceptable for use in the Christian school. An important aspect of the current research project is to determine whether administrators lean toward adoption from trusted-publishers, waive formal review from such publishers, or engage in individual textbook analysis techniques.

The proposed research will examine the current practices and decisional ethic of Christian school administrators and other textbook adoption decision-makers within a sample of ACSI secondary schools located in the Southeast region of the U.S. The research project will also examine decisional instrumentation and methodology employed in the selection process in view of applying principles of multi-criteria decisional analysis (MCDA) that came to light in the review of the literature (Ho & Hsu, 2011; Ishizaka & Nemery, 2012; Saaty & Begicevic, 2010).

The objective of the study is to identify the current status of textbook adoption within a limited population sample of private religious schools. I also hope to lay the groundwork for

future research into grounded theory, open textbook development, and a uniform, research-based decision-making instrument for textbook adoption.

Situation to Self

My role as the researcher is the “human instrument” or vehicle through which data is gathered and interpreted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study presumes that the researcher naturally approaches the research project with predispositions and presuppositions intact. Patton (2002) asserted, “The human factor is the great strength and the fundamental weakness of qualitative inquiry and analysis – a scientific two-edged sword” (p. 433). Patton (2002) further insisted this innate tendency toward bias requires a disclosure statement concerning the researcher’s situation to self. Denzin (1989) referred to this juxtaposition as the “hermeneutical circle” and advised that the researcher must disclose predispositions that could affect the research (p. 23). I am not wholly disinterested in the topic of interest, and this disclosure serves to place my personal worldview and biases into perspective as a conservative, Evangelical Christian; one who holds to a biblical worldview.

Pragmatism as a Research Paradigm

While addressing pragmatism as a research paradigm, I am not endorsing it as an ideology, but rather as an epistemology (Morgan, 2007). As an outcomes-based concern, Pragmatism simply asks what works. Even though Schwandt (2007) defined this mindset as both a “cognitive framework” and a “worldview” (p. 217), pragmatism, as a philosophical paradigm, lacks moral authority (Schaeffer, 2005). A pragmatic perspective complements the collective case study approach. I am seeking to examine what others have done, what works, and how practitioners might apply this research in the future (Schwandt, 2007). Upon this footing rests a structural framework consisting of ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology

(the relationship between the research and what is being researched/what is known), and methodology (the research process).

Philosophical Assumptions

My ontological assumption presents from a conservative, Christian worldview. The maxim attributed to Augustine (354 – 430) that All truth is God's Truth is apropos (Sproul, 2012). The Holy Bible is the infallible and inerrant revelation of God to man. As such it is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice (Schaeffer, 2005; 2 Timothy 3:16) (See Appendix A List of Scripture Citations). I interpret data epistemologically in respect to its comportment with the Word of God. This viewpoint presupposes that man is a tripartite being consisting of a body (physical), a soul (emotional/mental) and spirit (*Imago Dei* or God-likeness) created in the spiritual image and likeness of his Creator (Genesis 1:26, 27, 2:7, 9:6; Job 32:8).

My belief that man was created in the image of God shapes my philosophy of education. Being made after God's likeness implies that man is a rational being even as God is a rational being (Romans 11:33-36). The scriptures repeatedly assert that the fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom, and the knowledge of God brings understanding (Job 28:28; Psalm 34:7-11; Proverbs 1:7, 9:10 and many others (See Appendix A). God created man both with a thirst for knowledge and the capacity to learn (James 1:5).

True Christian education is not a mere label, but rather it represents a manner of life. Likewise, Christianity is not a series of activities; it is what we are (Booth, Garzon, Milacci, & Sites, 2009). Instructors, therefore, must possess this knowledge of God through personal faith in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. Additionally, teachers must be mentors and examples to students. Having assumed this societal role, educators (Christian or otherwise) are held to a high moral and ethical standard (Rebores, 2001). Even so, living one's life above reproach should

be the norm for the Christian. The New Testament sets a standard of avoidance of even the appearance of impropriety as the rule of practice for all Christians (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Epistemologically, I hold to the principles of differentiation. I do not believe the cookie-cutter classroom methodology of the 1960s and 1970s is effective for all students. While Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligence (Gardner, 1983) lacks empirical support, I would submit that differentiated instruction, an outgrowth of Gardner's work, is preferred over the one-size-fits-all model of direct instruction.

Qualitative research is generally non-numerical, interpretative, and phenomenological; and is concerned with happenings or events (Schwandt, 2007). The current design incorporates a rating instrument for synthetic analysis. Patton (2002) pointed out that a purely qualitative design might substitute descriptive values such as *poor*, *fair*, *good*, *excellent* for numerical ratings. At the other end of the research spectrum, Saaty (1990), a quantitative researcher, suggested a Likert-type rating scale satisfies the demands of both systems. A compromise might utilize an instrument defined by descriptive values such as 1 = *Poor*, 3 = *Fair*, 5 = *Good*, and so on. Insistence on descriptive values over an ordinal scale, therefore, is semantics since an ordinal scale in the current context represents qualitative values (Ishizaka & Labib, 2011).

Problem Statement

Parents who enroll their children in Christian schools have an expectation that the education provided will be decidedly Christian in nature (Cox et al., 2007; Swezey, 2006). Therefore, of the two recognized authorities in the classroom, the teacher and the textbook (Cox et al., 2007; Barlow, Finn, & Ravitch, 2005), the focus of current research is concerned only with the textbook.

While a body of literature exists in the area of textbook selection in the public arena, very little research addresses textbook adoption in the private Christian sector. Addressing this gap in the current research literature, Booth et al. (2009) affirmed, “Further research is needed to substantiate ontological foundation as a construct and to clarify the proposed relationship between ontological foundation, faith praxis, and multidimensional scholarly integration” (p. 37). Restated, Booth et al. (2009) found research is lacking in the Christian school context that incorporates a strong biblical worldview while balancing scholarly integration.

Additionally, secular textbook adoption is primarily controlled by the school boards for the largest textbook purchasers such as Texas and California (Barlow et al., 2005). The resulting textbook offerings become subject to market forces, thereby limiting available options in the public sector (EMBO, 2011; Haight-Keenan, 2012). Conversely, ideology motivates Christian publishers such as Bob Jones, A Becca, and ACE (Laats, 2010). What is not known is whether and to what extent the elements of faith factor into the decision-making process of Christian school administrators in textbook adoption.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this collective case study is to examine the current practices and decisional ethic of Christian school administrators and other textbook adoption decision-makers within a sample of ACSI secondary schools located in North-central North Carolina.

Significance of the Study

Textbook selection in Christian schools is significant for several reasons. Observing an alarming percentage of students graduating from Christian schools were withdrawing from Christianity, Cox et al. (2007) posited that Christian schools were becoming too secularized. Cox’s et al. (2007) thesis suggested that the practices of utilizing secular textbooks in Christian

schools sends a mixed message to students contributing to some leaving Christianity shortly after graduation from high school. In response to this problem, the researchers proposed that Christian schools should be distinctly Christian, and the textbooks utilized therein should present a clear Christian worldview (Cox et al., 2007).

Hull (2003) echoed these concerns asserting that Christian schools patterned after the public schools are often designed to stream students through objective-based programs in order to achieve standardized results and move students to the next level. As such they are not being consistent with a Christian vision and worldview. Hull (2003) asserted that Christian schools should be distinctly different saying, “[the] Christian perspective must reshape and redirect the curriculum, pedagogical theory, student evaluation, educational goals, and school structure .” (para. 17).

The significance of the study is to identify for Christian administrators, educators, and other stakeholders both the findings from the current literature (focusing on the literature in the public sector primarily) and current practice (focusing on the interview data in the private/Christian sector) to inform practice in the field of textbook adoption. The study has the potential of adding empirical, theoretical, and practical contributions to the field.

Theoretical contributions include locating textbook adoption within both an established theoretical and philosophical framework. This premise frames the decisional ethic employed in the adoption process. The learning theories that support the concept of textbook adoption include Piaget’s (1953) cognitive development theories and Vygotsky’s (1929) child development theories that led to Scaffolding (Anderman & Anderman, 2009).

Identifying the current practice of educators in the field would enhance the practical value of the textbook adoption study. As previously mentioned, administrators and others

approaching this task generally do so from an uninformed position (Cox & Haney, 2002; Reck, 2012). This premise was also asserted in the review of secular textbook adoption literature (Farr, Tulley, & Powell, 1987). The pragmatic value of the study will be to establish a research-based foundation for future application, such as a grounded theory or development of a uniform, instrument for textbook adoption, and a basis for open textbook development.

Research Questions

At the heart of qualitative inquiry are the research questions (Stake, 1995). Once the researcher defines the problem or phenomenon to be investigated, the research questions are meticulously designed in advance to guide the research process and keep the research focus (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) further advised that the researcher develop a system to keep the research questions in view throughout the process. Denzin (1989) followed the primary research question with intricate and involved procedure subquestions designed to get to the heart of the issue. The subquestions are designed to further examine the decision-making criteria and the process(es) employed within the scope of the research problem.

Primary Research Question

What textbook adoption practices do administrators or textbook adoption decision-makers employ when reviewing textbooks for classroom use? The processes administrators employ could include, but are not limited to the content-categorical factors (Saaty, 1990), faith considerations (Booth et al., 2009), and leadership paradigms, (Cawthorne, 2010; Kalagyrou, Pescosolido, & Kalargiros, 2012; Peeters, Churchwell, Mauro, Cappelletty, & Stone, 2010). The term decisional ethics is the application of the adoption instrument that defines the decisional values and weighs these categories against the option qualities. The process controls for

decision-maker bias by providing an objective numerical value rating to a series of subjective preference values.

Research Criteria Subquestions

The criteria subquestions focus upon examining content factors, stylistic features, and physical elements decision-makers take into consideration when commencing a textbook review project.

First criteria subquestion. What content factors, stylistic features, and physical elements do administrators consider in textbook adoption? This question is designed to explore the hierarchical category construct administrators identify as important features in textbooks. The categorical concept is derived from the methodologies discovered in current research (Durwin & Sherman, 2008; Hashemi & Rahimpour, 2011; Ho & Hsu, 2011; Petrides, Jimes, Middleton-Detzner, Waling, & Weiss, 2011; Wiley, Ellington, & Hall, 2012).

Second criteria subquestion. To what extent do administrators give consideration to Christian worldview factors when evaluating scholarship in textbooks? Again, the faith-factor is the crux of the current research model. The Cox research studies focused attention upon the distinction in the literature concerning pedagogy and faith values (Cox et al., 2007; Cox & Haney, 2002). The Christian worldview distinguishes the private/Christian school from public/secular models (Booth et al., 2009). The research needs to identify how Christian values drive the decisional ethic in textbook adoption (Booth et al., 2009; Cox et al., 2007; Cox & Haney, 2002).

Research Process Subquestions

The research process subquestions address the human need to order elements into a hierarchical strata of importance, and to examine existing instruments or other processes in use.

First process subquestion. How were textbook content criteria prioritized? (That is, if some categories were more important to your decisional objectives than others, how were these rated to reflect their values?) The research relies on the literature and practice to inform a means for gathering and analyzing data and drawing conclusions (Ho & Hsu, 2011; Saaty, 1990; Saaty & Vargas, 1994; Vargas, 1990). I will create a matrix of all the content-categories and considerations in the literature and current practice to create a hierarchical grid showing the synthesized order of importance of those who have designed and conducted adoption methodologies.

Second process subquestion. What instruments or rating criteria were utilized for rating textbooks? Virtually all research studies utilize some rendition of the Likert scale in rating textbooks (Cox & Haney, 2002; Durwin & Sherman, 2008; Hashemi & Rahimpour, 2011; Ho & Hsu, 2011; Petrides et. al, 2011; Wiley, Ellington, & Hall, 2012).

Research Plan

The research shall follow the multi-site (or collective) case study qualitative design (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). Among the reasons for selecting case study over other approaches such as phenomenology or grounded theory is the need to examine and relate the current practice of textbook adoption historically within the context of individual Evangelical Christian schools. The ACSI presents a homogeneous body from which to draw a sample; that is, schools that adhere to the fundamental tenants of Christianity as defined in the ACSI charter (ASCI, 2012; 2014).

The phenomenon addressed in the study, textbook adoption event, is not ongoing, but rather it is occasional and situational. As such, adoption events will be examined in their historical context. I will seek to identify and interview administrators and others who have

performed the task at each event site (Patton, 2002). I will attempt to extrapolate their experiences, worldview, background, theological beliefs, and other interpretative factors that might influence the analysis and adoption process (Schwandt, Lincoln, & Guba, 2007). Data will be analyzed by both within and across case methodologies highlighting similarities, differences, and emerging patterns utilized in textbook adoption (Yin, 2009).

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations to the study include the participant criteria, geographic range, and a narrow focus or issue. I selected the geographic range of the Southeast region of the U.S. and North Carolina in particular as both a matter of convenience and because I expect to find many qualified participants within a reasonable distance of travel. Focusing upon Christian schools that are aligned with the ACSI naturally delimits the study to a relatively narrow band of Evangelicals within the broader faith-based private school movement by virtue of member agreement with the ACSI statement of faith.

Replication is an inherent limitation of the research project in that the key methodology of the project relies upon participant interviews. The strict adherence to research-based qualitative standards (as discussed herein as trustworthiness) provides for reliability and credibility of the findings, but the actual research cannot be duplicated. Another limitation is the relatively narrow theological scope of the study. While the research theory may be applicable in other contexts, obviously a school of another theological or cultural genre would not apply the adoption distinctive of the ACSI. Other practitioners should define their own set of decision-making objectives, criteria, and comparative textbook options. Additionally, the study is focused within an area known in the Southeast region of the U.S. as the Bible belt; therefore, the

expectations of parents and other stakeholders would likely differ in other regions. Therefore, replication and application of the research in other areas are limitations to the study.

Definitions

The terminology specifically applicable to the current research project that may not be familiar is presented in the progressive order of appearance.

1. *Christian or biblical worldview* – The Christian or biblical worldview are generally synonymous terms denoting a theistic, biblically based perspective of life. The moral, ethical, and spiritual teachings of the Bible present the practical standard and personal belief system by which the individual gauges or weighs, interprets, and acts upon the issues of life. It is also described as the prism through which life is viewed (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001; Deckard, 2009).
2. *Integration of faith and learning (IFL)* – The tenants of one's faith or Christian worldview are fully integrated in one's practice or manner of living including, in context, the educational experience (Booth, Garzon, Milacci, & Sites, 2009).
3. *Scaffolding* – Scaffolding is a learning theory based on the metaphor of a construction scaffold initially envisioned by Vygotsky. Scaffolding presents learning as a series of ladder-like learning platforms. The metaphoric scaffold literally is the teacher, the textbook, the project or other undertaking that assists the learner in advancing from one plane of learning to the next (Anderman & Anderman, 2009).
4. *Zone of proximal development (ZPD)* – The zone of proximal development is the learning stage in Vygotsky's child development theory that describes the process of advancement of the learner from his current learning status, (the zone of present development) to where he might be (the zone of possible development). The zone of

proximal development (ZPD) is that tenuous stage between these two plateaus.

Vygotsky perceived the learner as unable to advance on his own without the assistance of an external aid or scaffold to help him clamber over the obstacle of insurmountable difficulty and thus advance to the zone of possible development, the next plateau in the ever-advancing learning paradigm (Zaretskii, 2009).

5. *Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)* -- AHP organizes multiple decisional criteria into a hierarchy based upon organizational or individual objectives or preferences. The decisional preferences are identified and scaled in a hierarchy in respect to the predefined decisional values (Saaty, 1990). This process is defined by Fariborz, Burton, and Banerjee (1990) as, “a decision-aided method which decomposes a complex multi-factor problem into a hierarchy, in which each level is composed of specific elements” (p. 5).

Summary

The textbook has been a mainstay in the American educative system for generations. The advancement of the Christian school movement in the U.S. produced a need for Christian textbooks that comport more closely with the biblical worldview of parents who choose faith-based private schools over public education. The Cox studies raised the empirical issue of pragmatic effect on some students when secular textbooks are comingled with faith-based textbooks in the Christian school context. The research being virtually nonexistent on the topic begged the question of the current thinking of administrators and other stake holders concerning textbooks in use in Christian schools. The current research project was designed to examine the decisional ethic of Christian school administrators in reviewing and adopting textbooks for use in

Christian schools. I designed the research question to examine the values criteria and process a purposive sample of Christian school administrators employ in the decision-making process.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The literature review serves two primary functions: to frame the research within the context of the discipline and to add to the body of knowledge. Patton (2002) states, “Review of relevant literature can also bring focus to a study. What is known? Unknown? What are the cutting-edge theoretical issues” (p. 226)? Determining that which is known and unknown prompts the second function of the literature review: defining the gap in the research area of interest. The focus of the dissertation is to fill this gap by adding to the body of knowledge.

The literature review also presents the theoretical foundation for the research project. The field of textbook adoption presents a variety of research studies in the public sector. From this body of literature a construct emerged for a uniform pattern of textbook adoption applied herein as the content-categorical approach (Mager & Nowak, 2012; Sicola & Chesley, 1999; Wong, 2009). In the private, Christian school sector very little research exists (Booth et al., 2009; Cox et al., 2007).

The literature review establishes a philosophical framework for a study in textbook adoption in the Christian school context. I will also develop a research-based theoretical foundation from current educational theory based primarily on Vygotsky’s theories of child development and Scaffolding in particular. A review of the literature in textbook adoption models, leadership methods, and MCDA forms the skeletal framework for the research study. The textbook adoption research by Ho and Hsu (2011) applied the Analytical Hierarchy Process, a well-established MCDA model, to the textbook adoption process. AHP very closely reflects this study’s research objective which is to examine the decisional criteria and the processes administrators employ in their decision-making routine. Because AHP is extant in the textbook

adoption literature, I examine AHP as a possible decisional instrument for administrators to employ in the textbook adoption process.

Theoretical Framework

Philosophical Assumption

Although the integration of faith and learning (IFL) is a relatively new phenomenon in education research, IFL is not new (Booth et al., 2009). Several research studies addressed Cox's premise that Christian schools ought to be decidedly Christian (Cox, 1985; Cox, 2004; Cox et al., 2007; Cox & Haney, 2002). These studies brought Christian school textbooks into focus as an area of interest that warrants more research.

Faith integration. Examples of those who have integrated faith in God into their daily practice in contrast to those who have not, can be traced to creation's early dawn. Man's primeval forebears, Adam and Eve, initially had two sons, Cain and Abel. The death of Abel at the hands of Cain actually occurred over a matter of the integration of faith and practice. God accepted Abel's act of obedience, his IFL, in offering of a blood sacrifice over Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground and the work of his hands. The biblical narrative recorded that Cain was infuriated by the Lord's rejection of his offering of human endeavor over the blood atonement for sin as represented in Abel's offering. The narrative reported that God appeared unto Cain and reasoned with him saying, "Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:6-7a). It appears God offered to Cain an opportunity to amend his practice and comply with the then-known faith objective which at that time was the sacrifice of an innocent animal for the sins and wrongdoing of the guilty individual. Yet Cain would not obey the word of the Lord, and in his anger, Cain murdered his brother Abel.

Eventually a third son was born whom Adam and Eve named Seth. The Scripture makes an interesting distinction concerning Seth's descendants saying, ". . . then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (Genesis 4:26). This expression is an archaic way of identifying those who lived their lives integrating their faith in God and obedience to God's Word in their daily practice. Furthermore, Hebrews 11 of the New Testament presents the hallmark of men and women who practiced faith integration to that point in human history. Abel is found at the head of this listing of heroes of the faith among those renowned for obedience to God while living in a secular context (Hebrews 11:4) (See Appendix A List of Scripture Citations). The integration of faith and practice, therefore, is not a new concept, but rather it is the manner of life for many people of faith today; that is, those who have adopted and exercise a Christian or biblical worldview.

That being said, IFL is not an attempt to make faith compatible with humanistic or secular learning paradigms (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001; Schaeffer, 2005). Christian and secular worldviews are mutually exclusive; that is, one cannot at once espouse both a faith and non-faith life perspective (Deckard & Sobko, 1998; Rebores, 2001). Each individual possesses either a theistic or a nontheistic worldview (Deckard & Sobko, 1998). This premise reinforces the thesis that inconsistency in textbook worldviews may send mixed messages possibly contributing to abandonment of faith for some students. Faith integration in Christian textbooks is an area of focus of this research project.

Contemporary application. Faith has always stood in opposition to secularism. IFL is not an integration of faith and education philosophy; it is rather how people of faith reconcile their belief system and life practice while abiding in a predominantly secular culture. Yet this tension between faith and non-faith worldviews is predictable. Defining the distinction between

the faith-discerning person and the natural or wholly secular-minded person, the Pauline epistle states, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). The disparity between a faith praxis and all others is a fundamental distinction of Christianity (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001; Deckard, 2009; Deckard & Sobko, 1998; Rebore, 2001).

Christian scholars do not isolate themselves from secular scholarship. Conversely, faith integration incorporates one’s faith praxis into one’s educational philosophy (Booth et al., 2009). The Booth et al. (2009) study employed a qualitative phenomenology to investigate the integration of faith and learning (IFL) of eight faculty at a Christian, Evangelical university. This research sought to answer the question of how spiritually mature professors exercise faith integration in their daily practice. The participants were a purposeful sample of eight professors chosen by students to identify those from whom the students learned the most about IFL. The philosophical construct of integrating faith and practice is paradoxical in that the participants’ identify faith as part of their person or being. IFL is not merely what they do, but rather they do what they do because faith integration has become part of their person (Booth et al., 2009).

Theoretical Assumption

Secular philosophical and theoretical constructs are not concerned with adherence to or comportment with a Christian worldview. Nevertheless, by purposeful selection (or cherry-picking) the best of several models, a theoretical foundation may be constructed that satisfies a Christian worldview for textbook adoption. Lev Vygotsky’s (1929) theory of child development known as constructivism guides the research concept. Constructivism views learners as capable of constructing knowledge according to their own learning techniques and is related to student-centered learning approaches (Ravitch, 2007). To narrow the construct as related to textbook

adoption, Vygotsky's theories of proximal development and scaffolding bring the broad spectrum of constructivism into manageable focus.

Vygotsky on child development. Notwithstanding the fact that much of Vygotsky's theoretical research was rooted in socialism, Lankford (2005) pointed out the error in discounting all of his work on purely philosophical grounds. Vygotsky (1929) observed that early childhood development is dominated by social interaction. The child learns organically; that is, primarily through the experiential senses: sight, touch, taste, and sound. The early development of the child is object-oriented (Vygotsky, 1929; Vygotsky, 1978). After these initial stages of development, typically near the age of seven, the child progresses to the stages of cognitive development. Some of these cognitive affects include recognition of diagrams, meaning and redundancy, problem solving, and reproduction of meaning. Thus the higher forms of cognitive development such as speech and symbol (requisite for reading and writing) and imitation follow social development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Imitation is a strong principle of child development in Vygotsky's (1984) thinking. Vygotsky defined imitation as, "all kinds of activity of a particular type that is performed by a child not independently, but in cooperation with an adult or another child" (p. 263). Older children (seven-years and above) have higher reasoning capacity than younger due to higher ordered *mnema* or memory functionality (Lankford, 2005). Thus the older child develops processes of learned behavior that are culturally oriented (Vygotsky, 1929).

Piaget on Vygotsky. Piaget discovered Vygotsky some 25 years after his death and acknowledged many points of agreement as well as some differences (Piaget, 1995). Piaget and Vygotsky generally agreed on principles of child development within Piaget's (1953) theory of the pre-operational development of the child; that is, stages of development of the child under

seven-years of age (Piaget, 1995). Vygotsky (1929) identified this developmental phase also with the term “prelogical” (Piaget, 1995, p. 334). The primary distinction between the two was Piaget’s emphasis on the self- or egocentric development of the child. The child sees the world only from his or her narrow perspective (Piaget, 1995). Children in this stage cannot distinguish between varying perspectives such as the volume of liquid being the same in a tall narrow glass as in a shorter, wider one (Slavin, 2009). Children are not abstract thinkers at this stage (Piaget, 1953).

Piaget (1953) and Vygotsky (1929) differed in the order of development and learning. Piaget placed cognitive development before learning; that is, internally, while Vygotsky (1929) emphasized developmental stages being influenced by imitation and other external stimuli from others (Piaget, 1995). Another significant difference was in the development of language in the child. Vygotsky (1929) differentiated between egocentrism and the communicative nature of language as socialization in the development of the child; Piaget (1995) disagreed. Piaget (1995) reasoned since the child is egocentric, the concept of socialization is foreign to the preoperational child. Generally the two theoreticians were contemporaneous in their respective philosophies of child development.

Vygotsky and the Christian worldview. Because Vygotsky’s thinking was rooted in Marxist Socialism, Lankford (2005) surmised many in the post-World War II cold war era did not appreciate his contributions. The problem for the Christian researcher concerns reconciling Vygotsky (1929) to a Christian worldview. The Christian views empirical evidence through the prism of faith. This faith-based approach asks whether the psychological consideration contradicts Scripture (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001; Deckard, 2009). If the answer is negative, the Christian then asks if the concept is supported by Scripture. Surprisingly, Vygotsky’s theory

of social and cultural development of the child is validated within a reasonable Christian worldview.

Vygotsky's (1929) theory of social and cultural development of children generally is discernible in anecdotal events in the life of Christ. At one point in Jesus' ministry, a gaggle of small children ran up to him interrupting his ministry. When his followers would have shooed them away, Jesus' notable reply was, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mark 10:14). I submit this anecdote bears an allusion to Vygotsky's (1929) realm of social development. The children wanted to touch and handle this celebrated visitor. Jesus himself as a child of 12-years of age was found in the temple both questioning and instructing the doctors of the law. The text states, ". . . they were astonished at his understanding and answers" (Luke 2:47). Again, this account might suggest the outworking of Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development. Whereas in the former event the younger children wanted to touch and feel to gain knowledge; conversely in the latter, the older child had gained understanding and was able to articulate deeper concepts.

Epistemological Assumption

Although he is not credited with coining the term, Vygotsky articulated the principle of cognitive development known as scaffolding (Anderman & Anderman, 2009). Scaffolding is a metaphorical concept that envisions the learning process as a ladder-like apparatus with platforms at various stages of learning. The learner progresses upward through these stages in which the scaffold represents the intervention of parents or instructors to assist the learner in progressing through an area of learning the child might not otherwise grasp without assistance. As such, scaffolding is the outworking of Vygotsky's concept known as ZPD (Zaretskii, 2009).

ZPD is that learning stage between actual and proximate cognitive development.

Vygotsky identified learning as “imitation” and “collaboration” (Zaretskii, 2009, p. 76). This collaboration is adult mentoring, guidance, and instruction that constructs a framework for learning. Upon this cognitive scaffold the learner progresses from the state of actual development to proximate development. The following provides the concept in Vygotsky’s own words.

We show the child how the problem should be solved and look to see whether or not, imitating what he’s been shown, he completes the problem. Or we begin to solve the problem and allow the child to complete it. Or we give him problems that are beyond the bounds of his mental age to solve in collaboration with another, more developed child, or, finally, we explain to the child the principles for solving the problem, pose a leading question, break the problem down into pieces for him, and so forth. In short, we ask the child to solve problems that are beyond the bounds of his mental age using one form of collaboration or another. (Zaretskii, 2009, p. 76)

ZPD theory presents the child in that tenuous stage of the learner’s cognitive development between where the student is without instruction (the zone of actual development) as opposed to where the student could be with external mentoring (the zone of potential or possible development). At some point along this journey the learner reaches what Zaretskii (2009) called, “the zone of insurmountable difficulty” (p. 81) where the student, left to himself, can advance no farther. At this point the instructor intervenes by presenting the learner with a cognitive scaffold; that is, the instructor presents some form of intervening instruction. The learner metaphorically struggles with the new learning concept as one might physically exert and one’s self and clamber up the virtual scaffold ultimately achieving the learning objective by

grasping the subject matter and landing positively on a higher plateau of knowledge and understanding.

Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) presented numerous examples of scaffolds employed in classroom settings including direct instruction, tutorials, prompting, modification of the task (such as suggestion of alternate approach to solving the problem), and diminishment of direct involvement as the learner's abilities are enhanced. Additionally, Anderman and Anderman (2009) suggested many software programs serve as tutorials to virtually any given task.

Deconstruction of complex problems is another scaffolding tool as well as its inverse, structuring a theoretical framework for problem solving. The academic exercise known as the *jigsaw* is another example of scaffolding where students work together to master various portions of a text and then present the same to the class thereby learning and instructing one another simultaneously (Anderman & Anderman, 2009). The textbook, therefore, serves as a scaffold to learning.

Instructors introduce the cognitive scaffold enabling the learner to overcome the learning obstacle and thus climb up the ladder to the next level of learning (Anderman & Anderman, 2009). To summarize Anderman and Anderman (2009), the successful learner utilizes this learning scaffold to pass from the zone of possible development, through the zone of proximal development, over the zone of insurmountable difficulty, and into a higher zone of prospective development. The classroom instructor serves as the catalyst providing the mechanisms needful for the student to advance cognitively from one level to a higher plane the student likely would not otherwise achieve (Anderman, & Anderman, 2009). Unfortunately, Vygotsky died in 1934 at 38 years-of-age before completing his ZPD theory (Lankford, 2005). His writings were subsequently suppressed having run afoul of Stalin's collectivism (seizure of peasant farms) and

industrialization (Lankford, 2005). Vygotsky's (1929) hypotheses were not explored and expanded until after Stalin's death in 1953 (Lankford, 2005).

Constructivism comports with a Christian worldview. In this sense Vygotsky (1929) is reconciled with the biblical prophet Isaiah who said, "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? . . . For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:9-10). Again, the Christian worldview does not seek to conflict with modern scholarship, but rather it often endorses and enhances some theoretical frameworks. Thus Vygotsky's (1978) child-development learning theory, constructivism, and scaffolding in particular, serve as the theoretical framework for textbook adoption within the Christian school.

Textbook Adoption Related Literature

Textbook adoption studies have been extant in the United States since the inception of public education in the late 1800s. Watt (2009) presents a comprehensive and analytical review of the published research literature tracing the development and key factors guiding textbook adoption selection in the U.S. As public schools developed age-graded organization in the mid-nineteenth century, standardizing and uniformity became a concern locally and nationally. Textbook selection was centralized and dominated by bureaucracies. Watt (2009) reviewed the development of state-level adoption, content and publisher concerns, review of large-scale research investigating, lack of uniformity, and review of research leading to increased emphasis on state and local-level adoption procedures.

By the late 1960s most state legislatures had established textbook selection committees. State-level adoption emerged as dominant in several states including Texas, the state exercising greatest influence in textbook content in recent decades (Barlow et al., 2005;

National Center for Science Education, [NCSE], 2012). States with localized adoption vested decisional authority in selection committees appointed by school boards. Researchers Tulley and Farr emerged from the meta-analysis as the key researchers in textbook adoption in the U.S. (Farr, Tulley, & Powell, 1987a; Farr, Tulley, & Rayford, 1987b; Tulley, 1985; Tulley & Farr, 1985; Tulley & Farr, 1990). While positing the positive effects of localized adoption, Farr, Tulley, and Powell (1987) cautioned that administrators may not have the time, expertise or inclination to conduct thorough textbook analyses. This observation affirms Cox's similar assertion in context of textbook adoption in Christian schools (Cox & Haney, 2002). Such studies laid the foundation for the current research that elaborates on factors such as content, quality, and curriculum alignment (Watt, 2009).

A Decisional Ethic Adaptable to Textbook Adoption

Many MCDA techniques exist and could be adapted to textbook analysis (Ishizaka & Nemery, 2012). The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a well-established decisional instrument used in business and government and has precedence in the textbook adoption literature in Ho and Hsu (2011) study. MCDA and AHP software programs are available to minimize specialized skills that might otherwise be prohibitive of utilization these systems. (Ho & Hsu, 2011; Ishizaka & Nemery, 2012; Rajeev, Rohit, & Ambedkar, 2012; Saaty, 1990; Saaty & Vargas, 1994). Additionally, Ishizaka and Labib (2011) identified one of the benefits of AHP is its utility in evaluation and application in both quantitative as well as qualitative problems of similar decisional values and preferences. Nydick and Hill (1992) and Fariborz, Burton, and Banerjee (1990) likewise cited numerous applications of AHP in resolving qualitative problems.

AHP was developed by T. S. Saaty (1990) in the early 1980s as both a multi-criteria and multi-participant decisional analysis model. AHP, as applied to textbook adoption in the

Ho and Hsu (2011) study, requires a high degree of mathematical proficiency (Saaty, 1990). Even with the availability of MCDA software, the steep learning curve required for application of AHP in the current research context could prove prohibitive. Considering most educators are familiar with weighted averaging as used in grade assessments, the current research study draws from applicable elements of AHP and adapts these to the textbook adoption process through the process of weighted averaging.

The strength of AHP is its ability to determine the highest rating choice among multiple options of varying strengths and weaknesses, multiple categorical criteria of varying degrees of importance to the decision makers, and multiple external concerns or groups affected by the decision (Saaty, 1990). Defining the hierarchical order and cross-analyzing the values of each is key to the model. Saaty and Shih (2009) defined hierarchy as a, “stratified system for organizing people, ideas or things, whereby each element of the system, except for the top element which is the goal of the hierarchy, falls in a level and is subordinate to other elements in the level above” (p. 868).

AHP identifies the decision-making criteria based upon the organization’s values and leadership objectives. These criteria are then arranged hierarchically in respect to predefined values and objectives. This process is defined by Fariborz et al. (1990) as, “a decision-aided method which decomposes a complex multi-factor problem into a hierarchy, in which each level is composed of specific elements” (p. 5). Nydick and Hill (1992) posited a three-step procedure for determining an organization’s values hierarchy:

The problem of hierarchy lends itself to an analysis based upon the impact of a given level on the next higher level. The process begins by determining the relative importance of the criteria in meeting the goals. Next, the focus shifts to measuring

the extent to which the alternatives achieve each of the criteria. Finally, the results of the two analyses are synthesized to compute the relative importance of the alternatives in meeting the goal. (p. 32)

Such values hierarchies are often determined and ordered by the beliefs and judgments of the decision makers (Nydick & Hill, 1992). Once the value preferences or criteria are determined, a rating matrix is developed based on a Likert-type scale. The decisional options are then analyzed and rated against the predefined organization's/decision-makers' values.

The preference criteria are defined and ordered in advance of any decisional analysis. This ordering affects the Dependence Axiom, a principle that asserts comparisons of elements at a lower level in the hierarchy are dependent upon elements at the higher level (Fariborz, et al. 1990). Once these hierarchical values are determined, they should not be altered in that doing so would mar the integrity of the decisional ethic. Altering the preferences at any point during the decisional process could give the appearance of manipulating the outcome necessitating the development of new hierarchy (Fariborz, et al., 1990). The decisional options are individually rated and scored against the hierarchically aligned values.

After citing some of the weakness of Likert scales and various research studies that explored alternatives, Ishizaka and Labib (2011) found the most often used scale in the research literature is the linear scale based upon the fundamental scale in Table 1.

Table 1

The 1-9 Fundamental Scale

Intensity of Importance	Definition
1	Equal Importance
2	Weak
3	Moderate importance
4	Moderate plus

5	Strong importance
6	Strong plus
7	Very strong or demonstrated importance
8	Very, very strong
9	Extreme importance

(Ishizaka and Labib, 2011, p. 14, 338)

Nydick and Hill (2009) posited a variation of the nine-point scale. In this model the verbal judgments or preferences were presented as “Extremely Preferred . . . 9; Very Strongly Preferred . . . 7; Strongly Preferred . . . 5; Moderately Preferred . . . 3; Equally Preferred . . . 1. The intermediate values of 2, 4, 6, and 8 provide additional levels of discrimination” (p. 33). In practice using Nydick and Hill’s (2009) model, where decision makers submitted different ratings on the same decisional category, the even numbers serve as compromisers (or tie-breakers) allowing completion of the decisional matrix.

AHP follows a procedural pattern: (a) define the problem, (b) generate a list of organizational values, (c) organize the list hierarchically using a series of pairwise (top-down) comparison charts, (d) identify each option’s qualities, strengths, and abilities, (e) evaluate and rate each option based on the predefined organizational grid (a Likert scale), (f) calculate the highest scoring candidate, and (g) make a decision (Saaty & Begicevic, 2010). Diagram 1 illustrates an AHP textbook adoption model styled after Saaty and Begicevic’s (2010) decisional concept map.

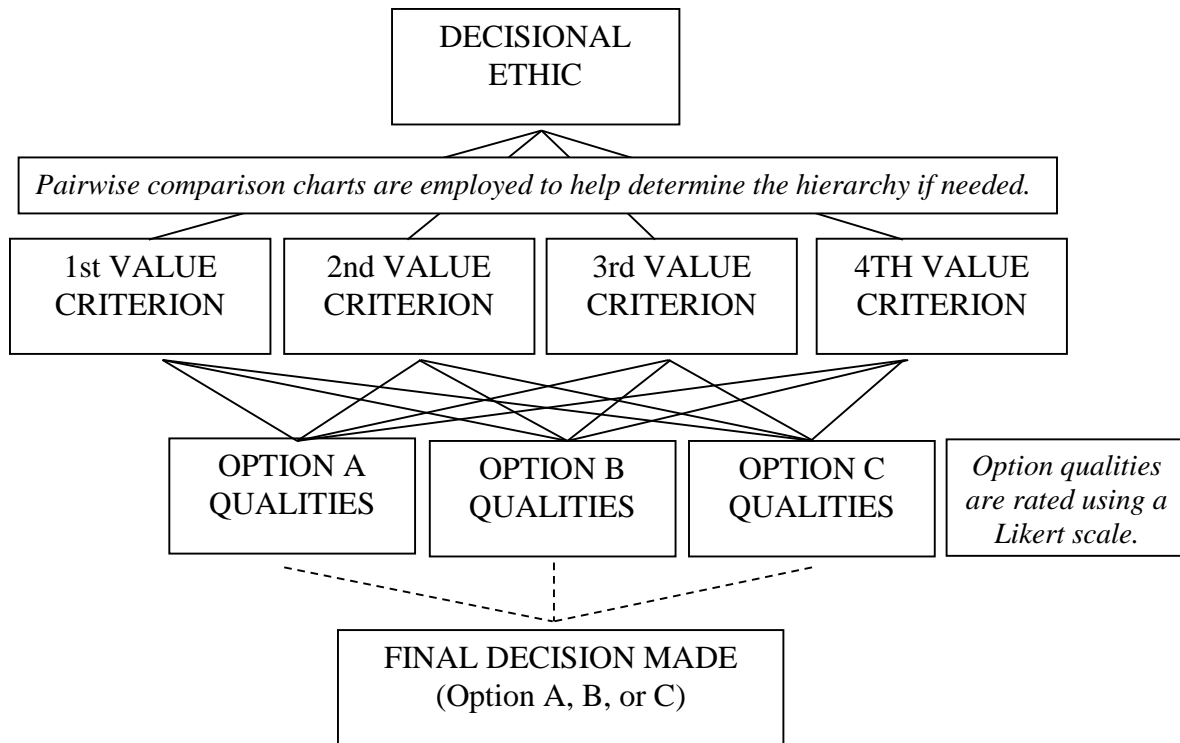


Figure 1. Textbook Adoption Model using AHP

The term ‘decisional ethic’ as applied herein addresses the fact that the needs and values of the decision-makers’ are subjective. The decisional ethic, and the Analytical Hierarchical Process in particular, controls for decision-maker subjectivity by arranging the organization’s or decision maker’s values and objectives criteria into a hierarchy that is ordered in advance of any decisional analysis (Saaty & Begicevic, 2010; Vargas, 1990). Barlow et al. (2005) demonstrated that decision-making in the area of textbook adoption likewise is subjective by nature. Even the most politically correct and deliberately non-biased approach is in fact biased. Barlow et al. (2005) showed that amending historic terminology to meet a present-day standard of acceptability (such as referring to *Indians* in the historical context as *Native Americans* and other like changes) presents a politically correct revisionist perspective that is by definition biased. MCDA controls for biases by converting the decision-makers’ subjective preferences into

numerical values. Decisional bias is not eliminated; it is in fact highlighted, but subjectivity and bias in the final decisional outcome is controlled by the analytic process.

The values criterion in Diagram 1 represent the criteria for the decision based upon the decision makers' core operational values and objectives. Any number of values criteria might be defined, and these are scaled in hierarchical order in advance of the decisional analysis. Each of the decisional options are then rated as to the perceived degree that they comport to the pre-defined values criteria. Within-case and across-case analysis is performed (the Process aspect of AHP), and the final analysis yields an objective, numerical value that informs the decision-maker as to the option that most closely comports with the decision-makers' initial objective.

While pairwise clustering is a pertinent part of AHP, it is not particularly relevant in the current research design in that the organizational objectives, faith ethic, and learning objectives in Christian schools would be clearly defined in the mission statement. Setting these factors in a hierarchical order should not be an issue warranting the pairwise clustering step for administrators, but it is presented as a functional aspect of AHP none the less (Ishizaka & Labib, 2011; Ishizaka & Nemery, 2012; Nydick & Hill, 1992; Saaty, 1990; Saaty & Begicevic, 2010; Saaty & Hsu-Shih, 2009; Saaty & Vargas, 1994; Vargas, 1990).

Even though pairwise comparison modeling is not employed herein, it was used in the textbook adoption methodology in Ho and Hsu (2011) and might prove relevant to researchers interested in MCDA or AHP in creating a textbook adoption or other decisional analysis. Pairwise clustering is useful in paring down multiple categories into a hierarchical order of importance. It is often represented in the research in statistical language. Ishizaka and Labib (2011) stated, "it is easier and more accurate to express one's opinion on only two alternatives than simultaneously on all the alternative. The judgment is a relative value or a quotient a/b of

two quantities a and b ” (p. 14337). Pairwise clustering is represented in many graphic is nothing more than the decision-makers’ preference of (First tier) a/b , a/c , a/d , a/e ; (Second tier) b/c , b/d , b/e ; (Third tier) c/d , c/e ; (Fourth tier) d/e . Comparisons a/a and b/b and etc. are not valid and are omitted from the matrix. The pairwise cluster narrows all the possible options to one final option, and this finalist represents the decision-makers first preference. This value is then removed from the cluster, and the process is repeated until the last preference remains, and this value is the lowest priority option. Saaty and Begicevic (2010) demonstrated how various problems might be reduced using pairwise clustering one of which resembled an inverted sports tournament bracket. Diagram 2 follows this thinking and presents the initial pairwise cluster in the design of a sports tournament bracket.

Pairwise Clustering, Solve for First Priority: a , b , c , d , or e

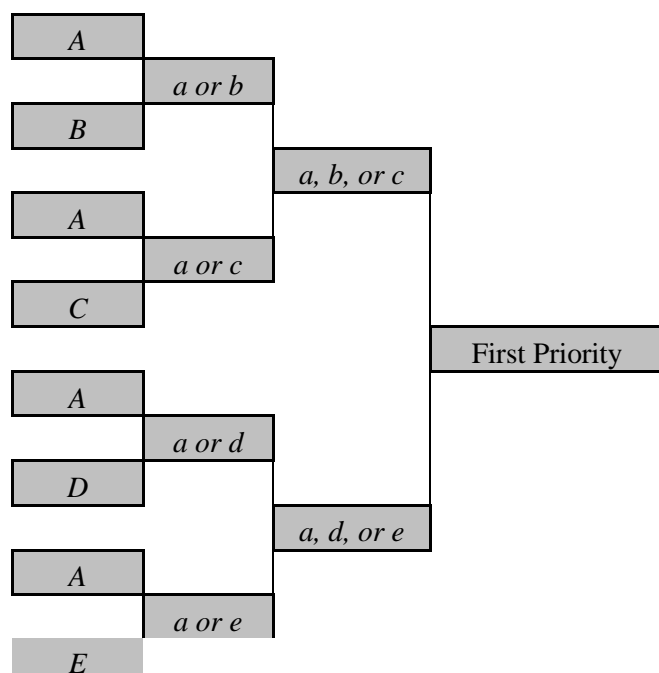


Figure 2. Pairwise Clustering, Solving for First Priority: a , b , c , d , or e

Values a through e in the diagram represent the decisional values criteria of the organization or decision makers. AHP requires that these preferences be arranged in a top-down hierarchy. To

determine this order of importance, a series of *a* or *b* comparisons is made leading to a final preference value that is the most important factor in the listing. This preference value is thus removed from the list, and the process is repeated until all the values have been arranged in their order of importance. These values are assigned a weight based upon their ordinal rank in the hierarchy; although, many other scales are extant in the literature (Ishizaka & Labib, 2011). Once the hierarchical values of the categories are ordered and weighted, the options are rated individually using one of any number of Likert-type rating instruments. Use of Likert scales was the only consistent commonality across all the research studies in the literature review (Altman, Ericksen, & Pena-Shaff, 2006, Cox & Haney, 2002, Cox et al., 2007, Doig, 2004, Durwin & Sherman, 2008, Emme, 1939, Hashemi & Rahimpour, 2011, Ho & Hsu, 2011, Sicola & Chesley, 1999, Wen-Cheng, Chien-Hung, & Chung-Chieh, 2011, Wong, 2009). As the options are scored and rated against the decisional criteria as defined in the hierarchical structure, the highest-scoring option represents an objective decision based upon the objective and ethic of the decision-maker.

The current research design borrows from MCDA theory. AHP, for example, is capable of factoring multiple levels of criteria and the diverse concerns of various stakeholders. In addition to the decisional criteria and the options, the design factored multiple categories such including multiple decision-makers, the decision-makers' scope of authority, groups affected, and decisional objectives. Saaty and Begicevic (2010) presented an illustration wherein AHP was employed in a complex decisional analysis involving a multi-layered multi-criteria problem. The U.S. Department of Interior employed AHP to determine the optimal water level to be maintained in a dam. The pertinent stakeholder concerns included (a) decisional criteria: financial, political, environmental, and social; (b) decision makers: U. S. Congress, Department

of Interior, courts, states, and lobbies; (c) factors: clout, legal position, potential financial loss, irreversibility of environment, archeological problems, and current financial resources; (d) groups affected: farmers, recreationalists, power users, and environmentalists; (e) objectives: irrigation, flood control, flat dam, white dam, cheap power, and protection of the environment. The decisional options were to maintain the water level at either full or half-full. A multi-layered decisional matrix consisting of five individual matrices representing the concerns of each interest group emerged from these categorical concerns leading to the final decision.

Another and perhaps more relevant model concerned the decision-making process employed in a routine employment hiring process (Saaty & Begicevic, 2010). First an AHP facilitator prepared a decisional matrix defining the goal or statement of the problem; that is, to choose the best candidate of four finalists for employment. Next the decisional objectives and values criteria of the organization/decision-makers were identified. Such criteria included: experience, education, starting salary, impression, numbers and measures, languages, Science and Humanities, behavior processes personality, and inter-personal relations. These factors included both objective and subjective values and create only a single layer of criteria as illustrated in Diagram 1 unlike the prior illustration that presented multiple layers of value criteria. AHP requires that these values criteria be ordered hierarchically and weighted in advance. The decision-makers then evaluated and rated each of the finalists (decisional options) for the employment position by each of the value criteria categories. The candidate whose skill set, work ethic, and personality that most closely suited the value objectives of the decision-makers ultimately emerged from the decisional matrix (Saaty & Begicevic, 2010). This illustration closely aligns with the decisional model to be employed in textbook adoption.

Throughout the research process I prepared such matrices and utilized them in analyzing the research data within each case and side-by side in across-case analysis of the site studies.

Education Leadership Models

The research-based decisional formula is merely a guide for decision-making by the leaders of the institution. In a study involving ACSI and other like schools, Boerema (2011) posited several contemporary issues relevant to Christian school leadership including balancing curricula alignment with a faith objective (or Christian worldview). This study utilized surveys of a diverse array of interested parties to ascertain important aspects of school leadership. Regardless of how the problems or questions are defined, however, organizational leadership operates within the parameters of an organizational ethic or system of values generally understood and accepted by leaders (Owens & Valesky, 2011). Thus textbook adoption is rooted in the decisional ethic or value system of the leaders and decision-makers within the institution or organization.

Ethics in leadership. Ethics implies relationship (Hanson, 2009). Leaders within organizations do not operate in a vacuum, but rather leadership affects others (Owens & Valesky, 2011). Ethics is generally approached holistically from either the deontological (right/wrong) or the teleological (ends-based) perspective (Rebore, 2001). Neither approach, however, is ultimately satisfying. The deontological argument pits the will of one against welfare of another. This position begs the question of authority to determine what is right and what is wrong. That which one might determine to be beneficial for the individual may prove detrimental for the group and visa-versa. Teleology falls short by ultimately invoking the relativistic fallacy that the end justifies the means. This system likewise begs the question of authority to determine the value of the objective destined to benefit some to the detriment of others. Christian ethics

presents a more satisfying worldview than either the rights- or ends-based systems. The Christian worldview presents the Word of God as an external and authoritative standard upon which to base an operational ethic and objective worldview (Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001; Schaeffer, 2005).

Individual ethics extend collectively to the organization. Institutional ethics requires moral leadership, shared vision, and a positive organizational culture (Gorton & Alston, 2009; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Of the many leadership styles addressed in the research literature including autocratic, democratic, collaborative, and *laissez-faire*, Owens and Valesky (2011) endorsed a collaborative model in educational leadership. Within a school culture, participants enjoy a degree of shared values (Hoy & Miskel, 2008), and this is especially true in a Christian school. Shared leadership is a methodology that can be utilized beneficially in textbook adoption (Cawthorne, 2010).

Shared or participative leadership. Within the context of textbook adoption in secondary education, the focus falls upon the academic leaders and those within the institution who make textbook adoption decisions. The research literature points to various applications of shared or participative leadership with positive results. Middle managers occupy a unique and functional role in the decisional ethic as touching both the decision makers and those directly impacted by their decisions (Cawthorne, 2010). In this context, the middle managers were librarians. In the current application, however, faculty would fill this role as the touchstone between administrators and students. Additionally, Sukirno and Siengthai (2011) found a direct correlation between teacher participation in decisional matters to higher performance, enhanced motivation, and renewed initiative in their classroom performance. Other researchers also

advocated for student participation in textbook adoption (Durwin & Sherman, 2008; Mager & Nowak, 2012; Peeters, Churchwell, Mauro, Cappelletty, & Stone, 2010).

As an example of shared leadership, Durwin and Sherman (2008) presented an anecdotal research conundrum. When a Psychology faculty could not reach a final decision between two equally acceptable textbook options, they devised an empirical test. Professors teaching multiple sections of a given course employed one textbook option for some sections and the other option for other sections of the same course. At the close of the course, student performance measures were evaluated as well as student ratings of the two textbooks. Ultimately, both textbooks were adopted.

While the students cited above were engaged only to settle a stalemate between professors, Mager and Nowak (2012) advocated for student input and participation in the textbook adoption process. Although students weighted categorical importance factors differently than faculty, Mager and Nowak (2012) found no negative affect of employing student participation in the rating and adoption process. Peeters et al. (2010) likewise reported successful results with student inclusion in testing the efficacy of revisions within a Pharmacology textbook.

Shared leadership is addressed in the textbook adoption research literature in the context of higher education. The current study, however, will be limited to administrators, faculty, and other key stakeholders within private, secondary schools only. The initial contact survey (See Appendix C Initial Contact Survey) is designed to identify all textbook adoption decision-makers for the interview stage of the research project.

Textbook Adoption Concerns

Of the adoption studies reviewed for the current research project, no uniform or research-based decisional instrument was present in the literature (Altman et al., 2006, Cox & Haney, 2002, Doig, 2004, Durwin & Sherman, 2008, Emme, 1939, Hashemi & Rahimpour, 2012, Ho & Hsu, 2011, Sicola & Chesley, 1999, Wen-Cheng et al., 2011, Wong, 2009). Each researcher devised a unique and original methodology for the task. These studies and factors are identified in Tables 2 and 3. Even so, certain commonalities were observable across most adoption models. These similarities shall be highlighted throughout the study. Nevertheless, textbook adoption does lend itself to MCDA (Ho & Hsu, 2011, Ishizaka & Nemery, 2012). The application of MCDA systems to the adoption challenge will herein be examined in more detail.

The content-categorical approach. Numerous categories of textbook content emerged from the literature review. These methodologies ranged in complexity from a simple checklist of categories and option-comparison (Wong, 2009), to employing a MCDA business model (Ho & Hsu 2011). Durwin and Sherman's (2008) study, designed to compare textbook comprehension, identified the factors categorized as, "the students' background and knowledge level, course type (e.g., upper level or lower level), the course's objectives, and characteristics such as readability, scope, and chapter organization" (p. 29).

Although many studies are available online at the practitioner level, current peer-reviewed research in the area of textbook adoption is limited and virtually nonexistent in the Christian School context. The parameters of the literature review were expanded to include any relevant textbook adoption studies. Even though some studies cited are dated, the content-categories of the period do not seem to have any negative impact upon the research approach, data analysis, or the findings. (Cox, 2002; Doig, 2004; Emme, 1939; Sicola & Chesley 1999).

Upon recording the salient features of each textbook adoption study, I observed significant repetition of the categorical themes listed below. The following tables present a synthesis of the content categories from each of the research studies cited in the study.

Table 2 shows the content categories of concern in the Altman et al., (2006) study, (coded as research study A), were content, pedagogy, student concerns, teacher concerns, and publisher. Textbook B, the Cox and Haney (2002) study, rated textbooks for content, student concerns, publisher, and a set of parameters unique to that study not in any of the other research studies cited herein as other. Therefore, of these two studies, the categories identified as content, student concerns and publisher emerged in the research literature as common themes across most of the studies. Table 2 synthesizes all of the content-categorical findings from each of the named (and coded) research studies. The tally identifies the frequency count for each content category.

Table 2

Categories Identified from the Literature

Content-Criteria	Research Studies (coded A-K)											Tally
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
Academic Content	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Pedagogy (teaching focus)	X					X			X			3
Course alignment			X		X						X	3
Student concerns	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X	8
Teacher concerns	X					X		X			X	4
Publisher	X	X					X	X				4
Credibility						X			X			2
Language (graded)				X	X	X					X	4
Format				X	X					X		3
Assessments				X					X			2
Quality/Features				X		X	X	X	X	X		6

Graphics			X			X	X	3
Other	X	X	X	X			X	6

Table 3 serves as a legend for the coding of the research studies listed in Table 1.

Table 3

Coding of Research Studies

Research Studies	Code
Altman et al. (2006)	A
Cox & Haney (2002)	B
Cox et al. (2007)	C
Doig (2004)	D
Durwin & Sherman (2008)	E
Emme (1939)	F
Hashemi & Rahimpour (2012)	G
Ho & Hsu (2011)	H
Sicola & Chesley (1999)	I
Wen-Cheng et al. (2011)	J
Wong (2009)	K

The literature review informed the content-categories. The field marked Other in Table 2 represents a wide array of categorical considerations in the research studies cited above. Saaty and Begicevic (2010) endorsed generalizing such a category saying, “we have proposed using the concept of ‘other’ as a criterion to complete a set of criteria . . . that would help give closure to the question of uniqueness of ranking” (p. 965). Two Cox studies, Cox and Haney (2002) and Cox et al. (2007), were concerned with faith-related factors such as Christian

worldview, Christian character content, biblical concepts, and faith integration. Doig (2004) was the only researcher to rate the quality of glossaries and indices. Durwin and Sherman (2008) included student assessments of textbooks. These researchers reasoned that students are more likely to use a textbook they like rather than one with less student appeal. Sicola and Chesley (1999) included a general category that was not clearly defined. From the context I understood this field to be an overall positive or negative subjective rating. Weng-Cheng et al. (2009) included a category that assessed the degree to which student activities could be applied in various group settings and asked if these activities built upon prior skills and knowledge gained.

While all the textbook studies in the literature review included helpful defining comments for the stated categories, only Emme (1939), Wong (2009), and Ho and Hsu (2011) featured extensive sub-categories under the content-category headings. Additionally, both Sicola and Chesley (1999) and Ho and Hsu (2011) provided detailed information on the textbook rating instruments. Whereas the former developed an instrument for assessing Nursing textbooks, the latter adopted the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) a mathematical decision-making model specifically adapted for textbook adoption (Ho & Hsu, 2011).

The literature review informed the predictable results. As shown in Table 2, the thematic repetition of content categories across the 11 studies listed suggests a hierarchy or order of importance based upon repetition of similar themes. An ordering of these categories follows as: content and student concerns (cited in eight studies), quality/features (six studies), teacher concerns, publisher, and language (four studies), pedagogy, course alignment, format, and graphics (three studies), and credibility and assessments (two studies). Additionally, several studies cited categories of concern that were unique to the research design defined herein as other. These content categories are weighted; that is, assigned a multiplier, for future calculation

in the textbook analysis process. Table 4 presents a theoretical hierarchy based upon this synthesis across the 11 research studies.

Table 4

Categories Weighted by Frequency Count

Content Categories or Themes	No. of Studies	Weight (multiplier)
Content	8	5x
Student concerns	8	5x
Quality/Features	6	4x
Teacher concerns	4	3x
Publisher	4	3x
Language	4	3x
Pedagogy	3	2x
Course alignment	3	2x
Format	3	2x
Graphics	3	2x
Credibility	2	1x
Assessments	2	1x
Other	6	n/a

The content categories cited above present a research-based rationale for the current study. As demonstrated by the frequency count charted above, certain themes emerged across the field of studies. The frequency of these recurring categories suggests a hierarchical ordering similarly reflected in the Ho and Hsu (2011) study that utilized a rating instrument. Ultimately, the current research project shall synthesize the research findings from the field research in the

same manner as the findings from the literature review to answer the research questions. In this sense, the synthesis of results from the literature review is a preview of the expectations of the research project in the Christian school context.

Adapting AHP to textbook selection. Designing a textbook adoption instrument is not the purpose of this study; however, instrumentation is an important aspect of the overall construct. Vargas (1990), a colleague of Saaty in developing AHP, presented four assumptions in designing a decisional matrix. When preparing the decisional analysis, it is imperative that the decisional factors be comparable or hierarchically orderable; the categories must be homogeneous; the categories must be independent, and the decisional matrix must be complete (Vargas, 1990). Based upon these criteria, all of the stated elements of the AHP instrument are adaptable to textbook adoption. The decisional values or objectives may be ordered based upon hierarchal importance; the categories are uniform and relate to one another; the categories will be consolidated into themes and independent codes, and the decisional matrix will be closed; that is, the instrument will be finalized and presented to the participants in the adoption event.

Designing a MCDA instrument. Decision makers first identify the problem that a decision is required to solve. The decisional objectives might be based upon the values criteria of the organization or the decision maker and the decisional objectives. By way of example, Cox et al. (2007) designed a faith-based textbook adoption study for Christian schools based upon Christian character attributes derived from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). From this values-based foundation decision-makers created a set of criteria. The AHP studies call for pairwise comparison rankings to establish the hierarchical order (Ishizaka & Nemery, 2012; Ishizaka & Labib, 2011; Nydick & Hill, 1992; Saaty, 1990; Saaty & Begicevic, 2010; Saaty & Hsu-Shih, 2009; Saaty & Vargas, 1994; Vargas, 1990). Again, this step would not be necessary

where the lead administrator sets the scale. Once a hierarchical order is established, weighting the hierarchy or weighted averaging provided an avenue more familiar to educators than adapting AHP or other quantitative methods. A rating system for the available options utilizes the Likert scale. All of the textbook research studies cited herein applied various iterations of the Likert scale. Wong (2009) and Sicola and Chesley (1999) presented the most comprehensive and adaptable rating constructs. Table 5 presents a hypothetical example of a weighted averaging chart with explanations following.

Table 5

Hypothetical Textbook Analysis Chart

	Weight or multiplier	Textbook Sample A		Textbook Sample B		Median Score Sample C		Maximum Score Sample D	
<u>Categories</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Value</u>
Student Concerns	4x	5	20	4	16	3	12	5	20
Content (current)	4x	5	20	3	12	3	12	5	20
Quality/Features	3x	2	6	4	12	3	9	5	15
Teacher concerns	3x	2	6	3	9	3	9	5	15
Publisher	3x	3	9	3	9	3	9	5	15
Language (grade)	3x	2	6	3	9	3	9	5	15
Format/Graphics	3x	1	3	5	15	3	9	5	15
Course alignment	2x	0	0	3	6	3	6	5	10
Credibility	2x	1	2	0	0	3	6	5	10
Assessments	1x	3	3	5	5	3	3	5	5
Biblical fidelity	4x	4	16	3	12	3	12	5	20
Christian ethic	4x	4	16	3	12	3	12	5	20
Weighted (Sum) = 36		Sum Values		Sum Values		Sum Values		Sum Values	
Normalizing: $36 / 36 = 1$		107 / 36		117 / 36		108 / 36		180 / 36	
		Option A		Option B		Median		Highest	
Weighted Average	Total /36	Score: 2.97		Score: 3.25		Score: 3.0		Score: 5.0	

Note: Derived from the literature review.

Weighting in the Table 5 is nothing more than assigning a multiple between one and four representing the predetermined value of each category from the literature review. The categories of highest importance to the decision makers have a value of 4(x); while the least important have a value of 1(x) value. The rating is based upon the Likert scale but may be any sequential ordinal scale. Rate merely represents the descriptive statistics from a Likert (numerical or value) rating scale. The rating used in Table 5 is a 1-5, low-to-high scale. Value is the Rate multiplied by the Weight. Normalizing the values requires the sum of the Values be divided by the sum of the Weights. This process is illustrated further in Table 6 and the discussion following.

Textbooks A and B represent viable options while examples C and D are controls. Even though A scored higher on the most important categories, student concerns and content, B scored higher overall. Median score, example C, shows the median score with the given weights, is 3.0 (as might be expected in that 3 is the median number between 1 and 5), while D represents the highest possible score: 5.0 on a 5-point rating scale. The median score, therefore, gives the decision-maker a reference point, in this case, showing option A scored only 2.97 or below the median on a 1–5 scale. Textbook option A for all its initial appeal in the most important categories, proved to rate a little below what one might have expected. Weighted averaging converts multiple subjective values into an objective measure by multiplying the Rate times the Weight and then dividing the product value by the sum of the Weight column for a given option. In the example given, textbook B would be selected as the option that is most closely aligned with the pre-defined decisional values of the institution.

Ishizaka and Labib (2011) presented a concise and understandable example of calculating weighted averaging. While providing statistical formula in their illustration, the descriptive

language and tables as presented in Table 6 omit formulaic language in order to demonstrate the simplicity of calculating weighted averages with basic mathematical skills.

(1) Sum the elements of each column (Formula omitted)

(2) Divide each value by its column sum (Formula omitted)

(3) Mean of row (Formula omitted)

Example 1. Consider the following comparison matrix:

	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>
<i>a</i>	1	4	2
<i>b</i>	$\frac{1}{4}$	1	$\frac{1}{2}$
<i>c</i>	$\frac{1}{2}$	2	1

The method “mean of row” derives the priorities as follows:

(1) Add the elements of the columns (1.75; 7; 3.5)

(2) Normalize the columns

(3) Calculate the mean of the rows ($a = 0.57$, $b = 0.14$, $c = 0.29$)

	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>
<i>a</i>	0.57	0.57	0.57
<i>b</i>	0.14	0.14	0.14
<i>c</i>	0.29	0.29	0.29

(Ishizaka & Labib, 2011, p. 14,338)

Figure 3. Comparison Matrix

The decisional matrices in Table 6 demonstrate, in the single-layered design, basic mathematical skills are all that are required to calculate the decisional choice once the analytical variables are established. The crucial step of normalizing the variables is somewhat enigmatic in

the given example and may require an additional step to adequately explain. Normalizing is important in that the raw factors must be converted into a multiple of 1.0. Normalizing integers may be likened to finding the common denominator of fractions. In the example presented, one can easily sum $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ as $\frac{3}{4}$ and convert it to .75. In actual situations, however, it is more likely a model would require an additional step to normalize the numerical values.

To normalize the factors, one simply sums the column that represents the weighted values (assuming any fractions are converted). Next each integer in the column is divided by the sum of the weighted column. Normalizing brings the final rating value of each object back to scale. The reviewers each rated the elements on the Likert-type (1-5 or like) construct. Then after multiplying the elements by their weighted values, the stated divisor (36 in Table 5) restores the values back to a Likert rating and final research-based decision.

Figure 4. Summing the Columns

Summing the columns:			
	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>
<i>a</i>	1	4	2
<i>b</i>	$\frac{1}{4}$ (.25)	1	$\frac{1}{2}$ (.5)
<i>c</i>	$\frac{1}{2}$ (.5)	2	1
Sum	1.75	7	3.5
Normalizing the integers:			
	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>
<i>a</i>	$1 / 1.75 = 0.57$	$4 / 7 = .57$	$2 / 3.5 = 0.57$
<i>b</i>	$.25 / 1.75 = 0.14$	$1 / 7 = .14$	$.5 / 3.5 = 0.14$
<i>c</i>	$.5 / 1.75 = 0.28$	$2 / 7 = 0.28$	$1 / 3.5 = 0.28$

Thus expanding the normalizing step helps to clarify how researchers arrived at these findings.

The examples presented herein affirm the decisional process in a textbook analysis context as in virtually any decisional context involves quantifying of values. Trehan, Sharma, and Abedkar (2012) affirmed, “Decision making involves many intangibles that are required to be traded off and measured along with the tangibles” (p. 188). By determining the decisional values in advance (such as the content categories the decision-makers desire to have in a Christian textbook), and then by arranging these values in a hierarchical order and assigning them a weight determined from the frequency count in the literature, the largely subjective opinions or as Nydeck and Hill (1992) designated “managerial judgments” of the decision makers’ is converted to an objective numerical formula (p. 32). Next the individual options are independently evaluated and scored on a Likert-type scale as to how they rate in relation to the

decisional values. This rating is computed against the weighted values and is normalized. The weighted average is calculated revealing the option that most closely comports with the decisional objective.

This process aligns with the foundational MCDA theory of identifying the hierarchical criteria, determining the weights to be assigned to these values, and rating the decisional alternatives in view of this hierarchy to determine a preferred option (Trehan et al., 2012). Because the entire process focuses around controlling decisional bias by identifying preferences in advance, weighting them, and not allowing for alteration in the analysis process; the final decision reflects a high ethical practice. While reflecting the organization's biases, preferences, and objective(s), the final decision is not subject to personal bias or individual dominance in the decision-making process.

Other Research Findings

The literature review touched upon the next generation of textbook evolution incorporating the internet in textbook utilization. The terms *e-textbook* and *open textbook* are often used interchangeably. Even though these terms are similar, they are not the same. E- (electronic) textbooks are generally those published resources that are readily available through traditional print and online sources; that is, they are electronic versions of print material available in downloadable format (Chesser, 2012). Conversely, open textbooks generally are not published. The confusion arises in that open textbooks are created digitally from public online sources (or e-textbooks), but not all e-textbooks are derived from open sources. Because there are no printing and other hard-copy costs, e-textbooks (open and published) are typically less expensive than print versions. Additionally, publishers often bundle e-textbooks (and other e-books) by author or topic at drastically reduced costs as compared to print versions.

The next evolution of e-textbooks will involve an open-resource method of textbook development created by instructors from open resources on the internet (Petrides et al., 2011; Wiley et al., 2012). Among the advantages of open textbooks are cost (the information is free) and, more importantly, content. Instructors acting as e-textbook designers are able to tailor the textbook content into precise alignment with course objectives. Additionally, the plethora of peer-reviewed resources available through on-line libraries addresses any concerns of scholarship.

Petrides et al. (2011) praised the open textbook concept from both faculty and student perspectives. The only negative considerations were the time and data gathering/analysis techniques required to create a viable textbook. Wiley et al. (2012) likewise experienced positive results from allowing Science teachers to develop open textbooks but found printing and binding to be problematic and costly. Petrides et al. (2011) found students were very receptive to using electronic versions of textbooks more so than instructors. Although the Cox studies cited herein generally predate the e-textbook revolution, Cox et al. (2007) anticipated open textbooks as the next generation of textbook adoption in the Christian school context.

Summary

The literature is not lacking in textbook adoption studies in the public sector. Very little research exists concerning textbook adoption in the private/Christian school context. Shared leadership paradigms suggest administrators benefit from engaging middle managers; that is, teachers and others, in decision-making matters such as a textbook adoption project (Cawthorne, 2010). While adoption studies tend to develop new textbook analysis methodologies, there seems to be no standard or uniform adoption instrument universally recognized or utilized across the field. The literature review reveals a gap in the field of knowledge in textbook adoption

process within the private school context where the faith-ethic (biblical fidelity, Christian worldview, and faith integration) is a primary concern (Booth et al., 2009; Cox et al., 2007; Cox & Haney, 2002).

It is not sufficient to adopt public sector models to the private/Christian school, in that the faith ethic is both outside the scope of the former while being essential to the latter. As addressed earlier, secular and sacred values or worldviews are mutually exclusive (Deckard, 2009; Rebore, 2001). The Christian worldview and faith ethic represent a bias that Christian school administrators consider desirable in textbooks (Barlow et al. 2005; Mitchell, 2010). MCDA models may accommodate Christian school textbook adoption concerns (Ho & Hsu, 2011; Ishizaka & Nemery, 2012; Saaty, 1990; Saaty & Vargas, 1994; Trehan et al., 2012). More research is required to determine the current practice of Christian school administrators as a starting point for development of the content-categorical approach to textbook adoption (Booth et al. 2009).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this collective case study is to examine the textbook adoption process and decisional ethic; that is, the value criteria and process employed in Christian schools, specifically ACSI schools in North-central North Carolina. The research objective is to conduct original research of a representative number of ACSI-accredited school administrators or other decision-makers who have participated in textbook adoption events. Chapter Three addresses the reasons for employing the qualitative method and the collective case study design. The primary research question inquiring into current practice is followed by relevant decisional criteria and process subquestions. I introduce the research participants and the rationale behind the given sampling parameters. The setting of the research takes place at each site (school) where the participant-administrators and others serve and conduct the textbook adoption analyses. I also address the data gathering and analysis procedures. The chapter closes with discussions concerning trustworthiness in qualitative research and the ethical considerations, and how these concerns were addressed in the research methodology.

Design

The research employs a qualitative methodology focusing upon a collective or multi-site case study design (Yin, 1982). Collective case study research examines a phenomenon in multiple settings (Yin, 2009). Textbook adoption in the private sector is conducted on a case-by-case basis while adoption in the public sector is largely centralized in school boards or State-level adoptions committees (Barlow et al. 2005; Little, 2012). Yin (2009) confirmed that case study is the proper approach when the research concerns how or what questions, as is the case in the current research project.

The field of textbook adoption might be examined by various research methodologies. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) advised that often no single method may be construed to be more appropriate than another. The current study, assessing and adopting textbooks in a given context, might be addressed as an event phenomenon. Adoption of textbooks is also a cyclical event that corresponds with the ever changing publisher offerings, teaching and learning objectives, and the natural deterioration and replacement of current volumes. Throughout the data gathering and analyzing process from the individual sites, I also began the across-site analysis of data. Hence the research is defined as a collective (or multisite) case study.

Alternatively, one might seek to develop a grounded theory defining the practice. The topic may even be approached as descriptive research; although, the research literature in textbook adoption lacks a uniform or well established textbook adoption instrument. While such an adoption instrument might be designed, a foundation for a quantitative hypothesis might be difficult to support without empirical evidence (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Conversely, the objective of qualitative research is to determine the present status of a phenomenon or event (Schwandt, 2007). Considering that the objective of the current research is to examine multiple event-phenomena within and across several institutions, researchers Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Yin (1982) prescribe a qualitative multisite case study design.

Research Questions

Research questions serve to govern the entire research process. They address the research problem, and guide the inquiry, analysis, and conclusory processes.

Primary Research Question

What textbook adoption practices and values do administrators or adoption committees consider when reviewing textbooks for classroom use in Christian schools?

First Criteria Subquestion

What content factors, stylistic elements, and physical features do administrators consider in textbook adoption?

Second Criteria Subquestion

To what extent do administrators give consideration to Christian worldview factors when evaluating scholarship in textbooks?

First Process Subquestion

How were textbook content criteria prioritized?

Second Process Subquestion

What instruments, if any, were utilized for rating textbooks?

Setting

Because the research involves multiple sites where data will be collected, the setting is geographically situated at the various locations where the data collection occurs.

Description

The setting of the site visits was limited to accredited ACSI member schools located in North-Central North Carolina. The research model requires that, in order for the comparisons to be meaningful, the variables selected for the research study must be comparable; that is, they must have some degree of homogeneity (Fariborz et al, 1990). While it may be feasible to design research that compares unlike variables, in the context of qualitative studies, Fariborz et al., (1990) stated, “we cannot compare automobiles with apples” (p. 8). The ACSI’s (2012, 2014) self-imposed academic standards are recognized by various states, colleges, boards, and international concerns. The research requirement for comparability across research sites is

satisfied by internal accreditation of ACSI schools as well as a general consensus of faith among member institutions.

The religious beliefs of the ACSI member schools generally comport with the Christian worldview of this research project. These tenets of faith are broadly defined as Protestant and Evangelical (See Appendix B ACSI Statement of Faith). The primary distinction between ACSI member schools and public counterparts is that ACSI schools seek to instill in their students a Christian worldview (Cox & Haney, 2002; Cox et al., 2007). In addition to the benefits of academic and spiritual homogeneity, utilizing the ACSI member schools provides virtually unlimited range for expansion of the research, if necessary. The site of the research will be at the location of each participant/administrator's school. I will conduct the interviews and gather data at each site and conduct preliminary fieldwork where feasible by visiting sites in advance of the interview and familiarizing myself with the school culture of the various institutions.

Rationale for Selection

The rationale for locating participants through ACSI (2012, 2014) is to utilize association membership to affect a predetermined set of faith criteria in addition to the academic standards. These faith criteria include belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible; one God in three persons, namely the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the incarnation, deity, sinless life, atonement (for others), death, burial, bodily resurrection, and imminent return of Jesus Christ; regeneration/salvation of man by faith alone in Christ; the resurrection of believers and union with Christ after death; and the present work of the Holy Spirit indwelling, infilling, and empowering those who believe. Such factors are elements that might otherwise be a "bias" and are, as Patton (2002) states, "therefore a weakness, becomes intended focus in qualitative

sampling, and therefore a strength” (p. 250). Because ACSI membership provides sufficient uniformity of the sample group no further vetting of candidates is necessary.

Participants

Selection of textbooks is an inherent aspect of academic course development (Haight-Keenan, 2012; Mitchell, 2010). Potential participants in the research project included any administrators or other textbook adoption decision-makers within ACSI member schools who have participated in prior adoption events.

Type of Sample

I used purposeful sampling to locate participants for this study. Patton (2002) defined purposeful or “criterion” sampling in situations where the participants are required to meet certain criteria (p. 243). My challenge was to identify Christian administrators who had participated in textbook selection and adoption studies in their respective schools. I also wanted to determine if other decision-makers were involved in the process at the various locations. The qualifying criteria for participation in the research study were ACSI membership and accreditation and personal participation in a textbook adoption study or event.

Sampling Procedures

With an abundance of ACSI schools near my home base of operation in North Central North Carolina, I began surveying for participants within a 50-mile radius of my home in the Winston-Salem area and continued to expand the geographical boundaries of the survey concentrically until an appropriate number of participants was reached. I initiated an email survey of contacts derived from public (internet) ACSI databases. I surveyed all ACSI schools within the sample area. The survey utilized SurveyMonkey™, a commercial, interactive survey service (See Appendix C Initial Contact Survey). The actual survey was interactive, very brief

(only seven questions) and designed to be recipient-friendly and easily returned by reply email. I selected qualified participants based upon replies from the initial e-mail survey. I also pursued personal referrals from several administrators who provided the same.

Sample Size

Determining sample size was based upon the nature of the research. Schwandt et al. (2007) presumed that case study research entails spending a great deal of time observing, interviewing, interacting, taking field notes and gathering copious amounts of data surrounding the case. The current research project, however, examines only a single-faceted aspect relating to current practice. In a multisite project that examines a single event phenomenon, Yin (2009) recommended a sample size of eight participants. Ultimately, thematic saturation drives the research as to the number of cases reviewed for the research project.

Demographics

The research participants ranged in age from mid-thirties to near retirement age. One, in fact, mentioned postponing retirement in order to assist his church in establishing a new school. The participants were evenly divided male and female. All had attained master's degrees, and two had earned doctorates. Table 6 presents an abbreviated introduction of the participants and the sites. All of the participants are Caucasians, and all of the sites are either K- or pre-K to 12, ACSI-accredited schools. A fully developed participant table is presented in Appendix F, Research Participants.

Table 6

Participant Summary

School	Administrator	Degrees	Years in Ed. / Admin.	Type of School or Affiliation	Approx. Enrolment
ALPHA	Mrs. McDonald	M.Ed.	25 / 6	Assemblies of God	100

School	Administrator	Degrees	Years in Ed. / Admin.	Type of School or Affiliation	Approx. Enrolment
BETA	Mr. Carter	M.Ed.	14 / 10	Southern Baptist	625
GAMMA	Dr. Jackson and	D.Min.	25 / 10	Private and	125
	Mrs. Dorsett	M.Ed.	15 / 5	Unaffiliated	
DELTA	Mrs. Hall	M.A.	24 / 5	Independent Private	250
EPSILON	Mr. Hurley	M.Ed.	22 / 10	Southern Baptist	550
KAPPA	Dr. Morris	M.A., Ph.D	40 / 30	Church of God	150
SIGMA	Miss Dorn	M.Ed.	30 / 20	Independent Baptist	130
OMEGA	Mrs. Teal	Ed.S.	20 / 4	Holiness	330

Procedures

No data was collected before obtaining IRB approval. Once the research phase began, I obtained written consent of each participant before conducting interviews. The study did not involve minor children. I identified prospects from public information published on the ACSI website where administrators' names, school addresses, and e-mail information is publicly available. I received written consent from the ACSI Director of Academic Affairs to contact administrators and conduct research in ACSI schools. My initial contact with administrators was via an interactive survey instrument via e-mail (See Appendix C Initial Contact Survey). I then contacted those qualified administrators who responded favorably to the survey and arranged a site visit. I forwarded these potential participants the initial contact letter (See Appendix D Participant/Administrator Contact Letter) and the confidentiality agreement (See Appendix E Confidentiality Statement). I also sent a draft in advance and brought to the interview an original and one copy of the IRB consent form explaining the purpose and extent of the site research to

the administrator for all participants to sign in advance of gathering any research data in compliance with the institutional IRB protocol (IRB, 2014). At each site I conducted a uniform, semi-structured interview with open-ended questions designed to encourage thoughtful verbal responses and recorded the same on a digital recording device (Patton, 2002; Yin, 1982).

I made careful observations and documented field notes in order to accurately describe the site experience (Patton, 2002). I observed the demographics, nature, and spirit of each faculty as well as the staff and student body. I asked the participants to discuss a flow chart of curricula development with an emphasis on textbook adoption. I transcribed the interviews verbatim and submitted the transcription to each participant for review. None of the participants wished to make any alteration to the interview narrative. I asked to see any other relevant data such as records, instruments or other documents administrators might have employed in textbook adoption events at the time of the interview. At each site visit I kept a detailed audit trail to accurately memorialize the facets of each site visit.

The Researcher's Role

A well-established principle of qualitative research affirms that the researcher becomes immersed in the hermeneutical process (Patton, 2002). Geertz (1973) suggested qualitative analysis differs from mere descriptive research in that the researcher incorporates context and perspective in both reporting and interpreting the findings. Whereas descriptive research presents findings, the current design attempts to give meaning to the data. As previously discussed, the researcher is the human instrument in interpreting the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To this end I shall address personal values and life experiences that inform the research process.

Personal Factors Affecting the Research: Axiology

Christian pollster George Barna (2005) asserted, “Everybody has a worldview” (p. 3). As a conservative, Evangelical Christian, I observe and interpret life from a distinctly Christian worldview. A worldview as a set of predispositions that are formed within the human psyche from birth that organize and interpret data input into useful and rational mental constructs (Barna, 2005). It is one’s philosophical outlook on life or the lens through which one views and interprets the world (Sire, 1976). Schwandt (2007) alluded to this concept as “lifeworld” or “philosophical hermeneutics” (pp. 177-178.)

Deckard (2009) illustrated worldview by employing a funnel metaphor to depict human psyche as the vessel into which all the stuff of life is poured. After swirling around in the cognitive realm, the processing phase, the human mind interprets the data based upon the culture, training, philosophical framework, morals, and beliefs of the individual. At the narrow end of the theoretical funnel one’s worldview or life-perspective is formed. A biblical worldview observes life through the lens of the Word of God (Schaeffer, 2005). I uphold the Bible as the moral absolute or prism through which all other matters of life are viewed and interpreted.

Professional Factors Affecting the Research: Rhetorical Stance

I am uniquely interested in the research topic on many levels. Having served 25 years as a judicial officer, I have been engaged in decision-making for many years albeit not in the Christian school context. Therefore, decisional ethics; that is, the criteria and process of objective decision-making, is a matter of personal and professional interest. Additionally, I have received formal education and credentials in both Bible (B.A. and M.A.R.) and as an Education Specialist in leadership and administration (Ed. S.). Therefore, this field of academic study summonses equally relevant interests in both Christian education and spiritual formation. As a

father of three who attended K-12 Christian schools, I have participated in the Christian school movement as both a parent and also as a high school student myself. In the mid '70s I attended an Accelerated Christian Education high school for two years. Later in life as concerned parents desiring to observe the sincerely held biblical mandate to provide a Christ-centered education for our three sons, my wife and I made the commitment to send our children to a Christian school. Homeschooling was not a viable option for us. Therefore, as an observer and interpreter of the data, I bring an informed, pragmatic, and experienced Christian perspective to the research.

Data Collection

No data was collected before obtaining IRB approval and written consent of each participant (See Appendix H IRB Approval Letter). I asked the participants to sign the IRB-approved consent documents in my presence before beginning each interview (See Appendix E Confidentiality Statement). The consent form was among the initial documents I forwarded to each administrator in advance of the site visit.

Methodologies Affecting Data Triangulation

No less than three methods of data collection were employed in order to implement a system of checks and balances or triangulation. These methods include surveys, formal interviews, observations and field notes, focus groups (where applicable), and gathering documents and other records. I interviewed each participating administrator on site. While there, I recorded detailed field notes and gathered other documents or records pertaining to the textbook adoption projects from the site. Shortly after each site visit, I jotted down reflections and points of interest as well as a running account of events. Once the interviews were transcribed, I employed member checking of the transcribed interview allowing participants to review the narrative and correct or clarify any data.

Survey

After identifying potential participants, I made initial contacts with ACSI member schools via SurveyMonkey™ via e-mail. The survey explored descriptive information about the school such as accreditation, religious affiliation, curriculum, and other elements. A sample survey from SurveyMonkey™ with questions relevant to textbook adoption is in Appendix C, Initial Contact Survey. From the qualifying information I was able to garner from public sources such as the internet, ACSI website, school websites, Linked-In™, and other like sources, I identified and e-mailed surveys to 20 qualifying schools. As per the IRB approved protocol, the first mailing was limited to schools within a 50-mile concentric range of my home locations. I expanded the mailings by 50-mile increments twice more before the desired number of qualified participants was reached.

Interviews

This study incorporates two specific interview models. The first interview is a peer-reviewed pilot interview as advocated by Yin (1982). The collective case study is erected upon a series of on-site participant interviews (Patton, 2002; Yin, 1982).

A peer-review pilot interview is advisable. Yin (1982) advocated for pilot studies as an “essential part of any multiple-site study” (p. 89). Prior to conducting an actual participant interview, I conducted a pilot interview with a colleague who has been involved with textbook adoption in order to determine if interview questions or procedures needed to be modified. I tested the survey questionnaire method and content as well as conducted an actual trial interview with the peer reviewer. I elicited feedback and made the recommended adjustments that were within the parameters of the IRB requirements. I also employed peer review after the pilot interview to enhance credibility.

On-site participant interviews are the primary data-gathering mechanism. Once the initial contact surveys were returned, I arranged on-site interviews with the prospective participants. The personal interview of each participant is the heart of the research project. Interview questions were be designed to examine textbook adoption factors raised in the literature review and in alignment with the stated purpose and research questions. I designed the interview questions to be semi-structured, flexible, and open-ended (Patton, 2002). In accordance with Yin (1982), the interviews were somewhat informal and semi-structured. While I followed the interview questions, I also prompted interviewees elaborate on pertinent matters to elicit deeper and richer understanding of the data. I also asked each participant for any available documents and records showing procedures of instruments used in textbook adoption.

During the interviews I asked the participants to describe the steps for creating a new curriculum focusing on any processed relating to selecting and adopting a textbook for the course. I made this a somewhat interactive exercise in that I visibly sketched a flow chart as the participant provided the steps. Most had created new courses for their schools, and they seemed to enjoy recounting the exercise while I was able to pinpoint more details on the textbook selection aspect of the project. Therefore, the data-gathering techniques included surveys, field notes, interviews, focus groups (where applicable), concept mapping, adoption documents, records, instruments, any current recently adopted textbooks. Table 7 provides the interview narrative followed by discussion and research-based rationale for the questions.

Table 7

Interview Questions

Leadership Questions

1. How long have you been the administrator here?
2. How would you define your leadership role in the organization?

Leadership Questions

3. To what extent are teachers or others involved in curricula development? Who determines who is in charge? Principal? School board? Any other stakeholders?

Textbook Adoption Questions

4. What role does faith play in textbook selection? Prompts: Faith-factors, Christian ethics factors, School mission factors
5. What percentage of textbooks in use are Christian? Secular? How do you address unchristian elements in secular textbooks in class? Do you intentionally include secular textbooks for discernment training?
6. How do you locate options for course curricula? Prompts: Publisher? Internet search? Professional Association?
7. Are there elements in textbooks that would disqualify them from use in this school?

Decisional Questions

8. When selecting textbooks for courses, what factors are considered? Prompts: Academic content, Alignment with course objectives, Alignment with a Faith ethic, Publisher criterion, Teacher helps, Student helps, Readability, Physical features, Cost, Technology interaction.
9. How would you prioritize these factors? (Create a flowchart if possible.) Prompt: Did you any such concept-mapping in prior adoption events?
10. Have you used any research instruments for categorizing and rating textbooks? Do you know of any? Any other documentation from prior textbook adoption processes?

The leadership questions frame the object of multi-site research (the decisional ethic or event analysis) within a context (Stake, 1994). Questions 1-3 above were designed to get the participants talking and to tell a little about themselves and their role at the institution. The underlying objective was to examine the administrator's leadership role, philosophy, and leadership style as well insight into each school's organizational structure. The leadership

questions satisfy the leadership aspects of the literature review. Some of the literature advocated for shared leadership among middle managers and even students. As anticipated, I was able to explore current trends in shared or participative leadership in textbook adoption (Cawthorn, 2010; Hanson, 2009; Kalargyrou et al., 2012; Peeters et al., 2010; Saaty, 1990; Saaty, & Shih, 2009; Sukirno et al., 1990).

The interview addresses the research concerns raised in the literature review concerning faith integration and Christian worldview factors within textbooks utilized in Christian schools (Booth et al., 2009; Cox et al., 2007; Cox & Haney, 2002). These criteria questions, 4-7 above, examine the heart of Christian education. Considering textbooks generally are presented as authoritative to students, the questions seek to examine how the administrator promotes a biblical worldview while attempting to prevent humanistic philosophies from creeping into the classroom.

The decisional questions, 8-10 above, address the decisional ethic (criteria and process) of the research. These questions address the content-categorical approach to textbook review used by virtually all researchers in the literature review (Durwin & Sherman, 2008; Hashemi & Rahimpour, 2011; Ho & Hsu, 2011; Petrides et al., 2011; Wiley et al., 2012). I explored how decision makers locate suitable textbook options such as preferred publishers, internet resources, or other resources. I also explored such factors as the academic content factors, physical features, cost, adoption cycles, and other criteria taken into consideration when evaluating textbooks.

Whereas time was an important factor to all the participants, rather than ask each one to create a flow chart of the adoption process, I elected to guide them through the hypothetical scenario of developing a new curriculum. I asked what steps would be implemented from

conception to implementation of a new course. The objective was to determine specifically where and how textbook selection would factor into course development. As each administrator answered, I sketched the flow chart which visually stimulated the participants in fleshing-out the process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis begins with disclosures bracketing the researcher's degree of involvement, any engagement with the data, and personal biases as previously disclosed. Qualitative coding consists of reading and rereading the data and identifying concepts, themes, and patterns in the narrative. Patton (2002) suggested by repeated reading of the interview transcripts, the researcher becomes immersed in the narrative striving to ferret out meaning from the data. The objective of qualitative research is to interpret meaning from the data. To this end I also compared the site data findings with the literature data (Patton, 2002). The literature review provides the basis for the comparative analysis of priorities in content analysis (Patton, 2002).

Bogden and Biklen (2007) identified numerous coding categories as well as a graphic abstract representing a system for data analysis and coding. Locational descriptions may be categorized as place, setting, and situation. People identified in the narrative may be coded by relationship, occupation, or role. Activities might be categorized as event, behavior, process (or life story) or strategy. Narratives may be historical, perspective, supportive (of other narratives)

or contradictory. Diagram 3 illustrates the coding process and was adapted from Bogden and Biklen's (2007) Analysis of Reduction research model.

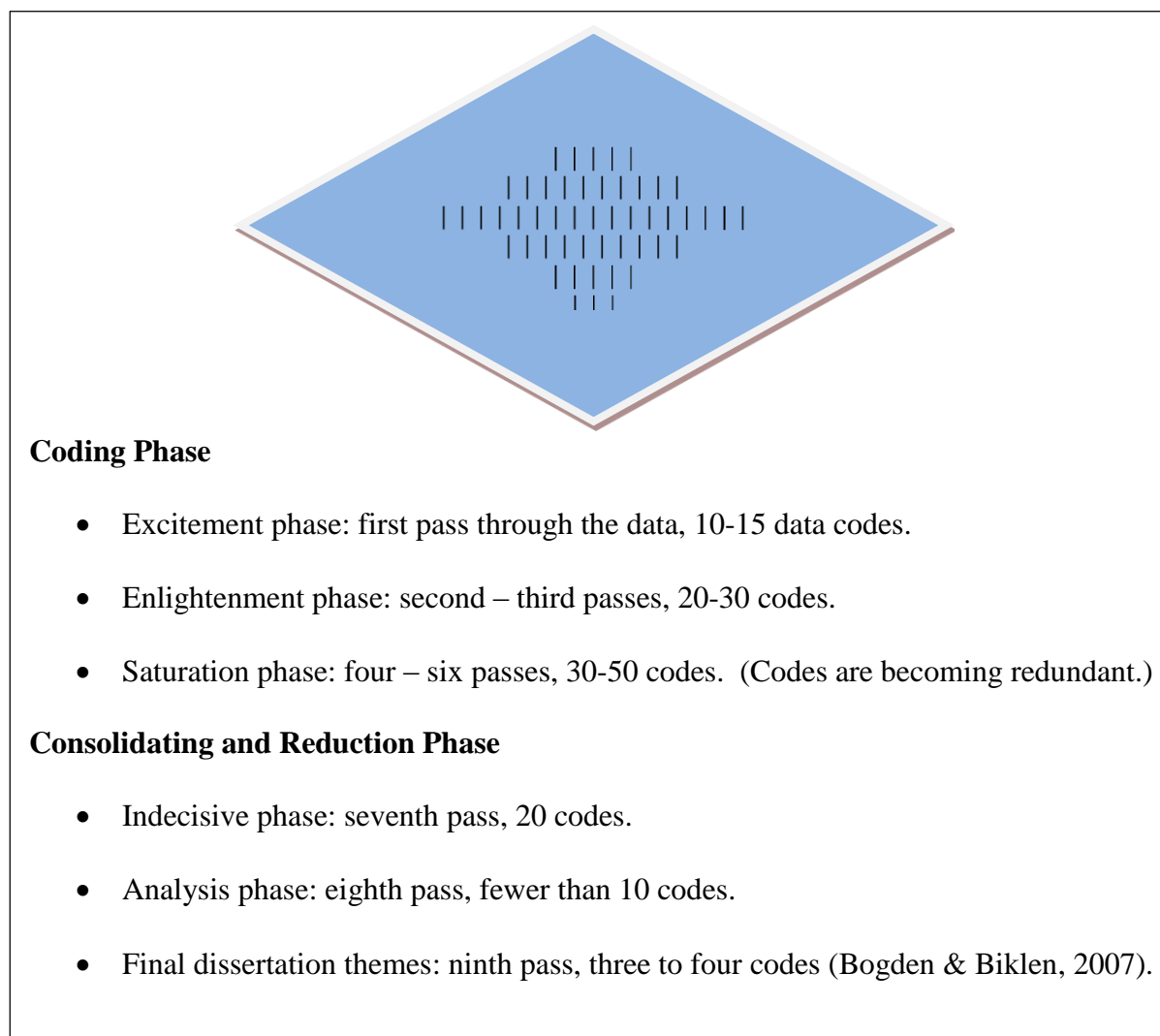


Figure 5. Analysis of Reduction

The blue background represents the field of raw data (the transcribed interview narratives). The six rows of vertical lines represent the analytical phases and codes developed through repeated passes through the research narrative as described below.

The duration of the interviews was between 30 to 50 minutes and resulted in 10 to 16 pages of script each. The process of transcribing, though tedious, helped instill the interview data in my mind as was previously affirmed (Patton, 2002). While transcribing I analyzed the frequently used key words from the interview analysis for relevance. I highlighted any thoughts, phrases, words, or concepts that I recognized from prior interviews. I also color coded new ideas. Some such themes were consistent throughout all the interviews, while other concepts were unique to that site visit. I read and re-read each narrative while listening to the recording and simultaneously made minor corrections to the transcript. Once satisfied that I had accurately transcribed an interview session verbatim, I mailed the interview transcript to the corresponding participant for member checking.

Following Bogden and Biklen's (2007) Analysis of Reduction model, I began the coding analysis phase by opening an Excel spreadsheet and assigning the interview questions as topical headings. Engaging the interview questions in this way ensured that the research questions (upon which the interview questions were based) would remain at the forefront and guide the analysis. These headings were: Leadership role, Leadership style, Teachers role, Role of faith (in adoption), Christian / Secular textbooks (high school only), Locating sources, Disqualifiers, Content factors (prioritized order), and Prior use of adoption instrument. I now had a manageable framework that could accommodate all eight sites and an unlimited number of codes as illustrated in the following sample spreadsheet as represented in Table 9. From this starting point I began to build the within-case and across-case analysis construct.

Within-case Analysis

The spreadsheet included any relevant concept raised in each interview in turn. I listed the pseudonyms of the schools in order of each site visit in successive columns. My next step

was to interpret the data by utilizing open coding to assign headings and categorical concepts as they naturally emerged from the narrative. I entered meaningful, interpretive codes or hermeneutics under each interview question in the codes column as codes emerged from review of the data. I recorded special notes, tallies, citations to quotations, and any other relevant data in the corresponding code fields under each site heading. I maintained a running tally of codes as concepts were raised and reiterated in the interviews. Frequency counting provided the basis for determining trends and interpreting data.

The spreadsheet expanded and evolved with each successive interview analysis. Each new hermeneutical code required a new row. I continued adding new codes (and rows) until I had exhausted all relevant concepts raised in the interview. I repeated these steps with each successive site narrative. School Alpha, my first and longest interview, yielded 34 codes. The spreadsheet evolved into an extensive analysis document and proved to be a very effective organizational tool. Being digital, it provided the efficiency of a computerized format in coding, highlighting, changing, moving and otherwise manipulating the data while affording the option of printing updated hard copies for continued review of the data when computer access was not available.

The next phase of the within-case analysis was to track the number of times the administrator referenced or repeated concepts. I used simple tally marks represented herein with a virgule [/] to track administrator reiterations within any concept code. In addition to tracking this summative coding of repeated concepts, I also cited page numbers under said codes as administrators made important or memorable statements worth quoting for later reference. Table 8 presents a replicated view of the within- and across-case analyses illustrating how the data was input after the first two site visits and interviews. The complete spreadsheet yielded 51

hermeneutical codes and was about six pages in length. When reduced in size and set in landscape format it enabled at-a-glance viewing across all eight sites.

Table 8

Data Analysis Spreadsheet - Limited Abstract

Concept Codes from Interviews	Alpha	Beta
Leadership Role (Interview Questions 1 & 2)		
General Learning Objectives	(N/A)	/
Final Decisional Authority	Admin. (self)	Principals //
Teachers and Others Involved (Question 3)		
Participants – teachers	///// /	//
Teams or Committees	Prayer /	Yes //
Participants – others	Board, Elder	Parents
Curriculum Guides	//	“p. 26” /////
Cycle (for adoption)	5-YR	5-YR
Teacher or Textbook as authority	Teacher	“p. 25”
Role of Faith in adoption (Question 4)		
Type of school (as to student body)	MISSIONAL	DIS/MIS/EV
Biblical Integration	//	///
Christian Worldview	“p. 11”	/
Unchurched percentage	(N/A)	Unk
Unchurched affect textbook adoption	N	N
Christian/Secular textbooks (Question 5)		
Percent Christian/Secular textbooks (Elem)	100% Chr.	100% Chr.
Percent Christian/Secular textbooks (High Sch)	100% Chr.	75/25
AP – concerns cited	(N/A)	None Chr. /
Secular textbooks for Character Ed?	N	Y //
Character traits	/	N/A
Apologetics	/	N/A
Locating textbooks to review (Question 6)		
Publishers named	ABEKA	BJU (Precept)
Any Primary Christian Publishers?	ABEKA	BJU
Disqualifiers (Question 7)		
Any disqualifying factors?	No	No
Content factors (Question 8)		
Prioritize the factors (Question 9)		
Academic content	2	2
Faith Alignment	7	3
Horizontal Alignment (Objectives)	1	1
Publisher criteria	10	9
Teacher helps	8	8
Student helps	9	7
Readability	3	6

Concept Codes from Interviews	Alpha	Beta
Physical features	5	10
Technology	4	5
Cost	6	4
Use of adoption instrument (Question 10)		
Have you used an adoption instrument?	Y	N
Interested in using adopt. Instrument?	Y	Y
Technology: Moving toward e-books	"p. 15"	(N/A)

I reviewed each interview narrative repeatedly inserting new lines and content codes for each new idea. As the participants repeated or reiterated previously-state concepts, I recorded the same with tally marks (/) or summative codes to aid in frequency counting. I entertained a desire to quote each participant at least once thinking they might actually read the finished product and recognize their participation, but I did not want to impose an ulterior motive on the interpretive process. Ultimately, however, the participants provided so much important and worthwhile information, I found I needed to selectively cite them and reduce quotes into paraphrased narratives. Eventually I was satisfied that I had thoroughly exhausted the within-case analysis of the interview and had documented all the pertinent information on the spreadsheet. I tracked the second and successive interviews in the following columns.

Across-case Analysis

I repeated the aforementioned within-case analysis and data entry steps for all eight interviews, while simultaneously making cross-case observations in accordance with Yin's (2009) across-case analysis framework. I continued the process by examining related codes and quotes by theme across all research sites. The spreadsheet proved to be visually advantageous in the across-case analysis. Not only did the research schematic emerge before my eyes, but I could literally see at a glance where, by whom, and how often new information for the research study was entered with each successive interview. Ultimately the cross-case data led to consolidation

of codes into a manageable thematic configuration. Again, following the within-case design, data from each interview is analyzed, reduced, compared, and synthesized on the spreadsheet. The across-case analysis developed as predicated by Stake (2005) who affirmed that cross-case analysis involves the researcher him or herself preparing thematic worksheets or matrices for the individual cases, laying these out side-by-side, and synthesizing commonalities across the cases. Stake (2005) elaborated further saying,

The analyst looks for related findings – from unpromising cases as well as from auspicious ones . . . for commonality in findings across cases, but for also for counterevidence anywhere. The procedure calls for interpretation. It is not an assertion-generating machine. (p. 309)

The codes continued to expand as predicted in the Bogden and Biklen (2007) Analysis of Reduction model. The final analysis of model yielded 51 unwieldy and rather disjointed codes before progressing to the reduction and consolidation phase. This expansion was remarkably on point with the model's prediction. As the codes increased and become redundant, I followed the model through a series of analytical reduction steps. Merging and consolidating codes brought the research into sharper focus and led to thematic development.

During the across-case analysis the research focus shifted from the interview questions to the emerging themes that had been articulated by the practitioners in the field. I organized data into a matrix using categorical and thematic analysis similar to the content-criteria tables and codes prepared during the research studies in the literature review. Not all codes were comparatively relevant. I focused on those codes that were reiterated across the research sites by taking note of the summative tally marks. Some novel concepts had merit also. I relocated these to the end of the spreadsheet and draw attention to them later in this narrative.

At the mid-point of the reduction of analysis phase, I began to highlight by color coding groups of codes that were complementary and noticed three dominant themes beginning to emerge. The first set of code groupings I observed were the 10 textbook content criteria codes from the literature review. I highlighted these in red, and these were located together in one section. I then noticed that the Faith-related codes were disbursed throughout the spreadsheet. I highlighted these also and began a process of grouping them under relevant headings such as Christian worldview, IFL, Apologetics, and other faith-related subthemes. I had now isolated the content-criteria codes and the faith-related codes. As I pondered the remaining codes, it occurred to me a great majority of these remaining codes were related to the leadership task of administrators. These codes were thematically highlighted under three overarching thematic headings: Administrator codes, Faith-related codes, and Textbook criteria or content codes. At this point in the Analysis of Reduction process, I restructured the spreadsheet and consolidated the codes under these dominant themes. The consolidated codes were as follows:

Administrator codes. Administrator or leadership codes are those concepts that might be generalizable to all administrators in any academic leadership context. These codes include: General learning objectives, Participants, Adoption teams, Curriculum guides, Adoption cycle, Teacher/textbook authority, Vertical alignment, Horizontal alignment, Peer (or Lateral) alignment, Role of textbook, AP concerns, Ethnicity, Publisher, and Cost. Again, these codes were consolidated from the general data after consolidation of similar concepts raised by multiple administrators. Under Publisher, for example, several subcodes might appear such as Favorites, Trustworthiness, Sales efforts, Quality, Internal features, and External helps. Most of these had subcodes such as CD/DVD and Interactive online under External helps.

Faith codes. Codes relating to the faith objectives peculiar to Christian schools were: Biblical integration, Christian worldview, IFL, Character education, Apologetics, Role of Faith, Christian / secular, Impact of unchurched population, Disqualifiers, Statement of faith, School mission.

Content-criteria codes. The content criteria codes were the textbook features that arose from the literature review. I listed these in the interviews and asked each administrator if they would add to or take away from this listing. The content criteria codes are: Academic content, Alignment with course objectives, Faith alignment, Publisher criteria, Teacher helps, Student helps, Readability, Physical features, Technology, and Cost. These ten codes lay the foundation for a prospective research-based grounded theory in textbook adoption.

I continued to reduce codes by consolidating them into thematic groupings. I also used frequency counting to determine which factors seemed most important to the highest number of administrators. For example, only one administrator mentioned that students play even an indirect role in adoption, and that was through negative feedback. Therefore, students as a concept code would not be discussed in the narrative. Teachers and curricula committees, however, have the single most important role in textbook adoption in all schools across the board; therefore, I emphasized this element in the narrative.

I highlighted and isolated points that I thought were important though unique or novel to a particular interview. A few such examples include peer or lateral alignment, censorship, and cost. Though mentioned only once directly, and alluded to in one other site review, lateral alignment proved to be a major research finding. Additionally Miss Dorn's flyleaf notice method for inclusion of books that might otherwise be censored was included. Likewise, Dr. Morris's insights on removing Cost from the content criteria listing was otherwise cited only in

the pilot interview. Thus the Analysis of Reduction phase proceeded much as predicated in Bogden and Biklen's (2007) model.

Thematic Saturation

Thematic saturation occurs when no new data is forthcoming from the interviews (Bogden & Biklen, 2007; Patton, 2002). This principle determines the point at which sufficient data has been gathered and thus controls the actual number of cases selected for study. So long as new data is forthcoming, the site visits continue. Upon entering the concept code data for the seventh interview, I observed that data was becoming redundant with no new relevant data. Considering, however, that the IRB research protocol contemplated a minimum of eight site visits, and having previously scheduled the eighth interview, I opted to follow through with the last appointment to ensure that this research objective was fulfilled. Again, the interview with Mrs. Teal was informative and helpful, but the redundancy of data confirmed that thematic saturation had been reached. No further interviews or appointments were arranged.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness addresses the integrity of the research by asking if the research is credible and dependable. For clarification purposes, credibility and dependability are the qualitative counterparts to the quantitative concepts of validity and reliability. These constructs enhance and safeguard the trustworthiness of qualitative research. Additionally, the terms refer to both the internal and external aspects of the research as well as its generalizability or transferability in other research paradigms (Schwandt, 2007). The research triangulates the data gathering and analysis processes to help ensure dependability. Schwandt (2007) defines triangulation as, "a procedure used to establish the fact that the criterion of *validity* has been met" (p. 297).

Credibility

Incorporating a system of checks and balances or triangulation in the research process affects the credibility and reliability of the process. I address the credibility of the interview and data-gathering processes by utilizing member checking after the interview transcription (Schwandt et al., 2007). After mailing each participant a transcribed copy of his or her interview narrative, I asked for confirmation that the interview was accurate to the event. I also afforded the participants an opportunity to change, omit, or add to the information. While interviews are the primary source of data, credibility is also achieved by gathering historical adoption documents from the sites if available, taking detailed field notes, and maintaining an audit trail.

Dependability

Schwandt et al. (2007) discussed achieving the characteristics of dependability and confirmability by conducting both an audit trail and an external audit of the research. While an audit trail is part of the protocol, an external audit of the research process was not. Lincoln and Guba (1985) are among the seminal resources for the external audit of qualitative research. Miller (1997) incorporated external audit in qualitative graduate research and, having served as an auditor for numerous dissertations and research papers, affirms the correlation of the external audit with dependability. Though not strictly construed as an external audit, I did engage an outside and unaffiliated statistician to review the rationale and accuracy of the pairwise clustering, Likert scales, and weighted averaging concepts utilized in the content-categorical sections. Additionally, one of the committee members of the current project is a content expert in statistical methods thereby enhancing the dependability of the research findings.

Confirmability

Schwandt et al. (2007) said that data narratives must be thorough and articulate enough to enable others to replicate the study or apply the research in other areas. I meticulously exercised the utmost care accurately interpreting data (assigning codes) and reporting the data pursuant to the approved IRB research protocol. Additionally, considering research ethics requires that research involving human subjects warrants confidentiality, confirmability becomes a matter of concern when the participants cannot be contacted. Strict compliance with protocols, followed by rich, thick, descriptive narrative enables others to replicate and thus confirm the study.

Transferability

Another test of trustworthiness is transferability; that is, the research findings are reliable. In this sense transferability differs from experimental research in that the events or phenomena in case studies are based upon observations and interviews that cannot be replicated (Yin, 1982). Transferability, therefore, focuses upon consistency of the results based upon the integrity of the data gathering, evaluation, analysis, and findings. Schwandt et al. (2007) posited the test of reliability is, “. whether a different team of evaluators might not arrive at entirely different conclusions and recommendations, operating perhaps from a different set of values” (p. 16). Trustworthiness as to transferability in the multisite collective case study, therefore, rests upon sound data-gathering techniques and the reliability of the research findings.

Ethical Considerations

I did not anticipate or encounter any issues such as illegal or immoral disclosures or any professional research-related contact with minor children. I submit to and follow all requirements of the Liberty University IRB. I assigned pseudonyms to the research sites and participants and maintain each one’s confidentiality. I secured signed consent forms prior to

gathering data at research sites. I conducted member checks of interview transcripts for accuracy and integrity of the information provided. I also maintained an audit trail of each site visit. The data is and has been secured in a password-locked computer and also on an external data storage device that I retain on my person or in my home. Printed reports are kept in a secured location in my home. Data will be maintained in a secured storage location in my home for at least three years upon conclusion of the project.

Summary

Chapter Three presented the plan for execution of the data gathering phase of the research project. I discussed the rationale for the qualitative collective case study design and for narrowing the prospective field of participants to ACSI-accredited schools in the North central North Carolina. The purposive sample of participants met the research criteria, and each one participated in an open-ended and semi-structured interview that directly reflected the research questions. I introduced the participants and reviewed the data collection processes employed. Once the interview narratives were fully transcribed, I conducted member checking with the participants. I conducted within-case and across-case analysis of the data and recorded all pertinent data on a spreadsheet. Following Bogden and Biklen's (2007) Analysis of Reduction model, I studied the data, identifying concepts relating to the topic and coding these elements on the spreadsheet. I assigned meaningful codes and organized these under emerging themes. I consolidated the data into primary themes that emerged. I was careful to follow all the research protocols to ensure triangulation in both the data-gathering and analysis phases.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter Four addresses the study purpose from the perspective of the research participants. The objective was to conduct collective case study research of a purposive sample of secondary school administrators to examine current practice and the decisional ethic; that is, the decisional criteria and processes employed by Christian school administrators and other decision-makers in adopting textbooks for use in Christian schools. The research findings are presented in two parts. I will provide descriptive vignettes of the research participants and relevant observations from each site visit, and I will examine the findings from these interviews.

Chapter Four intentionally presents from a research question and answer format. I present these findings as they relate to the research questions. I will provide my rationale concerning the coding and analysis of the data that led to various predominant themes, and I will highlight some unexpected and novel results as well. The chapter closes with a summary of these findings.

Participants

Each participant serves as the lead administrator in an accredited secondary school within the Southeast region of the ACSI. About half of the participant/administrators were in their mid-30s or 40s and were career educators. I would characterize four of the nine as wise and seasoned professionals; that is to say, probably in their early sixties. Most had been principals and had now been serving as lead administrators for many years. All were very gracious and cordial to me and took the interview seriously. I was always treated with the highest degree of respect and professionalism. I am very grateful for the kindness extended by each participant.

Pilot interview with Jeffrey McCann, Ph.D. (Whereas, the pilot interview is not a part of the actual data-gathering and analysis research protocol, Dr. McCann consented to be identified.)

Dr. McCann is a longtime friend and mentor, as well as an accomplished professional in the field of Christian Education. Throughout his long career in academia, Dr. McCann has served in virtually every capacity in Christian schools. For the past 15 years or more Dr. McCann has specialized in the area of Christian school accreditation. He currently serves as a vice president over the accreditation process at a Christian college and theological seminary. Thanks to Dr. McCann's insights, I was able to hone my interview questions into sharper focus in such crucial areas as the role of the textbook in the classroom, what teachers hope to accomplish with textbooks, questioning whether cost should be a qualitative factor for content consideration, and inquiring about textbook adoption cycles. All of the aforementioned points proved to be important areas of inquiry in the research interviews. The data from the pilot interview, however, was not included in the research analysis in that Dr. McCann's current role does not meet the participant protocol. I did, however, record and transcribe the pilot interview and retained this data in the dissertation notes. This exercise was beneficial to me in many respects. The pilot interview enabled me to have a dress rehearsal of sorts before a friendly, yet critical mentor. It helped me to time and pace my interview, and it yielded constructive criticism for the interview questions and process.

Alpha Christian Academy with Mrs. McDonald, Administrator

My first interview and site visit was at Alpha Christian Academy with Mrs. McDonald, the school administrator. This initial contact was either providentially ordained or sheer luck in that Mrs. McDonald was a gem of an individual to meet and get to know. I must have appeared

somewhat nervous fidgeting with the recorder (testing and retesting), but Mrs. McDonald put my anxiety at ease and approached the interview as though we were old friends.

Mrs. McDonald has enjoyed a full career at Alpha Christian in various teaching and leadership roles since the school's founding in 1989. Mrs. McDonald's communication with the faculty seemed more maternal than administrative; yet her authority was uncontested. The interactions I observed with teachers, who appeared young enough to be Mrs. McDonald's daughters, were handled as guidance and advice rather than a policy directive. I perceived a warmth and sense of mutual respect between Mrs. McDonald and her staff.

While Dr. Jeffries was the senior pastor and headmaster of the school, he directed all my initial inquiries to Mrs. McDonald who administers the day-to-day operations. I would characterize Mrs. McDonald's leadership demeanor as quasi-parental and participative over authoritarian leadership models; although, she was certainly authoritative in her role as the on-site administrator, Mrs. McDonald is mature, kind, and well informed, and seemed to be a worthy administrator.

Alpha Christian Academy is an Assemblies of God denominational school situated in a mixed urban/rural setting. The school, which is located within a church facility, is situated almost directly between two urban centers. Even so, it is far enough away from either city to have a distinct rural flavor. While the pastor serves as the titular head of the school, Mrs. McDonald clearly has decision-making authority and administers the school freely. Mrs. McDonald submits textbook decisions that affect faith or doctrine to the pastor/headmaster, but short of that factor, she makes the final decisions regarding textbook adoption for the school.

Beta Christian School with Mr. Carter, Headmaster

Mr. Carter serves as headmaster of the largest school in the current study. As such I was

surprised that he seemed to be quite young for this position, perhaps in his mid-thirties. Furthermore, Beta was the largest school in the study; thus I was somewhat taken aback by his age until the interview began when his keen intellect became evident. I observed an online social media posting of Mr. Carter and his lovely wife where someone had quipped that they still looked like Barbie and Ken, and this observation was true! Mr. Carter presents a health-conscious appearance and had a very businesslike demeanor. There was very little small talk prior to the interview as we proceeded from formal greetings directly into review of the IRB consent forms. I did not take this as being curt, but rather as straightforward and direct professionalism.

Mr. Carter's background is in Math and athletics, and that was all he revealed about himself. I would assess our time together as somewhat forced and rigid at first, but as we progressed, Mr. Carter began to warm up to the concept of the textbook review analysis. By the end of the interview, Mr. Carter was becoming somewhat animated and responded positively to helping draft a flow chart for curriculum development. Additionally, Mr. Carter provided referrals and a personal endorsement of the project that resulted in two positive contacts and additional site visits.

Beta is a denominational K-12 school associated with an urban mega-church of over 5000 members. The school is a separate organization from the church but is located on the church campus in a modern facility in an urban setting. I was able to observe the students interacting with one another between classes, and they seemed to be happy and friendly toward one another. It pleased me personally to see many of the students carrying band instruments of all kinds, perhaps enough for a small orchestra, in fact. I observed very few if any students walking alone or displaying a sulky or downtrodden disposition.

While awaiting my appointment I could not help but overhear a telephone conversation between the school secretary and possibly a parent regarding a student who was apparently a habitual truant. The employee handled herself very professionally and compassionately offering to support the family member in any way she could including praying for the situation with them. She offered that someone on the administrative staff would be happy to visit this family in their home, which I took as a thoughtful gesture exemplifying Christian love. While this conversation was occurring, I observed the school's motto was posted in the main lobby which otherwise was not overbearing in an outward display of Christianity. From the time I had to observe the students and staff in action, I had the feeling that they practiced their faith more than paraded it, which incidentally reflects the school motto, "Think, Learn, Live for Jesus."

Gamma Christian Academy with Headmaster Dr. Will Jackson and Academic

Coordinator, Mrs. Dorsett

Gamma Christian Academy was unique to the research project in several respects. It is the only school that is not directly associated with, located in, or under the auspices of a church. Additionally, the facility itself is set in a quaint, small-town setting and even utilizes an old public school facility that appears to date back to the post World War II era. The cinder-block and concrete construction, vinyl tile hallways, metal lockers, and even the molded-plywood student desks were all period and reminiscent of 'baby-boom' era schools I attended as a child in the Midwest. Another unique aspect of this site visit was that the interview was with both the headmaster and lead academic coordinator, Mrs. Dorsett. Even so, Dr. Jackson's relaxed and informal demeanor (that reflected the idyllic setting, actually) did not mask a keen intellect and astute awareness of all aspects and nuances of the research project.

Dr. Jackson began his career in the 1970s following a personal calling and desire to serve in the pastorate. He earned a Bachelor's degree in theology, the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees. Dr. Jackson described himself as a teaching pastor and served in several parishes in the Northeast. Finding fulfillment in working with youth, Dr. Jackson transitioned to a role in school chaplaincy. This transition into academia naturally led to an opportunity for him to serve in school administration. He said he loves learning and continues conducting academic research. Dr. Jackson described his teaching role as, "a natural and pleasurable passing-along of knowledge and skills" to others. Outside of academics, Dr. Jackson enjoys collecting a wide variety of antiques and visiting his four grandchildren.

While Dr. Jackson presented a relaxed and open-collared deportment, Mrs. Dorsett's nature leaned more toward academic disciplinarian. Mrs. Dorsett actually serves as Academic Coordinator, and in this capacity Dr. Jackson invited her to participate in the interview.

Mrs. Dorsett was much younger than Dr. Jackson but did not reveal much about herself in the interview. I learned that she is married and the mother of three young children. Mrs. Dorsett was educated, articulate, and understood all the nuances of the academics and course objectives of the institution. She presented herself as a capable and informed administrator. One might describe this Type-A / Type-B duet as hard rock and golden oldies! Mrs. Dorsett often gave quick and curt responses to my questions while Dr. Jackson typically would follow with mollifying and articulate reflections. Having two respondents, this interview sometimes took on a life of its own. In answering a question Mrs. Dorsett might address Dr. Jackson saying, "Remember when (so-and-so) did (this-or-that)?" and the two would banter their anecdotal reply in tandem. Even though this approach was pushing the preset time limits, the two seemed to enjoy reflecting on events and individuals that illustrated the point at hand. Their casual and

conversational style in the interview was consistent and reflective of the overall relaxed atmosphere of this school.

Delta Christian School with Mrs. Hall, Administrator

Upon my initial contact, Mrs. Hall indicated that she was simply too busy to participate in the research project. She said if I could not find anyone else, I could call her back. I did call her back, and she graciously granted an interview during Spring break. Mrs. Hall is a very professional, informed, and capable administrator. Even though she was suffering a bad cold the day of our meeting, I was grateful that she kept our appointment. Additionally, Mrs. Hall had been diligent in previewing the interview questions and had spoken to her staff to provide information on various points in advance. Moreover Mrs. Hall was the only administrator who had taken the extra effort to find and provide a copy of an old textbook adoption instrument as requested in the introductory material. Throughout the interview I was impressed with the professionalism and thoroughness Mrs. Hall presented. Mrs. Hall has a Master of Arts in Education, Administration and Supervision. She has served at Delta Christian in various teaching and administrative functions since 1991. As one who is now supervising those with whom she once worked, Mrs. Hall is sensitive being the “boss”. This was evidenced by her participative leadership style; although, she does make the final decisions in textbook adoption.

Delta Christian transitioned from a strictly church-associated school to an independent Christian school that incidentally is located within (rents space from) an unaffiliated church facility. At the time of this transition, the school board had an active role in the decision-making process. As time progressed, and as Administrator Hall has grown into her role as a competent administrator, the board has yielded more decisional authority to the school. Mrs. Hall’s collaborative leadership style is rooted in recruiting and hiring the most competent faculty

available. Once hired, she relies heavily on the advice and input from each teacher's area of expertise. Mrs. Hall related a wonderful anecdote concerning a recent need for a new and somewhat specialized course, how she prayed and the Lord led a young teacher applicant to Delta who minored in that specific area of study. This new teacher was able to consult with her former college (Liberty University) professor who in turn helped her modify her college course on the subject to develop a faith-based advanced placement course for this subject.

Epsilon Christian Day School with Mr. Hurley

My interview with Mr. Hurley was a result of a personal referral from Headmaster Carter at Beta. Like Beta, Epsilon is a large denominational school associated with a church whose membership numbers in the thousands. Being headmaster of one of the larger schools in this study, I found it difficult to schedule an interview with Mr. Hurley. In addition to his various duties as the lead administrator Mr. Hurley was also busy leading a student mission trip. I eventually secured an appointment well after school hours. Even so, Mr. Hurley still seemed somewhat stressed and busy when he met with me. He was very gracious, though. We met in a somewhat sterile conference room and not in his office, as was the norm with all the other participants. Mr. Hurley seemed to be a very capable administrator even though he was only in his second year as head of school at Calvary. He has a 25-year resume of offices and roles held within the ACSI. He holds a B.S. degree in education and leadership and M. Ed. Mr. Hurley has served as the headmaster of three schools over the last twenty-five years and also serves on the boards of two Christian school associations.

As Head of Schools, Mr. Hurley oversees a school of over 500 students with three principals who administer the elementary, middle and secondary schools. Mr. Hurley is in his second year at Epsilon and makes decisions with the aid of a leadership team comprised of the

school principals and academic coordinators. The teachers are also highly involved in evaluating textbooks within their academic purview. They make textbook recommendations to their respective principals who submit the various options to the leadership team. I was not afforded an opportunity to observe student or faculty interaction in that the interview was scheduled well after the school day had passed. Once I was greeted, I waited alone until Mr. Hurley arrived.

Kappa Private School with Dr. Morris

It was a privilege to meet Dr. Morris who is a well-known leader in Christian education, both in his theological circle and within the ACSI. Having played basketball in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II conference for his alma-mater, Dr. Morris earned a M.A. in Educational Supervision and Administration and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration. Dr. Morris holds a certificate in Non-Profit Management from a prestigious university. He is an internationally recognized leader in his field as contributor on CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, The Today Show, and the BBC. Additionally, Dr. Morris is an international speaker within the ACSI and in many other leadership forums. Nevertheless, he is a hands-on practitioner having assumed very active and dangerous roles in ministering to humanity's lowest societal echelon, orphans, and other castaways in third-world contexts. He has served in 48 states and 27 countries. Dr. Morris has founded five Christian schools and served in many others. It would be difficult to expound further on Dr. Morris's extensive and storied career in academic leadership without compromising his confidentiality.

Notwithstanding his impressive resume, I found Dr. Morris a most humble and gracious man. In his current role as superintendent at Kappa, Dr. Morris repeatedly referenced the school board throughout the interview. While Dr. Morris could have his choice of roles in any number of academic fields, he humbly serves as a modest private school administrator and submits to a

church-affiliated school board that takes an active, decisional role within the organization. Dr. Morris has founded several Christian schools and served in a wide variety of roles in the ACSI, both internationally and in other academic contexts.

Unlike other denominational schools that tend to be somewhat restrictive or protective in their enrollment outreach, Kappa presents as an open enrollment private school with a Christian belief statement. Students are not required to be associated with the denomination. Nevertheless, Dr. Morris is dedicated to his church affiliation, and submits to a strict, hierarchical school board structure more so than the other participating administrators. I thought this factor spoke well of the humility of this man.

Kappa Private School is a modern facility uniquely couched within a progressive, residential neighborhood development. The facility's location and appearance presents more of a community center ambiance than what one might expect of a private school. The students of all ages intermingled in an outdoor break area and seemed happy and well adjusted. Their interaction with each other was playful and positive. Dr. Morris's office overlooked this courtyard, and even during our meeting, some of the students enjoyed waving and playfully trying to get Dr. Morris's attention (and he accommodated them). Dr. Morris's participation in the research project contributed to some of the most significant findings of the study.

Sigma Baptist Christian School with Miss Dorn

If I were to imagine the consummate professional school administrator in my mind's eye, I would envision a presence and personality like Miss Dorn. This personable and yet businesslike professional is at once both the bane of the recalcitrant student, while she is also the kind of administrator a student in need could call upon for support. I found her to be highly professional and articulate, yet personable and genuine. As a single woman having raised no

children of her own, I would presuppose that being a school administrator would present unique challenges, but not for Miss Dorn. She is a well-rounded individual with a strong personality and leadership temperament.

Miss Dorn, like many others in this study, worked her way through various teaching and leadership roles. She taught for many years in both the public and private sectors. She has served in leadership at Sigma Baptist as a principal and now as headmaster for the past 10 years. Miss Dorn earned degrees in both Education Curriculum (B.S.) and M.Ed. in Academic Leadership and Administration. Miss Dorn takes a strong stance on professional development of all her staff and requires her faculty to be engaged in continuing academic education.

Sigma Baptist is a church-affiliated school in the independent genre of Christian schools. It is a significant accomplishment that such a relatively small independent school attained ACSI accreditation, and Miss Dorn strives to maintain high standards to maintain the school's accreditation standing. Miss Dorn's driving concern is that the students be well equipped for life academically. "It's all about the academics!" she said. Miss Dorn is equally concerned about each student's spiritual well-being. She views the school as both a mission field and a place of ministry. In Bible education, for example, Miss Dorn has promoted the development of an in-house curricula that ushers the upper school students through the entire Bible including a course in Apologetics. By the time they graduate, she said, they have a solid grasp on the tenants of the Christian faith and defense thereof.

While Miss Dorn submits to a school board, she also presides over regular monthly leadership team meetings. She focuses on vertical teaming both conceptually and as a leadership methodology. Within the Christian school culture, the Independents are sometimes perceived as

inferior to the better-funded and larger denominational schools, but not Sigma Baptist. Miss Dorn's administrative and leadership efforts at this institution are second to none in this study.

Omega Christian Academy with Mrs. Teal

Like many of her peers in this study, Mrs. Teal had a substantive and varied career in Education before moving into the lead administrative role at the current institution. Unlike her contemporaries, though, Mrs. Teal's entire background was in the public sector. Omega is a denominational, church-associated school where Mrs. Teal was actually a church member and public school teacher when an administrative role at the academy became available. She accepted a position as a principal and has now served as superintendent for four years. She affirmed that she enjoys working in the Christian school environment. Even during the summer break while other employees were dressed casually, Mrs. Teal presented a professional appearance and authoritative demeanor. As the headmaster of a sizeable school, Mrs. Teal was younger than I was expecting her to be. Mrs. Teal seeks input from teachers in textbook adoption and respects their positions as the ones who must teach the subject matter. Nevertheless, Mrs. Teal makes the final adoption decisions based upon her knowledge, experience, and comparative analysis of various options.

I pursued Omega Christian specifically due to a personal presupposition. As the only Charismatic or Holiness school in the geographical scope that met the research protocol (as far as I could tell from information provided in the ACSI website), I thought it would be informative to discover any philosophical differences in Mrs. Teal's application of the research questions from a theological or practical perspective that might vary from the largely Baptist views of the majority participants. I found the educational philosophy and practice of Omega varied little, if at all, from the other participants.

Mrs. Teal draws from her many years' experience in the public school arena by presenting a pragmatic teaching and leadership philosophy. She rejects the rote memorization method of one major Christian publisher that she referred to as "drill and kill". Mrs. Teal was one of the few participants who encouraged use of evaluation instruments for textbook adoption, as she said they did in the public schools.

Mrs. Teal was not able to grant an interview until the school year was over. I arrived an hour early for my appointment, but the administrative staff was gone. Some maintenance folks allowed me to wait in the lobby and advised the staff would be back from lunch soon. Even though school was out for the summer, the facility was abuzz with activity. While waiting I observed at least a dozen young adults and children coming and going. Most, it appeared, were involved in a basketball game or other activities in the gym. Everyone was friendly and asked if they could assist.

The school was located in an urban setting and was situated on the parent-church's property. The facility itself was a stand-alone structure. The building and grounds were clean and suitable for the task. The names of the church and school were alike so there could be no mistaking that Omega was a church-affiliated Christian school. The interior, however, presented all the characteristics of a school and not a church facility such as the school logo embossed in the tile flooring at the entrance, enclosed bulletin boards with all manner of school-related data and agenda, and an awards display.

Results

The remainder of Chapter Four follows a research question and answer format based upon the development and analysis of the data. I will focus on the most emphasized aspects of the research as these highlights were developed across the research sites. I will also pinpoint

important features that were unique to certain sites. The research project evolved from a focus on the research questions to a thematic design. I will demonstrate how these thematic headings emerged from the analysis.

Data Analysis

The within- and across-case analyses of the data yielded substantive answers to the research questions. Some questions elicited much more interest from the respondents than others. This chapter, therefore, reflects the collective answers to the emergent themes (codes) with occasional highlights from the individual participants. It might prove helpful to note that I was somewhat flexible with the interview questions and made allowance for some elaboration and change in the actual interview events, and this is consistent with the predefined open-ended and semi-structured interview model (Patton, 2002; Yin, 1982). During the pilot interview, Dr. McCann suggested that rather than asking, “Who determines who is in charge?” I might ask, “Who makes the final textbook adoption decision?” He also suggested the questions concerning the role of textbooks in the classroom and adoption cycles. The interview protocol allowed for some flexibility. I did not strictly follow the outline, but encouraged elaboration on certain points of interest.

The data was both gathered and analyzed observing the overarching principle that the research questions govern the research project. They guide the interviews, the data analysis, the findings, the results, and the conclusions. The interview questions, therefore, reflect the research questions. (See Appendix G for a research / interview question synopsis.) Because the data analyses progressed in direct correspondence to the interviews, for clarification purposes I will demonstrate how the interview questions support the research questions.

Primary Research Question

The primary research question asks, “What textbook adoption practices do administrators or textbook adoption decision-makers employ when reviewing textbooks for classroom use in Christian schools?” The following headings provide research-based answers to this question as cited and summarized in the interview narratives.

Role of teachers in textbook adoption. By far the most influential elements upon which administrators rely in the task of textbook adoption are the teachers. Administrators cited teachers no less than 25 times collectively as the primary consultants in textbook adoption. Reference to teachers was the highest ranking summative code of the research project. Dr. Morris tries to put himself in the place of the teacher when reviewing textbooks. “I’m a teacher first,” he said, “so I try to approach things from the standpoint of how would I like this done if I were still a full time teacher.” The teachers are the ones who interact with the textbooks and students on a daily basis, he said. “They’re the ones who are going to see the strengths of any curriculum” (Dr. Morris, Interview, 4/21/15).

The majority of administrators said they convene teams or curricula committees of in-subject teachers or department heads in the adoption process. In one event Miss Dorn of Sigma Baptist came to the realization that verbal skills as reflected on the SAT scores were low. To address this problem Miss Dorn appointed a particularly gifted English teacher to organize a vertical teaming approach to review and restructure the curricula from seventh to 12th grade. She said, “We gave her a lot of power to cast the vision” (Miss Dorn, Interview, 5/9/15), thus illustrating the empowerment aspect in this leadership model. Miss Dorn said this committee talked to the other high school English teachers and the middle school English teachers, again

referencing the principle of vertical alignment. “It needs to have a flow all the way through it” (Miss Dorn, Interview, 5/9/15).

Board members, parents, or other stakeholders generally do not play a significant role in the textbook review and adoption process with the exception of two subject schools that have active policy boards. Even so, these boards are not involved at the analysis level, but rather at the point of final decision. Parental feedback comes generally in the form of negative response and affects adoption as to the retention of textbooks but not so much as to the initial selection. Students do not have a significant role at the secondary level. This reliance on teachers in the adoption was consistently reiterated across all sites.

Based upon the teachers’ or a curricula committee’s recommendation, noting the aforementioned exceptions, the administrators generally make the final adoption decisions. In general, textbook selection is part of the individual course curricula and is not a board-level decision; it is an in-house function. Mrs. McDonald does engage a member of the church’s pastoral staff as a textbook adoption committee member. This individual occupies what I would characterize as a watchdog role. The minister’s role is to ensure textbook selections comport with or will at least be acceptable to all users and stakeholders. The minister is also a committee member in selecting textbooks for all religion courses taught in the school.

Role of textbooks in the classroom. All of the administrators described the textbook as a tool. All but two used this term, while the two exceptions were likewise on point conceptually. In this context Dr. Morris provided a definitive observation saying, “to me the textbook is a tool. The teacher is the key authority. I have had master teachers who can overcome a poor textbook. I’ve never seen a textbook that can overcome a poor teacher” (Dr. Morris, Interview, 4/21/15).

Likewise, Miss Dorn referred to textbooks as a means to an end, while Mrs. Teal added that textbooks are particularly useful in pacing teachers through the term. Implied herein is that vertical alignment is defeated if teachers do not finish the textbook. If a teacher loses pace and fails to complete her course objectives would create a gap in learning from one grade to the next. Mrs. Hall emphasized the autonomy that teachers have to focus the learning objectives as they deem necessary. Mrs. Hall advised, “They’re not required to follow the entire curriculum. You know, if they want to leave a section out . . . they can go through, you know, chapters one, three, four, five, six, eleven” (Mrs. Hall, Interview, 3/31/15). Most administrators, however, were not so open minded, but referenced curricula guides as an imperative. I cannot reconcile Mrs. Hall’s liberality with the general tenor of the others.

Additionally, the premise that textbooks serve as a tool and not as the final authority is particularly relevant in the advanced placement (AP) context. AP courses are not available from Christian publishers. Mr. Carter, Mrs. Hall, Miss Dorn, and Mrs. Teal all affirmed this point. Specifically referring to the unavailability of faith-based AP courses Mrs. Teal stated, “The fact that the textbook is just a tool becomes very important because the teacher needs to be able to bring in that Biblical perspective” (Mrs. Teal, Interview, 5/26/15). Mrs. Teal was adamant that teachers need to address unbiblical matters that are raised or are presented as fact in secular textbooks. Some administrators had, on occasion, selectively adopted and adapted portions from Christian college freshman textbooks for secondary AP courses. Most, however, simply use secular textbooks for AP classes. Thus, Christian schools rely upon the Godly influence of teachers to present a balanced perspective in the classroom.

Textbook adoption is an ongoing exercise. The rate of recurrence of textbook adoption exercises in Christian schools was not addressed in the literature review. The cyclical nature of

textbook adoption was first raised during the pilot interview. As I adopted this element into the interview questions, each administrator affirmed that adoption is in fact a cyclical and ongoing practice in their respective schools. Adoption cycles became a recurring and important theme of the research project.

At every site, textbook reviews proceed vertically across all grades by academic subject. They usually address one subject school-wide per year. Some administrators advised that in cases where a textbook's quality or content is substandard, they will initiate a limited and focused adoption review to address that particular issue regardless of the current subject cycle. This ongoing process of textbook adoption enhances the importance and impact of this research project. Textbook adoption and review should not be treated as an aside to the educative process, but rather adoption and review is an important feature in each school, at every level, and crosses all academic subjects.

Alignment as a key research finding. The overarching conceptual theme that arose in this research project is the principle of alignment. Alignment presents from three points of reference: vertical, horizontal, and peer or in keeping with the linguistic imagery, *lateral* alignment. All the administrators focused upon the principle of vertical alignment by ensuring a seamless transition of instructional material from one grade level to the next. Miss Dorn said Sigma Baptist utilizes graded vertical alignment teams in every subject to ensure there are no "laps or gaps" in the educative process (Miss Dorn, Interview, 5/9/15). Vertical alignment was a universal theme across all research sites.

Another inclusive aspect of alignment is the concern that textbooks comply with both the course objectives and the school's mission statement. Once again all of the administrators emphasized the imperative for both vertical and horizontal alignment of textbooks. Additionally,

horizontal alignment was consistently ranked as second only to academic content in the hierarchical ordering of decisional values in the textbook rating model.

The research yielded a new finding defined herein as lateral alignment. This third facet of alignment surfaced in answer to my question of how administrators locate textbook options. Dr. Morris stated that he inquires of his ACSI peers locally and also those in other regions on the West coast, Texas, and in the Northeast. He said he also consulted with peers in other countries to see what they are using. Upon reflection during the across-case analysis, I realized that Mrs. Hall at Delta Christian (two interviews earlier) had mentioned this concept in the context of relating how she addressed a State-mandated regulatory change in the requirements for Social Studies. She said she called some peers in the public schools to see what they were using to comply with this new State standard. While I failed to observe the significance at the moment and in that context, the fact that Dr. Morris emphasized the concept also suggests lateral alignment is more than an anomaly. Peer or lateral alignment, therefore, may constitute a new theory in the textbook adoption research literature.

First Criteria Subquestion

The literature review proposed a categorical, content-criteria approach to textbook adoption. Therefore, the first criteria subquestion asks, What content factors, stylistic elements, and physical features do administrators consider in textbook adoption? The following headings answer this issue or values-based subquestion.

Content criteria concerns. As to elements of this question, namely content, style, and features, the administrators were satisfied with the 10 elements identified from the literature review that were later incorporated in the interview. When asked to arrange these factors in hierarchical order, the administrators were generally consistent in the top three categories:

Academics, Alignment, and Faith. These were in fact the top three considerations among nearly all participants. Dr. Morris actually rated these three codes with equal importance; he ranked them all in first place. Similarly, though less consistent than the ranking of the top three codes, were the criteria on the lower half of the hierarchy, namely Publisher criterion, Physical features, and Student helps. Scattered throughout the mid-range of categories. The across-case analysis showed no consistency in ranking Teacher helps, Readability, Technology, and Cost.

Course curricula concerns. I asked all the participants to elaborate on the process of curricula development with a view toward textbook selection. When I asked how Beta Academy would develop a new course conceptually from inception to the first day of class, Headmaster Carter responded, “Now that’s a real question!” He continued, “Probably we’d spend a year trying to develop general objectives. What do we want to accomplish? Okay, and then we’d look to textbooks to match what our objectives are” (Mr. Carter, Interview, 3/19/15). I interjected, “That would go back to the principal and faculty members who would be teaching it?” “Um-huh. It would be just those two. . . . Ultimately the principal makes the final decision based on budget, so cost is important” (Mr. Carter, Interview, 3/19/15). This was the only school that entrusted such a high degree of authority to principals and as such serves as an example of shared leadership.

Very few administrators engaged outside participants such as parents or board members in the textbook review process as committee members. None consider students as participants; although, Dr. Jackson and Mrs. Dorsett acknowledged student response and criticism as the end-users of textbooks. As such they do consider student assessments as to retention of textbooks but not in adoption. As to other stakeholder involvement, Mrs. Hall said she likes to get input from

parents, but they do not serve on adoption committees. “We do get parents, typically, who let us know when they’re not happy” (Mrs. Hall, Interview, 3/31/15).

Second Criteria Subquestion

The second criteria subquestion addresses the issues peculiar to the current genre of private schools; that is, those elements affecting faith-based Christian schools. This issue subquestion asks, To what extent do administrators give consideration to Christian worldview factors when evaluating scholarship in textbooks? The following answers to this question again arise from the interview data.

Christian worldview development. An important consideration in the selection of faith-based textbooks is the impact of the same upon a diverse student body. Faith integration and Christian worldview are dominant themes in all subject schools, and these schools do not abridge religious instruction to accommodate students of diverse backgrounds.

Dichotomy of church and unchurched students. Not all students in a Christian school are Christians. Indeed the majority of students in the subject schools are from Christian homes; however, the administrators estimated student body ratio of church-affiliated to unchurched students between 10 to 50 percent. The majority of students indeed are from Christian homes, attend church regularly, and identify themselves as Christians. These students presumably possess a more advanced degree of knowledge and background in biblical teachings and principles than unchurched students who may not be thus indoctrinated. Nevertheless, all but one administrator stated the composition of the student body has little or no impact upon the Christian textbooks they might adopt.

This diversity within the student body might be attributed to each school’s mission philosophy. Schools that considered themselves Evangelical or Missional had a higher

percentage of unchurched students than schools that characterized themselves as Discipleship or Church-affiliated. Such semantics is subject to interpretation, however, in that one Missional school, Alpha Christian, estimated only 10% of the student body was unchurched. Conversely Epsilon Day School, a large denominational school that Mr. Hardy described as being, “under the church umbrella” has a 30 percent unchurched student population (Mr. Hardy, Interview, 4/17/15). Likewise, Mrs. Hall, whose urban school has a strong military presence, revealed Delta Christian presents an Evangelistic mission objective and has a 50/50 ratio of religious to non-affiliated student body. Mrs. Hall conceded that Delta does experience challenges in the area of unchurched students not being equivalent in the area of faith integration and a Christian worldview philosophy with those who attended church regularly. Even so, most schools require both the students and parent(s) sign a statement of assent to the teaching of Bible principles as articulated in each school’s statement of faith.

Mrs. McDonald’s sentiments would be affirmed by all of the administrators when she stated, “Our goal is to teach a biblical worldview.” She continued, “If your curriculum is working against you, then that makes the process more difficult” (Mrs. McDonald, Interview, 3/17/15). Anticipating that students will eventually be out of the sheltered Christian environment and perhaps in secular colleges, Mrs. Teal affirmed the necessity to ground children in the Biblical perspective and Christian apologetic; that, is a foundation that allows students to know both the what and the why of their faith.

Christian verses secular textbooks. I further asked if they intentionally included secular textbooks for discernment training. Miss Dorn’s reply was right on point. “You can’t have critical thinking if you don’t come up against something where you stop and say, do we believe that” (Miss Dorn, Interview, 5/9/15)? As one of the more conservative schools in the study,

Miss Dorn addressed this issue as a potential conflict of interest especially in the library context. I inferred from her guarded tone that library censorship had been a sensitive issue at Sigma Baptist in the past. It is certainly understandable that people have differing opinions on where to draw the line at secular content especially in the conservative Christian school context. Miss Dorn has adopted a policy of posting a permanent book leaf in the front cover of various books that warn of strong secular values, such as, “Evolutionary thought in this book. See page 113”. In this way, she said, parents may read that notice and conclude for themselves. Alternately, teachers might use these prompts for discernment training and have the students read it for discussion or other assignment purposes. “So, I’m not a book burner; I’m not a censor,” Miss Dorn concluded (Miss Dorn, Interview, 5/9/15).

Mr. Carter affirmed likewise that while Christian textbooks make the teacher’s job easier, some textbooks in use at Beta do not comport with the school’s doctrinal statement. In such cases, Mr. Carter stated, “.the teacher’s role [is] to address this in a helpful manner, to guide them into critical thinking.” Later he reiterated, “Some of the textbooks we use require the teacher, you know, (pause) we want to develop thinking Christians” (Mr. Carter, Interview, 3/19/15).

Faith integration in Christian education. The participants collectively identified elements or subcodes of Faith alignment to include such factors as the Integration of faith and learning, Christian worldview education, Biblical studies, Apologetics, Critical thinking, and Evangelistic outreach. Mr. Carter at school Beta elaborated on the importance of critical thinking when illustrating the differences between Christian textbooks that are spiritually substantive and those that are not. Applying the analogy of a light bulb, Mr. Carter drew a semantic distinction between association and integration. Mr. Carter explained that associating

Jesus as the Light of the world to a light bulb may have its place, but to him, it's, "cheesy faith". He said that is not true integration. He continued, "How does this subject relate to the purpose of God? The purpose of man? The purpose of the redemption of man? And so, we're trying to integrate, we're not trying to associate" (Mr. Carter, Interview, 3/19/15). In this dialogue I mentioned taking note of School Beta's motto, 'Think, learn and live for Jesus.' Mr. Carter affirmed the reality that the motto reflects the fact that faith integration is very important to him. The learning environment should allow and encourage students to ask questions and thereby learn to, "work out their faith. We want that element in the classroom" (Mr. Carter, Interview, 3/19/15).

First Process Subquestion

Harkening back once again to the literature review in both the content-criteria and reflecting on the AHP model, I asked the participants how they would prioritize the given content criteria. The first process subquestion simply asked, How were textbook content criteria prioritized?

Hierarchical ordering of the research-based content criteria. Each administrator was first asked to add to the content categories (presented from the literature review) and rank them in order of importance to their school's mission and objectives. Surprisingly none added to the category codes thus affirming the initial research findings that identified the areas cited herein as the foundational, research-based criteria. By calculating the mean of values across all research sites, the final hierarchical ordering of content codes was: Academic content, Faith alignment, Course objectives, Readability, Teacher helps, Technology, Cost, Student helps, Physical features, Publisher criteria.

Mrs. McDonald's rating concerned me, though. She was the only respondent to rate the textbook's alignment with course objectives in seventh place out of ten. Whereas, this was the first interview, I did not immediately recognize this rating as inordinately low for this code. As an aside, this relatively insignificant moment in the overall research project presents an opportunity to reflect on an intrinsic value of the qualitative method. Had Mrs. McDonald's interview been farther along in the research, I might have caught the atypical nature of her answer and questioned as to why she ranked Alignment so low when the others unanimously ranked it among the top three concerns. Did she misunderstand the question? Was it because Alpha had participated in the A Beka (rote memorization) curricula school-wide for so many years? Why so low? I regret missing the opportunity to ask this question. Quantitative research might dismiss this answer as an anomaly, an outlier, and simply move on. The qualitative method, however, seeks to find out why. In the final analysis this singular low ranking on an otherwise highly rated code did not have a significant impact on the research results. By calculating the mean of values across all research sites, the final hierarchical ordering of content codes was: Academic content, Faith alignment, Course objectives, Readability, Teacher helps, Technology, Cost, Student helps, Physical features, Publisher criteria.

Mrs. Hall of Delta Christian posited an insightful observation in ordering priorities. When I asked her to arrange the content categories in hierarchical order, she paused and pondered for a moment. She then stated, "Sometimes, depending on the subject, this order can change, so it's hard to list them" (Mrs. Hall, Interview, 3/31/15). Upon reflection of the wide diversity of the administrators' ratings across some categories, Mrs. Hall may have touched on a very important yet unforeseen aspect of ordering these variables. The order of importance might not be consistent across academic disciplines. It might have been better to ask administrators to

rate the priorities for specific courses rather than rank an overall impression of importance of the categories generally. Science and Math might have a different values orientation than Language Arts and History.

Questioning cost as a content factor. Based upon summative coding, Cost was a universally important factor across all research sites. Each administrator addressed cost specifically as an important concern. In the final ranking, however, cost proved to be of lesser importance to administrators than other pedagogical features within textbooks. Most of the administrators addressed cost as it relates to the benefit of the curriculum. Mrs. Hall stated, “You know, if the curriculum were really great; if we really love it, then cost – we’re going to skim some money from somewhere else so we can afford this” (Mrs. Hall, Interview, 3/31/15). Dr. Morris added that while they have discretion in decisional analysis and textbook adoption, the policy board at Kappa gets involved in the budgetary matters. The overall placement of Cost on the ten-point hierarchical scale was seventh. Dr. Morris suggested in cases where the final selection far exceeds the budget or the cost of comparable options, administrators conduct a cost/benefit ratio analysis to determine feasibility of purchasing the preferred option. In the pilot interview Dr. McCann also questioned whether Cost should be included as a qualitative factor.

Second Process Subquestion

The second and final process subquestion asks, What instruments or rating criteria if any were utilized for rating textbooks? Most of the participants advised that either they did not utilize adoption rating instruments or they developed in-house rating charts. Such charts were described as asking raters to list the pros and cons of a textbook or, alternatively, to cite strengths and weaknesses. Two exceptions were Mrs. Teal who was familiar with adoption instruments from her experience in the public school sector and Mrs. Hall who utilized a brief, half-page

adoption survey form she had adapted from Pearson publishers. I was able to secure this sample form. Even though I asked to see and gather such records in my preliminary contacts, no one else was able to produce any documentation of prior research studies or rating instruments.

This collective absence of multi-criteria decisional instrumentation supports the research problem: administrators generally do not know of or utilize a research-based instrument that addresses the textbook adoption concerns in Christian schools. Collectively they acknowledged the need for the current study and were intrigued with further development of a decisional model that could aid in this process. Gamma Academy was the singular exception. In one amusing moment I asked Dr. Jackson and Mrs. Dorsett if this project were to lead to the development of a research-based textbook adoption instrument, would they be interested in using such a tool. Would it be helpful to them? Mrs. Dorsett bluntly answered, “No” (Mrs. Dorsett, Interview, 3/20/15). Perceiving my dismay, perhaps, at seeing over two years’ research swirling down the proverbial drain, Dr. Jackson tried to rescue the moment by saying they are not tied to protocol at Gamma. It seemed a little too rigid for their style of leadership. All other administrators, however, responded positively to the prospect of a research-based adoption guide.

Research Questions Affirmed

The interview questions and participants’ answers addressed the research questions. The primary research question asks, *What textbook adoption practices do administrators or textbook adoption decision-makers employ when reviewing textbooks for classroom use in Christian schools?* These practices are classified into two fields: (a) the decisional criteria; that is, the school ethic, values or beliefs, academic content, and other features desirable in textbooks and (b) the process; that is the decisional analysis and evaluation method, and selection process. Thus the two Criteria subquestions answer the decision-makers’ values and objectives criteria

portion of the question. The two Process subquestions answer the procedural part of the adoption task.

Thematic Saturation

Only one new concept was raised in the transcripts of the seventh and eighth interviews. The last school, Omega, requires teachers to sign a statement of faith. While this factor was novel across sites, it was not relevant to the textbook adoption research. No new adoption data was forthcoming in these interviews. The spreadsheet was functional in both documenting and demonstrating that the protocol calling for eight sight visits was sufficient; the project had reached thematic saturation, and the research phase was properly concluded.

Identification of Dominant Themes

Three dominant themes surfaced from the data analysis. These are codes relating to administrators, codes relating to the unique concerns of faith-based schools, and codes relating to textbook content criteria and features. The first general group of codes I observed arose naturally from the interview question that asked administrators to order content codes hierarchically. From the literature review I identified and proposed a listing of 10 relevant textbook adoption features. I asked the administrators to (a) add any adoption criteria not mentioned and (b) rank these decisional criteria in their order of importance. I then entered this data on the spreadsheet. These Content criteria factors are the decision-makers' values-criteria that are weighted and ordered in the decisional process and relate to the textbook option rater's task.

Another primary category or heading focused upon a stated objective of the project which was to determine the faith-related factors that are important to Christian schools in textbook adoption. I arranged these codes under Faith factors. These values reflect the Christian school

concerns specifically such as Christian worldview, biblical integration, the role of faith, Apologetics, and the ratio of students affirming a Christian background to non-Christian (or in the vernacular, churched to unchurched) students in the school.

During the analysis I observed several factors that are applicable to administrators in all private school settings and not just ACSI member schools. These content-criteria codes would include learning objectives, alignment with school and course objectives, leadership style and decision-making authority, participants in adoption tasks, adoption cycles, AP concerns, publisher concerns, and critical thinking skills. I perceived that these elements and others are generalizable and transferable to all administrators within the private school genre. Administrator or leadership concerns generally, therefore, emerged as another primary theme.

The resulting classifications led to a thematic outline that addresses leadership theory and practice, school philosophy, and the practical task of adoption emerged as follows: Leadership dynamics pertaining to all administrators [within context] generally, Faith factors relating to Christian schools specifically, and Textbook content criteria addressing the reviewer's task individually.

Summary

Once the interviews and site visits were accomplished pursuant to the protocol, I began the analysis of reduction phase based on Bogden and Biklen's (2007) model. This methodology proved well suited to the collective case study research design. I created and developed a data spreadsheet that organized the data for the hermeneutical process. I assessed the data from printed transcript of the interview narratives. The content coding expanded from 10 initial fields based on the interview questions to about 51 codes excluding the categorical headings.

Numerous themes emerged from the analysis of the data. Vertical, horizontal, and lateral alignment concepts surfaced as the most important themes. I began reducing these codes into themes and observed that the data fell into three categories or headings, namely administrator or leadership concerns collectively, Christian school concerns specifically, and content concerns individually. The findings and results showed the research (a) reflected and answered the research questions, (b) affirmed the theoretic framework, and (c) addressed the research problem; that is, administrators generally either do not know of or do not utilize a research-based textbook adoption instrument to address the unique concerns of textbook adoption in Christian schools, and (d) added to this field of knowledge.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The purpose of the study is to examine the current practice and decisional ethic as to criteria and procedure of Christian school administrators and other textbook adoption decision-makers in adopting textbooks for use in ACSI member schools. I discuss my conclusions by the predominant themes: Administrator concerns, the Faith ethic and the Content-criteria decisional model. I present a theoretical matrix based upon the current research that employs the hierarchical process of a weighted, multi-criteria decisional analysis construct. I identify limitations to this research and propose alternate formula that might be of use to some followed by recommendations for future research. The implications of these findings should inform administrators and publishers of the concerns of practitioners in the field of Christian Education and may lead to a grounded theory in textbook adoption in Christian schools and other recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Findings

Three themes were identified from the findings: leadership matters pertaining to private school administrators generally, faith factors relating to Christian schools specifically, and textbook content criteria addressing the reviewer's task individually. Under the Administrator theme, shared or participative leadership emerged as a dominant code. Administrators across all research sites rely on teachers individually and in graded adoption committees for textbook adoption. This fact is evidenced in that administrators utilize the expertise and insights of teachers much more than any other factor. The influence of teachers in the adoption process was evidenced by virtue of unanimous affirmation of the same by administrators across all research sites. The alignment principle was another dominant code. Alignment was approached from

three perspectives: vertical, horizontal and lateral. Vertical alignment asks if textbooks provide seamless progression of instruction from grade to grade. Horizontal alignment ensures that textbooks are consistent with school mission and course objectives. The third and newly proposed aspect named herein as peer or lateral alignment asks what textbooks are contemporaneous with current usage in other regions and academic contexts.

Discussion

The following section addresses the empirical results of the research findings in view of the theoretical framework proposed in the literature review in Chapter Two. The progression will be thematic addressing the philosophical and theoretical foundations. I will follow the thematic outline that emerged from the findings as to the practice of administrators generally, the application of a faith ethic in textbook adoption of Christian schools specifically, and the adoption process of reviewing and rating proposed textbook options individually.

Theoretic Framework Validated

The research premise that Christian schools ought to be decidedly Christian is affirmed in the current research project. It is important to note that the current study was not designed to either affirm or challenge the Cox studies but rather to examine current practice. As such, the textbooks adopted in Christian schools generally ratify the Christian worldview hypothesis.

The research was rooted in a philosophical premise. Cox et al. (2007) proposed that Christian Education ought to be decidedly Christian. In this context, “Christian” means the integration of faith and learning and development of a Christian or biblical worldview among students (Booth et al. 2009; Deckard, 1998). The textbook’s alignment with a Christian faith ethic was consistently rated in the top three priorities across the research sites. Faith integration

is not represented merely in one's actions or behavior, but rather it permeates one's being. It is not just what one does but who one is (Booth et al. 2009).

The research was grounded in a theoretical framework. Vygotsky's (1929) theories in Constructivism in general and Scaffolding in particular (Ravitch, 2007) lay the theoretical framework for this study. The current research is not as interested in Vygotsky's early prelogical child development theories as it is in the aspect of learning later identified as Scaffolding. This research principle defines the textbook as a tool. Scaffolding is a concept employed consistently across all research sites not by name but in principle and practice. Scaffolding supports the proposition that the textbook and the teacher are the mechanism, that theoretical step or platform that enables the learner to move from that place of actual development (where the student is) through the zone of proximal development, into a higher cognitive understanding (where the student needs to be (Anderman & Anderman, 2009).

The Constructivist process of cognition might be understood considering the textbook, presumably, was authored by an expert in the field. The school presents this authority to the student, and the textbook figuratively asserts that "X" is true as to any given topic. The teacher, however, another trusted authority figure in the student's life, on the very point in question says, "Not X but Y". The student must then come to a reasoned conclusion, "Z" as his newly formed basis of truth and belief. This act of learning, advancing the students in their understanding through the implementation of a self-directed yet assisted process essentially defines the theoretic framework of Constructivism. The combination of informational authorities, in the current context the teacher and the textbook, serve as the scaffolds to such learning.

This rationale challenges Cox's et al. (2007) premise that secular textbooks in the Christian school send mixed messages to students. Under this theory the student may only be

offered one option, “Y”, in context, the accepted Christian narrative. I asked the administrators about the Christian-to-secular textbook ratio. All the schools held to a philosophy that textbooks utilized in elementary education would be strictly 100 percent Christian. Likewise, all begin to engage students in broader exposure to secular elements and critical thinking skills in the upper school. Those who elaborated on this point posited that the school mission and philosophy requires the younger children be grounded in educative material from a Christian perspective only. Principles of character education and maturity allow for greater exposure to secular material in the secondary school.

The research was erected upon a historical foundation. Due to the dearth of adoption literature in the Christian school context, I looked to the historical record of textbook adoption in public schools for guidance. The research project confirmed Farr, Tulley, and Powell’s (1987) suggestion that administrators may not have the time, expertise, or inclination to conduct thorough textbook analyses. The administrator’s role is one of enablement and empowerment of others to perform the reviews of viable textbook options. The leader provides both the tools and the support requisite for the task. Therefore, the research questions focused collectively upon the historical methodology employed by current practitioners in the field asking what have they done in the past and how have they done it.

Emergent and Dominant Themes

Thematic development guides the following discussion. Administrator, faith, and content-criteria concerns are followed by a discussion of an adaptation of the AHP decisional model as presented in the literature review and employed in the Ho & Hsu (2011) study.

The administrator’s role in textbook adoption. In the majority of cases the administrator employed a participative leadership model but made the final textbook decisions

themselves. In every case study teachers conducted the analyses and presented their preference along with their supporting rationale. The research affirmed the practice of collaborative leadership as a preferred management model in this context.

Participative or shared leadership. The literature review previously stated that Owens and Valesky (2011) endorsed a collaborative model in educational leadership. Cawthorne (2010) advocated for a shared leadership methodology in textbook adoption. Additionally, Maxwell (1998) taught that shared leadership is strong leadership while building a sense of ‘buy-in’ among the mid and lower-level participants within the organization. All of the administrators in the current study heavily rely upon teacher recommendations and thus employ a shared or collaborative leadership styles.

Vertical alignment provides what Mrs. Hall at Delta described as a “continuum effect” (Mrs. Hall, Interview, 3/31/15). Based upon the subject being reviewed in a given year, Mrs. Hall organized graded leadership teams that meet monthly to discuss the pros and cons of curricula at each level. In this way all the teachers develop a stronger awareness of the vertical progression of learning from grade to grade. Mrs. Hall also meets regularly with the principals to determine the best textbooks for their objectives. Mrs. Hall’s leadership style illustrates a truly collaborative approach, and this approach was consistent across all research sites.

Most administrators make the final textbook adoption decisions. Some exceptions are schools with a managing board or those who empower others to make textbook selection decisions. Mr. Carter, Headmaster at Beta Academy, allows the principals of the various schools (elementary, middle and high school) to select textbooks within given budgetary parameters.

When asked which has the greater authority in the classroom, the textbook, presumably written by an acknowledged expert in the field, or the teacher, the administrators unanimously

affirmed that the teacher is the final pedagogical authority in the classroom (again destroying my presupposition). Mrs. Teal, however, added a twist to this position by raising an issue that only one other administrator addressed; that is, teachers teaching out-of-field. In such situations, the teachers must rely on the textbook more so than if teaching within their pedagogical field. Teachers' teaching out-of-field was an exception but a valid consideration in textbook adoption.

Cost as a factor in adoption. In the literature review, cost was a determinative factor in the research concerning textbooks for use in public schools (Allen & Preiss, 1990). In the subject research studies, however, while cost was an important factor, it was not a major consideration. The highest hierarchical ranking was fourth place in one study (Mr. Carter at Beta, the largest school). The final ranking of cost across all research sites was seventh. As a significant budgetary item I was expecting textbook cost to be a more important consideration among the subject schools.

I began reevaluating my inclusion of cost as a decisional factor when Dr. Morris stated that he does not put cost of the textbook or curriculum before the teachers in the rating process. I recalled that Dr. McCann in the pilot interview suggested that cost is not a qualitative value affecting the teaching and learning objectives. Dr. Morris further suggested the administrator perform a cost-benefit analysis when the preferred curriculum far exceeds the budget.

Alignment as a key research finding. Alignment as a construct and major thematic heading in this project has been thoroughly discussed throughout the findings and results sections. Alignment presents in two dominant contexts in schools across all research sites: vertical alignment or internally graded and horizontal alignment of curricula with school mission and course objectives. The field research yielded a peer-to-peer category or externally equated

process defined herein as lateral alignment. Alignment, therefore, is a key leadership paradigm in the administrators' thinking and objectives in textbook adoption.

Faith factors relevant to Christian schools specifically. The research project was predicated on the Cox et al. (2007) thesis suggesting Christian schools had become too secularized, and the use of non-Christian textbooks sends mixed messages to students. This premise led to the proposal that such equivocation was a contributing factor to the widespread denial of the faith of many Christian school graduates. While the current research project did not directly address this concern, the participating ACSI administrators would not agree with the Cox et al. (2007) hypothesis. I base this assertion on the fact that all research sites engage mixed textbooks in secondary education. If any believed this construct sent mixed signals to students and thus contributed to attrition from the faith, I have no doubt the administrators would vigorously oppose mixed textbooks. Contrariwise, administrators employ mixed texts with intentionality for the purpose of discernment training. I am nonetheless indebted to the body of research initiated by the Cox studies as having stimulated my thinking in both the Christian textbook venue and the decisional analysis methodology (textbook evaluation criteria were based upon the ethos factors extrapolated from Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on Mount). Miss Dorn at Sigma, however, encapsulated the discussion saying,

There are schools out there that believe that what books you buy are what's going to make you Christian. If that's your philosophy, then you're only going to buy books that support that belief system, like A Beka or Bob Jones because your philosophy is going to be that book is what's going to make us Christian. Our philosophy is it's going to be the teachers that stand in that class that make it Christian, not the textbook. That's the difference, the philosophical foundation difference. (Miss Dorn, Interview, 5/9/15)

Indeed all of the administrators preferred Christian textbooks over secular. In the final analysis, however, Publisher criteria was deemed the least important aspect in the research-based and practitioner-ratified decisional hierarchy.

Faith alignment encompasses several subcodes. Such consolidating of codes is consistent with the research studies of Emme (1939), Wong (2009), and Ho and Hsu (2011). These studies incorporated numerous subcategories under the given categorical headings. Decision-makers should provide thorough definitions of codes and subcodes in the content criteria for the textbook reviewers. Mr. Carter at school Beta elaborated on the importance of clear understanding of terminology drawing a semantic distinction in association versus integration. Using the analogy of a light bulb Mr. Carter explained that associating Jesus as the Light of the world to a light bulb is “cheesy faith”. He said that is not true integration. “How does this subject relate to the purpose of God? The purpose of man? The purpose of the redemption of man? And so, we’re trying to integrate, we’re not trying to associate.” (Mr. Carter, Interview, 3/19/15). In this dialogue I mentioned taking note of School Beta’s motto, ‘Think, learn and live for Jesus.’ Mr. Carter affirmed the reality that faith integration is very important. The learning environment should allow and encourage ask questions and thereby learn to work out their faith. “So we want that element in the classroom,” he stated (Mr. Carter, Interview, 3/19/15). The participants collectively identified elements or subcodes of Faith alignment to include such factors as the Integration of faith and learning, Christian worldview education, Biblical studies and Apologetics (defining and defending one’s belief system), critical thinking, and evangelistic outreach.

Content-criteria addressing the reviewer’s task individually. Moving into the decisional analysis methodology, Mrs. Dorsett at Gamma recited a litany of adoption concerns

such as presentation, meaningful explanations, both teacher and student concerns, textbook appeal, and whether it is inviting or dull. “So there’s a lot more to it than just do I trust the content,” (Mrs. Dorsett, Interview, 3/20/15). Thus the textbook analysis involves content criteria and adaption of a multi criteria decisional analysis model.

The literature review introduced the analytical hierarchy process as an established MCDA instrument that was applied in textbook adoption (Ho & Hsu, 2009). Saaty & Begicevic (2010), founder of the Analytical Hierarch Process proposed the following formula for decision-making: (a) define the problem, (b) generate a list of organizational values, (c) organize the list hierarchically using a series of pairwise (top-down) comparison charts, (d) identify each option’s qualities, strengths, and abilities, (e) evaluate and rate each option based on the predefined organizational grid (a Likert scale), (f) calculate the highest scoring candidate, and (g) make a decision. The remainder of the research project focused upon how this AHP model might be adapted to the current research project.

Define the problem. The problem in the current context is the task of adopting textbooks that meet both an academic standard but also comport with the institution’s faith ethic and Christian worldview. How does the school locate and choose the best textbook for each grade and course that meets both the academic and religious objectives of the institution?

Generate a list of organizational values. The 10-point listing of content criteria codes reflects and summarizes the organization’s mission statement and educational objectives. These categories would be developed by the policy-makers such as lead administrators, principals, school board, and other decisional stakeholders. Each element of the content criteria should be clearly defined and may have multiple sub categories. The textbook reviewers would be thoroughly instructed as to the meanings and definitions of each content code.

Organize the list hierarchically. AHP anticipates that multiple decision makers' inability to agree on ordering a hierarchy would require a process of pairwise comparison charts to reach consensus. In the organizational structure of the subject schools, however, the lead administrator would simply define the content categories based upon the values of the organization. Thus pairwise processing is worthy of mention and could be employed when multiple stakeholders are involved. The current decisional analysis, however, addressed only one decisional authority for each site; therefore, pairwise ranking was not necessary.

The hierarchical ordering of elements in this listing of values is a key aspect of the AHP decisional process and is intentionally subjective. Once these preferences of the organization's policy makers are defined, they are converted into equivalent numeric values. The current decisional analysis model simply assigns a rating from 1 to 10, first priority to last, as the weighted multipliers. An alternative method would be to ask the decisional authority to assign numerical values to each category according to each one's view of its importance, but the sum total of all categories must total 100. The advantages and disadvantages of these ranking constructs will be discussed both as limitations and recommendations for future research.

Identify each option's qualities, strengths, and abilities. At this point in the process the focus shifts from the subjective values of the organization and the subsequent hierarchical structure to the individual qualities and characteristics of the subject options and the process of evaluating and rating said option candidates. The reviewers will evaluate the content characteristics and physical features of each textbook option in view of the predefined content categories provided by the policy-makers or administrator(s). As discussed elsewhere, the decisional ethic relies upon the raters' ignorance of the hierarchical ordering.

Evaluate and rate each option based on the predefined organizational grid. This step exercises the Likert-scale rating process. Each reviewer reviews each textbook option and rates the content categories on a predefined 1-5 or other like scale. The key to controlling for bias in this step is restricting reviewer's knowledge of the hierarchical ordering of the categories. It is important to the integrity of the decisional process that the raters be not aware of the rankings. In this way the raters can neither inadvertently nor intentionally skew the ratings toward or against any textbook option. Table 9 presents the final analysis of the eight subject administrators if the current study were an actual adoption event.

Table 9

Content Category Hierarchical Rating Summary

CATEGORIES	A	B	G	D	E	K	S	O
Academic content	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1
Course objectives	7	3	2	1	2	1	3	2
Faith alignment	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	3
Publisher criteria	10	9	10	9	5	7	10	10
Teacher helps	8	8	4	5	6	5	7	4
Student helps	9	7	6	6	7	5	8	9
Readability	3	6	5	9	4	2	4	8
Physical features	5	10	9	10	8	6	5	7
Technology	4	6	7	4	10	3	9	5
Cost	6	4	8	8	9	4	6	6

As previously stated, the final hierarchical ordering of content codes by calculating the mean of values across all research sites was: Academic content, Faith alignment, Course

objectives, Readability, Teacher helps, Technology, Cost, Student helps, Physical features, Publisher criteria.

Calculate the highest scoring candidate option. This process involves the step of weighted averaging. Since the current model defined ten content categories, the multipliers in this scenario will be assigned a corresponding value of 1 through 10. In the 10-level grid, the most important variable, Academic content in this case, receives a weight of 10x. The Likert (1-5) rating of the reviewer is multiplied by the weight assigned by the decision-maker or Rate times Weight equals Weighted Product. If the given textbook option were rated at 5 by the reviewer, then Academic content, weighted at 10, would receive a weighted rate of 50 ($5 \times 10 = 50$). Publisher criteria, however, being least in the hierarchy, has a multiplier of only 1. Were the reviewer to rate Publisher at 5, its weighted product would be only 5 ($5 \times 1 = 5$). This factoring raises the question of credibility as to whether Academic content is actually 10-times more important to decision makers than Publisher criterion. This construct, therefore, presents a possible limitation in that the 10-point range from the first to last priorities may not reflect the reality of the policy-makers' actual values. It does, however, reflect the proper ordering of the values-based hierarchy for the purpose of selecting the best values-based option. The final recommendation based on the weighted averaging formula will be correct even though the weighting of each value criterion might not be precisely accurate.

Once the reviewer rates the characteristics of each option on a five-point scale, the matrix must be normalized. This step simply reverts the weighted products that were multiplied by their order of importance back to the initial 1-5 rating. The sum of each column is divided by the sum of the weights, and this number becomes the normalizing integer, the divisor. In this construct,

55 is the normalizing integer (divisor) that brings the Weight-times-Rate product back into a 1-5 scale for final assessment. Table 10 illustrates the decisional matrix using random ratings.

Table 10

Hypothetical Textbook Rating Matrix

Textbook Options:		<u>Option A</u>		<u>Option B</u>		<u>Option C</u>	
Content Codes	Weight	Rate	Product	Rate	Product	Rate	Product
Academic content	10x	5	50	1	10	3	30
Course objectives	9x	4	36	2	18	5	45
Faith alignment	8x	3	24	3	24	4	24
Publisher criteria	7x	2	14	4	28	3	21
Teacher helps	6x	1	6	5	30	2	12
Student helps	5x	2	10	4	20	1	5
Readability	4x	3	12	3	12	2	8
Physical features	3x	4	12	2	6	3	9
Technology	2x	5	10	1	2	4	8
Cost	1x	3	3	5	5	5	5
Sum	55		177		155		168
Divisor / Normalizer	55		/55		/55		/55
FINAL RATING			3.21		2.81		3.05

The Content Codes column is in the hierarchical order construed from the collective results of the participants. The Weight column is the multiplier assigned by virtue of the code's place in the decisional matrix. Rate is the reviewer's subjective rating of each content category pursuant to the reviewer's opinion of the given option. Rate is multiplied by weight thus

yielding a weighted product. The weights are then normalized by simply adding them together to yield the normalizing divisor. The products are summed and divided by the normalizing divisor, that being 55 in the current sample. The final rating brings the model back to a Likert-type (1-5) rating of the textbook options.

The decision/policy-makers might wish to implement some parameters or restrictions also. One suggestion would be to assign a numerical lower margin of perhaps 3.0 as a minimal score to keep an option in consideration. The mean and median on a 5-point scale is 3; therefore, setting such parameters would eliminate any textbook that rates ‘below average’ on the pre-approved scale. This construct would eliminate Option B and pare down the final decision to two options. Option A with a comparatively high score, and C with a marginally above-average score, remain. Option A, rated a 3 on cost, is more expensive than C, that scored a 5 on cost. A, however, is rated much higher in academic content while C is a little better in faith considerations. By virtue of the decisional ethic model, textbook A most closely comports with the schools objectives overall as rated by the teachers, but it is somewhat more expensive than the other option. The final decision, therefore, becomes subject to a cost/benefit analysis.

Policy makers might also consider setting a failsafe rule against low ratings in the highest priorities. In context, a low rating of 1 or 2 in any of the top three categories, Content, Faith, or Course objectives, would disqualify the option. As to secular textbooks, the Faith alignment criterion must be altered to rate its acceptability to the school. The category might be rated as to its openness to a faith-based ideology (rated as 5 or 4), its neutrality (3), or as to its opposition or offensiveness to a Christian worldview (2 or 1). Again, parameters might be set that if the teachers rate a secular textbook as “1” or ‘very antagonistic or offensive’ to the institutional core values, it is culled for that reason alone.

The cycles in adoption affirms the need for an adoption instrument. The cyclical aspect of textbook adoption across all research sites is evidence that textbook adoption is an ongoing and important aspect of Christian education. This fact alone supports the proposition favoring a defined, research-based decisional instrument to aid in adopting textbooks in the Christian school. Furthermore, administrators generally did not use a standardized decisional instrument. These findings affirm the initial research problem that suggests administrators either do not know of or do not use a research-based decisional instrument or alternatively draft one anew guide or checklist for each adoption event. Most administrators expressed genuine interest in such a research based instrument.

Implications

The implications of this research project affect all constituents within context including organization leaders, school administrators, teachers, students, and textbook publishers.

Theoretical Implications

Based upon the research finding that textbook adoption is a graded, ongoing aspect of Christian education across all academic subjects and in all research sites, I recommend that organizational leaders and decision-makers adopt a multi-criteria decisional instrument for the adoption task. Only three of eight participants in the current study utilized any sort of textbook adoption guide. With one exception previously noted, all of the participants affirmed that a decisional instrument above would be a useful tool in rating and evaluating textbook options. Even a cursory search on the internet provides a plethora of evaluation guides that could be employed considering a research-based decisional analysis for faith-based schools is yet to be developed. This research has shown of the two pedagogical authorities in the classroom, the teacher takes primacy over the textbook. The latter is vitally important nonetheless.

Empirical Implications

Based upon the finding that shared leadership is both advocated in the literature for academic settings and is a universally applied principle across all research sites, I recommend administrators continue to employ shared or participative leadership regimens in the textbook adoption task (Cawthorne, 2010; Owens & Valesky, 2011). Administrators will benefit from continuing to apply collaborative leadership as the primary mechanism for conducting textbook adoption studies. Dr. Morris and other participants affirmed that teachers are the ones who are closest to both the textbooks and the students. They are the ones who have the experiential and observational knowledge and the students' reactions and outcomes from interacting with textbooks. Additionally, textbook adoption and review is a tedious task that requires time and attention. Teachers occupy a unique position in the organization and should possess the intellectual resources equal to the task. Teacher inclusion in the decisional process through collaborative or participative leadership also provides an incidental benefit of building loyalty or 'buy-in' within an organization (Maxwell, 1998).

Practical Implications

Based upon the research principles of criteria alignment, vertical, horizontal, and lateral as defined herein are organizational paradigms in Christian schools, I recommend that teachers adopt these concepts in their thinking and practice. Being cognizant of organizational objectives will facilitate teachers in educating their students pursuant to these purposes. Knowing that teachers and students are the ultimate beneficiaries of a better practice, I hope that teachers also, not administrators only, will benefit from the fruits of this study.

Based upon the research finding that Publisher criteria as a content category was found to be the least important feature across all research sites, I recommend publishers look into this

finding. Additionally, the research is transferable to a broader private school population than the focus herein; therefore, publishers of textbooks for use in all Christian schools should examine the reasons why their influence is waning.

I found the collectively low rating of Publisher criteria quite surprising. In the prospectus phase of the current project, my presumption was that Christian school administrators simply relied upon textbooks presented by their preferred Christian publishers. I presumed that Bob Jones University graduates would adopt Precept (formerly BJU Publications) textbooks, or ACSI administrators would gravitate to the ACSI approved list. I went so far in my thinking as to inquire of my research advisor at the time as to the validity of my project if my findings were to show that administrators simply selected textbooks from their favored publisher. My professor stated that if such proves to be the case, then this is what we need to know; the research project will have accomplished its objective of adding to the field of knowledge. I am surprised at both the fact that Publisher criteria ranked last overall by the participant administrators collectively and also that my initial thinking could be so far out of sync with the empirical results of the research. Such findings should be of interest to Christian publishers as well.

Limitations

Delimitations to the study include such predetermined restrictions as participant criteria, geographic range, and narrow focus or issue. Focusing upon Christian schools that are aligned with the ACSI naturally delimits the study to a relatively narrow band of Evangelicals within the broader faith-based private school movement. I selected the geographic range of the Southeast region of the U.S. and North Carolina in particular as a matter of convenience sampling. Additionally, the study is focused within an area known in the Southeast region of the U.S. as the Bible belt; therefore, the expectations of parents and other stakeholders may differ in other

regions. Such delimitations might affect replication of the research in other areas that are not so strongly Protestant, baptistic, and evangelistic in the broader population. Additionally, the research model is not truly transferable to all school settings, but it is adaptable to virtually any private school adoption proceedings by simply adapting the Faith criteria to the particular values of the current setting.

Replication is an Inherent Limitation

The key methodology of the project relies upon participant interviews. The strict adherence to research-based qualitative standards (as discussed herein as trustworthiness) provides for reliability and credibility of the findings, but the actual case studies cannot be duplicated. The methodology might be applied in other contexts.

Narrow Theological Scope as Possible Limitation

While the research theory may in fact be transferable in other contexts, obviously a school of another theological or social genre would apply and order their own organizational values to the content criteria in place of Faith criteria of ACSI schools. Other practitioners should define their own set of decisional objectives, criteria, and comparative textbook options. While the methodology is transferable from one private school genre to the next, of course, the findings may differ.

AHP Adaptation Presents Certain Limitations

The multi-criteria decisional strategy employed herein based upon the Analytic Hierarchy Process design is a limited adaptation only; it is not AHP proper. I borrowed many concepts from AHP such as defining the organizational objectives, ordering them hierarchically, rating the options and making a final decision. AHP does not employ weighted averaging but rather engages a higher level of mathematics (calculating eigenvectors for squaring the matrix) than

feasible for the current level of decisional analysis for practitioners who are not statisticians or mathematicians.

Multiple of textbook reviewers present a weakness in the weighted averaging model.

The current design utilizing weighted averaging is sufficient to assess the multi-criteria textbook analysis of a single reviewer or a philosophically united team; it works in a small, denominational religions school context where all the participants buy into the statement of faith and school mission in advance. When multiple reviewers submit independent findings, however, the paradigm changes dramatically. Rather than having just one chart or analysis matrix upon which all participants agree, one would have a stack of charts depending on the number of reviewers thus creating a three-dimensional matrix. The matrices of multiple raters, therefore, must be squared, and this requires a very high degree of mathematical proficiency or a computer program that, though available, would be beyond the proficiency of most administrators.

In the current context, therefore, where multiple reviewers might submit individual rating charts, the decision-maker might either ask the reviewers to confer and submit one analysis matrix or simply calculate a mean for each option on the multiple matrices. This shortcut would not present a true point-by-point comparative analysis of each reviewer's analyses but will lead to a reasonable final recommendation from the reviewers collectively based upon qualitative values. Therefore, the substitution of the weighted averaging construct in lieu of learning and implementing a true AHP program or formula for multiple reviews is a limitation to the study.

The hierarchical disbursement of values presents a potential limitation. The research model asked the administrators to rate the categories in order on a 1-10 ordinal scale from most to least important using whole integers. In reality, however, the content-categories might not be thus evenly disbursed in the opinion of those ordering the hierarchy. A 1-10 range requires that

the first priority is 10-times more important than the last. In the current context, therefore, Academic content is weighted 10-times that of Publisher criteria. Therefore, the actual weight of each code as evenly spaced by whole integers is not empirically true. Dr. Morris rated the first three categories as equally important and said two others, Teacher helps and Student helps (five and six) were, likewise, equal in value. In the processing, therefore, Dr. Morris's normalizing integer would not be 55 like all the others; it would be 74, and this would skew the data processing. The facilitator would have to rate Dr. Morris's top three categories as 9s (to equal 27 as does the sum of $10 + 9 + 8$) and his fifth and sixth priorities as 5.5 each in order that the normalizing divisor remain 55. The point here is Dr. Morris's evaluation of the content codes was not evenly spaced by whole integers for the convenience of the design. The matrix may therefore need another means of weighting and measuring subjective values between categories.

Weighted averaging on a 100-point scale presents another limitation. An alternative weighting method would be to ask the decisional authority to assign values to the categories as they deem them to be so long as the sum total of all categories equals 100. (The normalizing divisor would also be 100 under this construct.) By this means the lead decision-maker or decisional team provides precise values in relation to one another. This construct would be more accurate in the case of single or unified decision-makers but might prove impossible to implement with multiple independent stakeholders assigning the values.

Open resource textbook development. Some of the administrators referenced moving to e-textbooks and developing textbooks in-house from open (internet) resources. While the former would not be a limitation, during the literature review I considered whether the latter would be detrimental to this study (Petrides et al., 2011; Wiley et al., 2012). Were a content expert to develop a laterally graded course curricula including the textbook from open resources

and personal archives, as did the Bible teacher at Sigma Baptist, then the content criteria and hierarchical ordering could be applied as a curricula guide rather than an adoption instrument.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the results of the findings from the research examining the current practice of practitioners in the field, I recommend the following considerations for future research.

Development of a Grounded Theory in Textbook Adoption

The decisional ethic instrument proposed herein requires the foundation of a grounded theory in textbook adoption. The current study asked question, ‘what’. What are practitioners in the field currently doing in the area of textbook adoption? I believe the current research adequately answers this question. The next logical question is ‘how’. How should administrators conduct a decisional analysis project to reach an objective result that meets all the subjective values of the organization and its stakeholders?

Quantitatively Test the Validity and Reliability of the Decisional Ethic Instrument

The research showed that the participants do not utilize a research-based adoption instrument. Most agreed, however, such an instrument would be beneficial to the task. The current study suggests that multi-criteria decisional analysis and AHP specifically is a proven methodology for accomplishing this task. A future study could either validate the instrument proposed herein or either develop or recommend another MCDA instrument that presents a proven reliability and for this application.

Propose a Methodology for Conducting Cost-Benefit Analysis

The final decision-makers should be conducting cost-benefit analysis. Considering the proposed finding cited herein suggested Cost is not a qualitative value, cost should be omitted from the decisional matrix. The option evaluators/raters should not be concerned with the

textbook's cost. Omitting cost would minimize bias in this area. When the final options are recommended based upon the predefined ethical and practical values of the organization, it is almost a given that the best option might also be the most expensive option. The administrators and others should make the final decision as to a curriculum's worth and affordability.

Research the Validity of and Cause for Demise of Publisher Influence in Christian Schools

One of the curious results of the current study found Publisher criteria to be the least important aspect of the decisional analysis to the current practitioners. Additionally the research found that Christian publishers have not yet focused on development of advanced placement textbooks. The apparent demise of publisher influence in Christian school textbooks is an area of interest for future study.

The Prospect of Techbooks over Textbooks

While the current research did address technology, the findings were deemed insignificant for the purposes of this study. All of the participants did affirm they currently are or are considering moving into the tech field in the area of textbooks. Most, however, had not yet invested in electronic devices for students or tested the feasibility of utilizing electronic textbooks. Even so, the influence of e-textbooks is a reality. A future study might address the development of techbooks from open internet sources compared to the purchase of digital e-textbooks from established publishers as this may be the next most important development on this topic.

Summary

The research culminates in advancing two leadership principles: the application of the principles of alignment, and confirmation of the leadership approach defined herein as shared or collaborative. All administrators are intensely concerned with vertical alignment to ensure no

omissions or overlaps occur of graded course development. Additionally administrators are highly motivated to ensure horizontal alignment of core values and the academic expectations are reflected in the textbooks utilized in the classroom. Defining the principle of lateral alignment with contemporaneous resources outside the school's immediate context may prove to be the pinnacle aspect of the research project.

The decisional ethic model proposed herein accomplishes the objective in two ways. It converts the subjective qualities of both the organization and the options' characteristics to an objective rating and evaluation formula while it controls for bias through the bifurcation of the decisional duties. The organizational leaders set in order the hierarchical criteria and values, while the middle managers (the teachers), through shared or collaborative leadership, rate the decisional options by these pre-ordained criteria. By virtue of the decisional ethic model, the final decision will be informed, objective, and defensible.

In closing I reflect upon the opening comments of my first interview with Mrs. McDonald at Alpha Christian Academy. In answer to my initial question concerning the administrator's role in textbook adoption, Mrs. McDonald answered that her most important function is selecting the textbook adoption committee. In her own words, "I think that truly is praying about who you're going to put on that committee, knowing that they're going to pray about it as well" (Mrs. McDonald, Interview, 3/17/15). This opening thought of the project highlights the philosophical and empirical distinction between Christian and secular education. Christian educators assume an awesome trust and responsibility; that is, the academic and spiritual instruction, mentoring, and worldview development of children and adolescents. This high calling is not to be taken lightly. In James 3:1 the Holy Bible states, "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with

greater strictness” [English Standard Version]. Nevertheless, those who have answered this call might say with the Apostle Paul, one of the most significant leaders and teachers of the New Testament age, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14, KJV).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Scripture Citations

[King James Version unless otherwise cited]

- Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- Genesis 18:19_19 For I know him [Abraham], that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.
- Deuteronomy 4:9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen , and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;
- Deuteronomy 6:6-7 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down , and when thou risest up .
- Psalm 127:3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.
- Proverbs 6:20-23 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: 21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. 22 When thou goest , it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest , it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest , it shall talk with thee. 23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

- Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old , he will not depart from it.
- Job 28:28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that [is] wisdom; and to depart from evil [is] understanding.
- Psalm 34:7-11 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. 8 O taste and see that the LORD [is] good: blessed [is] the man [that] trusteth in him. 9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for [there is] no want to them that fear him. 10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good [thing]. 11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
- Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of knowledge: [but] fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy [is] understanding.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.
- 2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
- Genesis 1:26, 27 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

- Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
- Genesis 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.
- Job 32:8 But *there is* a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.
- Romans 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.
- James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.
- Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained a witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it, he being dead yet speaketh.
- James 3:1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness [English Standard Version].
- Philippians 4:13 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Appendix B: ACSI Statement of Faith

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21).
- We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30).
- We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33), His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23, Luke 1:35), His sinless life (Hebrews 4: 15, 7:26),
 - His miracles (John 2:11),
 - His vicarious and atoning death (1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7, Hebrews 2:9),
 - His Resurrection (John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:4),
 - His Ascension to the right hand of God (Mark 16:19),
 - His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11).
- We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ, and that only by God's grace and through faith alone are we saved (John 3:16–19, 5:24; Romans 3:23, 5:8–9; Ephesians 2:8–10; Titus 3:5).
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; that they are saved unto the resurrection of life, and that they are lost unto the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28–29).
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 2:12–13, Galatians 3:26–28).

- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Romans 8:13–14; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19–20; Ephesians 4:30, 5:18). (ACSI, 2012; 2014)

Appendix C: Initial Contact Survey

(by SurveyMonkey™)

Note to reader: The actual SurveyMonkey™ questionnaire is produced and delivered to the recipient in digital format via e-mail and features interactive check-boxes and expanding blank spaces for written answers.

1. What is the type of school?

- ☐ K–12
- ☐ Elementary only
- ☐ Secondary only
- ☐ Other (Please describe _____)

2. What is denominational association of the school?

- ☐ Baptist: ☐ Independent; ☐ Southern
- ☐ Full Gospel / Charismatic
- ☐ Lutheran
- ☐ Reformed
- ☐ Other _____

3. Please describe your administrative or teaching role.

4. What type of textbooks are used in the school?

- ☐ All are Christian publisher
- ☐ Most are Christian publisher
- ☐ About evenly mixed Christian / Secular
- ☐ Mostly Secular publisher

☐ Please name the major Christian publisher _____

5. Have you participated in textbook selection project?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Who are the textbook adoption decision-makers within your school?

(Please check all that apply.)

☐ Administrator

☐ Faculty

☐ Schools board members

☐ Other stakeholders: Please identify title or role: _____

7. Would you and other decision makers to participate in a 30 to 45 minute interview at your location with a Christian doctoral student concerning textbook adoption?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you for your time, and please return the survey by reply email.

Powered by [SurveyMonkey™](#)

Retrieved from <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/survey-templates/>

Appendix D: Participant/Administrator Contact Letter

Heading, Return address, Date, and Salutation

Body of the letter. Please accept my gratitude for your gracious response to my preliminary e-mail survey of (date). I am very encouraged by your willingness to participate in the research project concerning textbook adoption in Christian schools.

The next step requires that I secure permissions and conduct a site visit to your institution. The Liberty University Institutional Review Board requires that I obtain a signed assent form from each participant and the Administrator. The research design calls for an interview with you and other textbook review participants if possible concerning your past experience(s) in selecting textbooks for use in the Christian school. I would also ask to see any data you might have available such as records, forms, instruments or worksheets utilized in prior textbook adoption projects.

The interview should take 30-45 minutes. If others on site were involved in the adoption project I would hope to conduct a group interview if possible. The interview will be recorded, and once I have transcribed the interview, I shall send you a copy of the transcript for your review before incorporating any information into the research project.

Please allow me to review the data-gathering procedure to clarify the research protocol I must follow. In the research process I have done or will do the following:

- Submit the research proposal to the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and make any changes they recommend
- Once IRB approval is granted, request consent of the Regional Office of the ACSI to contact member school Administrators
- Send the dissertation project via interactive email survey to potential candidates

- Select interested candidate administrators from positive e-mail replies
- Send cordial reply to all email respondents
- Mail initial contact and introductory letters to potential participant administrators
- Arrange a date and time for the site visit and administrator interview
- Mail IRB consent forms and interview questions to participant administrator
- Conduct site visit: obtain written consent forms, conduct field research, personal interview and gathered hard data
- Transcribe the interview verbatim into a written, narrative format
- Submit the interview transcript to participant administrator for review
- Make any follow-up contacts and revisions to the interview as necessary
- Submit an audit trail record of the above to the Dissertation Chair, Dr. James Swezey, for review before moving forward with the data analysis phase of the project.

Thank you again for taking the time and interest to participate in this project. Upon hearing back from you to as to a date and time for the site visit, I will send a draft of both the consent form(s) and a copy of the interview questions.

Please feel free to call or e-mail me in reply with a range of dates and times to meet that are convenient for you. Looking forward to meeting with you soon, I am

Very truly yours,

Signature

Appendix E: Confidentiality Statement

(IRB, 2014)

Confidentiality of Collected Data

Committee on the Use of Human Research Subjects

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

This document outlines policies concerning

- Confidentiality of research data
- Discussion of research data
- Presentation and publication tips to preserve subject confidentiality

Confidentiality of research data

The anonymity and/or confidentiality of subject data must be preserved in studies collecting data, using archival data, or using information originally obtained for different purposes. Investigators and their personnel conducting research on human subjects must agree to **maintain in strict confidence** the names, characteristics, questionnaire scores, ratings, incidental comments, and/or other information on all subjects and/or subjects' data they encounter so as not to conflict with State and/or Federal laws and regulations.

In most research, assuring confidentiality is a matter of following some precautionary practices: **substituting codes** for names or other personal identifiers, **separately storing informed consent forms or face sheets** (containing such items as names and addresses) from survey instruments containing the data itself, properly disposing of computer sheets and other papers, **limiting access** to identified data, impressing on the research staff the importance of confidentiality, and **storing research records in locked cabinets**. More elaborate procedures may be needed in some studies, either to give subjects the confidence they need to participate and answer questions honestly, or to enable researchers to offer strong, truthful assurances of

confidentiality. This may be particularly necessary for studies in which data are collected on sensitive matters.

Sensitive research can be defined as involving the collection of information falling into any of the following categories:

- Information relating to sexual attitudes, preferences, or practices;
- Information relating to the use of alcohol, drugs, or other addictive products;
- Information pertaining to illegal conduct;
- Information that if released could reasonably be damaging to an individual's financial standing, employability, or reputation within the community;
- Information that would normally be recorded in a patient's medical record, and the disclosure of which could reasonably lead to social stigmatization or discrimination;
- Information pertaining to an individual's psychological well-being or mental health.

Information in other categories, not listed here, might also be considered sensitive because of specific cultural or other factors, and protection can be granted in such cases upon appropriate justification and explanation.

As early as feasible, the data in studies like the above should be handled in coded form (i.e., the subject's name and information that would reveal his or her identity should be removed; consent forms separated from data, etc.). Plans for the ultimate disposition of the data should also be made (i.e., after the three year retaining period, how will the data be destroyed). The identity of subjects must not be released except with their expressed permission.

Discussion of Research Data

Researchers may not discuss nor divulge in any manner a subject's name or any

identifying information or characteristics, scores, ratings, comments, or information about a subject with anyone who is not an authorized member of the research team. Furthermore, investigators may not discuss confidential information in a place where such a discussion might be overheard. Neither will they discuss confidential information in a way that would allow an unauthorized person to associate (either correctly or incorrectly) an identity with such information.

Presentations and Publications of Research Data

Publications or reports based on the collected data must be written in such a way as to safeguard the identity of individual participants. For example, data can be reported collectively as a group or with subgroups. Any reporting of individual data is done in such a way as to protect the subject's identity. For example, in a counseling research article that includes an individual case study, a pseudonym, minor demographics alterations, and minor details of the case may be altered so as to preserve anonymity. In the article, the writer notes that some case details have been altered so as to preserve anonymity.

Feel free to contact the IRB chair for more ideas as needed for safe data collection and storage (IRB, 2014).

Appendix F: Research Participants

The names of the schools and the administrators themselves are pseudonyms in keeping with federal guidelines requiring confidentiality in reference to research involving human subjects.

Table 11 provides a survey of the research participants and sites with pseudonyms.

Table 11

Table of Research Participant

Schools	ALPHA	BETA	GAMMA	DELTA
Type of School	Denominational (Assemblies of God)	Denominational (Southern Baptist)	Independent non affiliated	Transitioning from Church- associated to Independent
Administrator(s)	Mrs. McDonald Principal	Mr. Carter Head of Schools	Dr. Jackson Head of School Mrs. Dorsett Administrator for Curricula and Instruction	Mrs. Hall Administrator
Years in Education / Administration	25 / 6	10 / 4	25 / 20 15 / 5	24 / 5
Education	M.A. Educ.	M.A. Educ.	M.Div., D. Min. / M.A. Educ.	M.A., Ed.S.
Background	Teacher and Principal at Alpha only	Various Christian schools	Pastoral and Church/School Administration	Teaching, counseling, and leadership roles at Delta
Leadership Style	Participative and submissive to Sr. Pastor and Board	Personality is Authoritarian with genuine concern for others	Laissez Faire / Participative	Participative, team approach, Collaborative
School Mission	Mission- oriented and Evangelistic	Discipleship, Missional and Evangelistic	Discipleship	Evangelistic and Discipleship

School Setting	Associated with and located within the Church facility	Separate modern school facility on the church campus	Repurposed WWII era rural public school building	Leased school space within a former Church-school setting
School Culture or Spirit	Overall positive Elementary not segregated from older grades	Very positive interaction with students and others.	Relaxed, easy-going, and non-legalistic atmosphere	Site visit was during Spring break. No other staff present.
Schools	EPSILON	KAPPA	SIGMA	OMEGA
Type of school	Denominational (Southern Baptist)	Denominational (Central Church of God denom.) Board-run	Independent Baptist, Church-associated	Denominational (Holiness / Pentecostal)
Administrator	Mr. Hurley Administrator and Head of Schools	Dr. Morris Self-described as a teacher first, Administrator by vocation and calling	Miss Dorn Administrator and Head of Schools	Mrs. Teal Administrator
Years in Education / Administration	20 / 10	40 / 30	40 / 20	20 / 4
Education	M.A. Ed.S.	Ph.D., Education Specialist in Non Profit Management	M.A., Ed. Counseling	M.A. Education, Teaching
Background	Teaching and leadership in several Christian schools and serves on two administrative school boards	Internationally recognized authority in Christian Ed., Established 5 Christian schools ACSI Executive Administrator, CNN, FOX, NBC Christian school news expert.	Has served at Sigma Baptist for all but 8 years when she taught in the local public schools before returning to Sigma as an elementary principal.	Has taught exclusively in the secondary level in the public schools. Was recruited as administrator of the church-school, as an active church member, by the school board.

School	EPSILON	KAPPA	SIGMA	OMEGA
Leadership Style	Participative and Authoritarian	Participative and submissive to a controlling School Board	Participative and Authoritative	Participative and Authoritarian
School Mission	Described as non-Covenant in not requiring a pre-affirmed statement of Faith	Operated as a Community Christian School. Discipleship and Evangelistic	Discipleship	Discipleship and Evangelistic
School Setting	Located within and as part of a mega-(5000 + member) Baptist church	Church-owned school in a public/community school setting	Aging school facility adjoining a local church	Associated with denominational church in a formal educational environment
School Culture or Spirit	Students seemed happy and well-adjusted Friendly staff	Positive student/faculty interaction Friendly and happy atmosphere	Formalistic environment Polite but not overly outgoing staff	Very friendly and helpful staff. Students interacted will with adults and one another

Appendix G: Research Questions/Interview Questions Synopsis

The following synopsis illustrates how interview questions directly reflect the research questions.

Primary research question: What textbook adoption practices do administrators or textbook adoption decision-makers employ when reviewing textbooks for classroom use in Christian schools? The subsequent interview questions as seriated below elicit answers to the research problem.

- How long have you been the administrator here?
- How would you define your leadership role in the organization?
- To what extent are teachers or others involved in curricula development?
- How often do you engage in reviewing textbooks for replacement?
- Who makes the final textbook adoption decision?

First criteria subquestion and corresponding interview questions: What content factors, stylistic elements, and physical features do administrators consider in textbook adoption?

- What is the role of the textbook in the classroom?
- How do you locate options for course curricula? (Preferred publishers? Internet? Other sources?)
- When selecting textbooks for courses, what content, or other factors are considered?

Second criteria subquestion and corresponding interview questions: To what extent do administrators give consideration to Christian worldview factors when evaluating scholarship in textbooks?

- What role does faith play in textbook selection?
- What percentage of textbooks in use are Christian / secular?

- What is the percentage of church-affiliated to “unchurched” students/families?
- Do you intentionally include secular textbooks for discernment training?
- Are there elements in textbooks that would disqualify them from use in this school?

First process subquestion and corresponding interview question: How were textbook content criteria prioritized?

- How would you rank the following content criteria in order of importance? Academic content, Alignment with course objectives, Alignment with a Faith ethic, Publisher criterion, Teacher helps, Student helps, Readability, Physical features, Cost, Technology.

Second process subquestion and corresponding interview questions: What instruments or rating criteria in any were utilized for rating textbooks?

- Have you used research instruments or decision-making guides in the past?
- Do you have any copies of analysis guides you have used in the past?

Thus the research questions governed the personal interviews which, in turn, informed the majority of the data-gathering process.

Appendix H: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 10, 2015

Cecil John Phillips
IRB Approval 1999.021015: Decisional Ethic of Textbook Adoption in Christian Schools: A
Collective Case Study

Dear John,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054

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